

# Communications and Engagement Strategy



**Environmental Sustainability Communications and Engagement Strategy**

June 2023, version 1.6

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# 1.0 Introduction

The University of Salford's vision is *to pioneer exceptional industry partnerships that will lead the way in real world experiences, by preparing students for life*. The University Industry Collaboration Strategy supports this vision and one of the principles of Industry Collaboration is *to promote sustainability and social responsibility*.

Curriculums have been developed to be Industry Collaboration ready and one of the principles of being Industry Collaboration ready is 'Education for ethical behaviour'. This presents an approach to student education that seeks to balance human and economic well-being, knowledge, and competencies with cultural traditions, as well as respect for other people, and for the earth and its natural resources. In practice, this requires design of academic programmes with consideration for sustainability, such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

The University's sustainability vision is that *by embedding sustainability in all aspects of University life, we will enable our University community to have maximum beneficial impacts for society and environment*.

Communication and engagement are important elements of our Environmental and Energy Management System (EEMS). Our Environmental Sustainability Policy includes commitments to:

- Embed care for the environment in the culture of our Estates & Facilities Division, as part of our goal to be a sustainable University.
- Empower and motivate the whole University community to support our policy and strategy through appropriate education and communication.

To achieve our EEMS objectives and reduce the environmental impacts of the University's activities, we need to enable our whole University community to have an understanding of those impacts, as well as broader sustainability issues, and our responsibilities. We need to raise awareness amongst staff, students, and other interested parties to encourage and support them to take action and adopt positive behaviours, as well as ensure that our policies and environmental objectives, and any legal compliance requirements, are clearly communicated to them.

All information and data linked to the EEMS and significant environmental aspects/energy uses should be confirmed as accurate by the Head of Environmental Sustainability or Energy Manager before external publication.

In the 2022-23 NUS/SOS-UK student survey, 92% of University of Salford students thought sustainable development is something that places of study should actively incorporate and promote. When selecting their university choices, 75% considered the University's attitude towards sustainability to be an important factor in their decision to apply. 88% said it is

important that in their studies they learn how to use resources efficiently and limit their environmental impact, while 83% believed it is important to learn how to consider ethical issues related to their subject. These survey results show how important it is that we communicate with students about sustainability issues and engage with them to enhance their understanding, while also working with academics to embed sustainability into the curriculum.

As part of our Environmental Sustainability Plan, we have objectives and targets relating to community engagement:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicator</b>	<b>Baseline</b>	<b>Target</b>
Increase influence of Green Impact at the University	Number of staff/students influenced in Green Impact	2016/17	Increase in number of staff/students influenced in Green Impact
Increase engagement around sustainability with staff and students at the University	Number of staff/students engaged with sustainability campaigns & events	2019/20	Increase in number of staff/students engaged with sustainability campaigns & events

This document establishes the Estates & Facilities (E&F) Division’s strategy for communicating environmental and energy messages, including those related to the EEMS. It highlights our target audiences, communication channels, how we keep up to date with sector best practice, details of our main initiatives and programmes, and related documents. It also contains a matrix of our current events and campaigns, an action plan, and a campaign planning template.

## 2.0 Target Audiences

Our primary audience is all staff and students at the University of Salford, as well as visitors to the University. Target audiences also include local, regional and national communities and the Higher Education sector. For some of our communications related to our EEMS, the audience will be restricted to E&F staff or other interested parties. Our Log of Interested Parties provides details of all target audiences.

## 3.0 Communication channels

Our communication channels include:

- Website: <https://www.salford.ac.uk/environmental-sustainability>
- Blog: <https://blogs.salford.ac.uk/environmental-sustainability/>
- Staff Hub: [https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/UoS\\_Staff](https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/UoS_Staff)
- Student Hub: [https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/Uos\\_Students](https://testlivesalfordac.sharepoint.com/sites/Uos_Students)
- Students' Union channels (their website, social media channels and screens)
- Social media:
  - Twitter
    - General: [https://twitter.com/UoS\\_Sustain](https://twitter.com/UoS_Sustain)
    - Plastic Free UoS: <https://twitter.com/PlasticFreeUos>
    - Hedgehog Friendly Campus: [https://twitter.com/uos\\_hfc](https://twitter.com/uos_hfc)
  - Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SustainabilityUoS>
    - General: [https://twitter.com/UoS\\_Sustain](https://twitter.com/UoS_Sustain)
    - Hedgehog Friendly Campus: <https://www.facebook.com/uoshedgehogfriendlycampus>
  - Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/uos\\_sustain/](https://www.instagram.com/uos_sustain/)
    - General: [https://twitter.com/UoS\\_Sustain](https://twitter.com/UoS_Sustain)
    - Plastic Free UoS: <https://www.instagram.com/plasticfreeuos/>
    - Hedgehog Friendly Campus: [https://www.instagram.com/uos\\_hedgehogfriendlycampus/](https://www.instagram.com/uos_hedgehogfriendlycampus/)
- Microsoft Teams calls, chats, teams, and Teams Communities (formerly Yammer)
- Emails to staff and students
- Notices / signage / posters
- Digital screens / screen savers
- Events (on campus and online)
- Telephone calls
- Meetings
- Presentations
- Guest lectures
- Welcome Fair
- Workshops
- Training sessions

## 4.0 Sector best practice

Keeping up to date with sector best practice, learning from other HE organisations on how they have improved their environmental and energy performance, and ensuring the continual professional development of the Environmental Sustainability Team (EST) is achieved via the following methods:

- Accessing documents from the EAUC website and Sustainability Exchange.
- Attending EAUC webinars.
- Attending EAUC regional meetings.
- Attending the EAUC Conference and Green Gown Awards where possible.
- Joining relevant EAUC Communities of Practice and communicate with sector colleagues via the mailing lists.
- Attending other relevant webinars, meetings and network events.

## 5.0 Engagement initiatives and programmes

Events and campaigns that are carried out at specific points throughout the year are described in the events and campaigns matrix below, but here we describe some additional formal and informal initiatives and provide more information about our main staff engagement programme, Green Impact. We also communicate relevant national and international days and events such as Earth Hour and Global Recycling Day; we keep track of these on a social media calendar. Additional ad-hoc initiatives may take place throughout the year if the requirement arises.

### 5.1 Sustainability and the curriculum

Engaging with the academic curriculum is important – NUS/SOS-UK research shows that 66% of students want to learn more about sustainability<sup>1</sup> and we are limited in what we can achieve at the University without environmentally conscious students.

The EST deliver guest lectures for students every academic year, providing the foundation on how UoS is trying to be more sustainable and what the main challenges are. We have delivered guest lectures for several courses and modules; examples include:

- In the School of Science, Engineering and Environment: Mitigating Climate Change, Sustainability and Environment, Standards and Auditing

- In the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology: Fashion Image Making Styling (FIMS), Photography
- Salford Business School: International Marketing

The EST have also organised and/or supported a number of events with the FIMS team. This included a tree planting event in January 2022, where, together with City of Trees, staff and students from the course planted 210 trees on the David Lewis Playing Fields. In April 2021, the EST were also invited to speak at a digital youth symposium which focused on sustainability in fashion.

The EST provide live briefs and placement opportunities for the School of Science, Engineering and Environment consultancy module, acting as a client for the student teams. We encourage students to tackle live sustainability issues – such as sustainable development, biodiversity, or waste – for their dissertations, giving them a chance to work on a project that will have a real-world application and a lasting impact at the University. As part of the Standards and Auditing module, the EST also provide guest workshops about auditing for businesses and offer students the chance to audit Estates & Facilities processes and procedures as part of the assessment for the module. The EST also provide live briefs for other courses, including Photography, Graphic Design and Fine Art at the School of Arts, Media and Creative Technology.

The EST also meaningfully engage with students in tackling some of the sustainability issues on campus, through assisting with module assessment. As an example, we have worked with the Business School on the Business Ethics and Sustainability module – a super module for level 6, which reaches around 350 students every academic year, our future business leaders. Through group assessment, students critically assess how the University is addressing one of the United Nation’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and identify the main strengths and weaknesses of how the University is tackling that SDG. Based on their analysis they present recommendations and a project plan, which would assist the University in tackling the selected SDG in the future. The EST assisted students with their research by providing details of how the University is already tackling their selected SDG or directing them to a more relevant University department. In addition to these projects, the programme was also valuable in giving the EST an understanding of the current level of awareness of students, with sustainability and ideas of how we can increase this.

<sup>1</sup> NUS/SOS-UK research: <https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/research/sustainability-skills-survey>

## 5.2 Green Impact

Green Impact is an SOS-UK behaviour change programme that encourages staff teams to complete sustainable actions and projects. The University has taken part since 2013/14 (with a year’s break in 2015/16), with the programme being developed over time. Teams are supported to improve their environmental performance, promote sustainability at the University and win awards for their efforts. They register with an online toolkit and progress



through simple and attainable actions, building up points to achieve an award, which they receive at a ceremony at the end of each programme cycle. Teams are supported throughout the initiative via newsletters, meet-up events, an online sharing platform and emails and are audited by trained students. They are also supported to implement their own projects.

### **5.3 Green Campus Group**

The EST have established a Green Campus Group that is open to all staff, students and the local community, the purpose of which is to share information and engage about the current and future/potential use of outside spaces at the University and how they will and could be developed and enhanced. The group aims to meet at least three times a year. The aims of the Green Campus Group are to:

- Gain an understanding of how outside spaces on campus are used by staff, students, visitors and the local community, including how they are used for learning/educational purposes, to feed into the Landscape Management Plan.
- Actively involve users in identifying opportunities for improvements and to collaborate to implement them where possible.
- Share information with Green Campus Group members about how developments of the campus will impact on outside spaces.
- Gain ideas and information for the University's Landscape Management Plan and associated action plan, which are led by the Estates & Facilities Division.
- Support the Green Flag Award application.

Green Campus Group meetings are also opportunities for staff, students and local community members to find out about involvement and volunteering opportunities both on campus (e.g. Community Growing Space) and in the local area (e.g. Peel Park).

Ideas raised at the Green Campus group will feed into the Masterplan Landscaping design and University's Landscape Management Plan via the Environmental Projects Board, Estates Masterplan Board and wider University groups as required.

### **5.4 Go Green Salford**

Each year in February/March, the EST run a series of events and activities over four weeks, incorporating Go Green Week and Fairtrade Fortnight. During Go Green Salford, the EST collaborate with students, staff members, the University of Salford Students' Union, and the local community to raise awareness of the importance of sustainability and encourage positive change.

### **5.5 Cycle User Group**

The Cycle User Group on Microsoft Teams was created as a hub to support staff and students who cycle to and from the University. The EST use it for communications regarding

any internal or external opportunities and initiatives related to cycling and active travel, as well as share updates and consult the community on new projects and facilities, such as cycle maintenance stations.

## 5.6 Hedgehog Friendly Campus

Hedgehog Friendly Campus is a BHPS-funded national biodiversity programme for universities. It aims to highlight the issues faced by UK hedgehogs, and to encourage university staff and students to help them combat these on campuses. Since joining the programme in 2020, our dedicated social media accounts and a Microsoft Teams channel have allowed us to effectively communicate and work with Salford students, staff and local community on fun, engaging and impactful activities which help improve biodiversity on campus.

## 5.7 Plastic Free UoS

This campaign is aimed at eradicating avoidable single-use plastics from catering, labs and stationery at the University of Salford. The related communications via dedicated social media accounts and Microsoft Teams channel, provide an opportunity for the EST to increase awareness among the University community around the issue of single use plastics and educate about sustainable alternatives. As part of the campaign, the EST provide live briefs and placement opportunities for students, focused on community engagement and communication.

## 5.8 Estates & Facilities Green Champion Recognition Scheme

The EST have launched a sustainability recognition scheme to celebrate Estates & Facilities (E&F) staff who are working hard to make the University a more sustainable place. Staff can nominate colleagues or themselves and Green Champions will be recognised in the E&F newsletters and will receive a sustainable prize. The nominations can relate to a member of staff who is going the extra mile to help reduce E&F's negative impacts on the environment or increase positive impacts. This could be related to the EEMS, or any of the main impact areas, which are shown in the image below.



## 5.9 Sustainable procurement

As part of the ESTs work to achieve Level 4 of the Flexible Framework for the E&F, a variety of communication and engagement related activities are required. Some initiatives are in place, and some are in development; they are summarised below.

- The Sustainable Procurement Champion for E&F is the Environmental Sustainability Manager with support of the central Sustainability Office.
- Information about sustainable procurement is included in the University's staff environmental induction, and publicly available on the University website.
- We engage with suppliers via the NETPositive tool, allowing two-way communication.
- High sustainability impact suppliers are in the process of being identified and will be targeted for engagement and target setting, with senior management involvement, to promote continual sustainability improvement.
- Sustainable procurement case studies will be communicated to E&F staff via the E&F newsletter.

## 6.0 Events and campaigns matrix

Initiative	Message/communication goal	Audience	When	How
Cycle to Work Day	Show staff that we support them in cycling to work and recognise their efforts.	Staff	August	Encourage staff to share photos on social media of their journey to work, using posters and social media. Prize draw, coffee/lunch vouchers for cyclists.
Welcome Week	Key engagement opportunity with students, providing information on environmental management at Salford, volunteer opportunities and other sustainability initiatives.	New students	September	Attendance at Welcome Fair, social media activity, collaboration with Students' Union, Wildlife Society, and other University departments. Sign-up sheet at events with prize draw.
Recycle Week	Encourage correct recycling. Useful data from quiz to see what people are most confused about regarding recycling.	Staff and students	September	Link with national campaign – use social media and online recycling quiz.
Green Impact auditor recruitment and audits	Recruitment of student volunteers to audit the toolkits of staff Green Impact teams. Volunteers will learn more about sustainability and what actions the University is taking, whilst gaining valuable employability skills.	Students Green Impact teams	September/ October	Recruit students using social media, Student Hub, Students' Union, screen savers, digital screens, emails via Schools and to students on mailing list. Trained students conduct audits of the teams once they have submitted their toolkit, to agree their award level.
Green Impact awards	Celebrate achievements of Green Impact teams.	Green Impact teams and senior management	November/December	The achievements of staff who have taken part in Green Impact are celebrated at an awards event and it is an opportunity to highlight the impacts of the programme to senior management.

				The event is promoted via the staff Hub, social media and direct emails.
Christmas Switch-off	Encourage staff to switch off non-essential equipment to reduce energy wastage over the Christmas period.	All University staff	December	Engagement through Green Impact teams, Digital IT and communications through staff Hub.
Green Impact relaunch	Recruit staff for the next cycle of the programme.	All University staff	January/February	The event and recruitment of staff teams is done via the staff Hub, social media, direct emails, attending department meetings/congress, digital screens and screensavers.
Go Green Salford	Raise awareness of initiatives to tackle sustainability issues and how staff and students can take action and make a difference.	Staff and students	February/March	A series of events and activities to raise awareness of sustainability issues and engage with the University community, incorporating Go Green Week and Fairtrade Fortnight.
Easter Switch-off	Encourage staff to switch off non-essential equipment – essential to reduce energy wastage over the Easter break.	All University staff	March	Engagement through Green Impact teams, Digital IT and communications through staff Hub.
Hedgehog Awareness Week	Raise awareness around the issues faced by hedgehogs in urban areas, and encourage staff and students to get involved in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus campaign	Staff and students	May	Engagement through University of Salford Hedgehog Friendly Campus social media and Teams group. Communications through staff and student Hub. Events on campus, including hedgehog surveys and litter picks.
Plastic Free July	Raise awareness around the issue of plastic pollution, and encourage staff and students to get involved in the Plastic Free UoS campaign	Staff and students	July	Engagement through Plastic Free UoS social media and Teams group.

# 7.0 Action Plan

Action	Owner	2022				2023				2024				Budget assessment	Status
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		
Review Environmental Sustainability webpages to ensure all information is accurate and up to date	EST	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Internal time resources only	Ongoing; last review: June 2023
Investigate opportunities for a specific Sustainability page on the Student Hub	EST/Student Experience and Engagement							x	x					Internal time resources only	In progress
Introduce and use a mailing list for staff and students	EST			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Internal time resources only	Mailing list in regular use during term-time
Relaunch the Sustainability Strategy Board	EST							x						Internal time resources only	In progress as part of department restructuring
Work with local community groups on activities for students	EST		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Internal resources, internal grants, budgets of organisations we're working with	Ongoing partnership with local community groups, including Salford Ranger Team, Friends of Peel Park, Growing Togetherness
Establish collaboration with key Schools to explore opportunities to use environmental sustainability research on campus to	EST	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Internal time resources only	Active collaboration with Schools (Arts, Media & Creative Technology; Science, Engineering & Environment). Currently exploring collaboration

enhance environmental performance															opportunities with School of Health & Society and Salford Business School.
Plan and launch a campaign dedicated to waste, focused on recycling and reuse (Warp it)	EST					x	x	x	x					Internal time resources only	Planned for the academic year 2023/24
Re-establish collaboration with Salford Business School	EST/Salford Business School						x	x						Internal time resources only	In progress via Green Impact
Establish collaboration with the School of Health & Society	EST/School of Health & Society						x	x						Internal time resources only	In progress via Plastic Free UoS
Work with the SU to integrate sustainability messages into SU initiatives, and include SU presence in university-wide sustainability events	EST/SU					x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	Internal time resources only	Ongoing engagement collaboration with the SU. EST/SU Comms Intern recruitment in progress.
Advertise volunteer roles for Hedgehog Friendly Campus	EST/HFC team					x	x	x						Internal time resources only	Ongoing; next re-advertising planned for Welcome Week 23
Develop a communications campaign for Plastic Free UoS	EST/Plastic Free UoS team					x	x	x	x					Internal time resources only	In progress
Plan a communications programme on Net Zero Carbon to explain what it means and create awareness of what University of Salford is working on	EST							x	x					Internal time resources only	This will follow the timeline of the Net Zero Carbon related actions and developments

*This action plan is monitored regularly and updated at least twice a year.*

## 8.0 Approval of initiatives

The approval process for new or continuing communication and engagement initiatives is:

- If the initiative requires minimal time/budget resources and can be supported within the existing Environmental Sustainability budget, the Head of Environmental Sustainability can approve the initiative.
- If additional time/budget resources are required, the EST will bring the initiative to the Environmental Projects Board EPB for approval.

## 9.0 Related documents

The communication process regarding regulatory authorities, performance information and external complaints is detailed in the EEMS Manual. The Log of Interested Parties details the needs and expectations of interested parties, as well as who is responsible for EEMS communications for each interested party and relevant communication channels and storage locations.