Sustainability

University of Exeter

# Sustainability Report 2023/24

exeter.ac.uk/sustainability

# Foreword from Professor Lisa Roberts,

## President and Vice-Chancellor at the University of Exeter

Welcome to the University of Exeter's Annual Sustainability Report 2023/24. This year, we have continued to press ahead with our commitment to lead meaningful action against the climate emergency and ecological crisis, one of the three missions within our Strategy 2030. We have also committed resources to further embed the goals of our Strategy across all our operations and academic activities, representing a comprehensive, institution-wide effort.

Our dedication towards tackling the world's greatest challenges was reflected in the 2024 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, where we achieved an outstanding 10th place globally, and were ranked the best university in the world for commitment towards addressing Clean Water and Sanitation. This demonstrates incredibly strong progress towards our goals, and is testament to the collective efforts of our community working not only to make our own University more sustainable, but to use our research and education to impact societies, businesses and policymakers around the world.

This year we have been focused on embedding sustainable education into our curriculum, with our *Curriculum For Change* programme working to develop a distinctive and sustainable model for education by 2030. Alongside Exeter Students' Guild and Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union, we have been awarded joint SOS Responsible Futures accreditation, reflecting a shared commitment to embed sustainability across the curriculum and campuses.

Our world-class research makes a powerful contribution to the sustainability landscape, across a multitude of fields. According to the Reuters Hotlist, five of the world's 21 most influential climate scientists work at Exeter (the only five in the UK), and in total we have more than 1,500 research and education specialists working on forging a greener future.

This includes our Parliamentarians' Guide to Climate Change, launched in October 2024 alongside Peers for the Planet. This guide contains contributions from experts at the University and Met Office, and aims to provide global leaders with an overview of climate science, so that they can make informed, science-based decisions that will bring us closer to our net zero goals whilst stimulating clean economic growth. This crucial guide has now been sent to every British diplomatic mission around the world, and we are currently working on translations into multiple languages.

In addition, we have introduced several key strategies, including our Nature Positive Strategy, Sustainable Transport Strategy, and Circular Economy & Sustainable Resource Management Strategy. These set out our plans for the next five years, and we will be working hard to engage all areas of our organisation in their delivery. Data has been both a challenge and a catalyst to our progress this year, as we have strengthened our reporting infrastructure for greater efficiency and clarity. This work is fundamental in helping us achieve our net zero targets.

This report highlights a number of incredible achievements over the past academic year. We are incredibly proud of the progress we have made so far, but we also recognise that there is more to do. The scale and urgency of this challenge remains, and to stay ahead and drive meaningful change, we know we must build on these efforts, maintain our focus and increase momentum towards a truly sustainable future.

I hope you enjoy this report,
Professor Lisa Roberts FRSB FRSA
President and Vice-Chancellor, University of Exeter

# Contents



# Introduction

**The University has set an ambitious target of achieving net zero across all three scopes by 2030, which requires a coordinated effort by all areas of the institution. This annual report provides a review of sustainability activities across all our campuses, focusing on the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024.**

## Policy and governance

Strategy 2030 includes a commitment to lead meaningful action against the climate emergency and ecological crisis.

Our Environment and Climate Emergency (ECE) Policy Statement aims 'to integrate carbon and environmental management into all University processes and to maximise the influence of the University in reducing its footprint through education and research, its operations and ambitions'. It was adopted in 2020 and the Climate and Environmental Crisis (CEC) Board is accountable for ensuring it is implemented. The CEC Board is the University's senior governance group responsible for setting policy and priorities, maintaining oversight and approving the resource and delivery programmes for the ECE response across the University. The Advocate Climate Taskforce (ACT) provides academic expertise and oversight to plans to deliver on our sustainability commitment.

Our Faculties and Professional Services have formed Sustainability Committees to develop and implement local level sustainability plans focusing on areas where they have the greatest impact, tailoring their plans to localised areas of control and influence. These documents will be published in 2024/25, and reporting of progress will be to ACT.

Our Penryn Campus is a shared campus, managed by FXPlus on behalf the University of Exeter and Falmouth University. Our KPIs include our share of data from the Penryn Campus and each operational section of this report includes examples of activities at Penryn undertaken by FXPlus.

See our governance diagram.

We implement an Environmental Management System for Finance, Infrastructure and Commercial Services (FICS) certified to ISO 14001:2015 international standard. We are now working towards extending the EMS to all Faculties and Divisions across Exeter campuses, in support of the ECE Policy.

**Shortened governance diagram:**

## Materiality

Our ECE Policy was informed by the ECE **Working Group White Paper**. The group's work included assessing materiality, determining which environmental sustainability issues were of most importance and significance to the University and to our stakeholders. The ECE Policy was structured around this. We are undertaking work to develop a new Sustainability Strategy and as part of this we will review materiality.

## Risk

The University Risk Management Policy sets out our approach to risk management. Effective risk management is an essential element of good management and governance practice and is one of the key tools that we use to achieve our objectives. The University's Risk Register includes risks that are relevant to environmental sustainability and outlines mitigating actions to address these risks.

# Our progress

## Market-based vs location-based reporting

Market-based reporting reflects emissions from the specific electricity our institution purchases. It takes into account Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGOs) or other energy contracts we have made.

Location-based reporting calculates emissions based on the average emission intensity of the power grid a company is physically connected to. It doesn't matter which electricity contracts the company holds.

**Sustainability reporting is a strategic cornerstone that ensures transparency about the progress that we are making and the risks and opportunities we face. It plays a crucial role in enabling us to measure, evaluate and understand our operational footprint, providing the insights necessary to define and achieve our objectives. We are reporting using the GHG Protocol and progress against our target is reported using our market-based emissions.**

For the first time, **we have aligned to the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF)**. SCEF is a framework launched for higher education institutions by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC). We are therefore starting to report student out-of-term commuting, although this is not currently included in our net zero target.

For the first time, **selected carbon metrics have undergone an independent assurance process** to enhance the credibility and reliability of the data we report. The assurance statement is available on our website.

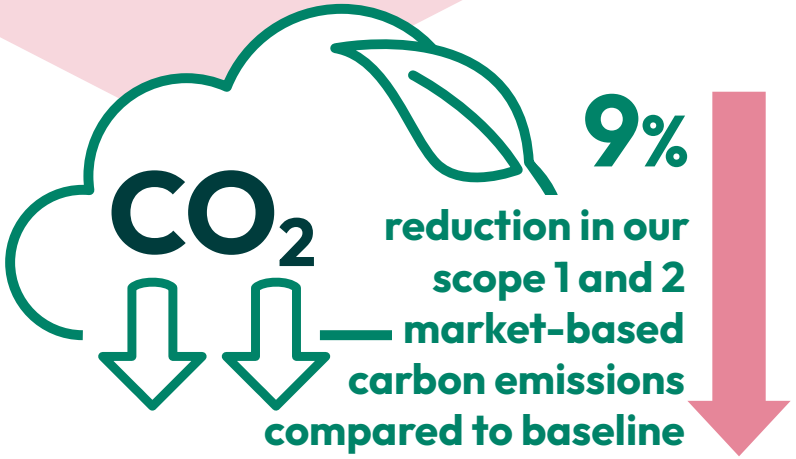
Alongside this, **we have developed a powerful, flexible data processing tool** to deliver relevant information to specific audiences at any given point in time. We are continuing to develop its capabilities over the coming year to include broader sustainability reporting to deliver on the University's goals and drive forward our impact.

## Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions

**Scope 1 emissions** – greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that we make directly from sources that we own or control such as burning fuel in boilers or vehicles.

**Scope 2 emissions** – emissions we cause indirectly, such as from the generation of electricity, steam, heat or cooling that we purchase.

**Scope 3 emissions** – includes all the other emissions for which we are indirectly responsible, for example buying products from our suppliers, travel on university business and commuting.




Our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions, excluding out of term time commuting, were 93,056 tonnes in 2023/24, **an increase of 13% compared to the baseline year of 2018/19.**

Since the baseline year, our scope 1 and 2 market-based carbon emissions have **reduced by 9%**, attributed to a 3% reduction in consumption and entering a Power Purchasing Agreement for the purchase of certified renewable electricity. Our scope 3 emissions increased by 15% over the same period, mainly due University growth and use of expenditure-based reporting for measuring supply chain emissions.

Compared to last year, we have reduced our scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2% due to the implementation of our Infrastructure Decarbonisation Masterplan and despite the inclusion of F-gas for the first time to align with the GHG protocol and SCEF.

**We have seen a 15% reduction in our business travel emissions** from last year's annual report figures. However, this is largely due to data improvements, such as removing historic errors and mis-assigned spend to travel.


We have improved our survey data to be able to report emissions from students commuting to and from University accommodation out of term time, which includes both international and domestic travel to home addresses. **Emissions from out of term-time commuting in 2023/24 were 55,163 tonnes, 39% of the University's total carbon footprint.** This was not originally in our 2018/19 baseline and was first calculated in 2022/23.

**Figure 1: 2023/24 market-based greenhouse gas emissions by category, with scope 3 breakdown (excluding out of term commuting).**

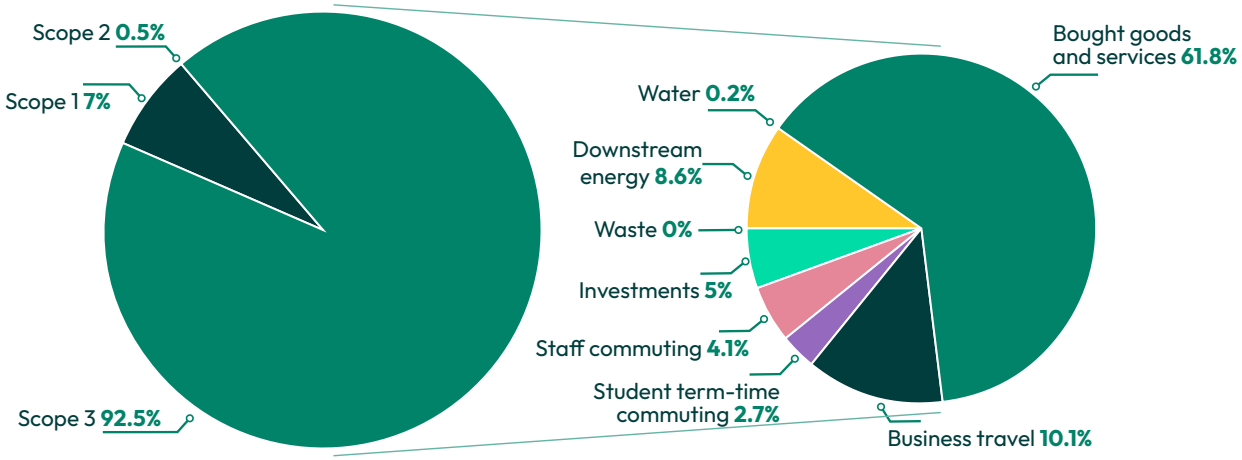



**Figure 2: 2023/24 market-based greenhouse gas emissions by category, with scope 3 breakdown (including out of term commuting).**

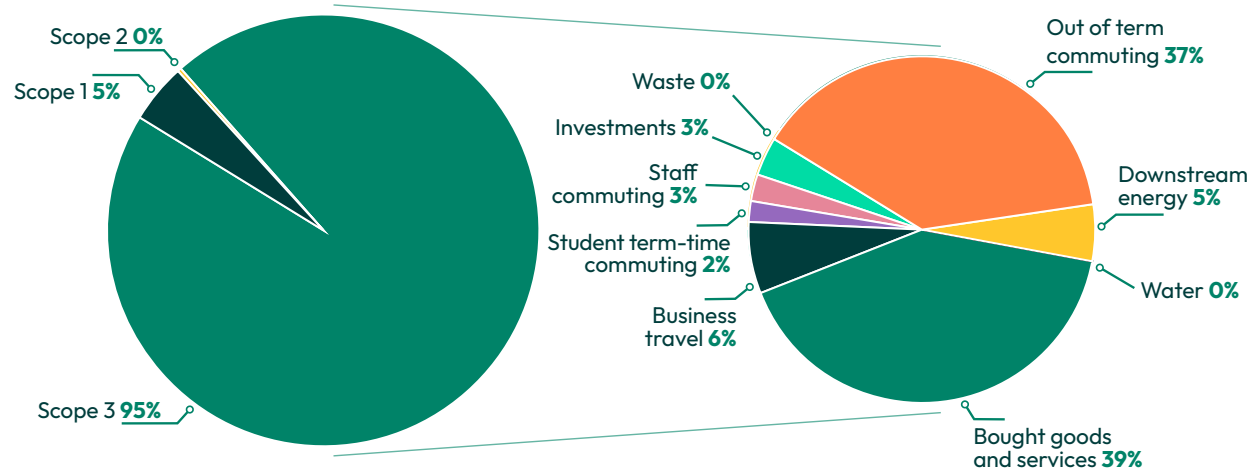




**Figure 3: Scope 1, 2 and 3 reported market-based emissions.**

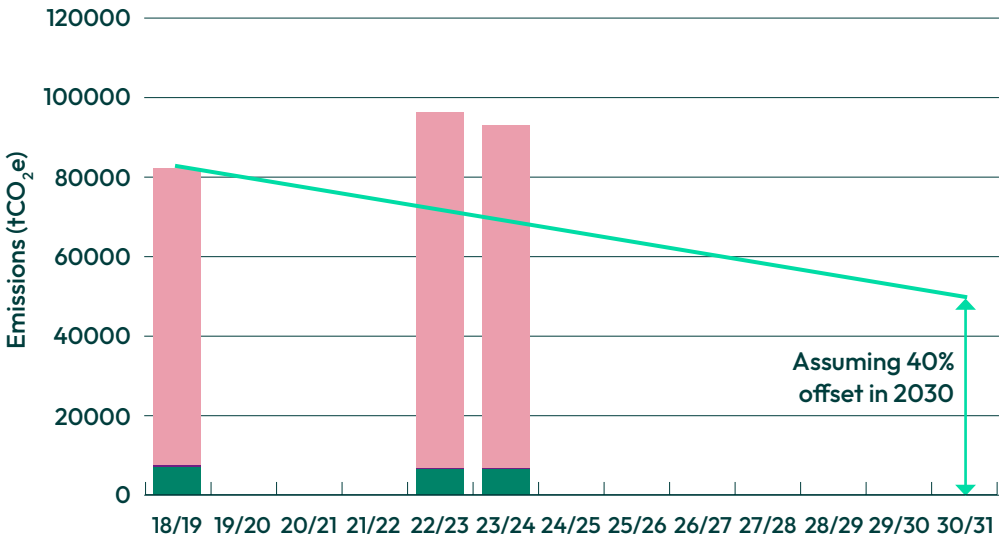
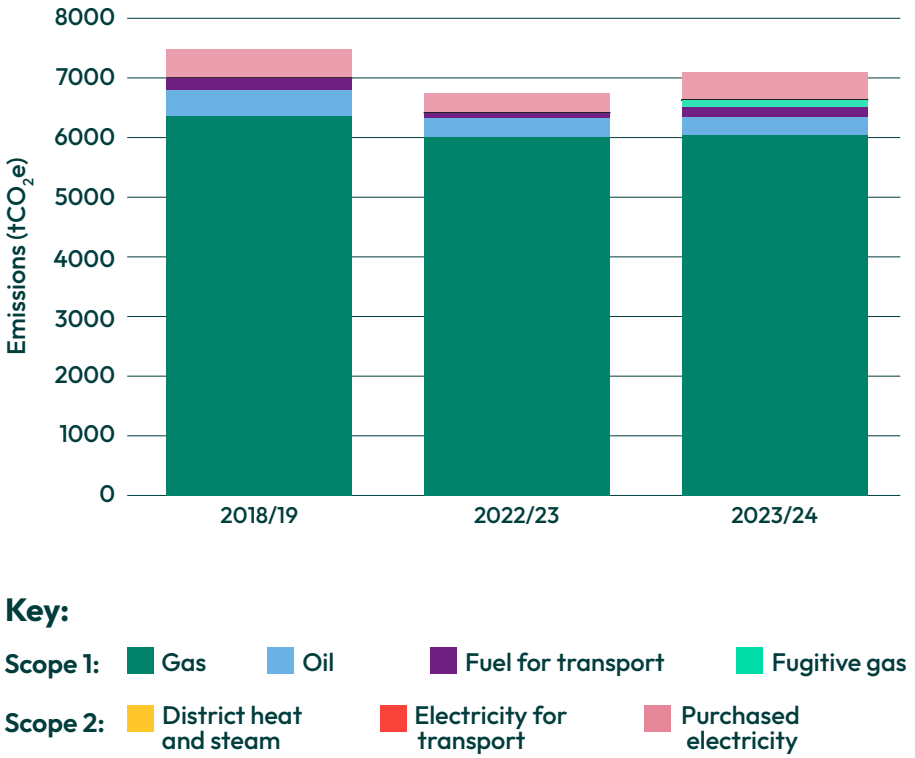



**Figure 4: Breakdown of scope 1 and 2 market-based emissions.**




**Note for figures 3 and 4:** Due to improvements in data quality and difficulty in verifying historic data some of the totals may not be accurate but provide a good indication of the direction of travel.

# Key performance indicators

**Our key performance indicators (KPIs) cover Streatham and St Luke's campuses and include our share of data from the Penryn Campus.**

In 2024/25, we will be reviewing our progress reporting approach to incorporate advice from the independent assurance process. This will include prioritising the most material sustainability issues, aligning with the forthcoming Sustainability Strategy and reducing the number of KPIs that we report against. We remain committed to transparency but believe that it is important to focus reporting on the material issues.

| | Key Performance Indicator | 2018/19 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Total scope 1,2 and 3 market-based emissions, including out of term-time commuting ($tCO_2e$) | 107,610 | 145,847 | 149,091 |
| 2 | Total scope 1 and 2 location-based carbon emissions ($tCO_2e$) | 15,702 | 13,017 | 13,256 |
| 2a | Scope 1 location-based emissions ($tCO_2e$) | 6,998 | 6,439 | 6,505 |
| 2b | Scope 2 location-based emissions ($tCO_2e$) | 8,704 | 6,578 | 6,751 |
| 3 | Total scope 1 and 2 market-based carbon emissions ($tCO_2e$) | 7,480 | 6,761 | 6,968 |
| 3a | Total scope 2 market-based emissions ($tCO_2e$) | 482 | 322 | 463 |
| 4 | Scope 1 F-gas, not included in overall scope 1 and 2 emissions ($tCO_2e$)* | | | 119* |
| 5 | Total scope 1 and 2 location-based carbon emissions per FTE (Full Time Equivalent) staff and student ($tCO_2e$/FTE) | 0.56 | 0.37 | 0.37 |
| 6 | Total scope 1 and 2 market-based carbon emissions per FTE staff and student ($tCO_2e$/FTE) | 0.27 | 0.19 | 0.20 |
| 7 | Total scope 1 and 2 location-based carbon emissions per total income ($tCO_2e$/£1000) | 0.03 | 0.02 | 0.02 |
| 8 | Total scope 1 and 2 market-based carbon emissions per total income ($tCO_2e$/£1000) | 0.02 | 0.01 | 0.01 |
| 9 | Scope 3 emissions (total) ($tCO_2e$) – excluding out of term-time commuting | 74,721 | 89,505 | 86,960 |
| 10 | Scope 3 emissions (total) per FTE staff and student ($tCO_2e$/FTE) | 2.65 | 2.54 | 2.44 |
| 11 | Scope 3 emissions (total) per total income ($tCO_2e$/£1000) | 0.17 | 0.14 | 0.13 |
| 12 | Scope 3 emissions Energy ($tCO_2e$) | 7,044 | 8,604 | 8,061 |
| 13 | Scope 3 emissions Water ($tCO_2e$) | 425 | 157 | 149 |
| 14 | Scope 3 emissions Bought Goods and Services ($tCO_2e$) | 46,139 | 57,280 | 58,090 |

* F-gas has been separated from the wider scope 1 emissions as it has not been assured this year due to complications in identifying all the equipment that is affected.

| | Key Performance Indicator | 2018/19 | 2022/23 | 2023/24 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 15 | Scope 3 emissions Business Travel ($tCO_2e$) | 10,802 | 11,262 | 9,541 |
| 16 | Scope 3 emissions Term-Time Student Commuting ($tCO_2e$) | 1,802 | 2,722 | 2,516 |
| 17 | Scope 3 emissions Out of Term-Time Student Commuting ($tCO_2e$) | 25,409 | 49,581 | 55,163 |
| 18 | Scope 3 emissions Staff Commuting ($tCO_2e$) | 3,999 | 4,672 | 3,815 |
| 19 | Scope 3 emissions Investments ($tCO_2e$) | 4,389 | 4,737 | 4,749 |
| 20 | Scope 3 emissions Waste ($tCO_2e$) | 121 | 71 | 37 |
| 21 | Total scope 1 and 2 energy consumption, excluding vehicle fuel (kWh) | 68,832,306 | 64,461,092 | 66,806,805 |
| 22 | Total scope 3 energy consumption (kWh) | 16,769,255 | 23,506,276 | 18,304,431 |
| 23 | Total on-site renewables consumption (kWh) | | 2,732,766 | 2,452,219 |
| 24 | Total energy consumption per FTE staff and student (kWh/FTE) | 3,036 | 2,496 | 2,391 |
| 25 | Total water consumption ($m^3$) | 404,231 | 415,428 | 439,827 |
| 25a | Total water consumption Exeter ($m^3$) | 387,013 | 371,631 | 388,698 |
| 25b | Total water consumption Penryn ($m^3$) | | 43,797 | 51,128 |
| 26 | Total water consumption per FTE staff and student ($m^3$/FTE) | 14 | 12 | 12.35 |
| 27 | Percentage of consumed energy generated from on-site renewable or low carbon sources (%) | 0 | 44 | 63 |
| 28 | Percentage of supply procured from renewable PPA (%) | 20 | 16 | 19.6 |
| 29 | Percentage of electricity with REGO certificates (%) | 39 | 100 | 77 |
| 30 | Total waste mass (tonnes) | 2,394 | 1,516 | 2,181 |
| 31 | Waste mass generated per FTE staff and student (tonnes/FTE) | 0.08 | 0.04 | 0.06 |
| 32 | Waste mass non-construction (tonnes) | 1,608 | 1,216 | 2,038 |
| 33 | Waste mass construction (tonnes) | 786 | 299 | 143 |
| 34 | Percentage of waste sent to landfill (construction and non-construction waste) (%) | 21 | 6 | 3 |
| 35 | Percentage of waste generated that is recycled or composted (construction and non-construction waste) (%) | 37 | 53 | 49 |

# Benchmarking

One of the ways in which we can benchmark our progress within the sector is through annual league tables that measure sustainability activities.

In 2023/24, Exeter's performance in the three headline sustainability league tables demonstrated strong progress towards our goals.

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings 2024

**RANKED**

**10TH GLOBALLY**

**8 PLACES**

**in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2024.**

The THE Impact Rankings are global performance tables that assess universities against all 17 SDGs.

We have also been ranked as a leader in the following SDGs:

**1st** globally for Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG 6)

**6th** globally for Life Below Water (SDG 14)

**7th** globally for Responsible Consumption and Production (SDG 12)

**12th** globally for Climate Action (SDG 13)

**19th** globally for Zero Hunger (SDG 2)

The Exeter Business School's MBA

**RANKED**

**9TH GLOBALLY**

5 PLACES

**in the Corporate Knights 2023 Better World MBA Ranking out of 209 business schools, and**

#1 **number 1 in the UK.**

**RANKED**

**30TH GLOBALLY**

18 PLACES

**in the QS Sustainability Ranking 2024.**

Exeter's highest individual ranking was

**2nd globally for Health and Wellbeing**

in recognition for its action and research into health and wellbeing.

We also secured:

- joint **14th** place in Knowledge Exchange;
- joint **15th** for Environmental Research; and
- joint **29th** for our Equality work.

# Energy
## (scope 1 and 2 emissions)

**We continue to work hard to reduce our energy-related emissions by both reducing our consumption and decarbonising our energy supply. While they do not form a large part of our overall carbon footprint, it is important to target these as they are our direct emissions and contribute to achieving our net zero target.**

## Heating decarbonisation

Most of our existing buildings rely on fossil fuel heating that add to our emissions. Our heat decarbonisation plan has completed a substantial amount of work to progress the decarbonising of our heat network.

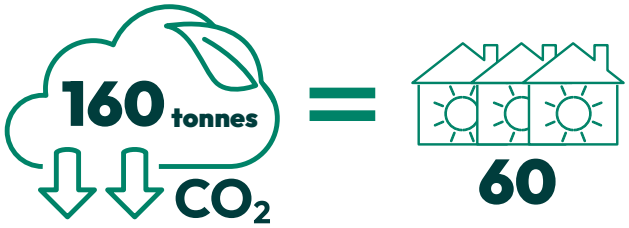
### District Heating Project

We are **undertaking Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Stage 3-4 design work** on two options for decarbonising our heating network. These are focusing on a city-wide heat network and a campus-based heat network, powered by low carbon heat.

In 2024, we **received a Low Carbon Skills Fund grant of £982,000** to develop the full business case. We are using this to decide on the most effective options for removing fossil fuels from our heating network.

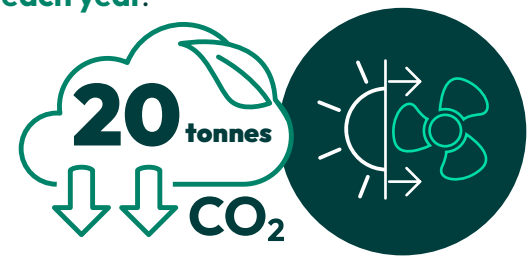
### Cornwall House air source heat pumps

Following a successful government grant funding bid, the heating source in the Cornwall House building and swimming pool has been switched from gas to electricity. The **new air source heat pumps** were completed in August 2024 and **will save over 160 tonnes of $CO_2$** compared to heating the building and swimming pool with fossil fuels – that's **equivalent to heating 60 domestic households**.



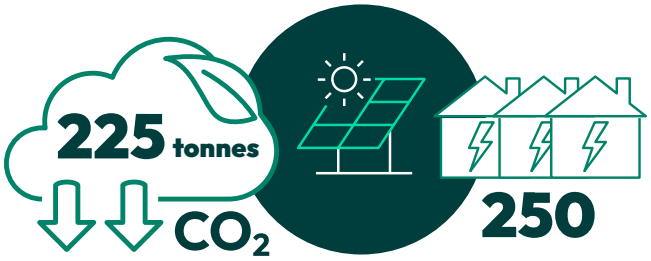

### Biosciences Greenhouses heat pumps

The heating for our Biosciences Research Greenhouses was also converted from fossil fuel heating to heat pumps, funded by a successful grant bid. The new heat pumps were completed in February 2024 and will **save over 20 tonnes of $CO_2$ each year**.




### Fleet electrification:

**69%**
of the Exeter campuses and
**34%**
of Penryn Campus vehicle fleets are **currently electrified**, with plans to increase this.



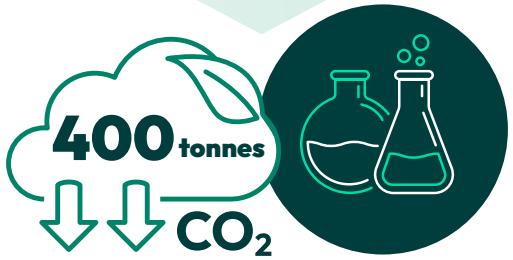

## Electricity generation

### Duryard PV array

During the summer of 2023/24 we **connected over 1,800 new ground-mounted photovoltaics** (PV) to our electricity network on university land close to Duryard Halls of Residence. The new solar panels are operational and will generate over 1,000 MWh of renewable energy per year – **equivalent to providing electricity to over 250 domestic households – and save 225 tonnes of $CO_2$ per year**.

### Roof-mounted PVs at Streatham

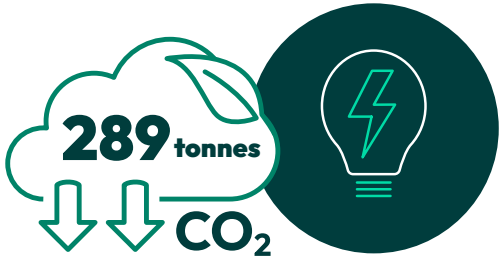
We currently generate 1 MWh through our installed roof-mounted PV and are developing the next phase to add an additional 1.2 MWh. We also **generate 480 MWh via car park canopy-mounted solar PV**, with potential to expand by a further 660 MWh across other car parks, subject to planning.




### Lab ventilation optimisation

We are undertaking a review of our energy-intensive lab ventilation systems. This project will reduce ventilation rates, replace inefficient equipment and improve controls to save energy and carbon emissions, whilst maintaining a safe environment for teaching and research.

The project **could save up to 30% of the current energy consumption** of these systems – **equating to a saving of 400 $tCO_2e$**. This is done by actively monitoring and automatically adjusting the air change rate based on the current air quality, and applying additional heat recovery measures.




### LED lighting programme

The first phase of our project, completed in July 2024, replaced fluorescent lighting with energy-efficient LEDs across eight buildings, resulting in an **annual saving of 289 $tCO_2e$**. The next phase, beginning in August 2025, will extend these upgrades to all remaining buildings, achieving an **additional annual saving of 550 $tCO_2e$**. The project also includes a smart lighting control system that shares valuable data – such as occupancy and room daylight levels – with other control platforms.

## Digital Strategy

### Sustainability Digital Strategy

The University is actively developing its Digital Strategy to provide an improved environment for staff and students, provide useful data for research, automate activities and streamline how we work to drive efficiencies and reduce reliance on the Earth's scarce resources.

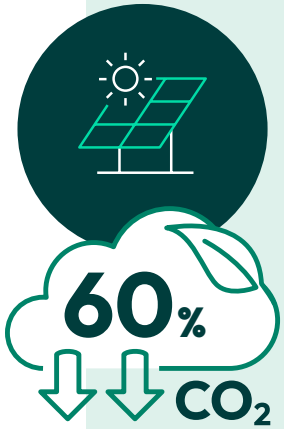
In alignment with this effort, the Sustainability team has **assessed current and future data needs for projects, systems and University operations** from a sustainability perspective. These findings will be outlined in a digital scope document, set for release in July 2025, which will integrate sustainability requirements into the University's Digital Strategy and support the delivery of the University's overarching goals.

### Metering review

We are currently **reviewing our existing and future energy and water metering systems** to identify enhancements. These improvements will help uncover opportunities for energy, carbon and water savings.

## Energy at Penryn

### Roof-mounted PV at Penryn




In July 2024, we installed a new PV system on the Academy of Music & Theatre Arts (AMATA) roof at our Penryn Campus, boosting our renewable energy capacity by 13% and **saving an estimated £30,000 per year**. Now fully operational, this addition is expected to **cut our annual carbon emissions by 20 tonnes**, in line with our ongoing carbon reduction goals.

With PV panels now featuring on four buildings, including Daphne Du Maurier, Peter Lanyon and the Sports Centre, our Penryn PV network is helping is saving around **169 tonnes of carbon emissions each year**, contributing to a massive **60% decrease in the energy emissions** of the Penryn Campus since the 2005/06 baseline.

### Penryn wind turbine


We have conducted a feasibility assessment for installing a 1 megawatt (MW) wind turbine on University-owned land to connect with the Penryn Campus. A planning application for the project has been submitted to Cornwall Council. The turbine **would generate up to 2,803 MWh of renewable electricity each year, enough to power 750 households**.

# Circular economy

**A circular economy is a new way of thinking about all that we buy and use. It is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. Products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling and composting.**

Gift it, Reuse it pop-up shop on campus.

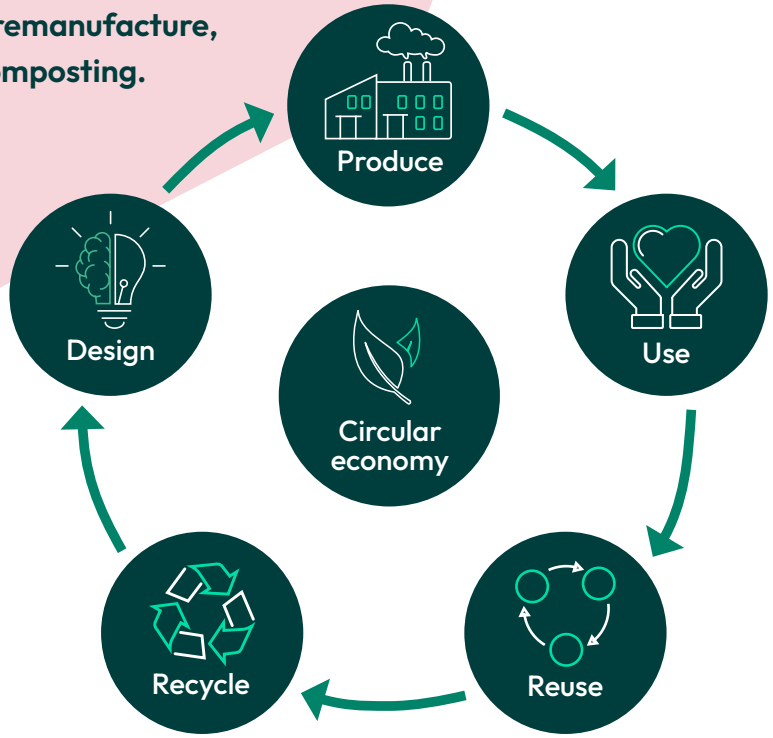
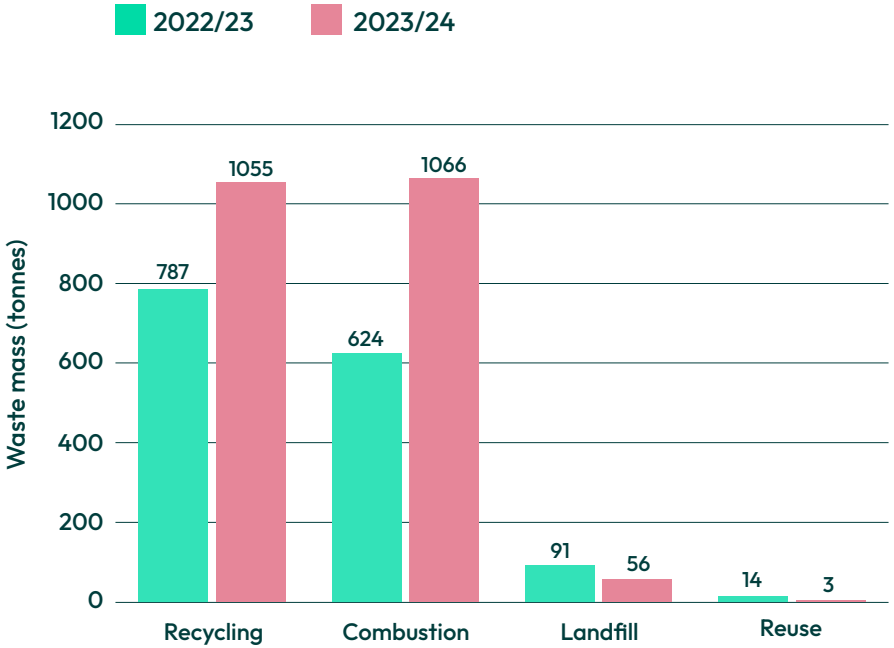


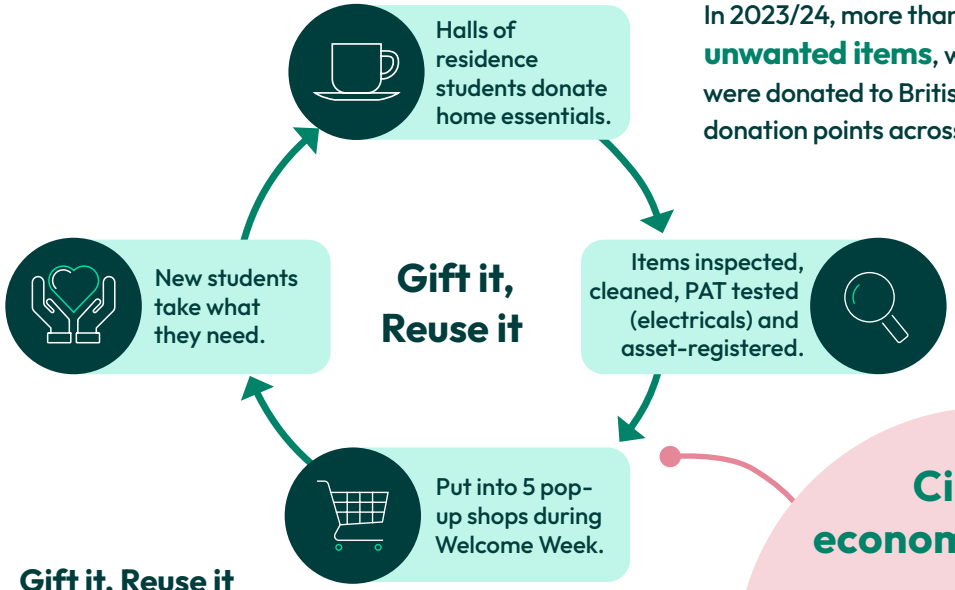

**Figure 5: Waste by weight (tonnes) – 22/23 vs 23/24**



# Circular economy strategy

In July 2024, UEB approved a new Circular Economy and Sustainable Resource Management Strategy. This strategy includes an action plan to encourage the adoption of circular economy principles across all aspects of our activities.

## Gift it, Reuse it




We launched a flagship initiative – Gift it, Reuse it – enabling outgoing students across our halls of residence to donate home essentials for incoming students the following September, free of charge. An estimated **8,000 of the items were taken by arriving students** during Welcome Week, and the remaining items were offered out in pop-up shops in Clydesdale House later in the term.

**8,554 items (1,623kg) were prevented from entering waste streams.**

## British Heart Foundation

In 2023/24, more than **38 tonnes of students' unwanted items**, worth more than £67,000, were donated to British Heart Foundation donation points across Exeter campuses.

## Project RESCUE

We are determining the feasibility of establishing an **off-campus facility dedicated to sorting, repairing and reusing materials** from across the University. Project RESCUE also seeks to foster engagement with local community partners and wider University stakeholders – such as students, research centres and suppliers – making it a collaborative hub for sustainable resource practices. Ultimately, this facility would provide a structured pathway to utilise resources and reduce waste whilst setting a model for circular economy practices within higher education.

## Circular economy interns

The Exeter Centre for Circular Economy (ECCE) ran a Circular Economy maturity analysis project with student interns to assess circular economy readiness and scaling opportunities. The project mapped circular economy maturity and explored piloting circular economy for Waste Electric and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and student engagement. 2024/25 will see further Electric and Electronic Equipment (EEE) analysis, an exploration of the feasibility of a sustainability hub on campus, and the creation of an online sustainability resource.

## warpit

The Warp It reuse platform has continued to increase its membership on a weekly basis. There were 250 transactions during the 2023/24 academic year which **avoided 7,874 kg of items going to waste** and **saved 89 $tCO_2e$**.

## Anaerobic digestion

Currently, an external supplier processes our food waste, while biodegradable food packaging is disposed of as general waste due to the lack of alternative facilities in the South West. To address this, we are determining the feasibility of managing green waste, food waste and biodegradable packaging **on campus using an anaerobic digestion plant**. This will also help with biodiversity-friendly grass management as grass cuttings need to be removed.

# Circular economy at Penryn

## Swap Shops

We ran three Swap Shop events throughout the year, **redistributing over 1,000 items (300 kg)**. Initially focused on clothing, the initiative now receives and redistributes household items as well, which are increasingly popular.

## Tetra Pak

We **recycled 14,000 Tetra Paks** in 2023/24. Medicinal blister pack recycling is also in pilot, with the first box sent for processing.

## LitterLotto initiative

Penryn and Falmouth are the **first university** campuses to introduce the new LitterLotto initiative, which allows participants to **win £1,000 weekly** by correctly categorising recycling. Participants scan a QR code on bins, select the item and upload a photo to enter. The initiative aims to improve recycling habits and waste management awareness.

# Travel and transport

## Student modal splits:

**Figure 6: Student travel modal split – Streatham / St Luke's 2023/24.**

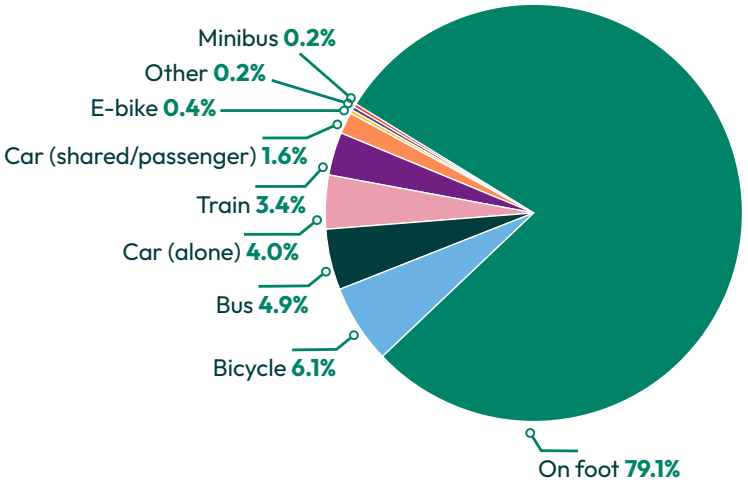
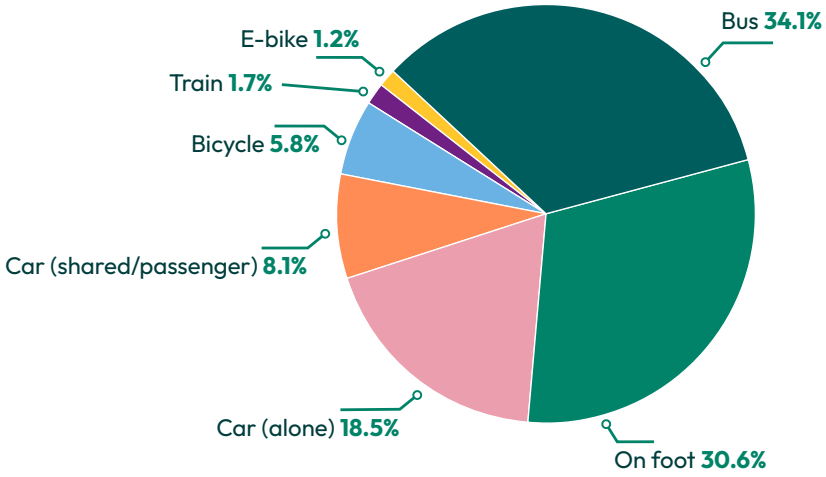



**Figure 7: Student travel modal split – Penryn 2023/24.**




## Staff modal splits:

**Figure 8: Staff travel modal split – Streatham / St Luke's 2023/24.**

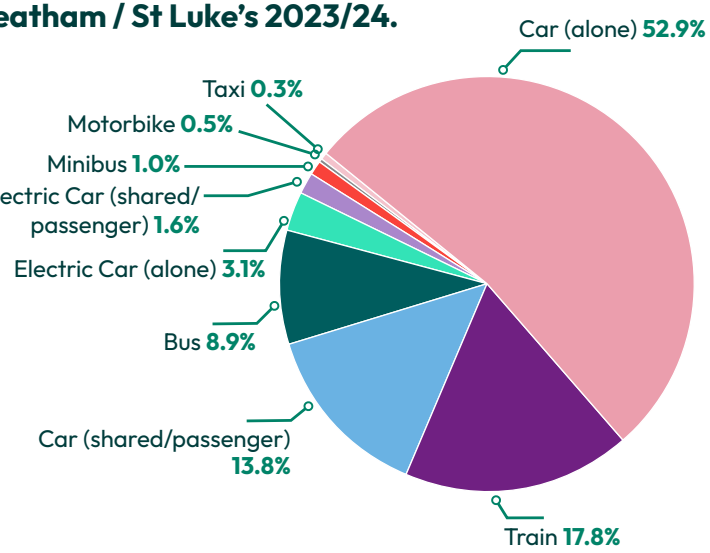
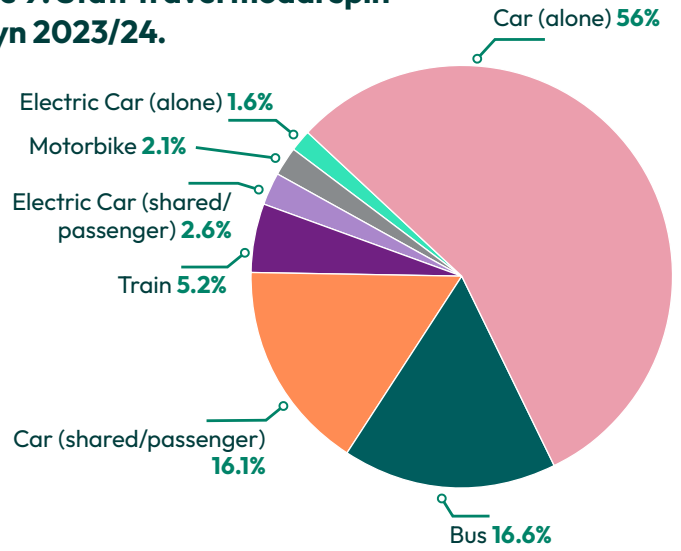



**Figure 9: Staff travel modal split – Penryn 2023/24.**



## Commuting emissions by transport type:

**Figure 10: Staff and student commuting emissions ($tCO_2e$) for Streatham / St Luke's.**

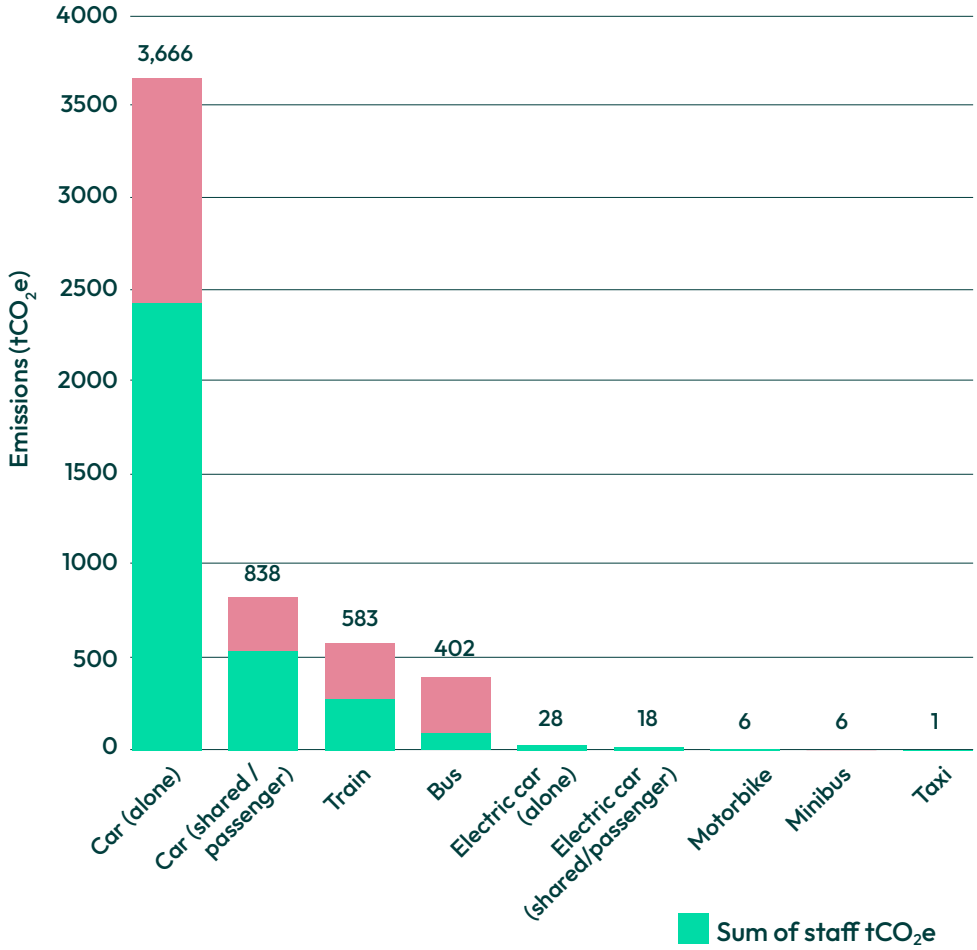
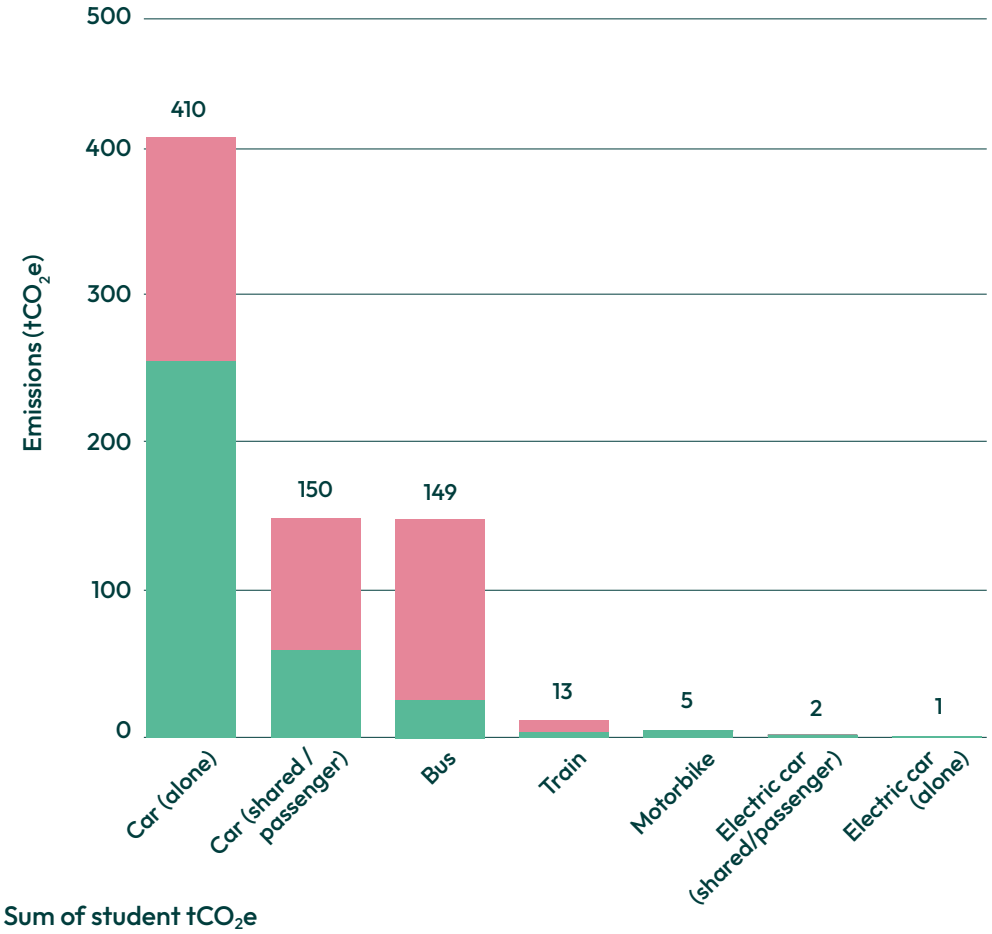



**Figure 11: Staff and student commuting emissions ($tCO_2e$) for Penryn.**



## Business travel emissions:

**Figure 12: Business travel emissions ($tCO_2e$) for Streatham / St Luke's.**

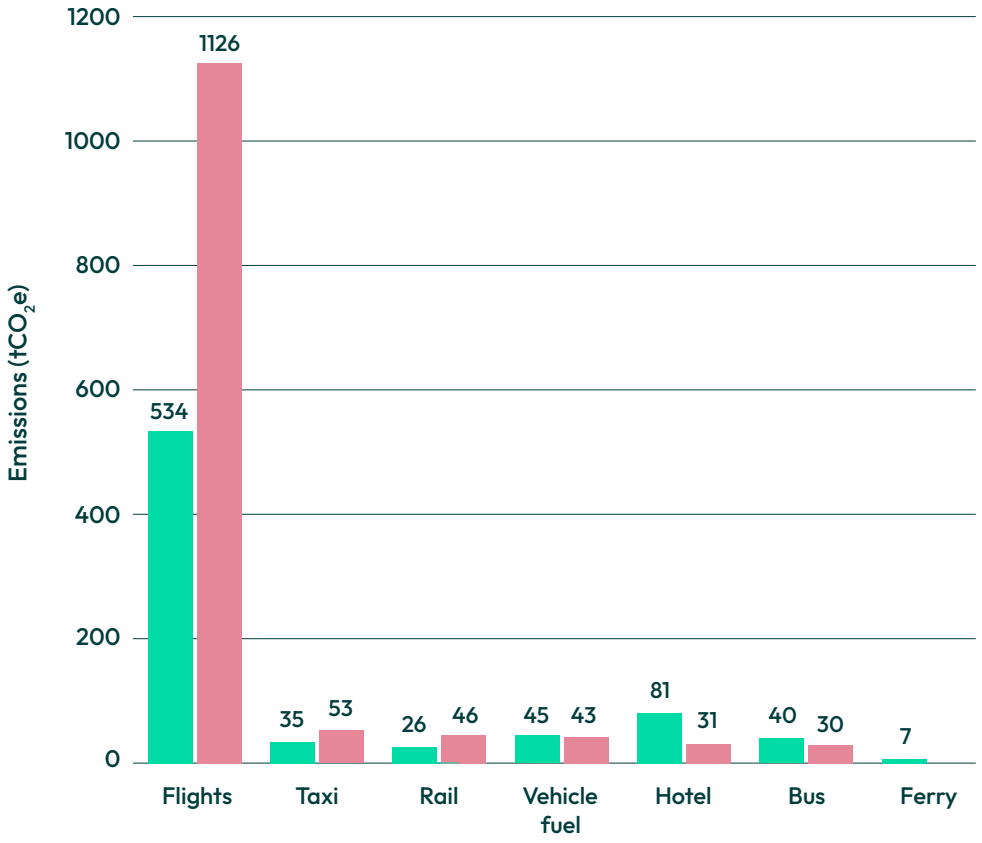
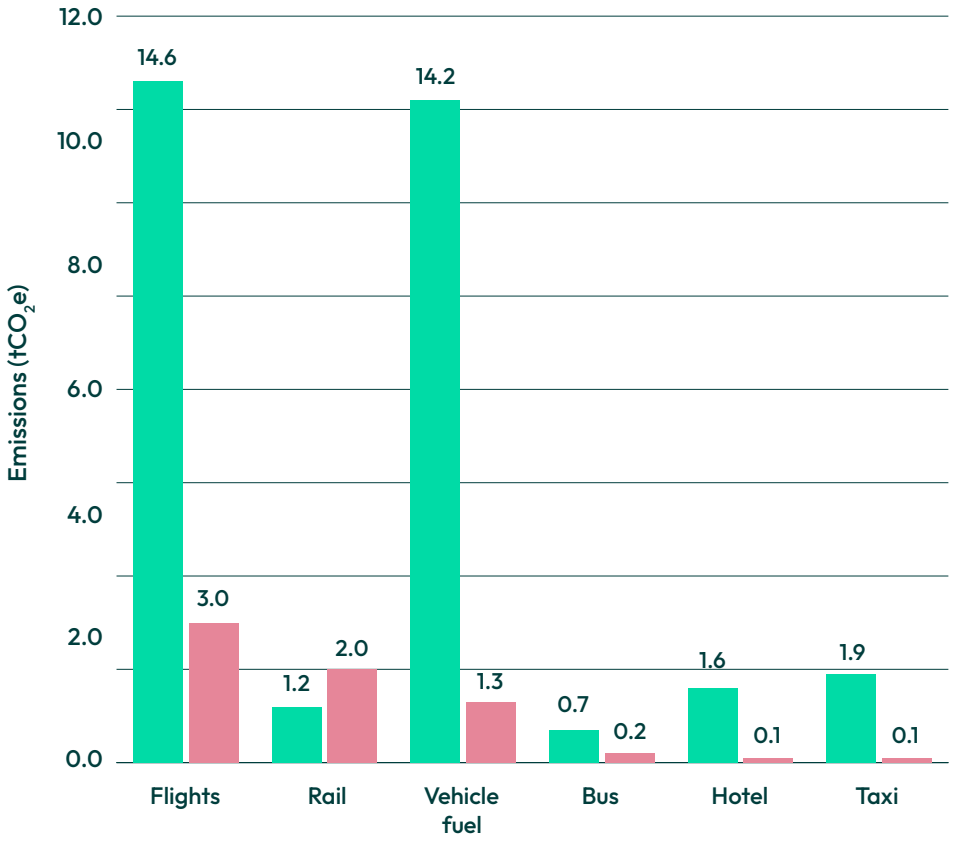



**Figure 13: Business travel emissions ($tCO_2e$) for Penryn.**




**With 30,000 students and 6,000 staff, our travel emissions are a significant part of our overall footprint.**

We have a range of ongoing **initiatives to promote sustainable commuting**, such as showers, a Cycle to Work scheme, discounted bus travel and interest-free loans for annual rail season tickets.

Our Travel Policy embeds sustainability into decision-making around business travel and applies to all staff and students who are required to travel as part of work or study requirements. Two Task and Finish Groups are working on furthering its aims: the Field Course Task and Finish Group, and the Enabling Rail Travel Task and Finish Group.

Business travel is a key metric within the University's Performance Framework under the net zero KPI. As part of this, **targets are being set at Faculty and Professional Service level to reduce emissions associated with business and field trip travel**.

## Annual travel surveys

Our annual travel surveys provide valuable data and insights on commuting behaviours across our three campuses and play a crucial role in informing decision-making.

In the 2023/24 surveys, we **collected a total of 2,637 responses across the three campuses**, 659 from students and 1,978 from staff. These were the highest survey results achieved so far.

## Sustainable Transport Strategy

The Sustainable Transport Strategy 2024-2030 (STS) was approved in July 2024 to **promote the adoption of sustainable transport modes**. Developed in consultation with various sectors, the STS aims to encourage students, staff and visitors to adopt sustainable transport modes. It includes KPIs and targets for modal splits and emissions, as well as actions on commuting and business travel.

## Field Course Task and Finish Group

The Field Course Task and Finish Group's work on developing a set of guiding principles to make practices more environmentally sustainable, inclusive and accessible has already supported **two low-carbon** (by rail) final year undergraduate **field courses in Geography** (GEO3325 and GEO3158).

## Enabling Rail Travel Task and Finish Group

The Enabling Rail Travel Task and Finish Group have been working to **identify barriers** preventing more staff from traveling by train and have **made several recommendations**, which are now being implemented.

## Bike infrastructure

We are upgrading the facilities at the Innovation Centre Phase 2 to include **new showers, bike lockers, drying cabinets and electronic swipe-card access**. These upgrades are due to complete in spring 2025. We are also looking to install new bike hubs across campus, to provide modern and secure bike storage facilities.

## Dr Bike sessions

In collaboration with Saddles & Paddles, we offered **fourteen free Dr Bike safety check** sessions across the Streatham and St Luke's campuses. These sessions ensure bikes are safe and roadworthy, and help promote this mode of transport.

## Enhanced bus services

During 2023/24, the UNI line's 20-minute service frequency during term time contributed to an **18% year-on-year increase in passenger numbers**.

An agreement was reached with Stagecoach to replace the UNI line and the free staff minibus service with an extended Line 4 service. This enhanced service now operates every 15 minutes, connecting St David's Station and Streatham Campus. As a result, free intercampus travel for staff has been expanded, with service availability from 07:00 to 19:00, Monday to Friday. Initial figures from the first few months show that this has **significantly increased passenger numbers, rising by 46%** compared to the same period last year.

## Car and e-bike club service

Despite considerable use, the car and e-bike club services were suspended in July 2023 due to the bankruptcy of the operator, Co Cars Ltd. We are collaborating with Devon County Council to **identify a new operator**.

## Car share

In November 2023, we launched the Liftshare app, enabling staff to car share and access free parking at our Exeter campuses. In 2023/24, it **reduced emissions by 13.86 $tCO_2e$** and **saved 70,536 miles of single-passenger journeys**.


## Travel at Penryn

### Cycle Friendly Employer – Gold Award

Our Penryn Campus was awarded Gold in the Cycle Friendly Employer award programme. Gold is the highest award administered and recognises the facilities and services employers provide to encourage and support active travel.

### Dr Bike sessions

We held six free Dr Bike sessions at Penryn Campus in collaboration with the charity Sustrans. The stalls offered bike safety checks as well as bike security marking and local walking, cycling and public transport advice.

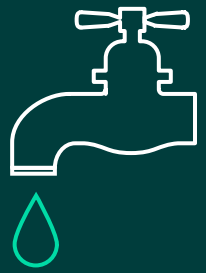
# Water

**Surface water runoff contributes to negative environmental impacts by carrying pollutants into waterways, causing water quality degradation, habitat destruction and increased flooding. Our Water Resilient Policy aims to maximise our influence in reducing our water use, ensuring sustainable supply of water and managing wastewater discharge.**

## Water saving surveys and optimisations

In 2024, South West Water surveyed the domestic water systems in all of our buildings across Streatham and St Luke's campuses to repair water leaks and identify further saving opportunities. They reduced flowrates, replaced inefficient control devices and repaired taps and toilets to reduce consumption to its minimum. In total, they **repaired 1,166 leaks and installed 8,185 devices**.

**1,166**
**leaks repaired**



Further work is underway to review and optimise the water and energy used in our specialist research and teaching activities. The research undertaken requires various purified and treated water types that are all produced locally on campus. Some systems are outdated and have inefficiencies that need to be addressed. Specialists have been engaged to **review the operation of these systems for possible water and energy savings**.

To minimise potable water usage and waste, future construction projects must adhere to the stringent water use targets outlined in our Sustainability Design Guide, ensuring water consumption is kept to an absolute minimum.

## Metallic water mains replacement

We manage a water network spanning over 3 miles of underground pipes that serve our buildings. To prevent water leaks, over half of the original metallic pipework installed in the 1960s and 70s has already been replaced, but the remaining metallic pipework suffers with sporadic leaks. A multi-year project is underway to replace these pipes and **modernise the network for our future needs**.

# Responsible procurement

**Bought goods and services are a significant part of our emissions and one we are working hard to improve. We are committed to procuring goods, services and works responsibly, in a way that enhances and protects our environment, economy and society. A crucial part of this is reducing the amount that we buy – a central component of a circular economy.**

## Responsible Procurement Strategy

We developed a Responsible Procurement Strategy to support our Sustainable Procurement and Social Value policies. The strategy educates staff and students and reinforces our commitment to suppliers. These policies ensure we are benefitting all stakeholders across the supply chain, **considering our social, ethical and environmental impacts**.

## Social value

Social value is about the positive impact an organisation has on society beyond its financial bottom line. Social value is measured by the actions an organisation takes to improve the world around it. In January 2024, Strategic Procurement introduced the Social Value Portal, **allowing bidders to showcase social value in their tenders**, which is then integrated into their overall submissions.

## Increased weightings in tenders

To reflect the importance of responsible procurement in our tenders above £50,000, we have **increased the sustainability and social value weighting from 20% to 30%**, where applicable.

## Sector engagement

This year, Strategic Procurement prioritised sector engagement, forming the GW4 Procurement Group, hosting the UK Universities Purchasing Consortia (UKUPC) conference and supporting a Plymouth University sustainability event with SMEs. Our leadership in sustainable procurement has drawn interest from other universities seeking guidance.

## New buying model

This year, we introduced a centralised purchasing model for transactions between £2,500 and £49,999, improving efficiency and ensuring consistent application of responsible procurement criteria. This approach **enhances oversight, sustainability and data insights for future procurement decisions**.

## Responsible procurement risk assessment

This year, we enhanced responsible procurement by **integrating the UKUPC Risk Matrix into our processes**, providing a framework to assess and address sustainability, social value and ethical risks.

**Our leadership in sustainable procurement has drawn interest from other universities seeking guidance.**

## Responsible procurement at Penryn

### Supplier engagement

Our 3-year Responsible Procurement Strategy has driven significant supply chain engagement:

**76%**

76% of core suppliers have committed to a **carbon reduction strategy**.

**90%**

90% of core suppliers have committed to a to a **social value strategy**.

**90%**

90% have joined the **NETPositives supplier engagement platform**.

### Social value

Carbon reduction and social value account for 20% of tender scoring, **requiring bidders to outline emissions reduction plans**.

# Construction

**Investing in our estate and ensuring that our facilities meet the demands and expectations of our community is a key element of the University's strategic operations. Construction remains one of the most carbon-intensive areas of any organisation, and particularly so for those institutions who maintain an ageing estate.**

## Sustainability Design Guide review

Our 2021 Sustainability Design Guide informs sustainable design and construction decisions across all projects. The creation of a Sustainable Buildings Manager post in 2023/24 has increased its application in Estates projects. A comprehensive review of the guide began in 2023/24 to ensure the right balance between deliverability and alignment with best practices, with an updated guide set for completion in 2024/25. A key change will be to the embodied carbon targets, which are currently not achievable for many development types.

## Capital projects – design stage

**West Park:** The proposed West Park student accommodation is among the first projects to be guided by the Sustainability Design Guide and is expected to become **one of the UK's largest Passivhaus student accommodations**.

**The Al Qasimi initiative:** Similarly, the Al Qasimi initiative, the first major project to adopt the guide from inception, is being **designed for Passivhaus certification**. Both the West Park and Al Qasimi initiative face challenges in meeting the current Sustainability Design Guide's extremely ambitious embodied carbon targets, which will be reviewed as part of the Sustainability Design Guide review.

**New changing blocks:** The new changing blocks facility at Duckes Meadow, initiated in 2022/23, involves replacing the existing structure with a modern building currently **designed to meet the AECB CarbonLite New Build standard**. A whole-life carbon assessment will also be conducted.

**PC Labs refurbishment:** The Innovation Centre PC Labs refurbishment was progressed very quickly, resulting in the Sustainability Design Guide not being applied. However, an in-house shadow SKA rating pre-assessment was conducted.

## Capital projects – construction stage

**Multifaith Centre:** The Multifaith Centre is set to complete early Nov 2024. The project will be **net zero in operation; it is Passivhaus and has PV** on the roof. The scheme will not be able to meet the challenging embodied carbon target set within the current Sustainability Design Guide. These are being reassessed as part of the Sustainability Design Guide review.

# Nature and biodiversity

**Nature and biodiversity underpin our communities, our society and global business. They provide the essential resources for life – air, water, food and medicine – while also sustaining balance through the regulation of Earth's ecosystems. Despite this, the abundance of species where we have measured their populations, has declined by nearly 70% since 1970.**

Biodiversity is a defining theme across all our campuses and our green spaces are prime habitat for a wide variety of amphibians, birds, insects, mammals and reptiles. They are expertly managed by our Grounds teams and have earned national acclaim and accreditation.

**We have committed to deliver environmental net gain in parallel with our net zero emissions target.** Environmental net gain means leaving the environment in a better condition after any activities than it was before.

## Nature Positive Strategy

We have pledged to become a Nature Positive University, committing to halting, preventing and reversing nature loss caused by our teaching, operations and research. Our first step has been to publish our Nature Positive Strategy, outlining our goals, targets and actions.

## Nature on campus

### Britain in Bloom

Our Streatham Campus was awarded the prestigious Britain in Bloom **Gold Award in the Business, Leisure and Tourism category**. This achievement is testament to the dedication and hard work of our Grounds team and reflects the University's efforts to create a campus that is both aesthetically pleasing and ecologically responsible.

### Lower Hoopern Valley

We have been working to make changes to the Lower Hoopern Valley, a 38-acre County Wildlife Site south of the Streatham Campus.

We ran a second consultation event in November 2023 to present draft plans for the valley to the local community. There was strong agreement with our aims to manage the site for biodiversity, ecosystem services and enhanced community and research access.

We have **enhanced community access and communication**, and our local community plan on setting up a Friends of Hoopern Valley group. We have

**signed a public path creation agreement** with Devon County Council to designate a new footpath through the valley and there are plans to **enhance meadow diversity** through sensitive management. We are also working with the Environment Agency and academics from the Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste (CREWW) to develop a **nature-based flood management plan**.

### Machinery and waste

The Exeter Grounds team has been reducing its carbon footprint by purchasing **electric machinery and hand tools**. Cut-and-collect machines have been used to enhance plant diversity across campus. A **mowing mosaic approach** has been used across 12,500m² of grass.

For a decade, the team has generated no green waste, further reducing impact this year by bringing key services in-house and **cutting contractor travel**.

### Lighting review

Working with the decarbonisation of lighting programme on Streatham Campus, we are compiling historic bat records to feed into this process. This will help us **design new lighting schemes** which are safe for people, low carbon and more wildlife friendly.

Get Growing event on Streatham Campus.

## Understanding our impact

### Biodiversity footprint

We are developing a biodiversity footprint for the whole University, including our activities at St Luke's and Penryn campuses. A biodiversity footprint is a measure of how much we impact biodiversity via all our activities, not just those on our estates. **Exeter academics** from the RENEW project are **working with us to carry out this analysis**.

## Engaging and connecting people with nature

We have worked to engage and connect people with nature on our estates, and more broadly. Over the past year, we have engaged over 600 people at 32 events, such as regular volunteering led by the Grounds team, biodiversity monitoring events, information talks and student-led events.

**We have engaged over 600 people at 32 events.**


## Nature and biodiversity at Penryn

### Green Flag Award

Penryn Campus earned the prestigious Green Flag Award for the **seventh year in a row**. This award celebrates our commitment to maintaining beautiful, well-managed green spaces that benefit both our community and biodiversity. This achievement is testament to the dedication and hard work of our Grounds and Garden and Facilities Management teams, along with the invaluable contributions of volunteers.

### Wildflower planting

In January 2024, our FXPlus Grounds and Gardens team at Penryn set a **goal to plant 1,200 wildflowers** across campus. By 11 June, we exceeded this milestone, with 2,320 planted.

This planting effort – featuring species like ox-eye daisies, mallows, self-heals, and yellow rattle – **supports biodiversity by creating habitats** for goldfinches, meadow brown butterflies and buff-tail bumblebees.

**2,320 wildflowers planted across campus.**

# Food and drink

The Commercial, Residential and Campus Services (CRC) team is dedicated to reducing its carbon footprint. This commitment is embodied in the Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan. To advance our goals, the team has implemented eight core initiatives. These initiatives aim to promote informed choices rather than restricting options.

## This year:

**11%**
of all milk used was plant-based.

**52%**
of all meals served during Veganuary were vegan.

**32%**
of total meals served were vegan and vegetarian options, a 22% increase from last year.

22%

OVER **0.5** TONNES
of fresh produce were produced in our garden kitchen.

**49%**
of all hot drinks served were served in a reusable cup.

**303,364**
Fairtrade items were sold, marking a 26% increase from last year.

26%

Cooking demonstration on campus.

## Educational engagement with students

Student engagement activities included:

- Cooking demonstrations
- Student consultancy projects
- Student insight groups
- Food-related cultural events

## Kitchen garden

In collaboration with the Grounds team our in-house **kitchen garden has been expanded**, now using both traditional planting and hydroponics to provide fresh, sustainable produce year-round, promoting local, campus-grown food.

**Hydroponics** is the horticultural technique of growing plants using a water-based nutrient solution rather than soil.

## Fairtrade

We achieved a **two-star rating** in the Fairtrade Universities and Colleges Award for 2022-2024.

## Sustainability award

We received a **three-star rating** – the highest possible grade – in the Sustainable Restaurant Association (SRA) Food Made Good Sustainability Standard.

## New community fridge

In March 2024, a community fridge opened at the Forum Library. This is a collaboration between the University and Foodsave CIC. The fridge is restocked daily with surplus food from local businesses, provided for free to help reduce food waste. Between March and August 2024, **the fridge redistributed over 1 tonne of food, equating to 477 and saving 3,635kg $CO_2e$.**

REDUCE FOOD POVERTY REDUCE FOOD WASTE FOODSAVE

3,635 kg $CO_2$


## Food and drink at Penryn

### Vegetarian Society accreditation

The Sustainability Café on Penryn Campus earned Vegetarian Society accreditation for its **fully vegetarian and vegan menu**.

### New gardening group

A new gardening group launched in March at Falmouth University's Falmouth Campus. It is open to all – participants are **invited to plant, potter and pick fresh produce**.

### Returnable cup scheme

The Sustainability Café has partnered with Circular & Co to bring a returnable cup scheme to campus. These reusable cups are **available to buy in the Sustainability Café** where you can pay a £2 deposit (small) or £3 deposit (large) and get your money back if you no longer want the cup.

### Bring Your Own campaign

**We have given away 300 free reusable cups as part of a Bring Your Own campaign on Penryn Campus.**

# Sustainable labs and research

**Exeter is a global leader in climate change research, home to more Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) authors than any other city in the world. As a Russell Group university, our research drives impactful change across the world. However, we must continue to work to reduce any negative impact that this research has on the environment.**

## Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice

We have signed the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice, which represents a shared ambition for the UK to continue delivering cutting-edge research, but in a more environmentally responsible and sustainable way.

## Research footprinting tool

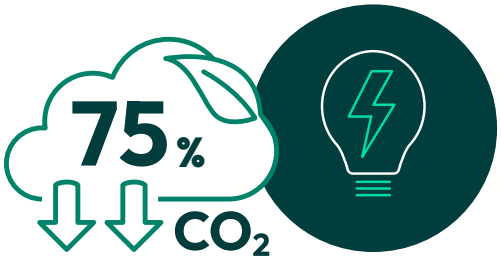
We have developed a tool **to estimate the carbon emissions associated with research projects**. By identifying the areas of our research with the highest negative impact, the tool empowers individuals to focus on solutions for reducing these. Our researchers will then collaborate with the University to adopt low-carbon research practices, driving meaningful change. With funding secured from the Wellcome Trust, we are developing and piloting the tool for a national rollout in partnership with the Universities of Bath, Bristol, Cardiff, Edinburgh, LSE and QMUL.


## Sustainable Lab of the Year Award

CREWW labs were awarded Sustainable Lab of the Year at the Lab Innovations Awards. Their exceptional sustainability initiatives and rapid attainment of Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) Gold demonstrates industry leadership, setting a benchmark for excellence in sustainable practices.

## Sustainable research pilot projects

**The Research and Impact Strategy invested £40,000 towards three pilot projects:**

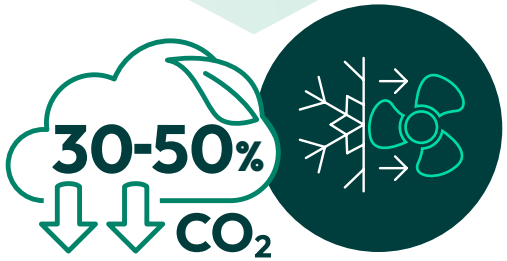



### Plant growth labs LED cabinet upgrades

An investment of £5,200 allowed for the upgrading of lighting within 10 growth cabinets. 142 tubes were replaced with eco-LED models which **save on average 75%** of the energy of the previous bulb.


### Biophysics water upgrades

An investment of £28,300 allowed for the purchase of sustainable water equipment, such as a recirculator and glass washer, **saving an estimated 23,520 litres of potable drinking water** each year.




### Penryn fish labs lighting and filtration upgrades

An investment of £5,700 allowed the replacement of ageing and discontinued lighting systems and air conditioning pumps, with an estimated **reduction in energy usage of 30-50% per unit**.

## Lab plastic recycling

Sustainable Labs invested £3,800 to conduct a waste audit in the Biosciences labs, resulting in a trial scheme for recycling decontaminated plastics. Biosciences, Living Systems Institute and Geoffrey Pope 4th floor labs produced **84 kg of decontaminated plastics for recycling** by **RecycleLab** in the first month alone.

## LEAF

In 2021, we became the second higher education institution in the world to **achieve LEAF Bronze accreditation across the board**. Of the 75 lab clusters registered, 20 now have Gold status with a further 18 holding Silver awards.

## Ultra Low Temperature (ULT) freezers

We published our **Freezer Management Policy** in November 2023, with the aim of optimising capacity, ensuring safety and working as sustainably as possible. **Less than 12%** of the University's ULT freezers are now **held at -80°C**, and we are working to reduce this further.

## Engagement

The Sustainable Labs team has supported sustainability initiatives by delivering **webinars, resources and guidance** to teams across the institution, covering all aspects of lab sustainability.

# Research excellence

**Our world-class research makes a powerful contribution to the sustainability landscape, across a multitude of fields. We have the UK's top five most influential climate scientists – all in the top 21 in the world (Reuters Hot List). In total, we have over 1,500 research and education specialists working on a green future.**

## Some highlights from 2023/24 include:

**Professor Fiona Charnley** – Co-director of the Exeter Centre for Circular Economy (ECCE) and National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research Hub (NICER) – has been **appointed to lead a team of experts** who will advise the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) in the area of manufacturing and circular economy research and innovation.

CE-HUB UKRI National Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Research | NICER PROGRAMME

**Academic experts** from the University have collaborated with the retailer John Lewis on **a new circular collection of products** designed to be longer lasting and more durable.

JOHN LEWIS & PARTNERS

We are now a partner in the new UN-backed **International Centre of Excellence on Sustainable Resource Management in the Circular Economy** (ISC-SRM).

At COP28 in Dubai, we released **the most comprehensive assessment of planetary tipping points**, as well as a second publication looking at positive tipping points.

In an industry first, EDF Renewables UK and Nature Positive announced a long-term academic partnership with the University's Environment and Sustainability Institute (ESI) to **study the ecological effects of solar farms** at Longfield Solar Farm.

Peers for the Planet

A Parliamentarians' Guide to Climate Change was produced in collaboration with Peers for the Planet, designed as a resource for MPs, peers and other stakeholders.

Research led by the University of Exeter and Devon Wildlife Trust shows that **beavers are having a positive impact** on flood and drought alleviation.

Researchers from the ESI have developed VespAI, an **artificial intelligence** that can **detect invasive hornets** with complete accuracy.

The Advanced Zero Emission Analysis Tool was created, helping owners, systems designers and engineers find optimum green power options for modifying existing maritime vessels and designing new ones.

**We hosted a programme of events**, including Solutions to the Climate and Nature Crisis, at the World Economic Forum in Davos for leaders in science, business and the media.

Research from the UNDP Spiny Lobster Project, led by the University of Exeter, has successfully **contributed to the creation of Marine Protected Areas** in Ascension Island, Gabon and the Ivory Coast.

A groundbreaking study has provided pivotal new insights into the extensive **impact of metal mining contamination** on rivers and floodplains across the world.

## Major funding secured

**£2.3m**

£2.3m from the Wellcome Trust to fund a research project investigating how **polar climate change impacts upon human health** and the healthcare sector.

**£300k**

£300,000 from the Wellcome Trust to further **develop our research impact tool**. This tool allows staff to identify the key areas of impact of their research and helps them plan to reduce them.

**£3m**

£3m from the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) and Innovate UK to continue the work of the **Integrating Finance & Biodiversity for a Nature Positive programme** and fund a new network and hub.

**£3m**

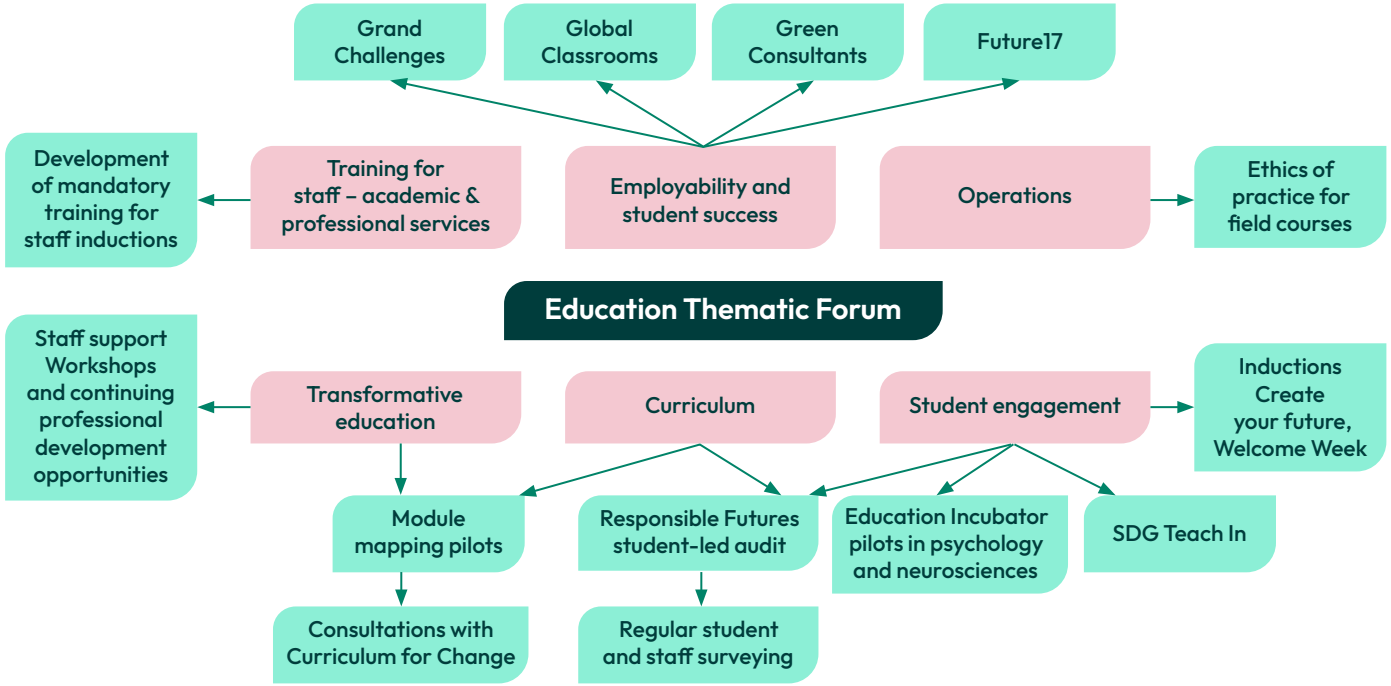
£3m from the National Institute of Health and Care Research to open a **new centre for healthcare technology** in the South West, which will include a focus on sustainability and environment.

# Education

**We have pledged to provide all students with the opportunity to learn about the scientific, human, social and cultural issues that are involved in the vital field of sustainability.**

## Education Thematic Forum

The Education Thematic Forum is chaired by our Sustainability Education Advocates and leads projects and initiatives to embed sustainability education across our formal and informal curriculum.




## Responsible Futures

Responsible Futures
accredited institution

The University of Exeter, Exeter Students' Guild and Falmouth and Exeter Students' Union have been **awarded joint** SOS Responsible Futures accreditation.

This accreditation reflects a shared commitment by the institutions and student unions to embed holistic sustainability across the curriculum and campuses.

**Exeter is the only Russell Group university to currently have full SOS Responsible Futures accreditation.**

## Curriculum for Change

The Curriculum for Change programme is working to realise our strategic commitment to develop a distinctive and **sustainable model for education by 2030**. It will be exploring different initiatives further in 2024/25, such as reviewing all undergraduate programmes.

The Curriculum for Change programme entered an initial discovery phase in 2023/24 and will be exploring the following strategic cases further:

- Review of all undergraduate programmes and modules using co-created course and assessment design principles
- Establish and pilot of 'minor pathways' open to all undergraduate students, to include a minor on sustainability
- Prepare a business case for moving to a three-teaching term model for the academic year
- Development of skills classification, which incorporates sustainability literacy, against which programmes can be mapped
- Prepare a business case for and pilot a compulsory interdisciplinary immersive module for all programmes, including climate change/sustainability.

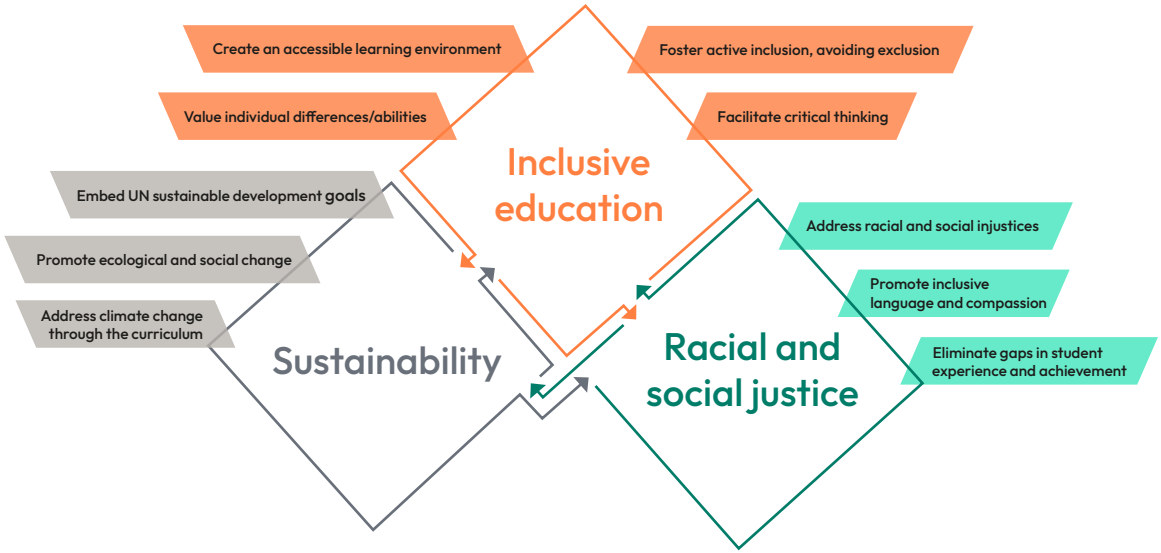
## Transformative Education Framework

Introduced in 2021, the Transformative Education Framework (TEF) **supports educational initiatives relating to its three pillars: Inclusive Education, Racial and Social Justice and Sustainability**.

Under the Sustainability pillar, the TEF is working to embed the UN SDGs, promote social and ecological change and address climate change throughout the curriculum.

During 2023/24, a wide range of resources have been created, such as:

- New SharePoint resources on Education for Sustainable Development and a new version of Decolonising Sustainability
- New SharePoint resource on COP outlining information on the various projects led by the University of Exeter
- Two Education for Sustainable Development student voice workshops for internal and external staff
- Three Transformative Education Curriculum Enhancement Programme level workshops
- A seminar series, featuring topics such as Addressing the Climate Emergency and Sustainability in Higher Education.



## Future17

The University of Exeter and QS are partners in delivering this first-of-its-kind global initiative – Future17 – that unites multinational organisations, a consortium of leading universities and teams of students to participate in projects that aim to advance the UN SDGs. Each university selects up to 50 students per cycle to work on an SDG team challenge set by an international partner.

The initiative has expanded further and now includes 12 universities. The most recent cycle **united more than 200 students with 31 partner organisations**.

## SDG Teach In

Exeter was the **top university in terms of number of students reached** in this year's SDG Teach In. Exeter ranked fourth in 2024 (first among universities) for the number of students reached, and sixth (third among universities) for the number of educators pledged.

**4th** for the number of students reached.

**6th** for the number of educators pledged.

# Engagement

Our Communication and Engagement Strategy 2022-2025 sets out the plans to increase sustainability engagement levels across the University through a range of events, projects and promotional activities.

2023/24 saw the launch of a new Instagram account (@uoesustainability), as well as the installation of two screens dedicated to sustainability news, one at Streatham Sports Park and one in St Luke's Cross Keys.


## The Climate Wall

The Climate Wall, an interactive digital art installation, toured St Luke's, Streatham and Penryn campuses in late 2023 in the lead up to COP28 in Dubai. **Over 1,100 staff, students and visitors interacted with the wall**, answering questions or posting reflections to facts relating to the climate and ecological emergencies.

## The Mossy Carpet

In March 2024, the Mossy Carpet installation from the Art and Energy Collective provided a safe space for people to **explore feelings around the climate and ecological crises**. Visitors were invited to add to a large-scale artwork by creating pom-poms and textile tufts using Dartmoor fleecy felt. The experience also included opportunities to record their thoughts on ways to improve the world, while also learning about the important role sphagnum moss plays in tackling the environment and climate emergencies.

## Biodiversity sound trail

A new biodiversity sound trail around Reed Hall has been installed. Wooden posts with QR codes link to a website with **poetry recorded by students** to a background of the ambient sounds around Reed Hall and natural history facts about trees.

GREEN CONSULTANTS

## Green Consultants

The number of **students participating** in our award-winning programme, Green Consultants, **increased in 2023/24**, with 224 completing training and 46 successfully completing a project. Numbers of students completing an internship also increased due to a boost in funding.

**224 students completed training.**

## Internships and placements

In 2023/24, we employed several student interns within the Sustainability team, with **paid roles** offered in circular economy, biodiversity monitoring, communications, Responsible Futures and curriculum mapping. **Two new Graduate Business Partner (GBP) posts** were created: Sustainable Education Project Manager and Sustainable Living Assistant.

In addition to offering paid positions, the team also supported several students on **credit-bearing placements**, including a dissertation research project student from the MSc Global Sustainability Solutions and an MBA consultancy project student.

## Culture change

Achieving our climate goals relies upon individuals taking action across the whole institution. To drive action and create lasting behaviour change, we are addressing how we adopt a culture of sustainability within the University.

We have expanded the Communication and Engagement team this year to support transformative behaviour. In 2024/25 we will be **developing a Culture Change Programme** led by our new Head of Sustainability Engagement. This will be developed alongside a **new Sustainability Strategy** to supersede the current ECE Policy. The Sustainability Strategy and Culture Change Programme will sandwich all the work we undertake, ensuring we achieve maximum impact and engagement from each area of development.

We will be linking up with more student-led services and societies to widen engagement and understanding of climate issues and implement actions plans for each of them.

We are looking to roll out **climate literacy training** available for all staff and students.

## Grand Challenges

Grand Challenges is a project week in which participants work in interdisciplinary groups with other students to design **innovative solutions to real world challenges**. All of the Grand Challenges topics link to the UN's 17 SDGs.

In 2023/24, 105 students were involved, focusing specifically on sustainability issues across **three core challenges**: Future Food, Climate and Environment Emergency and Tomorrow's World. Projects focusing on sustainability ranged from local to regional, national and international.

**105 students involved 2023/24.**

### Grand Challenges project examples

- **Local:** '2 Good 2 Throw', a scheme for Exeter students to donate excess food to homeless shelters.
- **Regional:** 'Invest in Cornwall', a proposal for Cornish renewable technologies.
- **National and international:** 'Sustainable Visionaries', raising awareness of existing sustainable technologies. 'Fashion Forward', an ESG rating website for fashion brands.

# Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| **ACT** | – Advocate Climate Taskforce |
| **CEC Board** | – Climate and Environmental Crisis Board |
| **CRC** | – Commercial, Residential and Campus Services |
| **CREWW** | – Centre for Resilience in Environment, Water and Waste |
| **ECCE** | – Exeter Centre for Circular Economy |
| **ECE** | – Environment and Climate Emergency |
| **EEE** | – Electrical and Electronic Equipment |
| **GBP** | – Graduate Business Partner |
| **GHG** | – Greenhouse Gas |
| **KPIs** | – Key Performance Indicators |
| **LEAF** | – Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework |
| **MW** | – Megawatt |
| **MWh** | – Megawatt hour |
| **NPS** | – Nature Positive Strategy |
| **PV** | – Photovoltaics |
| **SCEF** | – Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework |
| **SCP** | – Student Campus Partnership |
| **SDGs** | – Sustainable Development Goals |
| **STS** | – Sustainable Transport Policy |
| **UEB** | – University Executive Board |
| **UKUPC** | – UK Universities Purchasing Consortia |
| **WEEE** | – Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment |

## Contact Us

Please get in touch with the Sustainability team to find out more about our plans to lead meaningful action on the ecological crisis and climate emergency, and how you can get involved at sustainability@exeter.ac.uk or follow us on Instagram @uoesustainability.

**exeter.ac.uk/sustainability**

University of Exeter

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