

SUSTAINABILITY BOARD REPORT

April 2021



STUDENT IDEAS 2020/2021

Student Ideas is a system in which students submit ideas on anything they would like to see added or changed to any aspect of the student experience. These ideas go on The Students' Union website for voting, which gives the ideas a score which affects their level of priority. The ideas are then scrutinised by the Executive, Student Council, and Trustee Board to ensure they are in the best interests of the student body. Should the idea pass these stages they then go to the Executive where they are assigned to our Presidents and Part Time Officers to begin working on making them a reality.

Ideas around sustainability have always been popular, with this year as no exception. **Of the 62 ideas that have been submitted this year, 25 have been around sustainability, which constitutes 40% of the ideas.** Sustainability is the area that we have seen the most ideas submitted around, and where students generally have engaged the most enthusiastically with the Student Ideas system. The more we can do to support this enthusiasm and show students that they can make an impact by engaging through this system the better.

The student idea system can take a while for an idea to progress from submission to being actioned. While this is necessary for ideas to be scrutinised, it can mean the initial enthusiasm for these ideas from the student body is lost. Often campaigns or projects are already being run by the SU and the University, and it would be much more efficient to identify where work is being done and tie this into Student Ideas. We can use Student Ideas to highlight areas where there is student engagement, and use the number of ideas submitted, and how many votes they received, as evidence for working more on these areas.

Sustainable Ideas submitted this year:

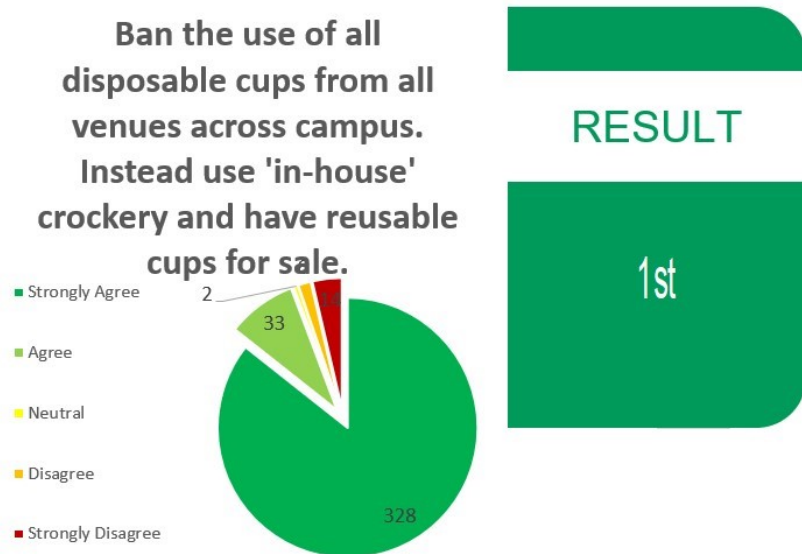
Idea Number	Student Idea	Status
311	Kitchen/Household swap shop -sustainable accommodation shop	Awaiting Student Council
317	Hold clothing swap events	Awaiting Student Council
318	Invest in solar panels to be used as canopies for eating or drinking outside the cafes in UWE university campuses	Awaiting Student Council
319	Introducing insects to the menu in all University cafes e.g. in biscuits and burgers	Awaiting Student Council
320	To start a bug farm within the University	Awaiting Student Council
322	Provide free, borrowable cargo bikes for students living on campus	Awaiting Student Council
329	Green walls/roofs to be put on buildings. All new infrastructure to have green walls in place.	Awaiting Student Council
330	UWE planting day, whereby all students are allocated a time either in autumn or spring to plant bulbs/ flowers on the grounds to help sustainability.	Awaiting Student Council

332	UWE Bristol should commit to only stock sustainable period products in dispensers in campus bathrooms.	Awaiting Student Council
333	Joint collaboration through Teracycle to allow a better variety of bins to recycle waste at UWE.	Awaiting Student Council
335	A microwave on Bower Ashton again	Awaiting Student Council
336	Ban the use of all disposable cups from all venues across campus. Instead use 'in-house' crockery and have reusable cups for sale.	Awaiting Student Council
338	Replace Starbucks in the canteen with a popular local café business- Bristol has so many!	Awaiting Student Council
339	Promote the use of recyclable cups/compostable plastic ones	Awaiting Student Council
345	Living Green Walls - Addition to UWE Beeline, provide volunteering hours and improve air quality and mental health around UWE Campus'.	Failed
348	More food waste bins around campus	Awaiting Student Council
349	More information on where people can get period product help.	Awaiting Student Council
357	Creating our own compost from food waste all over the University	Awaiting Executive
360	Pen Recycling Bins or Collections	Awaiting Executive
361	Ensuring the UWE branded merchandise sold in the SU is sourced ethically and made from low-impact, sustainable materials.	Up for Voting
362	Provide students with the option to personalise their own clothes or purchase second-hand 'reclaimed' UWE merchandise	Up for Voting
363	Install automatic movement sensors to switch off lights in all University buildings.	Up for Voting
364	Store rainwater on University buildings in tanks to use elsewhere e.g. student toilets.	Up for Voting
365	Do mending cafés which educate students on how to mend/repair broken items	Up for Voting
366	Expand the Greener futures competition with the University	Up for Voting
368	Soft plastic recycling available on campus	Up for Voting

These are all the ideas that are related to Sustainability which have been submitted by students this academic year. While one has failed, the rest have passed the initial stage and are now awaiting Student Council. Student Council are expected to pass the majority of the ideas, and once they do, the ideas will go the Executive to be assigned to a President and a Part Time Officer - usually our Sustainability Officer, Vanique.

Idea 336, on banning disposable cups, received 383 votes, which is the second highest number of votes ever received through the system, and especially noteworthy when on average new ideas have received roughly 20 votes. This is also by far the most votes we have had for an idea around

sustainability. This shows significant student support for this idea, and the student who submitted the idea is also very passionate and keen to be involved in the process.



Sustainable Ideas assigned this year:

108	<u>The SU Should Commit To Using Triodos Bank, An Ethical Bank That Does Not Invest In Fossil Fuels.</u>
116	<u>The SU to install solar panels on its buildings</u>
125	<u>The Students' Union to commit to only stocking products containing palm oil that is Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) certified</u>
199	<u>A microwave in S block!!</u>
245	<u>Free hot water in OneZone!</u>
249	<u>Install boiling water taps around student study areas</u>
261	<u>Optional Sustainable Living module for new students in halls</u>
274	<u>The S Block needs a space for student who need a microwave and hot water- that is free and not time consuming!</u>
296	<u>More microwaves</u>

These ideas were submitted in previous years and, having passed through the system, have been assigned to our Sustainability Officer this year who has made the following progress:

- Idea 108, the previous sustainability officer has already requested the use of Triados bank to be a possibility for both The Students' Union and the University of the West of England. As the current sustainability officer, in an attempt to better understand how to address the student idea, she entered into conversations with Evan Botwood the VP for societies and communication for 2019/2020. As well as Michael Blades and James Longhurst. Taking on board all their comments, it was thought the best way forward would be to put forward communications from both The Students' Union and UWE around divestment and how both parties are currently addressing divestment. As soon as both parties approve the communications, it will be put out on the various platforms.
- Ideas 116 and 125 had already been implemented before the ideas were assigned. So to ensure that students are aware of this, a blog post will be written to show the hard work The Students' Union and the University of the West of England have put in around these areas.

The blog post will be written after the academic year has ended but will be posted as soon as possible.

- Ideas 199, 245, 249, 271 and 296 all link to boiling water taps and microwaves on campus. Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, Estates and services as well as the catering services do not want to go against government guidelines to install these and possibly create an unsafe environment. Once restrictions ease this will be revisited.
- Idea 261, even though we cannot create a sustainable living module for student, the Sustainability Committee has been working on a project called the Sustainable Living Guide, which could help students who want to make more sustainable choices. This guide will be available to download in a pdf version.

This hopefully shows that the implementation of student ideas can change from their original submission, and often align with work already being planned. It also shows where there are areas of particular interest to students and should be used as evidence for the University to work on them. For example, that there are five ideas that have been assigned around hot water taps and microwaves being installed, and another submitted this year, shows the student need for this. This would support students in bringing their own food to campus and reduce the amount purchased instead and the waste that generates.

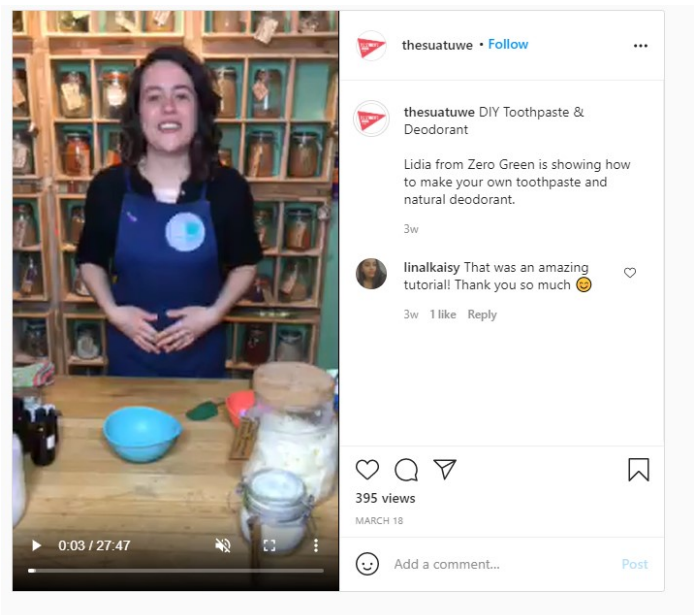
SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER AND COMMITTEE

Let's Talk Trash

The Sustainability Committee ran their campaign Let's Talk Trash in March. This explored what we can all do to reduce our waste and impact on the planet. Over the week, we explored five different areas that everyone can take action on, these included: plastic, recycling, fashion, food and zero-waste living.

Highlights from the week include:

- Instagram live with local zero waste shop, Zero Green. This had 390 views in total.
- Slow fashion giveaway which had over 40 entries and the winner received a sewing machine. Here's a quote from one entry: *"I have a number of old clothes that aren't in good enough condition for charity shops or selling, and I want to make something with them. My idea is to cut up the different fabrics into triangles and create patchwork dungarees and a hood out of them. It'll be a really unique way of using up fabric that would usually be thrown away and will create an amazing outfit!"*



- Leftovers challenge in collaboration with Hallslife
“My mum and I like to use all left-over food, we cook it in the oven or fry up left-over vegetables, potatoes, meat as a meal. Lemon rind, lime rind and orange rind we use in drinks, cakes or just in a bowl to make a room smell fresh and zesty. Cereal that is a bit hard we add chocolate and make cakes. We make carrot, suede, parsnip, courgette and potato peelings into crisps cooking in the oven with oil.”



- [Day in the Life of UWE waste video](#). Thank you to Jennifer Fawcett-Thorne and her team for collaborating on this

Sustainable Period Products

During the ‘Try Something New’ week of Feel Good February, members of the Sustainability Committee alongside our Sustainability, BME and Women’s Welfare officers ran a sustainable period product workshop. This focused on educating students about the full range of products available, in a friendly and non-biased way. This word cloud shows how attendees found the event.



We have also secured funding from the Student Experience Fund to allow students to trial a sustainable period product of their choice. We have so far had six students trial this with the following comments:

“This was a great opportunity to try a product I would not have bought otherwise. It has also been a conversation starter with some close friends who are now considering trying reusable products.”

“I really enjoyed using the pants. They have changed my life! I now feel strange when using pads (as I had to use one the other day) and I missed my pants and couldn't wait for them to dry. So happy I tried these.”

We have budget remaining to allow around 10 more students to trial a product.

Off the Record: Acts of Activism

[Off the Record](#) is a Bristol-based charity that runs a variety of projects focusing on mental health among young people aged 11-25. They're running a series called Acts of Activism where they interview a young local activist each week to explore how to take small acts of activism in daily life

Vanique was interviewed for their climate and environment session on 25 March. This gave her the opportunity to share her knowledge, thoughts and reflections with young people. She was a fantastic ambassador for The Students' Union and UWE Bristol, showcasing the variety and reach of our sustainability work and her achievements this year.

Advance HE

Vanique Kruger, our elected Sustainability Officer, and Leah Bromley, our Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator, contributed to a project run by [Advance HE](#), called 'Voices of Sustainability'. This blog collection, collates voices from across the sector to summarise their experiences, ideas and concerns about sustainability.

FAIRTRADE

As part of Fairtrade Fortnight, The Students' Union in collaboration with UWE Bristol, created a Sustainability 101 video about Fairtrade. This featured Jane Ojiako, our VP Education, who explains what Fairtrade is, why it's important, and how people can get involved. It is available to [watch here](#). The video will also feature on the Fairtrade Foundation's website, as part of their virtual festival for the fortnight.

ELECTIONS AND TREE PLANTING

This year, The Students' Union chose to partner with Bristol-based organisation, [TreeSisters](#) to plant one tree for each student who voted in The Leadership Race elections.

We're delighted to say we'll be planting 2000 trees through TreeSisters.

We chose TreeSisters because they take a holistic approach to tackle climate change. They work across Asia, Africa, and South America to empower women and local communities. Their work improves the environment through tree planting, soil restoration, and forest protection.

SPRING/SUMMER PLANS

In collaboration with the Grounds Team, we are running small group sessions again in the Community Garden. We'll also be running some gardening drop-ins at Bower Ashton and Glenside, where student can help pot plants for the herb border.

GREENER FUTURES

Greener Futures is our sustainability competition for sports clubs and societies. Students submit evidence of completing sustainability challenges to a Facebook group. The group who gets the most points over the year, receives £200 in funding.

Our sustainability competition for sports clubs and societies has seen great engagement this academic year with 18 groups signed up. Individuals have been submitting fantastic actions to contribute to the points total for the club/society. We also ran a mid-year competition in January, which was won by the Baking Society and the Lacrosse team. Some photos of actions that were submitted are below.

The final awards for the competition will be released in mid-May.



ACCREDITATIONS

We are making steady progress on our NUS/SOS-UK Green Impact submission for this academic year, and are being creative in how we respond to the criteria during the pandemic. Please find a separate attachment for the organisation wide action plan for this academic year. The final submission is due the end of April 2021. The following month, we will be audited for our second sustainability accreditation, Responsible Futures with UWE Bristol.

NUS SKILLS SURVEY

Since 2011, The National Union of Students (NUS) has run an annual national survey of student attitudes towards, and skills for, sustainable development. This consistently shows that over 80% of students would like their university or college to cover sustainability, with over two-thirds hoping to see sustainability included in as part of their programme. The survey continues to build the case, locally and nationally, for increased capacity, funding, and resources for sustainability. Reports from previous surveys can be found here [<https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research-reports/education-learning-employment-and-sustainability/sustainability-skills-annual-survey>].

The Students' Union at UWE promoted this year's survey, which ran between 26 October and 15 November 2020. Thanks to Bec Rengel (Residences Community Coordinator and The Students' Union for analysing the results for us).

413 students responded (83% studying Bachelor's courses, 12% studying Master's level courses).

Here are some of the highlights from the survey:

- 83% of UWE Bristol students would take a £1000 lower salary in an organisation with a good environmental and social record.

- 92% of UWE Bristol students believe sustainability is something universities should actively promote and incorporate.
- 71% of our students agree UWE Bristol takes action to limit the effect it has on the environment.
- Over half of our students (66%) want to learn more about sustainable development, in particular, to learn more through the formal curriculum and through informal education.
- 60% of UWE Bristol students would take a salary £3000 less than average if the role contributes positively to environmental and social change
- Learning about sustainability, equality, and ethics has had a positive impact on most of our students, with 77% saying they were more educated and aware as a result.

Please find the PowerPoint presentation as an appendix to this report.

<https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/news/article/thesuatuwe/NUS-Sustainability-Skills-Survey-Results/>

UWE SUSTAINABILITY SURVEY

- The Students' Union at UWE carried out research in partnership with the institution within the current academic year, 2020-2021. This took the form of a survey which we ran during Welcome 2020 and a series of focus groups during January 2021.
- The results are published publically and used to inform campaigning priorities.
- The survey was widely promoted with 556 responses in total.
- The published results [can be found here](#).

1.1 Introduction

In a new academic that is unlike before, The Students' Union at UWE wanted to learn about students' priorities and expectations surrounding sustainability this year. While Covid-19 has dominated global discourse, students and young people have been continuously voicing concern over the climate crisis (Marquardt, 2020) and social injustices. In Scotland, young people are calling for a green recovery from Covid-19 (Scottish Youth Climate Strike & Young Friends of the Earth Scotland, 2020) as across the UK, young people and graduates are impacted by the upheaval caused by the pandemic (Noorlander, 2020). Students have increasingly shown a desire to learn more about sustainability issues in the NUS Sustainability Skills survey, with [92% of UWE students believing sustainability is something universities should actively promote and incorporate](#). Given this national and global backdrop to the 2020/21 academic year, we wanted to understand what students would like to see us doing to tackle the climate crisis and social injustice. We have will also be using the findings from this research to inform our new sustainability strategic plan (see LD004).

Aim: To investigate students' sustainability priorities and expectations for the 20/21 academic year.

The objectives of this research were to find out:

- Students' knowledge and attitudes towards sustainability in the formal curriculum
- Students' priorities for informal curriculum and Students' Union
- Students' expectations of The Students' Union's sustainability commitments in the short and long-term
- Measure student's sustainability actions through taking a pledge

2. Methodology

We ran the survey during the Welcome/Freshers' period in order to capture students' thoughts and opinions at the beginning of the academic year. Participation was incentivised, with respondents having the option to be entered into a draw to win an £100 Ethical Superstore Voucher.

The survey was widely promoted across main Students' Union and University channels (see evidence) including the following:

- Green Team social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)
- The Students' Union social media (Instagram, Twitter, Facebook)
- Glenside and City Campus social media
- The Students' Union website
- Green UWE social media
- During student reps training
- UWE Bristol student newsletter
- Green Team newsletter

These methods of promotion ensured it reached students of all faculties and levels of study.

Focus group

Following on from the survey, we also decided to carry out focus groups. This gave us the opportunity to build on the survey findings and have a deeper look at students' thoughts and priorities. The focus groups complemented the predominantly quantitative data from the survey, to provide us with qualitative data. It also gave us a foundation to write our strategic sustainability plan. We ran them during January and February.

Focus groups included:

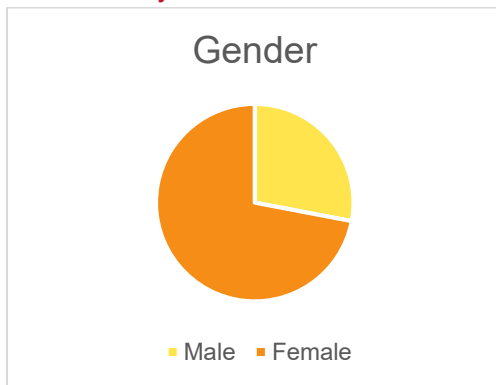
- Sustainability Committee/Sustainability Department reps
- Part-time officers and Presidents
- Students that expressed interest in being part of a focus group when they completed the survey. To ensure diversity in the voices and students represented in these, we ran an anonymous analysis on the demographic details of those who expressed interest in a focus group. From this we were able to select focus groups that consisted of a diversity of students' fee status (home/EU/international), ethnicity, age, gender and faculty. The focus groups inform our work and will feed into the content of our strategies. In this way, ensuring diversity in the participation of our focus groups, means we also have a diversity of voices and opinions feeding into our strategies and holding us to account on our sustainability work.

3. Results and Discussion

We have included these demographic details of our survey and focus groups as part of our equality and diversity commitments.

3.1 Demographics

3.1.1 Survey



Status

Home	88%
EU	6%
International	6%

Age

Age	No. of participants
18	40
19	57
20	73
21	81
22	41
23	32
24	20
25	15
26	5
27	15
28	9
29	6
30-35	24
36-40	7
41-50	7
51+	7

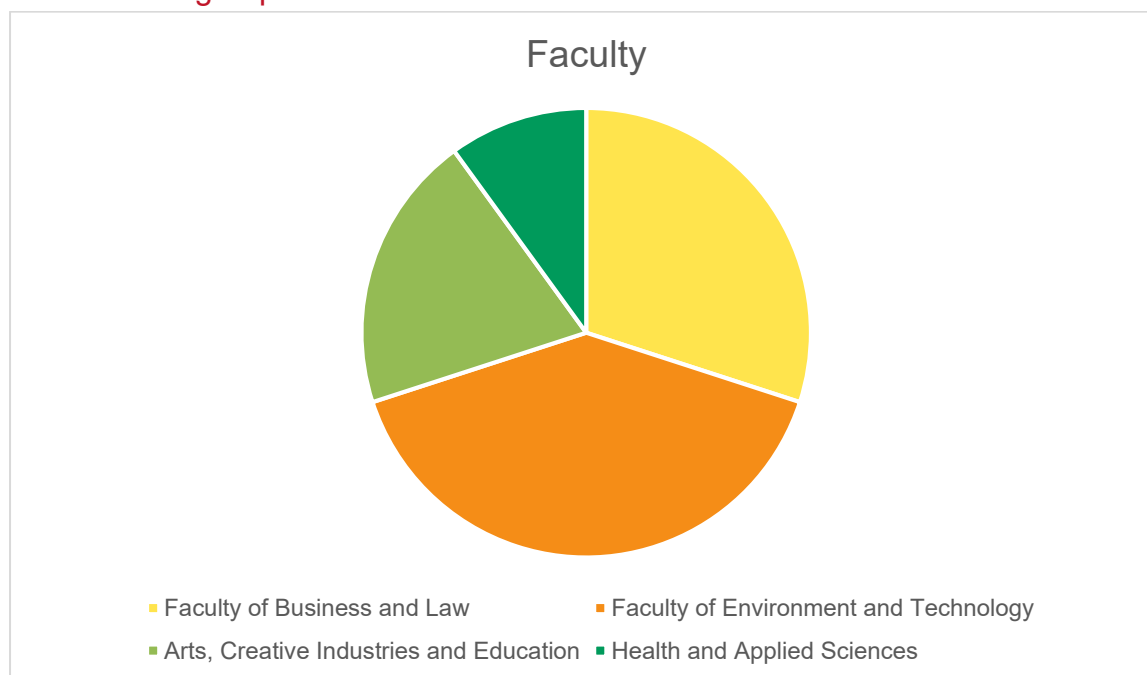
Ethnicity

ARAB	0.9%
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH - INDIAN	0.9%
ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH - PAKISTANI	1.4%
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH - AFRICAN	1.6%
BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH - CARIBBEAN	0.7%
CHINESE	1.4%
MIXED - WHITE AND ASIAN	2%
MIXED - WHITE AND BLACK AFRICAN	0.7%
MIXED - WHITE AND BLACK CARIBBEAN	1.1%
Other Asian Background	1.4%
Other Black Background	0.5%
Other Ethnic Background	1.2%
Other mixed background	2.6%
Prefer not to say	0.7%
WHITE	82%

Faculty

BBS and LAW	Faculty of Business and Law	14%
BIT and BNE	Faculty of Environment and Technology	16%
HLSS and EDU and SCA	Arts, Creative Industries and Education	34%
HSC and SOLS	Health and Applied Sciences	36%

3.1.2. Focus groups

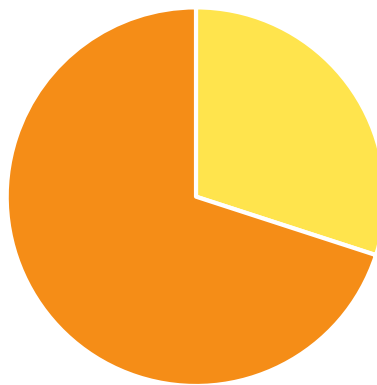


Ethnicity



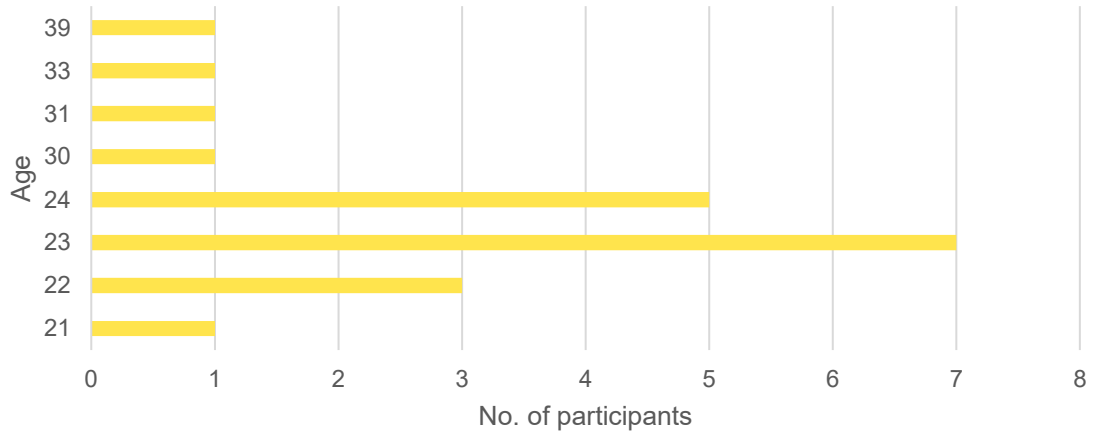
- ARAB
- ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH - INDIAN
- ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH - BANGLADESHI
- BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH - CARIBBEAN
- CHINESE
- MIXED - WHITE AND BLACK CARIBBEAN
- WHITE

Gender



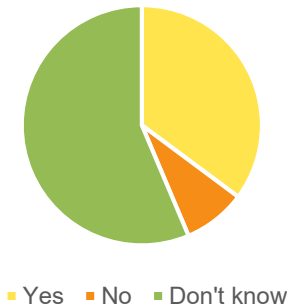
- Male
- Female

Age

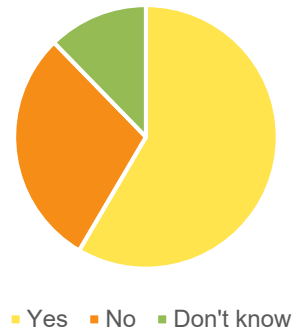


3.2 Sustainability in the Formal Curriculum

Has your course been mapped against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals?



Has your course given you the opportunity to learn about sustainability?



Around a third of respondents were aware that their course had been mapped against the SDGs. Two thirds either didn't know whether it had, or thought that it hadn't. Nearly two-thirds of respondents felt their course has given them the opportunity to learn about sustainability. Therefore, while the majority of respondents felt they have been able to learn about sustainability on their course, fewer have knowledge of the SDG mapping against their course. The low awareness of the SDG mapping work that takes places at UWE was something we sought to address during Green Week. At this, our Associate Professor for Education for Sustainable Development, Dr Georgie Gough ran a [drop-in session for students](#) to find out more about sustainability on their course.

In the open text response following this, main themes and some quotes were:

- Those of have studied sustainability issues within their course enjoy it and find it interesting
- An eagerness to learn more about sustainability
- Some specific ideas of what type of sustainability content they'd like to see in their course

"I have enjoyed learning about sustainability in my course. I am doing a PGCE and I have enjoyed learning about the importance of teaching children about sustainability and techniques I can use in my teaching to calm eco-anxiety in children."

"Sustainable fuels for aviation would be beneficial to aerospace engineering and could help others on my course to be more mindful and encourage them to engineer for a better and more sustainable future."

"My course is preparing me to design more sustainable buildings. It is providing me with opportunities to learn about all kinds of strategies to take on this challenge."

During the focus group, similar themes arose in response to being asked if they'd been taught about sustainability on their course. Participants mentioned how they had received presentations on the SDGs and how they relate to their discipline. However this appeared to vary with the course, as one psychology students had little awareness of sustainability in relation to their discipline. Another student also mentioned there should be more work on decolonising the curriculum.

“Some of our tutors have put some bans on us students on using certain materials, and if we use non sustainable materials we really have to justify why we are using them! Just bringing an awareness to materials and how to be a better designer for the future”.

Our VP Education, Jane has been running a Decolonising the Curriculum campaign this year, which had included a call out for student zines.

3.3 Sustainability in the Informal Curriculum

The top five type of events students would like to attend are the following:

- Plastics and reducing waste
- Sustainability and mental health
- Food and food waste
- Social and climate justice
- Sustainable consumption

Here are some of the comments respondents made about the type of events they'd like to attend:

- Virtual events and making sure they are engaging and interactive with discussions
- Being able to have a fuller understanding about sustainability
- What an average individual can change to help on a small scale and how they can make practical long-term changes in their lives
- How to be sustainable specifically while at UWE and in the Bristol area – best shops to go to, sustainable restaurants, resources available, where to go if you have questions
- Discussions of ways we can tackle the biggest climate challenges – guest talks from people in politics, people creating policies, creating renewable energy
- Finding a way to record the events so to create a catalogue of resources that people are able to look back on and learn

The Students' Union have already been using this feedback to create engagement activity this academic year.

3.4 Short and Long-term Sustainability Priorities

The top three priorities that respondents would like The Students' Union to work towards by 2022 were:

1. Removing unnecessary single-use plastics
2. Reducing our carbon footprint
3. Divesting from fossil fuels

In the focus group, we asked students more about these priorities and this is what we found:

Carbon-neutrality

Students had a general idea what this term meant, mentioning reducing carbon dioxide emissions, tree planting and offsetting, balancing the carbon we output with what takes in carbon. One student said how the term 'net zero' is often confusing as they don't know if it has the same meaning as 'carbon neutrality'.

All the participants wanted to see The Students' Union be carbon neutral by 2030, once receiving an explanation of what the term meant. However, many were concerned that while it's a "fantastic goal" it might not be achievable. When asked what students would like to see The Students' Union

doing to become carbon neutral, their responses centred around empowering students with practical skills and engaging workshops. They also said at the moment, this could be in the form of short videos which gave us further rationale to continue the Sustainability 101 video series throughout the committee's campaign week and semester 2. Other common responses included planting more trees and having more greenery on campus. Partnering with TreeSisters to plant a tree for every voter in our SU elections in March is one way we have immediately responded to this (see SC001).

Transport also came up, with students feeling like the current bus charges are too expensive for students.

"Students want value for money with things like bike loan schemes or transport e.g. £3.15 to come to campus is too much for one lecture"

It was also mentioned that more should be done to promote the bike loan scheme, and any price reductions on this would also be good.

Members of the Sustainability Committee also discussed supporting students to choose renewable energy in off campus accommodation and choosing more sustainable suppliers. Please see SU007 to see how we have responded to this.

Single-use plastics

The groups said it would be good to expand existing zero waste shopping opportunities on campus, however, while a minority said they would be willing to pay more, most said that this needs to be as low cost as possible for students. Some also said that there should be more promotion of existing low waste shopping options on campus, with posters and promotions spread across campus. One student suggested that have discounted weeks can help engage students in zero waste shopping. To respond to this we ran a discount in the zero waste shop during the Let's Talk Trash campaign week.

They also mentioned having a UWE-specific 'Buy Nothing' group, where students can share and swap unwanted items, to prevent them going to landfill. A Student Idea (see PA010) has recently been passed for a swap shop on campus, and Vanique (Sustainability Officer) will be working with SU staff on progressing this for next academic year.

They also said to have more promotion of the fruit and veg stall on campus, as an affordable and package-free way to get groceries.

Some discussed the possibility of an outright ban on single-use plastic. However, members of the Sustainability Committee said the focus should be on removing unrecyclable plastics, and not completely demonising plastic through taking into account life cycle analysis and the impact of other options e.g. paper bags.

Our response so far to this data includes the roll out of biodegradable bags in the SU shop (initiated by Vanique), our work of plastic-free and sustainable period products (see SC002) and on more ethical and sustainable freebies and moving away from single-use giveaways (see SU002).

Divestment

Most participants were unsure of exactly what divestment means, even those in the sustainability committee. The main aspects discussed were about investing in ethical companies, having more transparent finances and reducing certain investments.

After having the term clarified, many participants said there should be more clear and simple information about what divestment means and what UWE/The Students' Union are doing on the topic. Vanique, our part-time Sustainability Officer has responded to this by working in partnership with the SU Finance Team, and UWE's Chief Finance Officer and Vice Chancellor for Sustainability and Environment to create a public divestment update. For more details on this see SU008.

Other themes and priorities

Following a deeper look at the three main priorities from the survey with the focus group participants, we opened up to asking about what else students would like to see us prioritising in the short and/or long term.

This mostly centred around upskilling students with knowledge and skills to live more sustainably. Much of this focussed on waste, in all its forms, including fashion/second-hand clothing, book swaps, clothes swaps, low waste cooking, recycling. The Sustainability Committee's campaign week 'Let's Talk Trash' in March, has responded to many of these themes, see campaign criteria.

Long-term

Looking ahead to 2030, these are the key areas students would like us to work on:

- Completely eradicate or seriously reduce single use plastics use on campus, or make everything so it is recyclable or reusable – specifically in food areas
- Having compulsory introductions to freshers on sustainable living
- More electric charging points for cars as well as eco-friendly buses around campus
- Having equal amounts of vegan and veggie options to meat options at food outlets across the university
- Introducing new sustainability focussed degrees such as Sustainable Business and Sustainable Law
- Having more green spaces on campus such as community gardens and rooftop food growing
- Promoting organisations in which students can use the skills that they are learning at uni and apply them to building community resilience and fighting for climate justice, locally, nationally and globally.
- Being transparent about these targets so it is easy to find how the university is implementing these changes

Future engagement and activities

To close the focus group, we asked students what other engagement activities they'd like to see The Students' Union put on.

In similarity to existing themes from the focus groups, there was discussion of having workshops focussing on practical skills.

"I think some of the ideas I mentioned for group sessions on how to cook X meal with X ingredients, or take your old clothes and have a session on how to alter them and make them new rather than buying lots of new fast fashion etc"

One student also mentioned having sustainability embedded into other activities such as film nights: *“David Attenborough – sustainable films, outdoor cinema, doesn’t seem like it IS about sustainability but then captures the imagination and can go to with your friends and then learn more about it”*

Thinking big, another student also discussed having sustainability fairs on campus, which bring together an array of local and sustainable businesses, to showcase sustainable living. This is something last year’s Sustainability Committee were able to run with their [Farmers Market](#). The Sustainability Committee also discussed having more green space on campus, with a focus on how wellbeing and mental health would be supported in these, such as having a dedicated ‘Zen garden’. They also said having more calisthenics around campus can encourage people to get active. As we begin to plan potential in-person activity, ideas like this can inform our approach and strategy.

3.5 Pledges

All respondents were asked to write a sustainability pledge for the year. These were the key pledge themes:

- Minimising plastics
- Trying to be more zero waste
- Eating more responsibly and more veggie/vegan – buying local and encouraging others to do the same
- Reducing personal carbon footprint – with less flights, electric cars and public transport
- Shopping more meaningfully

The survey gave respondents the option to receive a follow-up email about their pledge to see how they were getting on with it. Appendix 3 details the contents of this email, which aimed to give students practical information about living sustainably.

Overall, we had 21 follow-up responses which were on the whole positive with many students making sustainable changes. Here’s a flavour of the responses we’ve received:

“I am making a lot of my own meals from fresh produce and refrain from buying fruits and vegetables wrapped in plastic. My red meat intake is greatly reduced to roughly once every two weeks at most. Before it was multiple times a week.”

“I have only made small changes towards this pledge, primarily in the form of having a weekly veg box delivered from a farm south of Bristol and making sure to use it all (also topping up on more veg when it runs out) and in turn reducing the amount of meat and dairy I have been eating.”

“I have enjoyed nature more and have gone for walks more often! I have only shopped ethically or on Depop/Ebay for clothes, and I’ve not bought as much makeup and when I have it’s been vegan and cruelty-free!”

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from our survey and focus groups demonstrate student appetite for learning practical skills to live more sustainably and a desire to learn more about sustainability in relation to their course.

The main sustainability themes students prioritise are around:

1. Plastic;
2. Carbon; and
3. Divestment.

However their areas of interest for events and extracurricular activity show interest in intersectional environmentalism through social justice and mental health. This gives us rationale to expand our climate anxiety cafes and continue to build our work on intersectionality.

We have used this research to inform our programme of events this academic year, to ensure they are tailored to students' interest. This research will also form the basis of our new sustainability strategic plan.

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