

# SUSTAINABILITY BOARD REPORT

October 2021



## SOS-UK/NUS RESPONSIBLE FUTURES ACCREDITATION

Responsible Futures is a whole-institution approach to embedding social responsibility and sustainability across the formal and informal curriculum across both HE and FE. It is a supported change programme and accreditation mark that works to put sustainability at the heart of education. UWE Bristol and The Students Union were delighted to be reaccredited at the end of the last academic year, with a score of 300 points. The threshold for accreditation is 200 points, with a maximum total of 330. We have just received our report and will soon work through the recommendations.

Student auditor overarching feedback on Responsible Futures:

- *It's really positive to see everyone's passion and dedication towards sustainability and it makes me proud to be a UWE student!*
- *Each interviewee came prepared and knew exactly what they were talking about, not only because it was their job but because they believed it was the right thing to do which definitely came across. I love how valued and collectively people work together.*
- *It is really great to see the Partnership being so engaged with sustainability and knowing that it comes from a genuine desire to help shape the planet and global community, rather than for greenwashing purposes. They are doing all this work for genuine reasons and the accreditation is an acknowledgment of what they are achieving.*
- *From what I have seen on the evidence and interviews there is a genuine interest thus an active participation on doing things right, they are accountable for their actions and that has been shown through everything that has been reviewed through this audit.*
- *It is impressive the amount of work that is done by the partnership, and still too many students do not know about this. It is clear the level of importance and passion that this partnership has and that is absolutely incredible; the only thing is that it could be better if it reached more people.*

### **Green Impact**

We will start to digest the new Green Impact criteria for 2021/2022 to challenge us once again to improve our sustainability performance.

### **D3: democratise, decarbonise and decolonise Democratise**

We do hope that UWE Bristol and The Students Union at UWE can sign up for a \*new\* programme for 2021-22: Education for Sustainable Development changemakers (a student-staff co-creation approach for D3: democratise, decarbonise and decolonise). ESD changemakers seeks to address 'D3': democratising, decarbonising and decolonising synergistically in teaching, learning and research. Through the process of active engagement with the learning process and experience, the programme aims to support staff and students so they are equipped with relevant knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes to contribute to a just and sustainable world in the context of their academic discipline. It aims to address student concern about climate change, supporting them to turn concern into agency, and address student demand for sustainable development in their tertiary education courses.

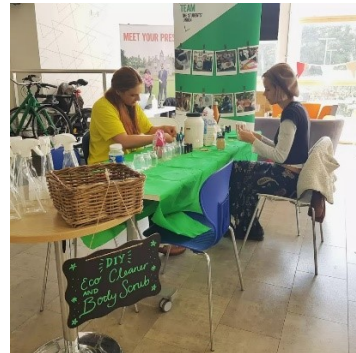
We are working to secure funding to join this new scheme.

## THE GREEN TEAM WELCOME ACTIVITY

During this start of year period, The Green Team have run several in person and virtual engagement events, to welcome new starters and welcome back returning students.

### DIY Body Scrubs and Eco-Cleaner at Glenside, Frenchay and Bower Ashton

We showed students how to create their own body scrubs from coconut oil, sugar and essential oils, and eco-cleaner from vinegar, water and essential oils. This activity engaged 42 students in total from the three different campus sites.



### Green Gatherings with free vegan food:

We had one Green Gathering Vegan Picnic at the Community Garden and one Green Gathering at Bower with free vegan pizza, we had 25 students at each event, engaging 50 students in total. Students were told about everything that's happening for Green Week (18<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> October), information on The Green Team and The Sustainability Committee. This was also a chance for students to socialise and get to know each other over free pizza!







### Community Garden

We ran a gardening session with the Grounds Team and engaged 25 students in total, students did some planting, weeding and digging, as well as drinking tea and eating biscuits of course:



### Planting Bulbs

We planted a variety of flower bulbs at Bower Ashton in pots for students to take home and grow and 25 students got involved at this drop-in event. We had great conversations about upcoming events and how City Campus students could get involved!



### The Green Team Freshers' Fair Stalls:

We ran a Green Team Freshers' Fair and Welcome Fair stalls at Glenside, Frenchay and Bower and 312 students signed up to the newsletter. We gave out lots of free tote bags, vegan and plastic free sweets, plastic-free period products and entered students into a prize draw to win an ethical superstore voucher.



We also did some pledges at the Green Team stall, such as 'I pledge to be 90% vegan' and 'I pledge to only buy second hand clothes for a year' and spoke to hundreds of students in total about sustainability:



## BIKE LOAN SCHEME

The Bike Loan scheme is open to 2021-2022 academic year applications from UWE Bristol students. The Bike Loan Scheme is an initiative which aims to keep our students active and also helps to reduce their travel carbon footprint. With the scheme, students hire a bike to use for the year, which must be returned to The Students' Union at the end of each academic year. The bike loan includes a D lock to keep the bike secured and a set of lights to make sure students are safe and visible on the roads. Please direct any interested students here:

<https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/commercial-services/bike-loan-scheme/>



# LOOKING AHEAD

## Green Week

The Students' Union Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator, is working closely with Vicki Harris to plan Green Week. This will run from 18-21 October. There is a plethora of events, all found on our website: <https://www.thestudentsunion.co.uk/representation/campaigns/green-week/>

We have 27 events listed on The Students' Union webpage dedicated to Green Week, such as:

- A vegan challenge
- Free cycling check ups
- Linking the SDGs to your studies
- Introduction to Extinction Rebellion (new student society)
- Green campus tour
- Clothes mending and upcycling session
- Launch of the new Glenside community garden
- Community garden – with talk on biodiversity initiatives at UWE
- Climate anxiety café
- COP26 talk – uniting the world to tackle climate change
- Green gathering with sustainable fashion talk
- Veggie cook off
- Clothes swap
- Litter pick
- Trip to the vegan market with Veg Society
- Charity shop crawl with LGBT+ Society

## NUS Skills Survey

The annual NUS Sustainability Skills survey will run between 25th October to 14th November 2021 – as always UWE Bristol and The Students' Union at UWE are getting involved in the research in order to update our understanding of our students' perspective on the topic. This will be the 12th year of the research, which in 2020-21 showed the following notable changes:

- How seriously the university takes environmental and global developmental issues is reported to be a factor influencing their choice of place to study by 54% and 55% respectively, up from 52% in 2019-20.
- 84% say they agree that all places of study should actively incorporate and promote sustainable development compared to 83% in 2018-19.
- 66% say sustainable development is something they would like to learn more about compared to 65% in 2019-20
- 75% say the chance to work in an organisation / company that makes a difference to environmental and social issues is a factor they'll consider when applying for jobs, compared to 73% in 2019-20.
- 80% say they're willing to accept a salary sacrifice of £1000 to work in a company with a positive environmental and social record, compared with 77% in 2019-2020.

As with all years, all institutions receiving over 100 responses will receive an anonymised data summary and raw data for their students. The survey will be live here from the 25th October until 14th November 2021: <https://online1.snapsurveys.com/UniSkillsSurvey>, please do pass onto students.

## **Greener Futures**

Greener Futures is a sustainability competition for societies and sports clubs at The Students' Union at UWE. It is a creative, fun and rewarding way for our students to gain inspiration and recognition for building sustainability into their communities.

The programme features a workbook of challenges that are completed throughout the academic year and connected to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Participating clubs and societies are given the option to apply for financial aid of up to £500, this enables groups to carry out in-depth sustainability projects.

At the end of the academic year, the club or society with the most points will receive the 'Greener Futures Club/Society of the Year' title, presented at their respective awards ceremony. There is also an award for 'Leader of the Year', celebrating a student who has made particularly strong efforts to be sustainable and encourage their group to get involved.

The Students' Union's Greener Futures Accreditation has been shortlisted for an EAUC Green Gown Award in the 'Student Engagement' category. We look forward to the virtual awards night in November.

We will be relaunching Greener Futures in October for Sports Clubs and Societies to start working their way through the updated workbook. We have already had good interest from new committee members this year.

## **Sustainability Committee**

There has been an interest from students in the sustainability committee for 2021/22. Faith, our Student Sustainability Engagement Coordinator, will be making the application process live after Green Week and then recruiting a new committee. We will then run an induction with them and support them to create their campaign and goals for the year ahead. All students will have the opportunity to meet sustainability members of staff at UWE Bristol to learn from their expertise/experience. If you would be interested in talking to any students please email [thegreenteam@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:thegreenteam@uwe.ac.uk).

## **Plastics**

The Students' Union is working with our leadership, passionate students and our Commercial Team to scope out our future approach to reducing our purchasing of unnecessary single use plastics within our operations. We are going to start by scoping our impact within retail and café outlets and focusing a plan for single use coffee cups and other items. We will share this plan with UWE catering and hope we can work together on a shared approach.