

FALMOUTH
UNIVERSITY



sustainability Report 2024



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Introduction

To drive meaningful progress, measurable goals and transparent reporting are essential. We believe in the importance of being accountable for the sustainability of our operations and actions, and that's why we publish this annual report.

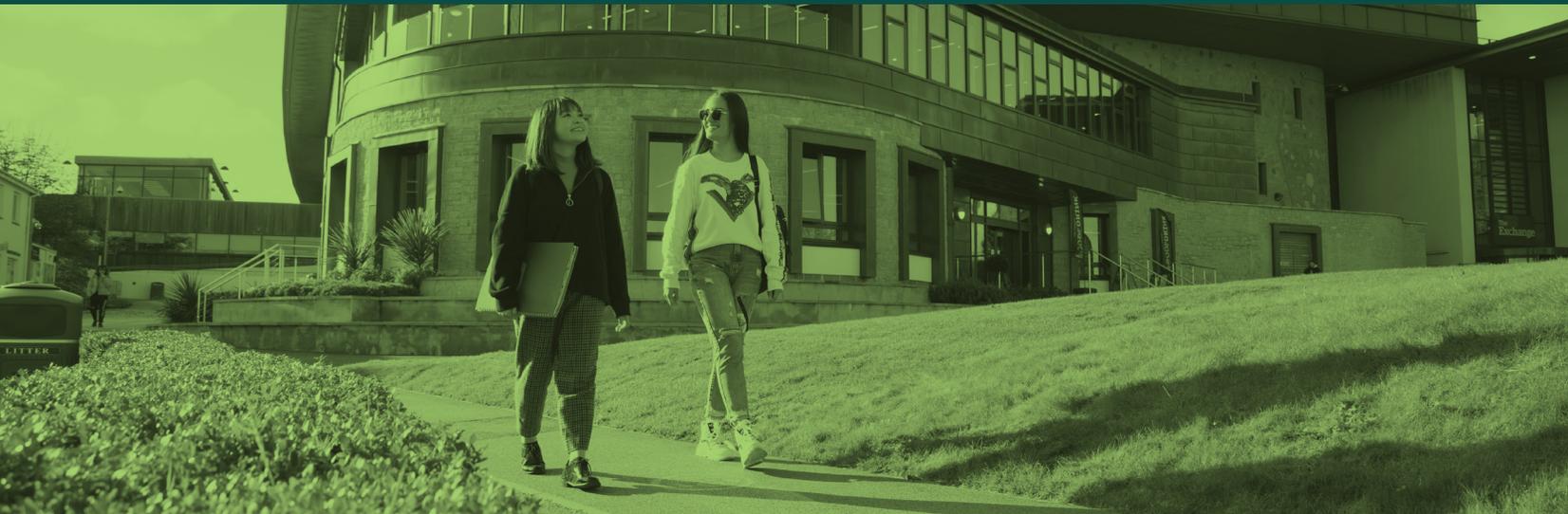
This year, we took a comprehensive approach to refine and update our sustainability ambitions. We've developed a fresh set of metrics that will guide our progress over the coming year and serve as a basis for assessment in our next Sustainability Report. These metrics will allow us to track our impact more closely, reinforcing our commitment to measurable, transparent sustainability decisions.

This year, we've made solid progress on estates initiatives aimed at reducing our carbon footprint. Across our campuses, we've implemented more solar photovoltaics, LED lighting and enhanced submetering, all of which are helping us monitor and lower our carbon emissions.

However, we realise that there is still much to do.

The inclusion of the 'People & Planet University League' in the Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide for the first time signifies sustainability's importance as a key consideration for prospective students. We were disappointed with our ranking this year. Our analysis suggests that while in some important areas such as education, engagement and staff we were strong, improvements in our published policies would significantly improve our performance. This will be a focus for the year ahead.

Simon Foster
Executive Director of Estates,
Operations and Planning



our position on the EAUC roadmap

We have completed our fourth annual gap analysis against the EAUC (Environmental Association of Universities & Colleges) Climate Action Toolkit, measuring our sustainability journey and assessing our position against others in the higher education sector.

We remain in the 'leading' category based on the number of completed metrics. Although our overall position has remained static, we continue to focus on further improving our position in the year ahead.

Green Gown Awards

2023 finalist: 'Tomorrow's Employees', recognising our embedding of sustainability into the curriculum

2024 finalist: 'Creating Impact', for our 'Swap Shop' initiative



Theme 1: Learning & Teaching

This year marked significant progress with the establishment of the Academy for Continuing Education, prioritising innovative short course provision.

A key achievement was the reintroduction of the 'A Greener Future' Sustainability Assessor Training, previously embedded within degree programmes. The course ran three times in this academic year, at a retail price of £495. Transitioned into the short course portfolio, the programme now targets a broader audience, combining new student recruitment with training for existing students. This initiative has equipped hundreds of participants with the expertise to foster sustainability in live event settings.

- **Shared Prosperity success: The Future is Green:**

Falmouth University secured funding through the Shared Prosperity Scheme to deliver two new sustainability courses under the 'The Future is Green' skills programme. Focused on carbon reduction within Cornwall's visitor economy – one of the region's major contributors to emissions – the courses aim to address two critical needs:

1. **How to Make Your Business Greener** – empowering business owners and leaders to evaluate their environmental impact and implement actionable strategies.
2. **Leading Sustainability Change in Business** – supporting employees in upskilling or transitioning into sustainability-focused roles.

Although course delivery has not yet commenced, foundational development work is underway to ensure impactful outcomes aligned with regional sustainability goals and wider policy changes.

Within our institutional Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Commitment, we articulate our understanding of the importance of social responsibility within the curriculum, which we define as one that helps its students develop the skills and knowledge to be effective and compassionate in an uncertain world. Our curriculum-based work on sustainability education is completely aligned with this ethos, as we see increasingly complex needs in those entering higher study, and mental health as a key driver of student choice and behaviour. We therefore broadly define social responsibility through a lens of wellbeing and sustainability; in an evidence-informed way that allows us to measure and develop our curricula at scale and systematically assure and enhance student success and student outcomes.

This year we have published and applied our peer-reviewed novel methodology to better evaluate the embeddedness of sustainability across our provision supported by initiatives such as our Eco-Anxiety workshop, delivered in response to mental health issues related to climate change.

Educate
Inspire
Enrich

Goal 1

Design our curriculum to include sustainability learning outcomes

Goal 2

Embed sustainability-related projects and challenges within the curriculum

Specifically, this year our analysis showed we have 53 courses in total with Sustainability Learning Outcomes (SLOs) embedded, representing 42% of our courses using that mode to embed sustainability. Further, as courses were validated (new) or revalidated (updated), we capitalised on that opportunity to use a formal quality process to encourage, evaluate and then confirm sustainability learning outcomes and/or content had been embedded.

Sustainability and our curriculum

Building on our momentum from previous years, we have continued to review our new and existing course portfolio using the Falmouth Curriculum Ladder for Sustainability (FCL-S) framework approach. This year, we have analysed an additional 28 courses (a total of 58 courses complete to date) which helps us generate a comprehensive, consistent and data-informed baseline understanding of how sustainability-lined content is embedded across our curricula. This empowers us to target and design sustainability learning into new and re-approving courses to keep our curriculum current and reflective of the importance of sustainability for education. In 2023, we developed and ran a co-created Ecological Citizenship course in response to the ecological crisis, open to all students and staff. The aim of this course is to nurture creative responses to the climate and ecological predicament faced by us all, in a supportive space which encourages collective learning and creative enquiry and addresses eco-anxiety.

CASE STUDY: Graphic Design

Our revalidated BA Graphic Design course has woven sustainability into three separate learning outcomes, namely:

‘Ethics’ has been created as a learning outcome to position meaningful practice as being critically sensitive to people, nature and planet.

‘Agency’ encourages students to be advocates for their own critical position by developing sustainability-related attributes such as critical thinking, self-awareness and citizenship.

‘Imagine’ is about identifying relevant, authentic opportunities in new and existing markets or societal needs, encouraging students to challenge the boundaries of the discipline and embrace anticipatory thinking for sustainable design futures.

Analysis this year also identified a further five courses that deliver, or will deliver from September 2025, a sustainability-focused module as part of the course, contributing to a total of 30 courses across our portfolio engaging in this mode of delivery of sustainability education, equating to a total of 23% across our provision.

CASE STUDY:

Engaging students in sustainability through practical challenges

In a new cross-department module titled Exploring Sustainability, undergraduate students across Cornwall Business School created 'sustainability guides' for business audiences.

For example:

One guide, aimed at local authorities, emphasised the role of funding and supporting community festivals to foster social and community sustainability.

Another guide offered insights for consumers interested in adopting sustainable food shopping and consumption habits, encouraging informed choices and conscious practices.

A third guide targeted UK farm owners and managers, focusing on strategies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture. The guide provided actionable suggestions to inspire sustainable behavioural and attitudinal shifts in farming.

These guides empowered students to apply sustainability principles, addressing real-world audiences and issues within various sectors.

CASE STUDY:

'Sustaining a Practice'

This new module, shared across MA Fine Art, MA Illustration: Authorial Practice and MA Photography, aims to deepen students' theoretical awareness of contexts associated with discipline interfaces with wider social, cultural, political and ecological issues, and in doing so explore ideas, methods and processes of embedding an art-based professional practice within contemporary culture.



Goal 3

Ensure graduates leave Falmouth with an increased awareness of sustainability

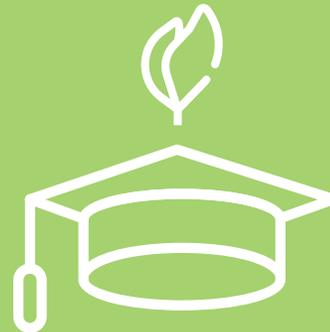
The presence of sustainability themes in course documentation is a useful measure of the visibility of sustainability to learners and correlates well with their level of awareness.

Analysis of the formal course approval documentation from the 27 validated or revalidated courses this year identified a total of 717 individual references to our core sustainability themes aligned in the FCL-S (previous reported). Of note was an increase in references to our 'Social Justice & Equality' themes, which were specifically identified 103 times, an improvement of approximately 50% of the same theme coverage the previous academic year. This year, 23 of those courses analysed evidenced sustainability in some way which, when combined with our previous years' total, makes 66 courses or just over 50% of our portfolio evidencing at least one core sustainability theme through their formal course documentation. Looking forward in delivering on our new targets, that focus on increasing the breadth of key sustainability themes in our curricula and growing the number of assessments and projects with local partners and industry will help us identify courses in need of improvement, development or support.

Goal 4

Ensure that students understand the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Although an area of change and development moving forward, for completeness we note that this goal was deprioritised to focus on the gain of goals 1 – 3 above which were a better use of the resource and attention in establishing long-term initiatives (goals 2 and 3) and impact measurement at scale (goal 1). This was also partially because the articulation of goal 4 was specifically about timebound campaigns and pledges, meaning other adjacent work such as an SDG-focused workshop for BA Illustration Level 4 students would not formally qualify as progress against the goal as articulated, despite being work with value. Improvements for the next reporting cycle will better capture the breadth of this and linked work in a more sensitive way to capture a more representative picture.



Theme 2: Environment & Operations

Goal 1

Achieve reductions in scope 1 and 2 emissions in order to reach net zero by 2040

This year we are pleased to report that our campuses have achieved a 5.5% reduction in our absolute scope 1 and 2 emissions from 2,247.5 tCO₂e to 2,127.28 tCO₂e (tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent).

Reviewing our carbon emissions based on gross internal area (CO₂e per m²) against a 2005/2006 baseline, Penryn Campus has now seen a 61% reduction, and Falmouth Campus a 67% reduction – significantly ahead of our target of a 50% reduction by 2025.

Our work to reduce the carbon impact of our estates continues steadily. Initiatives include:

- LED lighting upgrades: these have been completed in the Peter Lanyon building and are ongoing in AMATA. These upgrades are expected to lower carbon emissions by approximately 12 tCO₂e annually.
- Solar panel installations: additional solar photovoltaic (PV) systems were fitted at new locations, including the Peter Lanyon building and AMATA. These installations are projected to generate around 805 MWh of renewable energy annually, cutting emissions by approximately 169 tCO₂e each year.
- Sub-metering enhancements: installation of over 100 sub-meters has continued this year, providing detailed energy usage data to support future efficiency projects and monitor the effectiveness of implemented initiatives.

Goal 2

Achieve reductions in scope 3 emissions, including those from the supply chain, to reach net zero by 2050

Overall, Scope 3 carbon emissions have seen a significant 17% decrease this year to 11,510.2 tCO₂e. This is largely due to a 31% reduction in procurement emissions, from 9,274 to 6,762. Accounting for 50% of total emissions, this decrease significantly impacts our overall carbon footprint. This is from a combined reduction in procurement activities, an increase in local procurement and working with our suppliers on reducing their environmental footprint. We have also done further work on understanding the granularity of our expenditure to ensure that Scope 3 emissions are being accurately allocated to each campus partner.



300 free
reusable cups
given away

Procurement

We are pleased that our responsible procurement strategy continues to deliver sustainability across our supply chain and procurement process.

Each quarterly meeting with our suppliers now includes agenda points on carbon reduction, social value and general sustainability actions. This ensures that we are following up on their progress. As part of these meetings, we also request suppliers to look at what value-added benefits they bring to the contract. This can range from free professional services to workshops for students.

20% of scoring in all tenders is allocated to carbon reduction and social value. This has led to:

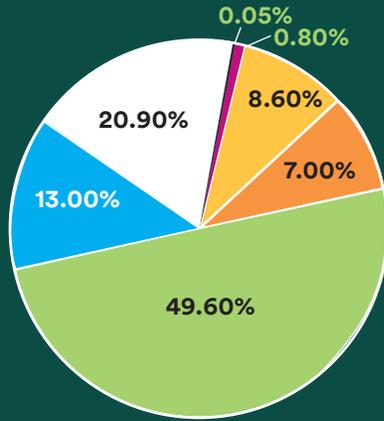
- 76% of our core suppliers now committed to a carbon reduction strategy, a 25% increase on last year
- 90% of our core suppliers committed to a social value strategy, a 20% increase on last year

While our goal was to have 100% of core suppliers enrolled in the NETPositives supplier engagement platform this year (enabling them to create their own sustainability action plans), we're pleased to have reached a strong 90% and are aiming for full participation by 2025.

Keeping it local, an unchanged 37% of our overall supply chain is based in Cornwall and Devon but this jumps to an impressive 87% of our catering and retail suppliers.



The Sustainability
Cafe achieved
accreditation from
the Vegetarian
Society



- Scope 1: 8.60%
- Scope 2: 7.00%
- Procurement: 49.60%
- Travel: commuting, students and staff: 13.00%
- Travel: term time: 20.90%
- Travel: business: 0.80%
- Waste: 0.05%

Travel

The shared campus annual travel survey indicates that this year’s travel emissions are experiencing an upward trend, underscoring a need for action.

To address these challenges, we will be developing a Sustainable Commuting Travel Plan which will focus on three core strategies: enhancing infrastructure, improving service levels and fostering behaviour change through targeted communications. Together, these pillars aim to create long-term improvements in sustainable commuting and mitigate travel-related emissions.



Waste & Recycling

We continue to roll out initiatives designed to drive positive behaviour change. We were the first university to launch the ‘Bin it to Win it’ campaign, featuring ‘smart segregation’ QR codes that incentivise proper recycling with a £1,000 prize for correct waste disposal.

At the start of the year, fridge magnets were distributed to flats in all of our Halls of Residence to promote food waste recycling as part of the new collection scheme.

Our Tetra Pak recycling programme has also expanded, resulting in the recycling of an impressive 14,000 cartons this year.

In partnership with Refactory, we introduced a medicinal blister pack recycling programme on campus, upcycling waste into products like modular furniture and hoarding systems.

Additionally, we collaborated with the BA Robotics course team to recycle vape batteries, giving them a second life powering robot mice models used in coursework.



Goal 3

Improve, meet and exceed environmental legislative and regulatory requirements

Our Environmental Compliance Risk Register and Action Plan serve as a comprehensive inventory to address key legislative requirements, forming the foundation of our Environmental Management System (EMS) compliance framework. These resources are updated annually to reflect any legislative changes, ensuring ongoing alignment with current regulations.

In pursuit of industry best practices, we are exploring ISO 14001 Environmental Management certification, which would provide us with a standardised framework to further enhance our environmental compliance approach.

Goal 4

Maximise the biodiversity of campuses to boost regeneration and carbon sequestration

Following the baselining activities undertaken in previous years, we now understand Penryn Campus' baseline biodiversity value, the opportunities we have to enhance this and the predicted gain in value if we were to implement these.

Research provided by ecological consultants Plan for Ecology Ltd showed that Penryn Campus has 289.18 habitat units, 3.88 river units and 66.53 hedgerow units. We have an opportunity to increase these to 346.46, 5.33 and 73.45 units respectively through the planting of new urban tree species and Cornish hedgerows, improving the quality of our on-site heathland and scrub and creating a waterway management plan.

Theme 3: People & Behaviour



Goal 1

Ensure that all staff and students have a greater awareness of sustainability and the impact we have both as an organisation and as individuals

During the first months of the academic year, our team delivered 'Sustainability at Falmouth' sessions to 585 students. We invited students to consider what sustainability means to them, highlighted some of our achievements from the past year and signposted them to the bespoke resources and events on offer which could help them make a sustainable start to the term.

Over 1,150 sustainability-related handouts were also given out or downloaded, helping educate our community about core sustainability themes, local organisations and opportunities to make a greater positive impact.

We've brought local organisations onto campus, bringing new ideas and voices from outside the institution. These include Fairtrade Falmouth, Beryl Bikes, Kernow Library Of Things and the Railway Partnership.

Five new eco-anxiety facilitators have been trained so they're equipped to support and expand our drop-ins and wider support offer.

In collaboration with the local 'Fairtrade Falmouth' group, we gave away 150 Fairtrade Falmouth Study Well packs to remind students they can "study well and do well" by choosing Fairtrade products during the assessment period.

Our Grounds team delivered a wealth of additional, nature-focused educational events for our campus and local communities, including coordinating butterfly and bird surveys tying into national campaigns like RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch, leading plant and wider biodiversity tours and running a host of bee-themed activities for Penryn Nursery's bee week.

Goal 2

Drive measurable change in staff and student behaviours

This year, our team has hosted engaging sessions for staff and students, helping them make impactful lifestyle changes toward sustainability. With a community-driven approach, we're generating real engagement and driving positive, lasting change.

We've also partnered with external organisations that provide incentives, enhancing engagement and encouraging deeper participation in our sustainability initiatives.

Volunteering taking root

Conservation volunteering is flourishing, with 31 sessions held this year between August 2023 and July 2024, attended by 236 participants – double the attendance from the previous year.

Swap Shop success: 300% more carbon saved

Building on our original 'Swap Shop', we delivered three campaigns across the past year, spanning a combined period of seven weeks, delivered on both of our campuses. To date, we estimate:

- Over 2 tonnes of carbon emissions avoided – the equivalent of four grand pianos in weight
- Redistribution of at least 1,049 items
- Over 300 kg of items reused, reducing waste and resource consumption

In total, around 1,100 staff and students engaged, embracing secondhand options to cut waste and save money while fostering a culture of resource-sharing on campus.

On your bike

To promote active travel, we distributed 1,000 free, 30-minute Beryl Bike ride codes to staff and students during the Welcome period. Data from Beryl shows that 1,869 journeys were made by our staff and students on Beryl Bikes over the year, with Penryn's two bike bays ranking among the most popular in the Falmouth and Penryn service area. On average, riders covered 1.3 miles per journey. This is a promising start in reducing travel emissions, even as our Scope 3 targets remind us that there's more to do.

Sustrans free bike repair and maintenance stalls

Through our ongoing collaboration with Sustrans, we hosted six free bike repair, maintenance and security-tagging days throughout the year. These events not only serviced 12-15 bikes per day and tagged an additional 5-7 per day, but also sparked conversations around sustainable travel, helping more of our campus community adopt active travel options.

Plant-based diets and food initiatives

In support of Veganuary, we teamed up with the Catering team on initiatives to highlight the environmental benefits of plant-based eating and encourage positive changes in dietary habits. By subsidising a vegan meal option on two days that month, we saw vegan meal sales surge – selling out on one day and experiencing a sixfold increase on another compared to the previous week.

13 eco-anxiety drop-ins run across the year

We have continued to run our 'Breathing Space' drop-in events for our community, providing welcoming and inclusive spaces held by trained facilitators that aim to help attendees understand eco-anxiety, how they can use it for good and connect with other likeminded people. Although only a modest number of attendees have engaged with the initiative – 25 throughout the year – attendees are reporting positive changes in their awareness, agency and connectedness as a result of the events, moving away from feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty, and leaving with increased motivation and optimism.



TRACKING OUR PROGRESS				
Theme 2: Environment & Operations	Goal 1	Percentage reduction in total scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions per m ² compared to our 2005/06 baseline	Penryn Campus 61% Falmouth Campus 67%	Green
	Goal 1	Penryn Campus total Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions per m ²	36.4 kgCO ₂ e/m ²	
	Goal 1	Falmouth Campus total Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions per m ²	21.4 kgCO ₂ e/m ²	Green
	Goal 1	Total Scope 1 & 2 carbon emissions	2,127.28 tCO ₂ e	Green
	Goal 2	Total Scope 3 carbon emissions	13,769 tCO ₂ e	Green
	Goal 2	Proportion of total supply chain that is local (Cornwall & Devon-based companies)	37%	Amber
	Goal 2	Proportion of food and drink suppliers that are local (Cornwall and Devon-based companies)	87%	Green
	Goal 2	Total waste generated	237.51	N/A
	Goal 2	Total recycling	70.88	N/A
	Goal 2	Average recycling rate	34.2%	N/A
	Goal 2	Total food waste recycled	10.5	N/A
	Goal 4	Estimated number of bees supported by the wildflower areas across Penryn Campus, per day	N/A	N/A
Theme 3: People & Behaviour	Goal 1 & 2	Total number of engagement events	90	Green



FALMOUTH UNIVERSITY

