**Staff and student sustainability engagement strategy (2025 – 2030)**

**Introduction and aim:**

The University of Surrey is aiming to reduce its negative sustainability impacts and develop positive sustainability action across all areas of activity. Using the UN Sustainable Development Goals, sustainability is being embedded into each of the University’s [8 core policies](https://www.surrey.ac.uk/about/policies-and-procedures). Separate delivery plans are being developed to ensure tangible changes take place in each area.

Our staff and students all play a key role in ensuring the University meets its ambitious sustainability aims. Engagement and communication play a significant part in ensuring our community feels empowered to take action and join the University’s sustainability journey.

**Communication and engagement objectives:**

Over the next 5 years we want to develop a sustainable culture that *informs, encourages and enables* staff and students to take and support action on sustainability. We will do this by:

* Creating a ‘Sustainable Surrey’ identity through a major University-wide campaign, identifying key messages and making the University’s key sustainability areas visible.
* Enabling our staff and students to take a range of sustainable action in order to raise awareness and normalise a sustainable culture.

**Key areas:**

The University’s Sustainability Team is working closely with a variety of key stakeholders across the University to action key areas. These include, but are not limited to:

* Net zero carbon
* Circular economy (waste and procurement)
* Catering
* Biodiversity
* Water
* IT
* Careers

The Sustainability Team will continue to work with respective teams to ensure effective communication and engagement of the sustainability actions taking place within these key areas.

**Engagement and communication baseline:**

From 2022/2023 to 2024/2025, attendance at sustainability events and activities has been tracked. Within this timespan, a total of 3,475 staff and students have been actively involved in sustainability activity. This represents a small percentage of the University’s total population (circa 18,000):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic year** | **No. of sustainable events/activities organised** | **Total no. of staff/students engaged** |
| 2022-2023 | 11 | 673 |
| 2023-2024 | 48 | 1157 |
| 2024-2025 | 76 | 1645 |

*Action: Sustainability Team to continue to track staff/student engagement with sustainability events and activities via monitoring attendance and using surveys.*

Data from Sustainable Surrey’s various media channels continues to highlight the current limited reach of sustainability messages and engagement. The development of a University-wide sustainability campaign, in collaboration with the University’s communications and marketing teams, will seek to change this:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Academic year** | **Sustainable Surrey Channel** | **Followers** |
| 23/24 | Instagram | 1441 |
| X (twitter) | 758 |
| Newsletter | 227 |
| 24/25 | Instagram | 1646 |
| X (twitter) | 701 |
| Tik Tok | 64 |
| Newsletter | 470 |

*Action: Sustainability Team to monitor engagement rates across all Sustainable Surrey channels throughout 25/26 to establish a baseline.*

**Target audience:**

All staff and students should feel a part of the ‘Sustainable Surrey’ culture. Although we want to engage with all internal staff and students, we realise that bespoke campaigns and activities will need to be developed to reach different groups within our diverse community.

**Potential channels:**

The University has a range of communication channels to utilise. These include, but are not limited to:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Channel** | **Details** | **Target audience** |
| Sustainability social media | InstagramXTik tok | University students actively interested in sustainability |
| Sustainability newsletter | Monthly email to staff and students who have signed up | University staff and students actively interested in sustainability |
| University website | Sustainability webpages | Current and prospective University staff and students |
| University intranets | SurreyNet for staffMySurrey for students | All University staff and students |
| University newsletters | Staff briefingMySurrey for students Accommodation newsletter | All University staff and studentsStudents living in University accommodation |
| University social media | Instagram (including student focused account @surreystudent)XTik tokLinkedInYoutube | Current and prospective staff and students Alumni |

**Action plan for 2025-2026:**

The following plan sets out key engagement and communication actions, as well as their KPIs (targets), for the 2025/2026 academic year:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Dates** | **Activity** | **Target audience** | **Key area** | **KPI** | **Budget** | **Owner** |
| Ongoing | **Sustainable labs:** All University labs taking part in LEAF (mandatory) | Lab staff + students | Net zero carbonCircular Economy | All labs achieved LEAF bronze award by 26/27Increase number of labs with LEAF silver + gold awards by end of 25/26 | Yes | Anna Roberts |
| Ongoing | **Website:** Updated sustainability website to integrate SDGs | Current + prospective staff/students | All areas | Updated sustainability pages by end of 25/26Increased traffic and engagement with website by end of 25/26 | No | Charlotte Discombe / Martin Wiles / Nathalie Hinds |
| May2025toSeptember2026 | **Pilot Sustainability Impact Plans (SIPs):** Support first two departments in creating bespoke sustainability plans  | GSA + vet school staff/students | All areas | GSA and vet school create their own SIPs by end of 25/26 | Yes | Martin Wiles |
| May 2025 toJanuary 2026 | **Green Impact:** Webinars and support for teams from SustainabilityAwards ceremony  | Current staff | All areas | Increase the number of departments taking part by January 2026 | Yes | Charlotte Discombe |
| May 2025 onwards | **Staff inductions:** In-person inductionsCreation of ‘how to’ guidesRefreshed online mini-module | New and current staff members | All areas  | All new staff members to continue to receive sustainability inductionCreate at least 5 ‘how to’ guides to be shared with staff by end of 25/26Increase number of staff taking mini-module by end of 25/26 | Yes | CharlotteDiscombe |
| September2025 onwards | **Overarching sustainability campaign:** Develop campaign plan during Summer 2025Launch first part of campaign across campus Oct/Nov 2025 | All staff and students | All areas | Measure engagement to create initial baseline by end of 25/26 Expand campaign into 26/27 | Yes | Charlotte Discombe / Martin Wiles / Kate Bailey |
| September2025toMarch 2026 | **Sustainability Mark:**Present at SU conferences and standingsSustainability to support societies/clubs in completing actions for Sustainability Mark awardAwards presented at Union and Colours Ball | Student Societies/Clubs | All areas | Increase the number of societies taking part by March 2026 |  Yes | Charlotte Discombe / VP Community |
| October2025toFebruary 2026 | **Student induction:** Sustainability included in in-person course inductions (including policy, strategy + engagement opportunities)Updated information in welcome booklets and student channelsPresence at Freshers and Re-freshers FairRefreshed online mini-module and Global Graduate Award in sustainability | All students | All areas | All students to receive in person sustainability induction by February 2026Increased number of students taking part in mini-module and Global Graduate Award by February 2026 | Yes | CharlotteDiscombe |
| October 2025toMarch 2026 | **Waste + energy engagement:** Implementation of more food waste and mixed recycling bins, plus signageMonthly pop-ups run by student volunteersEngagement campaign in University accommodationDevelopment of student-led social media contentInvolvement in national campaigns – including Love Food Hate Waste, Recycling Week and Energy Saving Week | All staff and students  | Net zero carbonCircular economy | Increase in recycling rates and reduction in energy consumption across the University by end of 25/26 | Yes | Charlotte Discombe / Energy Team |
| October2025February 2026March 2026 | **Sustainability Assemblies:** One assembly organised per term covering a key sustainability topic | All staff and students | TBC | Increase number of staff/students attending assemblies by March 2026 | Yes | CharlotteDiscombe |

This strategy document, including the action plan, will be reviewed and updated annually by the Sustainability Awareness Coordinator. Communication and engagement progress will be added to this plan and the University’s annual Sustainability Report.

*Next review deadline: June 2026.*