

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](#). 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 is educated in sustainable development, feel 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 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 20% engagement 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

During the 2025-2026 academic year, the number of sustainable activities increased to 79, engaging a total of 1907. This illustrates a 14% increase in staff/student engagement in comparison to the previous year.

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

During the 25/26 academic year, the Sustainability Team made the decision to stop using X (twitter) as part of its communication strategy. Focus has been on utilising Instagram (1959 followers) and Tik Tok (139 followers) which collectively has seen a 23% increase in following on the previous year.

Action: Sustainability Team to continue to monitor engagement rates across all Sustainable Surrey channels.

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	Instagram Tik 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 staff MySurrey for students	All University staff and students
University newsletters	Staff briefing MySurrey for students Accommodation newsletter	All University staff and students Students living in University accommodation
University social media	Instagram (including student focused account @surreystudent) Tik tok LinkedIn Youtube	Current and prospective staff and students Alumni

Action plan:

The following plan sets out key engagement and communication actions, as well as their KPIs (targets). This will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure actions are not only being met, but are updated each year with progress:

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 carbon Circular Economy	All applicable labs achieved LEAF bronze award by end of 26/27 Increase number of labs with LEAF silver + gold awards by end of 26/27	Yes	Anna Roberts
Ongoing	Website: Updated sustainability website to integrate SDGs	Current + prospective staff/students	All areas	Updated sustainability pages by end of 2026 Increased traffic and engagement with website by end of 26/27	No	Charlotte Discombe / Martin Wiles
Ongoing	Pilot Sustainability Impact Plans (SIPs):	GSA + vet school staff/ students	All areas	GSA create and action their own SIP by end of 26/27	Yes	Martin Wiles

	Support first two departments in creating bespoke sustainability plans					
May 2026 to January 2027	Green Impact: Webinars and support for teams Awards ceremony	Current staff	All areas	Run 2 Green Impact webinars during 26/27 cycle Organise an awards ceremony at the end of the 26/27 cycle	Yes	Charlotte Discombe
June 2026 onwards	Staff inductions: In-person inductions Creation of 'how to' guides Refreshed online mini-module	New and current staff members	All areas	Launch refreshed mini-module by end of 2026. Create a sustainability induction animation to be shown during in person staff inductions by end of 26/27. Integrate 3 'how to' guides within the sustainability campaign by end of 26/27.	Yes	Charlotte Discombe
September 2026 onwards	Overarching sustainability campaign: Launch full campaign in 26/27 Create plan to develop campaign into future years	All staff and students	All areas	Put up campaign OOH across campus to ensure physical presence by end of 2026. Launch and run campaign, focusing on at least 3 key areas during 26/27 academic year. Measure initial engagement to expand campaign into 27/28.	Yes	Charlotte Discombe / Martin Wiles / Kate Bailey
September 2026 to March 2027	Sustainability Mark: Present at SU conferences and standings	Student Societies/ Clubs	All areas	Increase the number of societies taking part by March 2027	Yes	Charlotte Discombe / VP Community

	<p>Sustainability to support societies/clubs in completing actions for Sustainability Mark award</p> <p>Integrate Mark further into SU communications</p> <p>Awards presented at Union and Colours Ball</p>					
<p>October 2026</p> <p>to</p> <p>February 2027</p>	<p>Student induction: Sustainability included in in-person course inductions (including policy, strategy + engagement opportunities)</p> <p>Updated information in welcome booklets and student channels</p> <p>Presence during Welcome Weeks</p> <p>Refreshed online mini-module and Global Graduate Award in sustainability (sustainable futures award)</p>	All students	All areas	<p>Sustainability included in student Welcome comms, including but not limited to the Welcome Magazine from September 2026</p> <p>New sustainability induction animation in all student Welcome and Welcome Back talks by September 2026.</p> <p>Launch new online mini-module by end of 2026.</p>	Yes	Charlotte Discombe
<p>October 2026</p> <p>to</p> <p>March 2027</p>	<p>Waste + energy engagement: Implementation of more food waste and mixed recycling bins, plus signage</p>	All staff and students	<p>Net zero carbon</p> <p>Circular economy</p>	<p>Create at least one waste installation in high footfall area by end of 2026</p> <p>Create at least 4 student-led social media videos on waste +</p>	Yes	Charlotte Discombe / Waste Team / Energy Team

	<p>Regular pop-ups run by student volunteers</p> <p>Engagement campaign in University accommodation</p> <p>Development of student-led social media content</p> <p>Involvement in national campaigns – including Love Food Hate Waste, Recycling Week and Energy Saving Week</p>			<p>energy-saving behaviours by end of 26/27</p> <p>Run at least 2 waste + energy pop-ups per term from September 2026</p>		
<p>October 2026</p> <p>February 2027</p> <p>March 2027</p>	<p>Sustainability Assemblies:</p> <p>One assembly organised per term covering a key sustainability topic</p>	All staff and students	TBC	Increase number of staff/students attending assemblies by March 2027	Yes	Charlotte Discombe
July 2026 onwards	<p>Sustainable career development for students:</p> <p>Provide more opportunities for students to develop their career skills within the sustainability sector</p>	Students	All areas	<p>Provide 2 students with placement opportunity with the team from July 2026 onwards</p> <p>Develop sustainable volunteering network for students from September 2026</p> <p>Provide students with one volunteering opportunity with team per month from September 2026</p>	Yes	Charlotte Discombe

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.

Latest review: 21 May 2026

Next review deadline: June 2027.