



BIRMINGHAM CITY  
University

**Birmingham City University:**

# **Environmental Sustainability Communications and Engagement Strategy 2021/22 - 2025/26**



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# Introduction

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As described in Birmingham City University's (BCU) Strategy 2025, our mission is to be the 'University for Birmingham' and to work with individuals to enable them to transform their lives and to achieve their potential. Environmental Sustainability is one of the three measures of success for this mission:

*By 2025 all university decisions at main governance committees will explicitly address sustainability. All staff will have completed awareness training. All courses will have been assessed for sustainability using the Sustainable Development Goals.*

BCU's Teaching and Learning Enhancement Strategy 2020-25 recognises environmental sustainability as a core priority, and our curriculum plays a vital part in ensuring we work with our students to create sustainable futures.

Our Environmental Plan 2020-25 has a vision that each and every one of our students and staff understands the principles of sustainability, and this strategy is key in supporting the achievement of that vision. The Environmental Plan has three main objectives, of which this strategy supports all, but in particular the third objective in creating a green culture:

1. Embedding sustainability in our processes
2. Reducing the environmental impacts of our operations
3. Creating a green culture within BCU, locally and globally

BCU has an ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS). Communications, competence and awareness are key elements of our EMS and this strategy will support these, as well as the EMS as a whole.

Our Environmental Policy includes a commitment to '*Deliver environmental training and communications to students and staff, and where appropriate, our suppliers and contractors, to ensure good environmental performance and awareness.*'

The aim of this strategy is to raise awareness and change behaviours across the University and beyond to support the environmental agenda. It establishes our approach to communicating environmental messages and engaging with key stakeholders.

# Key Stakeholders

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- Staff:
  - All staff
  - Environmental Champions
  - Academics (sustainable curriculum network)
  - Professional Services staff
  - Marketing and Communications Team
  - Union – UCU
  - RIE and STEAMhouse
- Students:
  - All students
  - Faculty/School level engagement
  - School Reps
  - Earth Society
- Students' Union
- Visitors
- Partner organisations
- Local community
- Suppliers

Our Log of Interested Parties provides further details of key stakeholders and how we communicate with them.



# Communication Channels

Our current communication channels include:

- Written and digital communications
  - Tiger Today
  - Student newsletter
  - Emails
  - Website
  - iCity
  - SU channels
  - Graduate+ channels
  - Student Success Advisor channels
  - Earth Society social media
  - BCU social media
  - BCU Environmental Team Instagram account
  - Environmental Team mailing list
- MS Teams groups
  - Environmental Champions
  - Sustainable Students
  - Earth Society
  - Bicycle User Group
  - Hedgehog Friendly Campus
  - Education for Sustainable Development
- Signage
  - Digital screens
  - Fixed signs
  - Posters
- Events
  - Welcome Week
  - Go Green Week
  - Waste Awareness Week
  - Travel events e.g. Dr Bike sessions
- Workshops
- Meetings
- Presentations
- Training



# Calendar of Key Activities

The table below shows the environmental themed events and communications at Birmingham City University in the 2023/2024 academic year, some of which are related to national and international campaigns.

Each year we run a series of communications and activities that follow a similar format to the calendar of events below, and the university is continuously planning for engagement activities for future years.

■ BCU-led activities

■ Wider campaigns

MONTH	ACTIVITY	MONTH	ACTIVITY
September			World Water Day
October	Welcome Week		Food Waste Action Week
November	Measure My Carbon Footprint Seminar	March	Measure My Carbon Footprint Seminar
	Donut Economics Seminar		Donut Economics Seminar
	Climate Awareness Seminar		Climate Awareness Seminar
	Environmental Leadership Programme		Environmental Leadership Programme
December	Christmas Switch-Off		Waste Awareness Week
January	Veganuary	April	International Day for Biological Diversity
	FareShare Food Parcel Volunteering		Bioblitz
February	Fairtrade Fortnight	May	Hedgehog Awareness Week
	Sustainable Food Competition	June	Bike Week
	Canal and River Trust Litter Pick	July	Plastic Free July

# Current Engagement Initiatives

## Environmental Champions network

We have an Environmental Champions network, which includes staff from a range of disciplines and departments from across the University. We have an Environmental Champions meeting at least three times a year and have a very active Microsoft Teams group.

The Environmental Representative for the University and College Union is also one of our Environmental Champions, enabling input in the environmental management and steer at the University.



## Embedding Sustainability into the Curriculum training course

To ensure that staff are supported and able to fulfil this responsibility, the Education Development Service and Environmental Team worked in partnership to co-create a brand new accredited 'Embedding Sustainability into the Curriculum' course for staff. The course is the first of its kind and is accredited by the Staff and Educational Development Association (SEDA).

The course aims to support colleagues to embed sustainability in the curriculum of their individual courses and faculties, giving participants the knowledge and skills to support implementation of sustainability priorities aligned with the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## Embedding sustainability into academic quality assurance processes

We have embedded sustainability into a number of academic quality assurance processes including:

- The Periodic Review, a formal review of all of our courses every five years;
- The course approval form for every new course that is developed or existing courses that have a significant change.

## Environmental Committee

Our Environmental Committee meets three times per annum and addresses issues relating to all environmental areas including the Environmental Management System, energy and carbon management and travel planning. The Committee helps to develop and review our environmental policy, objectives and targets. The Committee is formed of key members of staff from across the University, has student representation and the Environmental Representative for the University and College Union is a member.

# Current Engagement Initiatives

## Policy/strategy/process change

The Environmental Team attends a variety of meetings to influence policy, strategy and process change across BCU. Some examples are listed below:

- Procurement Team meetings
- Biological Safety Committee
- CEBE Health and Safety Committee
- Engineering Team meetings
- Space Management/Environment catch ups
- Capital Project catch ups
- Commercial Services meetings
- Environmental Manager/Vice Chancellor catch ups
- Waste Contract review meetings
- Catering Contract meetings
- Development Team meetings

We also influence ad-hoc policy, strategy and process change, for example IT strategy development, business case approval processes and ethical investment policy development.

## Staff Environmental Awareness Training

Staff Environmental Awareness Training is available to all staff members and is mandatory for new starters. It can be accessed via the Learning module on ERP.

## EMS Training

As part of the EMS we have developed specific training about spills and waste documentation, to ensure that staff are competent in their roles. Ad hoc training and awareness raising is also delivered, for example water efficiency information for Facilities staff.

## NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool

We use the NETpositive tool to facilitate sustainability related engagement with our suppliers. The tool enables suppliers to develop a sustainability action plan in line with our environmental, sustainability and institutional objectives, which can be monitored and measured.



# Current Engagement Initiatives

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## Hedgehog Friendly Campus

We are taking part in the Hedgehog Friendly Campus scheme, a national initiative to support universities to help hedgehogs thrive. We achieved Silver accreditation in 2022 and are working towards Gold by completing actions from the online toolkit including installing hedgehog houses and carrying out hedgehog surveys. We have an active Microsoft Teams group.



## Bicycle User Group

We have set up a Bicycle User Group (BUG) for staff and students. We have an active Microsoft Teams group and hope to do on campus activities when possible. The BUG is a place to share information and offer support to BCU staff and student cyclists, and potential cyclists. The Group discuss cycling-related issues, including advice on commuting, leisure routes, facilities and events.

## Travel events

Throughout the year we may run specific travel events, generally related to cycling. These include Dr Bike maintenance sessions and cycle safety and security stalls, selling discounted D-locks.

## Accommodation induction

All students staying in students halls undertake an online induction, which includes a section on 'Your Environment'. This has been developed by the Environmental Team and is reviewed annually.

# Mapping current communication methods and engagement initiatives

ENVIRONMENTAL PLAN AREA	CURRENT ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES	AUDIENCE / STAKEHOLDERS
Environmental Management System	Environmental Committee	Environmental Committee
	Various meetings as described above	Specific staff
Procurement	Fairtrade Fortnight	Staff, students and local community
	Procurement Team meetings	Procurement Team
	NETpositive Supplier Engagement Tool	Suppliers
Projects and other processes	Various meetings as described above	Specific staff
Biodiversity	Hedgehog Friendly Campus	Staff, students and local community
	International Day for Biological Diversity	Staff and students
Catering	Fairtrade Fortnight	Staff, students and local community
	Veganuary	Staff and students
	Food Waste Action Week	Staff and students
	Catering Contract meetings	Specific staff
Energy and carbon	Christmas switch-off	Staff and students
	Engineering Team meetings	Specific staff
Environmental management and compliance	EMS training	Specific staff
	Biological Safety Committee	Specific staff
	CEBE Health and Safety Committee	Specific staff
Sustainable buildings	Capital Project catch ups	Specific staff
Transport	Travel events	Staff and students
	Bike Week	Staff and students
	Bicycle user Group	Staff and students
Waste and recycling	Food Waste Action Week	Staff and students
	Plastic Free July	Staff and students
	Waste Contract review meetings	Specific staff and contractors
	Waste Awareness Week	Staff and students
Water	World Water Day	Staff and students
	Engineering Team meetings	Specific staff
Curriculum	Embedding Sustainability into the Curriculum training course	Specific staff
	Embedding Sustainability into academic quality assurance processes	Specific staff
Engagement, communication and training	Environmental Champions network	Environmental Champions
	Welcome Week	Students
	Sustainable Christmas tips	Staff and students
	Go Green Week	Staff, students and local community
	Staff environmental awareness training	Staff
	EMS training	Specific staff
	Go Green at Graduate+ Week	Students
	Accommodation induction	Students
Community partnerships	Research activity	Led by other areas of BCU

## Resources

We have an annual budget for engagement activities and the Environmental Officer coordinates these. The whole Environmental Team is involved with wider communications and engagement.

# Action Plan

The following action plan outlines how we will continue to deliver, develop and evolve environmental communications and engagement at BCU, to further involve and educate our students, staff and partners.

ACTION	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	MONITORING
Review and update environmental webpages						Environmental Officer	Time	Website updated at least yearly to ensure information is up-to-date
Update environmental iCity pages						Environmental Officer	Time	Pages updated every two years to ensure links are up-to-date
Pilot of Carbon Awareness training						Environmental Officer	Time and budget	Trial completed and at least 20 people trained
Roll out Carbon Awareness training programme if pilot successful						Environmental Officer	Time and budget	Programme launched and delivered. At least 50 people trained each year
Support Graduate+ Week to incorporate environmental activities						Environmental Officer	Time and budget	Environmental elements included in Graduate+ Week
Develop Graduate+ SDG activities						Environmental Officer Graduate+ Team	Significant time	SDG activities developed
Set up environmental team social media account						Environmental Officer Student placements	Time	Completed - Instagram account set up October 2021
Run social media account						Environmental Officer Student placements	Time	Regular posts and followers increase each year
Develop improved recycling signage and campaign						Facilities Manager (Contracts)	Time and budget	Signage installed and improvements to recycling contamination
Investigate Student Sustainability Ambassador programme options						Environmental Officer	Time Potentially budget	Options reviewed and decision made on whether to/how to proceed with programme

Action plan continued

ACTION	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	RESPONSIBILITY	RESOURCES	MONITORING
Pilot a University wide environmental engagement programme that incorporates an online platform						Environmental Officer	Time and significant budget	Pilot completed
Roll out engagement programme if pilot successful						Environmental Officer	Time and significant budget	Programme launched and delivered
Promote SDG teach-in						Environmental Officer	Time	Communications delivered and BCU staff take part in teach-in
Zero carbon journey campaign						Environmental Team	Time and budget	Campaign launched and delivered
Student Switch-off engagement scheme at University Locks						University Locks staff	Time and budget	Scheme launched and delivered and positive feedback received from students
Develop energy saving campaign						Environmental Officer Energy Manager	Time	Campaign launched and delivered
Investigate potential to make funds available for student or staff led sustainability projects						Environmental Officer Environmental Manager	Time and budget	Decision made on whether we have the resources available

# Monitoring, reporting and governance

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The Environmental Officer has oversight of ongoing monitoring and management of the Environmental Communications and Engagement Strategy. The Strategy is used to develop a communications calendar for each academic year. This calendar includes a description of the activity/event, the exact dates, and the type of engagement e.g., event, article or social media. Details of key communications, activities and events are recorded in a Communications Log. The Environmental Officer has monthly meetings with a member of the Communications Team, where previous and upcoming communications and engagement activities are discussed.

Progress against the strategy will be included in the annual Environmental Report and progress on key areas will be reported at the Environmental Committee meetings. The Strategy will be reviewed and updated on a yearly basis.

