BIRMINGHAM CITY University

2025/26

Sustainable Development Goals at BCU

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What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 global goals established under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. They provide a shared framework for addressing the world's most pressing current global, social, environmental, and economic challenges shaping our future. The SDGs recognise that global issues such as poverty, climate change, and inequality are deeply interconnected, and that meaningful progress cannot be achieved unless each goal is considered alongside its impact on the others. As a result, the goals encourage continued collaboration between governments, organisations, universities, communities, and individuals. Universities play a crucial role in helping to advance the SDGs through their teaching, research, and active engagement with communities. By embedding sustainable practices into everyday operations and academic activities, higher education institutions help prepare current and future generations with the understanding and skills needed to tackle the SDGs.

Embedding sustainability across the institution

This report will provide a detailed account of Birmingham City University's (BCU) efforts to advance each of the 17 SDGs. Drawing on a wide range of initiatives, research, and operational practices, the report demonstrates how BCU is embedding sustainability across the institution. While many initiatives contribute to multiple SDGs, each has been assigned to the goal to which it is most closely aligned. The report highlights examples from teaching, research, community engagement, and campus operations, showing how staff, students, and partners are working together to create meaningful impact locally, nationally, and globally.

1 NO POVERTY





SDG1

No poverty

Bottom Financial Quintile Admissions

BCU has a strong commitment to widening participation from disadvantaged backgrounds, with 45% of its students coming from the most deprived neighbourhoods (IMD Quintile 1) and 32% of young full-time entrants having been eligible for Free School Meals. We specifically target access for students in the most deprived areas of the UK in the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Report 2024/25. Our Access and Participation Plan sets out objectives to support and increase participation and success among disadvantaged groups, providing clear evidence of strategic intent and action. Birmingham City University is ranked 7th in the UK for social mobility for economically disadvantaged graduates (Social Mobility Index).

Bottom Financial Quintile Success

We focus on student outcomes for the most deprived 20% of students through our publicly available Access and Participation Plans and Transparency Reports. The proportion of students achieving a 2:1 or above increased from 47.5% in 2023/24 to 64.1% in 2024/25. The University has specific targets for disadvantaged students, including improving completion rates for young male students eligible for free school meals from 81% to above 86%, as well as improving completion rates for socio-economically disadvantaged mature students from 80% to above 83% by 2027/28.

Low Income Student Support

BCU provides support for students experiencing financial hardship. Through financial support systems such as child care, financial assistance fund, access to a food pantry and others, BCU is positioned to assist any students where financial difficulties could affect their continuation or completion of study. The financial assistance fund is specifically designed to assist students at risk of not successfully completing their academic term due to funding shortfalls, including emergency financial support and intervention to prevent withdrawal from higher education. Awards can include direct financial payments, travel passes and food vouchers. The University also offers impartial advice and guidance through the Money and Childcare Advice team, such as one-to-one meetings and publicly available resources such as guidance on Lifelong Learning Entitlement (LLE), and financial planning. Our Period Dignity Scheme focuses on ensuring bathrooms around the University have period products readily and freely available. This is important as many students may not be able to afford period products.

Bottom Financial Quintile Student Support

We provide dedicated financial support to students from disadvantaged and lower income backgrounds through a range of hardship and widening participation initiatives. The Accelerate Scholarship is aimed at eligible students from Participation of Local Areas, Version 4 (POLAR4) quintile 1 at the point of application, or from POLAR4 quintile 2 with an additional criterion, such as being the first in the family to go to university. Accelerate aims to provide financial assistance alongside opportunities that support student success and progression, helping to reduce financial barriers to higher education participation.



SDG1

No poverty

Low or Lower-Middle Income Countries Student Support

BCU provides financial support schemes that help reduce barriers to higher education for student from lower-income countries. We offer £5,000 International Undergraduate Scholarships to self funding international undergraduate students enrolling on eligible full-time degree programmes, lowering the overall cost of university education for international students. We also offer assistance with living and travel costs through initiatives such as the BCU Travel Pass Scheme. Eligible students receive a free West Midlands travel pass for their first year of study, worth up to £750, helping to reduce transport costs and improve access to campus and student services.

Local Start-Up Assistance

We offer extensive support for local business start-ups through dedicated entrepreneurship programmes, mentoring, training, and access to enterprise facilities. The Birmingham Skills for Enterprise and Employability Network (BSEEN) programme offers aspiring entrepreneurs in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area a free 12-month start-up support package that includes tailored mentoring, a business skills bootcamp, and a free co-working space within the Student Enterprise Hub at STEAMhouse. BCU's STEAMhouse Hatchery Programme supports students and recent graduates in developing viable businesses through expert guidance, peer collaboration, business model development, and access to resources and facilities designed to help transform ideas into sustainable enterprises. The University's wider entrepreneurship ecosystem includes programmes such as the Female Founders Programme that brings female founders from across the Greater Birmingham area to attend workshops and develop their businesses.

Local Start-Up Financial Assistance

Financial assistance and investment opportunities is offered to support the creation and growth of sustainable local businesses. Through the Future Founders Fund, students and graduates can access up to £25,000 in investment, alongside mentorship and enterprise support to help develop viable business ventures from concept to launch. The BSEEN programme provides free co-operative working spaces for student and recent graduates within the Greater Birmingham and Solihull area. The Hatchery programme provides guidance from business experts, where current students and recent graduates compete for a monetary prize to support the launch of their own business. In 2024, BCU secured £775,000 from the Regional Innovation Fund to enhance support for local businesses, enabling companies to prototype ideas, collaborate with researchers, access specialist equipment, and accelerate business growth across the region.





SDG1

No poverty

Programmes for Services Access

We deliver programmes that improve access to health services and support healthier communities. Through its Public Health Research Centre, BCU works with the NHS, local authorities, and local communities to develop interventions that reduce health inequality, preventing disease and improving quality of life, particularly for minority ethnic populations that may be financially disadvantaged. BCU also supports the Community and Cultural Immersion Programme. Developed with community organisations, schools, and Birmingham City Council's Public Health Team. The programme aims to reduce barriers to healthcare access, enabling healthcare practitioners and researchers to spend time within local communities to improve understanding of diverse populations to better provide accessible, inclusive, and appropriate healthcare. Much of East Birmingham is among the top 20% most deprived areas in England; the University is partnered with Birmingham City Council on the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy to research how to overcome barriers around employment, health, local infrastructure and green spaces.

Policy Addressing Poverty

We contribute to policy development and implementation aimed at reducing poverty and tackling socio-economic disadvantage at local and regional levels. The University's Access and Participation Plan identifies poverty, deprivation, educational disadvantage, and social mobility as key challenges affecting the Birmingham region as a publicly available resource. We also engages civic and regional leaders on issues of economic inequality and social mobility. BCU's Vice-Chancellor has publicly advocated for coordinated action across government, business, and education sector to address poverty related barriers affecting young people and disadvantaged communities in the region. We work directly with Birmingham City Council to support the East Birmingham Inclusive Growth Strategy to identify priorities related to employment, health, housing, education, and local infrastructure in deprived neighbourhoods. The findings of which are designed to inform local policy and decision-making.



2 ZERO HUNGER





SDG2

Zero hunger

Campus Food Waste Tracking

Working closely with our partner company Veolia, food waste is weighed and collected on a weekly basis from all the catering facilities across the estate. BCU's catering impact resulted in 60 tonnes of food waste sent to recycling in 2025. Annual Environmental Report 2024/25 further supports this, stating that the total waste in all forms handled was 345 tonnes, of which 203 tonnes was converted to energy and 142 tonnes recycled.

Student Food Insecurity and Hunger

We are committed to fighting student food insecurity. Following feedback received from students on how the cost of campus food was affecting their finances, the University introduced 40% off meals and 25% off hot and cold drinks scheme. This gives students who struggle financially access to meals at the University.

Student Hunger Interventions

There are several programmes and initiatives at the University designed to intervene in circumstances where students may be in hunger poverty. The BCU Money Advice and Childcare Team provides a student pantry which offers basic food and hygiene items to students in need. The Emergency Fund is another initiative accessed through a private meeting and is designed to provide financial assistance for essentials such as travel and food. The Financial Assistance Fund is designed to assist students who struggle with finances at University, providing support to prevent financial issues impacting student studies, continuation, and success rates.

Sustainable Food Choices on Campus

Guided by the Sustainable Catering Plan and Targets, we provide sustainable, ethically sourced and local food for staff, students, and visitors across all of our food outlets. This is done by partnering with catering companies that are committed to lessening food production related emissions. There is a concerted effort in pushing plant-based options, by doing this the university lowers the emissions associated with meat production. BCU is committed to animal welfare. All eggs are free range, and all milk and meat products are Red Tractor certified, ensuring companies involved with food distribution meet strict guidelines across food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection. All Fish is MSC certified. Baxter Storey, the catering partner of BCU, states that all farms also have RSPCA assured fresh milk and eggs.

Healthy and Affordable Food Choices

Birmingham City University is committed to providing healthy and affordable food choices to staff and students through multiple in place initiatives and programmes. We have a publicly facing information encouraging healthy eating, stating that seasonal ingredients and balanced meals are central to the services they provide. No promotion of unhealthy foods including soft drinks, high sugar foods, high salt foods, high fat foods and highly processed foods; achieved by BCU policy to not feature such content on any promotional materials or as part of any deals. Furthermore, students have access to 40% off meals and 25% off hot and cold drinks. This gives students who struggle financially access to meals at the university. The University is Soil Association Food for Life Bronze accredited which means that the University is ensuring healthy, ethical, and sustainable meals across campus.

SDG2

Zero hunger

Staff Hunger Interventions

Staff also have access to the same food discounts as students. To this effect, staff have access to 40% off food and 25% off hot drinks at all campus catering outlets, reducing the risk for staff hunger at BCU. The University works on providing access to knowledge around food security through research initiatives. There have been numerous efforts in research around food insecurity at the university. An example of this is a research paper done at BCU called 'Holiday Hunger'. This paper aimed to analyse and investigate holiday food provision, providing insight into nutritional outcomes of food provisions in line with government dietary guidelines, and the effect of such provision on the ability to improve individual culinary skills.

Sustainable Food Purchases

The University understands the importance of providing sustainable, ethically sourced and local food for staff students and visitors in line with guidance outlined in its Sustainable Catering Plan and Targets. These targets are achieved in part through partnerships with catering companies that are committed to lessening food production related emissions. There is a concerted effort in pushing plant-based options, ensuring that the university lowers the emissions associated with meat production. BCU provides plant-based options due to their smaller footprint, which has been achieved by the introduction of at least two fully meat-free lunch menus per week across main outlets, in line with Food for Life Standard, with meals based on beans, pulses, eggs, and non-meat proteins such as mycoprotein or nuts. Additionally, Baxter Storey, the catering partner of BCU only uses rapeseed oil from the Cotswolds, this option is healthier and is also sustainable as it is locally sourced.



3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING





SDG3

Good health and wellbeing

Current Collaborations with Health Institutions

We actively contribute to improving health outcomes locally, nationally, and globally. One way we do this is through our collaborations with various partners, including Birmingham City Council (local), the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR) (national), and the University of Zambia (international). Locally, we are part of a Birmingham City Council-funded project supporting the mental health of young people aged 16–25. Nationally, we are working with NIHR and Rand Europe on a UK-wide economic impact project, assessing the effect of NIHR-funded activities on health and social care research. Globally, we are involved in multiple health initiatives in Zambia, partnering with the Ministry of Health and the University of Zambia on several projects supported by the Burdett Trust for Nursing, with a particular focus on critical care and cardiac nursing.

Health Outreach Programmes

We actively encourage our students to engage with the local community through a range of volunteer opportunities. One way we do this is by partnering with local charities to offer volunteer roles that enable our students to make a positive impact in the local area. We collaborate through volunteering opportunities with two partner charities, Migrant Help and Migrant Centre, who, amongst other objectives, actively support refugees and immigrant communities. to advertise their volunteering opportunities to students. BCU also offers mental health support to vulnerable youth through its partnership with Barnardo's and Our Place charities, offering outreach support to our local community through mentoring and support to young people to prevent low-level issues from escalating into complex problems, alongside supporting those with disabilities, diverse ethnicities, and LGBT+ young people. BCU also provides research assistance for NHS Free Health checks, these health checks, aimed at individuals aged 40 to 74 from ethnic minority communities help prevent conditions such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and kidney disease. The research aims to assess and provide recommendations for these populations to engage with the NHS service, improving access and participation. We also work with Fareshare Midlands to package up good to eat food which was going to be thrown away, and instead offer the food parcels to disadvantaged people through community food redistribution initiatives.

Shared Sports Facilities

The University shares its sports facilities with both the university community and the wider public. The Doug Ellis Sports Centre is a shared facility, open to BCU students, staff, and members of the public on a paid membership basis. Additionally, access to the Sports Facilities at The Pavilion is also available to BCU students, staff, and the wider community, including local schools and teams for a fee. BCU's investment into the Alexander Stadium facilities also provide opportunities for local communities.

Sexual and reproductive health care services for students

Students experiencing sexual and reproductive health conditions can access free support through the Disability Support and Mental Health & Wellbeing Team. Students can also access information and education resources about sexual and reproductive health-care through iCity and BCUSU.



SDG3

Good health and wellbeing

A Smoke-Free Policy

We operate as a partial smoke-free campus, with smoking only permitted in designated smoking areas. Smoking is strictly prohibited within all university buildings and vehicles. This policy is in place to ensure a healthy environment for all students, staff and visitors.

Mental Health Support for Students

Students are offered significant support with mental health and wellbeing. All students have free access to both Student Wellbeing Advisors and Mental Health Advisors, offering guidance and support for a wide range of personal and emotional needs. Students are also able to download and use the BCU wellbeing app at any time for additional resources. Additionally, Pause at Uni offers on-campus wellbeing advice and activities, which students can access without the need for an appointment.

Mental Health Support for Staff

Staff also have access to a wide range of free mental health support services via the Employee Assistance Programme which features a 24-hour helpline. Staff can also download and access the BCU wellbeing app for additional support and guidance. Any safeguarding concerns or issues can be reported through the Report & Support system, full guidance on safeguarding is available in the safeguarding policy.

Local Research

We actively engage in research that supports and promotes good health and wellbeing locally, nationally, and globally. Birmingham City University is engaging in local research to help promote sustainability and wellbeing within the community. A recent key study led by one of our academics explored the emotional experiences of students from West Midlands universities who provided Mental Health First Aid and examined the significance of self-compassion in relation to their overall wellbeing. The research "Mental Health First Aid experiences: a qualitative investigation into the emotional impact of Mental Health First Aid responsibilities and the significance of self-compassion", investigated the personal experiences of those providing mental health support to others and how they coped with the emotional demands of the role. Twelve students who had completed the two-day Mental Health First Aid training course participated in semi-structured interviews. The findings indicated that while participants valued their role and found providing mental health support to be a rewarding experience, it often came at the expense of their own self-compassion.

National Research

Some of our key research focuses on the health workforce in developing countries. We are currently working with the University of Zambia to help strengthen Zambia's healthcare services through critical care nursing. A key study led by one of our professors has examined how specialist nursing education can be improved to strengthen healthcare systems. The research, "The 'sleeping elephant': The role of mentorship of critical care nurses in Zambia", investigates how Zambia can address gaps in its healthcare workforce and improve healthcare services through the formalisation of nursing mentorship roles.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION





SDG4

Quality education

Public Resources (Lifelong Learning)

We provide free educational resources for those not studying at the University through the BCU Open Access Repository. This provides public access to reports and documentation from research undertaken at the university including journal articles, working papers, book chapters, conference presentations, audio-visual materials and more. The University's That's Me! scheme is an initiative in partnership with the University of Wolverhampton. This initiative encourages members of the public to pursue postgraduate research and provides access to mentoring, workshops, seminars, and free online resources to help participants develop the research skills and confidence needed to succeed in higher education.

Public Events (Lifelong Learning)

The University provides learning in the wider community through temporary, cyclical events. Open Days at the University are open to all and include subject specific talks and sample lectures for a wide variety of subjects, where individuals can speak to educators, alumni, and current students providing insight into the options available in higher education. STEAMhouse provides educational events related to Business, AI, and social media, among others. These events are open to the public and provide the opportunity to network, find opportunities, and continue adult learning. Vocational Training Events (Lifelong Learning). We offer short courses that are available to the public, aimed at both businesses and individuals not currently in attendance at the university. These courses are affordably priced and are provided in a flexible manner allowing for on-site, blended, or distance learning and are placed as ways for adult learners to gain new skills. Example courses include topics ranging from the sciences to academic writing to Business to AI and Technology.

Educational Outreach Beyond Campus

BCU has several initiatives and programmes around educational outreach beyond services offered on campus. These initiatives focus on encouraging individuals to consider higher education in all its forms, not just university. AimHigher is a partnership between Birmingham City University, Aston University, University of Birmingham, University of Worcester and others. It targets students from Year 9 to 13 from schools that are underrepresented in higher education statistically to teach them about their options regarding further education beyond secondary education. That's Me! scheme is an initiative partnering with the University of Wolverhampton, encouraging individuals to undertake postgraduate research. The scheme provides access to mentoring, workshops, seminars, and free online resources to help participants develop the research skills and confidence needed to succeed in higher education. The Accelerate scheme is designed to increase participation from underrepresented groups through the reduction of barriers to study by lowering entry requirements where needed, allowing those with an educational disadvantage such as being first-generation, disabled, or financially disadvantaged to enter university. Eligible Students may also gain £1,000 to reduce the financial barriers to university.

SDG4

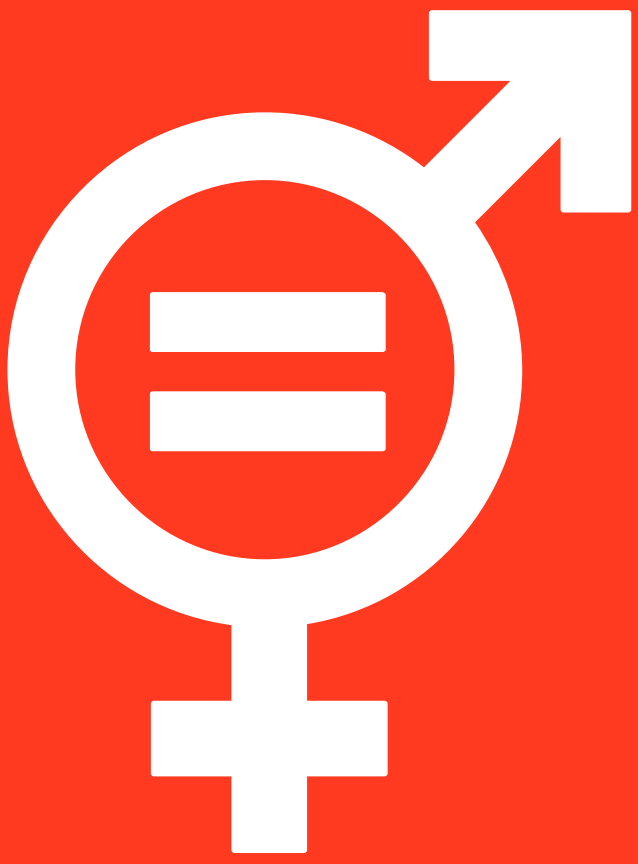
Quality education

Lifelong Learning Access Policy

Birmingham City University is committed to making the university an educational institution in which students from any backgrounds can succeed regardless of ethnicity, religion, disability, immigration status or gender. The University's Access and Participation Report states that the university is committed to ensuring all students with academic ability have access higher education at BCU. We state within our Equality and Diversity and Employment Policy that the University is dedicated to eliminating discrimination and creating an inclusive culture based on merit where everyone has an equal chance to succeed, and where collectively all people can advance equality and fairness.



5 GENDER EQUALITY





SDG5

Gender equality

Tracking Access Measures

We track acceptance rates which are summarised in the University's EDI report. This includes Women's acceptance rates and entry rates. This allows the University to effectively track engagement from Female students and identify barriers that the university can tackle to level the playing field and promote equality.

Policy for Women Applications and Entry

BCU is part of the Athena Swan Charter, which focuses on Women in Higher Education and achieving Gender Equality in Higher Education. It is judged on markers such as representation, progression and success / career milestones. BCU has achieved the Athena Swan Silver award due to the University's work in addressing gender quality in education. Fewer than 40% of universities in the UK hold this award.

Women's Access Schemes

The University encourages women in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths (STEAM). BCU currently has a scholarship for Women going into STEAM valued of £2,500 and is deducted from their tuition fees. This lessens the financial burden for the grant winner and encourages young women to go into subjects they are underrepresented in. BCU also offers grants for engineering students, although this isn't directly for women, it is an encouragement to female students to join an engineering course. BCU is a proud member of WISE, that encourage women and girls to go into Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM). WISE offers bursaries and scholarships for women that can be accessed by women who have been accepted to BCU STEM courses.

Women's Application in Underrepresented Subjects

The University's EDI Report highlights that BCU bursaries are targeted at underrepresented groups, including women and ethnic minority students. In partnership with Kainos, BCU offers the Digital Bursary Scheme and actively encourages women to pursue studies in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics (STEAM). BCU also provides a £2,500 Women in STEAM Scholarship, which is deducted from tuition fees. By reducing financial barriers, the scholarship supports and encourages women to enter subjects in which they have traditionally been underrepresented.

Policies Protecting Those Reporting Discrimination

BCU has a zero tolerance policy for discrimination and encourages people to report any incidents through the University's Report and Support system. This allows employees to report unwanted behaviour, discrimination, etc. both anonymously or through recorded transcript. The Respect at BCU policy states that any misconduct will be investigated and resolved in a fair and objective manner. Furthermore, the Grievance policy explicitly states "No employee will be subjected to any unfavourable treatment or victimisation as a result of making a genuine complaint."



SDG5

Gender equality

Policy of Non-Discrimination Against Women

We take action on non-discriminatory practices against women through policy, support, and actions taken across the institution. The university's Gender, Ethnicity, and Disability Pay Gap Report 2025/26 reports that average median pay gaps have been reduced by 5% since 2024, while the Birmingham City University Student Society (BCUSS) median pay gap is 0%. BCU's Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion in Employment Policy states a commitment to eliminating gender-based discrimination and ensuring that men and women are properly represented and rewarded for their contribution at every level, creating an inclusive culture based on merit and an equal chance to succeed. BCU staff have mandatory Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion training prior to joining the University, creating an ecosystem where men and women are allowed equal opportunities to succeed. The university also provides support to employees who require maternity leave through the Family Related Leave Policy and the Flexible Working Policy and take steps to facilitate returning after maternity leave.

Non-Discrimination Policies for Transgender

We take proactive steps towards supporting Transgender and Non-Binary individuals, as well as eliminating discrimination within the workplace. Policies cover protecting such individuals allowing them to use the facilities of their gender, and that any disclosing of medical history is the prerogative of the member of staff.
BCU is currently running an initiative called Going for Stonewall, for which the University has received the gold award for their efforts. The project includes launching training on LGBTQ inclusion which over 300 staff have now completed, supporting LGBTQ recognition and celebrations across campuses and developing HR policies that ensure the inclusion of LGBT colleagues and generally promoting inclusive language. The Gender Identity and Transitioning at Work Policy identifies the process around transitioning at work. This includes a glossary detailing what terms are appropriate to use and what they mean. It also goes through the process of transitioning at work including new ID cards, changing records and potentially time off work for medical appointments related to gender identity.

Maternity Policy

The University's Family Leave Policy states that university employees are granted 52 weeks of Statutory maternity leave. There is also a Student Maternity Policy concerning leave. The policy provides details on the support available for students during studies and temporary leave.

Childcare Facilities for Students

BCU provides students with access to a childcare advisor who will assist in aiding the student in what the best option is for them and give a range of support and advice. The University provides accessible childcare incentives for students, which helps to allow recent mothers to continue to attend university.

Have Childcare Facilities for Staff and Students

BCU grants childcare advice however does not have any on campus childcare. Staff can access discounted nurseries through their remuneration package.

SDG5

Gender equality

Women's Mentoring Schemes

The University has created several initiatives offering mentoring support that women are able to access, such as peer-mentoring groups and steering groups. BCU is also committed to creating professional mentoring groups where students are matched with someone who can give important industry insight, these mentoring schemes offer great benefit to individuals that are LGBT or Disabled.

Track Women's Graduation Rate

We track the number of women that graduate per year. The University's Transparency report for the year 2024-25 states that 4440 awards were granted to individual female graduates, with 69.1% of undergraduates receiving classified first degrees at grade 2:1 or above.

Paternity Policy

Employees of BCU get paternity leave as part of the policy for Family Related Leave. The policy includes shared parental leave which enables both parents to take paid time off work in order to care for their child during the first year of the child's life or within one year of adoption



6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION





SDG6

Clean water and sanitation

Water Consumption Tracking

Water consumption monitoring forms part of BCU's ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management System (EMS) and is supported by commitments within the **Environmental Policy** to manage and reduce water consumption. This policy also required monitoring and reporting mechanisms to track environmental performance and progress against objectives. Birmingham City University (BCU) measures and monitors water consumption across its campus though its building management system. We are continuously improving its metering infrastructure, including the installation of water meter loggers that help identify leaks and improve understanding of building performance. There has been a 41,418m^3 reduction in water use from 2023/24 to 2024/25. Evidence of water consumption tracking is published publicly through the University's Annual Environmental Report, which records environmental data and key performance indicators. Including institution-wide water monitoring.

Wastewater Treatment

The University uses water meter loggers to identify leaks, reduce water wastage and improve understanding of water consumption, supporting effective management of water entering and leaving its facilities.

Preventing Water System Pollution

The University's Environmental Policy is a publicly documented process designed to prevent pollution entering water system. Through it, we commit to preventing water pollution by maintaining an ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS), which provides a structured framework for identifying risks related to water system pollution, such as implementing controls and ensuring legal compliance. We also promote responsible waste management through publicly available information, operational guidance and recycling procedures that help ensure materials are disposed of appropriately and do not enter drainage systems or watercourses. There is also further internal documentation available to staff on the University's intranet providing procedures for hazardous waste, such as providing contact details for qualified waste handlers to resolve issues.

Free Drinking Water Provided

Free drinking water is provided across our estate through a network of drinking water refill points accessible to students, staff, and visitors. We actively encourages the use of reusable water bottles as part of its sustainability initiatives, promoting refill rather than the purchase of single-use plastic bottles. A publicly accessible interactive sustainability map is also available, identifying water fountain locations across the university estate. BCU supports hydration and waste reduction, embedding sustainable practices into everyday campus life.



SDG6

Clean water and sanitation

Water-Conscious Building Standards

We apply formal building standard and environmental management practices designed to minimise water use across its estate. All new developments must comply with the University's Sustainable Buildings Standard, requiring a Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) Excellent rating, and Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) A rating. Birmingham City University (BCU) actively monitors water consumption through its Energy Manager and uses water metering and logger technology to improve building performance, alongside a rolling programme of building audits. BCU's Environmental Policy further commits the institution to managing and reducing water consumption, incorporating environmental best practice into construction and refurbishment projects, and maintaining an ISO 14001-certified Environmental Management System. We use WRAS approved fittings to ensure they comply with the Water Supply (Water Fittings) Regulations.

Water-Conscious Planting

Our approach to campus landscaping support water conscious planting through its Biodiversity Action Plan, which prioritises the use of native and climate resilient species across the estate. With this focus on planting that is adapted to local conditions, there is a reduced need for intensive irrigation while simultaneously enhancing biodiversity and local ecosystem resilience. The University focuses on wildflower areas, and dense native scrub rather than resource intensive ornamental landscaping, which supports pollinators and minimises water consumption.

Off-Campus Water Conservation Support

We embrace practical water conservation beyond our campuses through applied research and collaboration with water utilities to reduce water losses and improve the efficiency of water distribution systems. The IoT4Win project, in partnership with United Utilities and technology partners developed a smart water management solution that uses smart sensors, big data, and artificial intelligence to monitor water quality, quantity, and demand in real time. Allowing for rapid identification of leaks and reduce water wastage across urban infrastructure. Research also supports the wider adoption of smart metering and advanced water monitoring technologies, providing practical solutions to assist with water conservation.

Promoting Conscious Water Usage in the Wider Community

We actively promote conscious water usage beyond our campus through public facing research, partnerships and knowledge-sharing activities focused on water conservation, security, and flood resilience. Through the Water, Environment and Communities research group, BCU engages with local authorities, utilities, communities, and environmental organisations to support communities affected by water-related issues and to help develop solutions that aim for long-term water stewardship. BCU also promotes responsible water use through the IoT4Win project, which works with water industry partners to develop smart technologies that monitor water quality, demand, and leakage. Using data to create practical solutions to improve efficiency of urban water networks, reducing water losses. The project also supports wider public awareness of sustainable water management practices.



SDG6

Clean water and sanitation

Water Management Educational Opportunities

We provide educational opportunities that help local communities understand water management, water quality, and sustainable water use through public engagement and innovation-focus activities. The University's College of Engineering has delivered a learning module entitled "Leading Engineering Endeavours", working closely with the water welfare charity 'The Rivers Trust.' Students were tasked with educating schoolchildren, undergraduates, and teachers about the challenges of water welfare. InnovationFest is a yearly showcase, designed to contribute to the knowledge economy by showcasing project work focused on sustainable development goals. Projects showcased through BCU's Innovation Festival include the 'Smart Hydration Bottle', promoting awareness of healthy and responsible water consumption, and the Smart Greenhouse, which uses sensors and artificial intelligence to optimise water use in food production. Through the Water, Environment, and Communities research group, BCU brings together expertise in water resource management, sustainable urban drainage, hydraulics, flooding, and community engagement. By conducting research into the causes and impacts of flooding BCU helps communities become better prepared for water-related environmental pressures. Which is shared with local authorities, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent, and community organisations across the West Midlands.

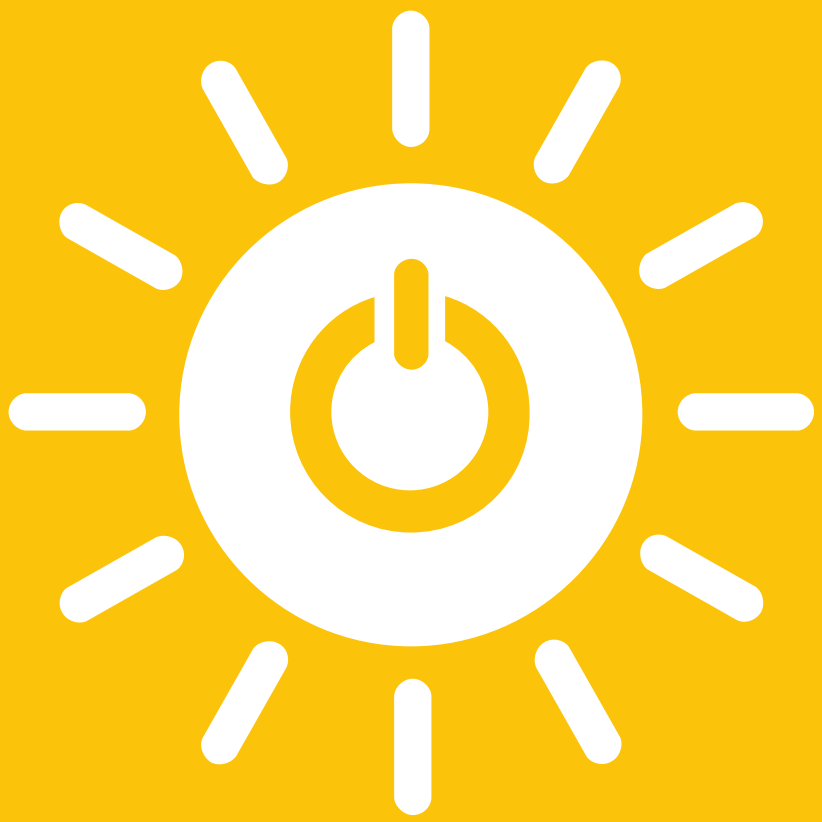
Cooperation on Water Security

Cooperation happens on water security through research partnerships that bring together industry, public-sector stakeholders and international organisations to address water management challenges. The University's Water, Environment and Communities research group focuses on issues including water resource management, flooding, sustainable drainage, resilience and community impacts, supporting collaboration with organisations involved in managing water security and environmental risks. BCU's IoT4Win project provides particularly strong evidence of cooperation on water security. Through this initiative, the University works with United Utilities in the UK and partners in Greece, Romania and Spain to develop smart water management systems using sensors, artificial intelligence and Internet of Things technologies. The project helps improve the monitoring of water quality, supply, demand and leakage, supporting more sustainable and resilient water infrastructure.

Promoting Conscious Water Usage on Campus

We deliver on conscious water usage across our estate through its Environmental Sustainability Communications and Engagement Strategy. The University's public facing Environment and Sustainability Initiative gives guidance on how to report water leaks, to be mindful of what enters drains and wastewater systems, and to use clearly displayed free water fountains on campus rather than disposable plastic water containers. These initiatives are supported by the Environmental Management System (EMS) that includes fitting buildings with water meter data loggers, alongside targets and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) outlined in BCU's Sustainable Future documentation to reduce water consumption.

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY





SDG7

Affordable and clean energy

Energy-Efficient Renovations and Buildings

Birmingham City University has a clear commitment to energy-efficient renovation and building, documented in the University's Net Zero Plan. The plan includes objectives to reduce carbon emissions from the estate, improve energy efficiency, and ensure that capital projects incorporate sustainable design principles. New developments and improvements are expected to contribute to the University's carbon reduction targets and environmental performance objectives. All new builds must achieve a BREEAM rating of Excellent or equivalent. BCU's sustainability strategy 'Our Sustainable Future' embeds sustainability into estate management and campus development. The strategy promotes the creation and maintenance of buildings that minimise environmental impact, and support the transition towards net zero carbon operations, and is aligned with sustainability goals and environmental standards.

Upgrade Buildings to Higher Energy Efficiency

We have established plans to improve the energy efficiency of its existing estate through a combination of strategic investment, carbon reduction programmes, and long-term sustainability planning. The University's Net Zero Plan commits to reducing energy consumption, lowering carbon emissions, and improving the environmental performance of campus buildings through ongoing estate upgrades and efficiency measures. Our Energy and Carbon programme has actions set to improve building performance, reduce energy demand, and support progress toward carbon reduction goals. These measures are further reinforced by the University's Sustainability Strategy, which prioritises building efficiency improvements as part of its transition towards net-zero. In 2024, the University secured a £3.3 million grant to facilitate acceleration of carbon reduction initiatives across its estate, supporting projects that improve energy efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of existing buildings. Air source heat pumps, solar panels and LED lighting are to be installed in the Pavilion, with a similar install already completed at Seacole.

Carbon Reduction and Emission Reduction Process

Processes have been established for carbon and emission reduction. The Energy and Carbon Management Plan has actions set in to support progress toward carbon reduction goals. The Environmental Policy 2025 includes guidelines for maintaining an Environmental Management System (EMS) to the standard of ISO4001:2015, which provides a structured framework for monitoring, reviewing and continually improving environmental performance. As well as committing the University to carbon reduction.BCU also publishes annual environmental reports detailing carbon emissions, performance indicators, and progress towards net-zero ambitions, providing public evidence of implementation and outcomes.

Local Community Outreach for Energy Efficiency

As part of the Smart, Sustainable, and Green (SSG) programme in East Birmingham, one of the city's most deprived and culturally diverse areas, community engagement activities were delivered in partnership with Ark Victoria Academy to advance smart energy inclusion. The programme focuses on inclusive Net Zero transitions, digital equity, and community-led smart energy innovation.



SDG7

Affordable and clean energy

Plan to Reduce Energy Consumption

We have a publicly available energy efficiency plan embedded within our Environmental Policy, Sustainability Strategy, Energy and Carbon programme, and estate management processes. The university is committed to improving the energy efficiency of its buildings, meeting net-zero carbon targets, and improving performance through its ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS.) BCU's approach includes a continuous programme of energy auditing for buildings, monitoring of electricity, gas, and water consumption, and the prioritisation of energy improvement projects based on audit findings and engineering recommendations. The University has implemented a range of energy-saving measures, including LED lighting, lighting controls, insulation improvements, and solar panels. The University's Sustainability Strategy identifies reducing carbon emissions and improving the performance of campus infrastructure as key objectives, supported by measurable targets and annual reporting. Progress, energy performance data, and related initiatives are published through BCU's public sustainability webpages, strategy documents and annual environmental reports, providing clear evidence of implementation and transparency.

Energy Wastage Identification

BCU delivers a systematic process for identifying and addressing energy wastage through formal monitoring, review and reporting mechanisms. The Report of the Board of Governors and Financial Statements 2024/5 highlights the University's commitment to sustainable investment and the transition to net zero, including the development of programmes in construction and the built environment that support the region's carbon reduction ambitions. Environmental sustainability is also embedded within Strategy 2030 as a core institutional priority. We also undertake ongoing energy reviews through a rolling programme of building energy audits verified by SE Advisory Services and backed by Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates. Energy, gas and water consumption are closely monitored across the estate, through the University's Building Management System (BMS) and Environmental Management Systems (EMS) with audit findings used to identify areas of high energy use, detect inefficiencies, and target improvements.

Divestment Policy

In place at the University is a publicly available Ethical Investment Policy, approved by the Finance Committee in June 2024 and implemented in August 2024, demonstrating a commitment to responsible investment and divestment from carbon-intensive industries. This policy is scheduled for regular review every 2 years. We further commit to avoiding investments in organisations that contribute to environmental damage or climate change and requires third-party investment managers to operate in line with defined socially and ethically responsible objectives. This policy is supported by publicly available annual environmental policy and reports.

100% Renewable Energy Pledge

We have a publicly available commitment to net-zero for Scopes 1 and 2 by 2035/36 and Scope 3 emissions by 2042/43. The energy supplied to BCU has been audited and verified by an independent third party, certifying that BCU's zero-carbon, 100% renewable electricity supply is backed by Renewable Energy Guarantee of Origin (REGO) certificates. BCU also has a publicly available Ethical Investment Policy, encouraging and requiring any third-party investment to operate in line with energy responsible objectives.

SDG7

Affordable and clean energy

Energy Efficiency Services for Industry

BCU offers direct services to industry that support energy efficiency, sustainable building and clean energy innovation through research partnerships, programmes, and business support. The University's Smart Sustainable Green Cities research group works with external organisations to support the transition to net-zero, as well as to develop sustainable urban solutions. The DIATOMIC Digital Accelerator provides small to medium enterprises (SMEs) with access to academic expertise, research facilities, and real-world testing opportunities to develop technologies addressing greener energy, sustainable urban services and climate resilience. The Centre for Future Homes project allows BCU to work directly with housing providers, developers, and industry partners to develop, evaluate, and demonstrate energy-efficient building solutions. Projects such as Project 80 Eco Drive aim to reduce carbon emissions of housing by 80% compared to previously constructed buildings. BCU has also collaborated with Birmingham City Council, housing providers, and technology companies on Retrofit Plus. This project demonstrated how retrofit measures can reduce domestic energy consumption by more than 80%, providing expertise on energy efficiency improvements and low-carbon housing.

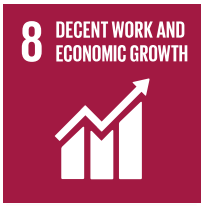
Policy Development for Clean Energy Technology

We support the development of policies related to sustainable and energy-efficient infrastructure through collaborative research with government agencies, local authorities, and industry. Through its Centre for Future Homes, BCU provides evidence and technical expertise to support policymaking on low-carbon housing. BCU has also worked with Natural England, alongside researchers from the Universities of Oxford and Manchester, to develop a comprehensive framework and menu of standards for green infrastructure in England. This research is intended to help local authorities and developers deliver sustainable infrastructure. The framework supports evidence-based decision making on environmental sustainability, and climate adaptation. Additional research projects have developed tools and guidance to support low-carbon building design, renewable energy assessment and retrofit planning, generating evidence that can inform government strategies, planning frameworks and decarbonisation initiatives.



8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH





SDG8

Decent work and economic growth

Employment Practice Living Wage

BCU is an accredited Living Wage Employer by the Living Wage Foundation. All staff employed by the University receive the living wage as a minimum. Remuneration Annual Report certifies the University's commitment to compliance with the Higher Education Staff Remuneration Code, the report specifically states pay bands for staff and senior staff, where all employees are guaranteed to receive living wage at a minimum. The Pay System and Policy incorporates all relevant legislation and is underpinned by the University's core values and commitment to equality and diversity.

Employment Practice Unions

The University as a body recognise unions for all. The University and College Union (UCU) is recognised as staff members official trade union. The UCU represents staff across the University, facilitating support and advice on employment related issues.

Employment Policy on Discrimination

Equality, diversity, and inclusion is promoted across all University practices. The Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025/30 includes priorities focused on the elimination of discrimination. Additionally, the Dignity at Work Policy ensures respectful and supportive workplaces, alongside an Antiracist Commitment Plan, and Anti-Harassment Policy which promotes racial equality and inclusion across the institution. Furthermore, the University regularly monitors pay and progression through annual Gender Pay Gap Reports.

Employment Policy Modern Slavery

Our policy against modern slavery is guided by the Modern Slavery Act which includes commitments to operating as an ethically and socially responsible organisation. There is a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of modern slavery, including forced labour, human trafficking, and exploitation. There is also a supporting Whistleblower Policy to raise concerns about malpractice at the University or with one of the University's partner organisations.

Employment Practice Equivalent Rights Outsourcing

The University has a General Supplier Management and Contract Policy, which provides clear guidance for selecting and engaging with suppliers.

Tracking Pay Scale for Gender Equity

The University publishes annual gender pay gap reports, through the Gender and Ethnicity Pay Gap Report which provides a detailed analysis of pay distribution across the University. The report also includes information about pay quartiles and bonus pay, showing the proportion of male and female staff within each pay range and highlighting the areas of both progress and improvement.

SDG8

Decent work and economic growth

Employment Practice Appeal Process

The Formal Grievance Policy at the University provides staff with clear guidance on how to raise workplace concerns and the processes available for appeal. The policy outlines the steps staff can take if they wish to make an appeal for various reasons, such as concerns regarding pay or if they feel they have been treated unfairly in the workplace.

Employment Practice Labour Rights

BCU has a Trade Union Facility Time Report, which includes detailed information regarding the number of employees who act as relevant union representatives within the institution. Indicating that the University is aware of practicing labour rights and is not actively obstructing efforts. The University also formally recognises UCU as the partner trade union and supports collective consultation and bargaining agreements.

Employment Policy Pay Scale Equity

The BCU Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2030, includes detailed information about employment rights for employees and demonstrates an ongoing commitment to promoting a fair, inclusive, and supportive environment for all staff and students. All staff are paid at least the National Living Wage.



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



SDG9

Industry, innovation and infrastructure

Smart City Technologies

As part of our Strategy 2030, BCU is committed to working with global partners to create research that aligns with the SDGs and drives both regional prosperity and innovation. Our ongoing collaboration with South Korean researchers is a notable example of this. Thanks to a significant grant of £179,982 from the British Council, BCU is helping bring smart city technologies to Birmingham, making the city more sustainable and efficient. The project uses AI, smart sensors, and data-driven solutions to tackle challenges such as air quality, traffic Smart city technologies management, and energy use. By partnering with international experts, BCU is helping to develop cutting-edge solutions that not only improve urban life but also address climate change. This initiative supports our goal of making Birmingham a smarter and more resilient city, and it ties directly into BCU's Strategy 2030, which focuses on global collaborations that drive innovation. Through research, international partnerships, and real-world action, BCU is playing a key role in shaping the future of sustainable urban solutions worldwide.

Sustainable Buildings

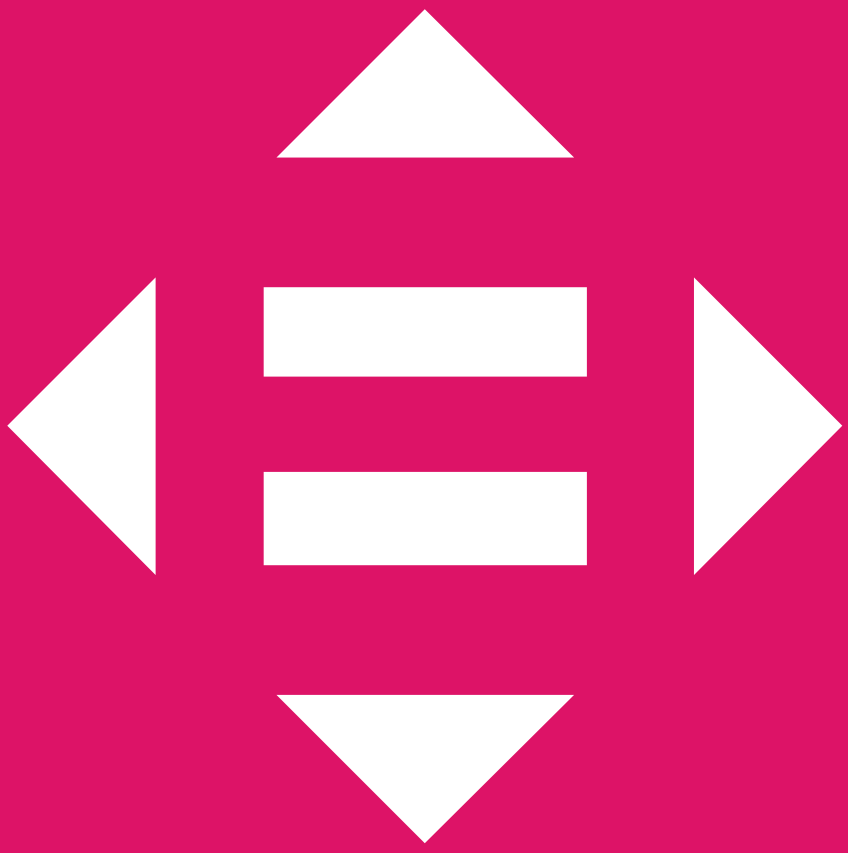
We prioritise sustainability in all our campus developments. For example, all new buildings are constructed to sustainable standards, with Parkside, STEAMhouse, and Curzon both achieving BREEAM Excellent ratings, as evidenced on our website. Benjamin Zephaniah is also our first building where heating has been 100 per cent decarbonised. This helps to reduce our overall energy consumption and minimises our carbon footprint. Additionally, since 1998, all major developments have been built on Brownfield Sites, which allows us to restore unused land, instead of expanding into natural areas. We also make sure that all new buildings are designed to be resilient to climate change, with energy efficient features built in. This approach is part of our ongoing effort to create a more sustainable campus for the future.

DIATOMIC Project

DIATOMIC is a £6 million project in the West Midlands, funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI). It brings together Birmingham City Council, STEAMhouse, and the Greater Birmingham Chambers of Commerce, alongside other partners such as the University of Birmingham, to accelerate local innovation and strengthen the region's position as a leading UK hub for digital innovation and inclusive growth. The project focuses on expanding the region's clean technology, health technology, and med technology sectors, helping to drive a sustainable, technology driven urban region that delivers meaningful benefits for people, the environment, and the wider economy.



10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES





SDG10

Reduced inequalities

Non-Discriminatory Admissions Policies

Many policies and schemes are in place, aimed at reducing inequalities in its admissions process. The Accelerate Scheme is designed to increase participation from underrepresented groups. This is achieved through reducing the barriers to study by lowering entry requirements where needed, allowing those with an educational disadvantage to enter university. Eligible students from underrepresented groups such as first-generation students, disabled students, and financially disadvantaged students may also receive £1,000 to reduce the financial barriers to university. The Admissions Policy directly states that the processes are kept fair, reasonable and equitable, this is done via offering contextual offers to those affected by financial and educational disadvantages. The Admissions Policy is explicit in its anti-discrimination policy on age.

Access to University Track Underrepresented Groups: Applications

Applications of underrepresented groups are tracked at the University, identifying gaps in recruitment and recording the number of students in each underrepresented group including Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT), Women, Disabled, Low-Income and Ethnic Minority Students. This tracking is summarised in the EDI Report.

Access to University Underrepresented Groups: Recruitment

In addition to tracking application, BCU also takes action to recruit from underrepresented groups through directly targeted schemes. AimHigher is a partnership between Birmingham City University, Aston University, University of Birmingham and others. The scheme targets students from Year 9-13, primarily targeting students that are underrepresented in Higher Education from certain postcodes around Birmingham, making them aware of the options available to them and allow them to make an informed decision continue into further or higher education after secondary school. The Black Researchers Network is a network that encourages Black postgraduate students to go into research by fostering community and a safe space for black academics.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Respect at BCU policy statement directly tackles discrimination and has a zero-tolerance policy for any kind of harassment, victimisation, discrimination, or bullying. BCU is committed to acting upon, and preventing unacceptable behaviour, and enforces this by providing training and raising awareness on the prohibitions, including embedding anti-discrimination and harassment in training for overseas staff to help build an inclusive and supportive environment. The Office for Institutional Equity ensures such policies and initiatives are being implemented and acted upon.

University Diversity Officer

Our Equality and Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee commit themselves to tackling issues of EDI matters across Birmingham City University.



SDG10

Reduced inequalities

Support for Underrepresented groups

The University has several initiatives in place to support underrepresented groups. This is accomplished through the implementation of 'steering groups', groups that are dedicated to supporting, mentoring and counselling staff from many different backgrounds. We also support ethnic minority groups, those with disabilities, and those with long term conditions through the Peer Mentoring and Mental Health Champion for Young People's Service. This initiative targets individuals ages 16-25 living in Birmingham and aims to provide a safe space aiming to improve the mental health and resilience of participating individuals. Working with an external partner programme 100 Female Black Professors NOW that aims to promote black women in higher education, BCU supports black women academics with career coaching, sponsorship, mentoring, and community building. This is in direct response to the 2018 statistic where there were only 25 black female professors compared to 12,500 white male professors. The Women's Society is a liberation group and part of the liberation council, which provides a platform for committee members to amplify the voices of the members within their purview, and address key issues affecting the University, Students' Union, and local community; aiming to enhance the overall student experience at BCU. BCU's Women's Professor Society, established in 2019. Was created to provide a forum to celebrate the successes and challenge the obstacles faced by female academics at all levels. The group aims to meet quarterly, discuss the gender pay gap, ethnicity pay gap and making the career route more transparent for female academics and better supported.

Accessible Facilities

Several accommodations are available at BCU for individuals with varying levels of accessibility needs, the publicly facing Disability Support information describes the steps BCU has taken. Such examples include that all buildings are fitted with wheelchair ramps, along with accessible toilets, and the BCU Library, which has accessible study rooms with adjustable table heights. Alongside this there is also accessible parking on site.
Disability Support Services. Several initiatives, policies, and associated services to support students with disabilities. The Disability Support documentation states that the University allows for reasonable adjustments in teaching, assessments and course materials for students. The Disabled Student Allowance is available for students who are likely to incur extra costs due to a disability while studying, such as for specialist equipment.
Life Skills Summer School allows students to try out living in accommodation for 2 nights while learning skills that will support them throughout university. This is a great opportunity to test how the university experience will be like during a quieter time.

Disability Access Scheme

The University's Disability Support system provides access schemes for disabled individuals such as support workers and the study skills workers; this aids students with disabilities in preparing adequate study plans and help develop strategies for students with disabilities such as learning difficulties.

SDG10

Reduced inequalities

Disability Accommodation Policy

Our Disability Accommodation Policy in place that takes an anticipatory approach, seeking to remove barriers through inclusive design while providing additional individual accommodations where needed. Such adjustments may include extra time in exams, coursework extensions, note-taking support, and adaptations for field trips and practical work. Housing related adjustments can include adapted rooms, housing arrangements, and permission for therapy animals.

Anti-Harassment Policy

Employees are protected against harassment and works to ensure inclusive working relationships for all their employees. The University boasts a no tolerance policy against all forms of bullying, harassment and victimisation and the Policy for the Prevention of Bullying, Harassment, and Victimisation ('unacceptable behaviour') outlines the frameworks and guidelines for implementation of these measures. Within the Respect at BCU Policy Statement, the University states its willingness to investigate claims of Bullying and Harassment fairly for both its staff and students.



11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES





SDG11

Sustainable cities and communities

Public Access to Buildings

Public access to buildings, monuments or heritage sites are provided at the University. BCU's Parkside building has many open galleries throughout the year that the public have access to, including showcases of student and staff work for fashion, woodworking, artwork and more. The School of Jewellery, STEAMhouse, and the School of Art also host events throughout the year. The Handmade by Machines Symposium held at the Vittoria Street Gallery exhibited work from artists and designers that demonstrated incorporation of digital technology into the hand-making process. Additionally, the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire hosts over 300 events a year, alongside providing free tickets to select events. Such events include orchestral performances, jazz performances, and the performance of classic, baroque, and contemporary pieces such as the work of Schubert, Beethoven, and Wagner.

Public Access to Libraries

The University's Library Open Access Repository is freely available online and is accessible to members of the public. The available documents include research done at BCU and other publications. The physical BCU library is available to the public for a fee over the summer, additionally members from participating Universities can access the library through SCONUL, allowing for borrowing of items and access to study areas, furthermore, alumni can access the library for free up to 24 months after graduation.

Public Access to Museums

Hosted throughout the year are many exhibitions and galleries open to the public. The School of Jewellery, and the School of Art hold events throughout the year, including use of space at the Vittoria Street Gallery and Parkside. The Tactile Exhibition demonstrates the breadth of skills need to transform raw materials into functional objects and artworks. From sculpted wooden furniture to intricate typesetting, all work showcased is made by BCU technicians. Events like this allow for any member of the public to access and benefit, aiming to inspire them in their own lives and to give insight into the work behind such pieces.

Public access to Green Spaces

In 2025, the University transformed a derelict area of its estate into a wildflower meadow, creating a rare green space in the centre of Birmingham which is open to students, staff and the public to enjoy throughout the year. Seacole Building also boasts a wealth of green spaces, habitats and interpretation boards which inform students, staff and members of the public of the biodiversity in the around the area.

Arts and Heritage Contribution

The University hosts a large number of public performances, such performances include orchestras, choirs, and theatre productions. These are either performed by students and members of the University or through guest artists, and attract many members of the public, allowing them to enjoy These events attract a large number the public and allows them to experience the local art and heritage of BCU, and the Greater Birmingham region.



SDG11

Sustainable cities and communities

Record and Preserve Cultural Heritage

The Royal Birmingham Conservatoire (RBC) has led many efforts to preserve cultural heritage. RBC have recently created and launched the Aural Histories: Coventry app, dedicated to exploring the musical heritage of Coventry and recreate the music of the city from 1451 and 1462. Through this app, visitors are able to stand in historic spaces throughout Coventry and experience its sound from centuries past. Birmingham City University (BCU) provides short courses on the Conservation of the Historic Environment. These courses give information on heritage protection and planning legislation and workshops around conservation planning. These courses are widely available for anyone who would like to deepen their knowledge of the conservation of historic heritage sites. BCU has research surrounding History, Heritage and Archives. This research aims to reflect on the media especially concerning the past. Through this research the team accesses archives of the past using these to better understand history. The team aims to uncover previously overlooked stories, artefacts and traditions and shed light on different communities and the contributions of their heritage. The BCU project 'Fashion Police', partnered with the West Midlands Police Museum, aims to uncover the last two centuries of police uniforms throughout the United Kingdom (UK). This project reflects upon how uniforms changed throughout the past two centuries, how they shape public perceptions of authority and preserving a large part of Birmingham's rich cultural landscape.

Sustainable Practices Targets

Our Travel Plan aims to reduce transport related carbon emissions. This plan aims to promote walking and cycling, this is done through promotional campaigns like 'Walking Wednesdays' and cycling initiatives such as bike hire schemes, lockers and maintenance stands. We aim to promote public transport by creating strong partnerships with transport providers to improve fairs and frequency and potentially discounted fares for staff, students and visitors.

Promote Sustainable Commuting

Since the launch of the Travel Plan in 2025, the University has installed 5 bike maintenance stands, partnered with Transport for West Midlands to offer hundreds of free 4-week bus passes to staff and student, coordinated learn to ride bike sessions and much more. The promotion of sustainable commuting has become embedded in University process.

Allow Remote Working

The Flexible Working Policy at the University encourages open discussion with employees if they believe they will benefit from flexible working hours, and offers solutions such as four-day weeks, and working from home. The Travel Plan also has guidelines around flexible working to avoid the carbon emissions associated with travelling to the University. Many colleagues now enjoy the flexibility of being able to work remotely as opposed to working on campus all the time during working hours.



SDG11

Sustainable cities and communities

Affordability for Staff

BCU is an accredited member of The Living Wage Employers. The Living Wage Accreditation is a certification given to employers who willingly pay the living wage which would be over the minimum wage. This aims to tackle 'work poverty' and fairer, better work. This ensures that BCU employees are being given a real living wage, creating better opportunities for the purchasing of essentials, such as food, water and affordable housing. The University's Benefits and Savings Scheme for their employees which ensures that BCU staff are able to access savings where possible and designed to support the financial wellbeing of staff.

Affordable Housing for Students

Birmingham City University (BCU) aims to provide affordable housing solutions for students through collaborative efforts with providers including Unite Students, Canvas, Almero, Yugo, Host, and Evenbrook across the city to ensure quality and fair pricing. The University also directly manages University Locks consisting of purpose built students flats which include utility bills and other facilities in their fees. We provide additional support and guidance for returning students in their second year and onward to find affordable housing. The University also provides a financial assistance fund for disadvantaged students, or students in financial crisis; alongside internal, student facing support from the Money and Childcare Advice team.

Local Authority Collaboration Regarding Planning and Development

We demonstrate collaboration with local authorities and regional partners on planning and development through a range of initiatives. Partnering with Birmingham City Council on the Birmingham Knowledge Quarter to create an innovative district to deliver new homes, facilities, green spaces, and employment for local communities. The University also contributes to urban planning and regeneration. Our Built Environment engages with issues surrounding Birmingham, such as the Big City Plan and Birmingham City Council's Urban Design Team. The Centre for Future Homes project works with the Midland Heart Housing Association on Project 80 Eco Drive to develop affordable and sustainable housing solutions.

Building on Brownfield Sites

All major developments since 1998 have been built on brownfield sites at the University. Planning permission dating back to 2008 (Birmingham City University), 1992 (University of Central England), and 1991 (Birmingham Polytechnic) can be found on the Birmingham City Council planning website. This includes work on the brownfield site Westbourne Road in Edgbaston. The Curzon and Parkside buildings of Birmingham City University's Cite Centre campus, constructed in partnership with Willmott Dixon as part of a £260+ million regeneration of Eastside Locks, converted brownfield land into an eco-friendly, BREEAM Excellent rated urban space. The recent renovation of the Belmont Works factory into STEAMhouse is an example of Birmingham City University's continued development of brownfield sites.

SDG11

Sustainable cities and communities

Pedestrian Priority on Campus

The City South Campus is accessible on foot by various entrances, with Seacole building having two pedestrian only entrances, and is also a step-free campus, where all facilities requiring student access are accessible by wheelchair. The main thoroughfare between the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire, Millenium Point, and Parkside at the City Centre Campus are also only accessible by pedestrians.

Planning Development – New Build Standards

BCU is committed to sustainable improvement of existing buildings and new buildings on its estate documented in the University's strategy, Our Sustainable Future. These commitments are further supported by BCU's Energy and Carbon programme that has actions set to improve building performance, reduce energy demand, and support progress to carbon reduction goals; alongside the University's Net Zero Carbon Plan, which prioritises building efficiency improvements on current and future builds as part of its transition to net-zero. The Parkside building has been awarded the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rating of Excellent, and all new builds must follow BCU' s Sustainable Buildings Standard, with a minimum of BREEAM Excellent (or equivalent) and an Energy Performance Rating (EPA) of A.



12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION





SDG12

Responsible consumption

Ethical Sourcing Policy

Our ethical sourcing policy is covered in the Sustainable Catering Plan and Targets 2025/30 that aims to ensure that all catering practices at the University are ethically sourced and environmentally responsible. All food and drink are purchased from suppliers who meet ethical and environmental standards. We are committed to ensuring all eggs, meat and milk are only sourced from farms which are Red-Tractor Assured, and all fish must be Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified. These certifications require that a company meets strict guidelines across food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection.

Policy Waste Disposal – Hazardous materials

BCU has specific operational procedures on hazardous waste disposal as part of its ISO 14001 EMS. Our environmental report provides information on BCU's environmental policies and practices, accompanied by guides such as the A-Z Recycling and Waste which gives details on what constitutes as hazardous waste and who to contact for disposal.

Policy Waste Disposal – Landfill Policy

Our sustainability strategy, Our Sustainable Future states the current aims related to waste and recycling. The Annual Environmental Report also provides evidence of waste reduction and recycling initiatives. No waste from the university goes to landfill. Instead, it goes to an energy recovery facility handled by the University partner Veolia, where it is then recycled or used for energy purposes.

Policy for Minimisation of Plastic Use

The University's Sustainable Catering Plan 2025/30 sets out targets related to reducing plastic waste. Additionally, the Annual Environment Report provides evidence of reducing plastic waste through several initiatives, such as phasing out single-use plastics and non-recyclable packaging. The University also promotes plant-based options on campus which helps to reduce environmental impact. Within the catering plan, there are policies banning the use of plastic utensils during events, conferences and forums, ensuring that non-disposable utensils are available and clearly signposted. Single-use plastics and non-recyclable packaging are targeted to be removed from all catering provision across the University's estate by 2030.

Policy for Minimisation of Disposable Items

BCU's catering plan also outlines commitments to reduce disposable items. This is accomplished through various initiatives, including reusable cups and containers available at the University, as well as a refill schemes and ensuring that all packaging used in the University's catering practices are recyclable and reusable. The University also encourages behavioural changes to reduce plastic waste by offering £0.15 discounts on drinks for those who bring their own cups. Single Use Plastics to be phased out across all catering provision by 2030.

Minimisation Policies Extended to Suppliers

We ensures that policies are extended to outsourced suppliers and the supply chain. The University's Sustainable Procurement Policy outlines how sustainability is embedded in the procurement processes, requiring suppliers to support BCU's commitment to sustainability.

SDG12

Responsible consumption

Disposable Policy: Extensions to Services

Birmingham City University's (BCU) Sustainable Procurement Policy ensures that its disposable and sustainability-related policies extend to external outsources services and the supply chain. Sustainable Catering Plan 2025/30 applies to all university catering operations, including our catering contract, BaxterStorey, ensuring that external providers adhere to the university's sustainability commitments.

Waste Tracking

BCU measures the amount of waste generated and recycled across its academic and accommodation buildings. Our sustainability strategy includes waste tracking initiatives aimed at reducing the amount of waste generated by 1% year-on-year by 1% and maintaining zero waste to landfill. We ensure that food is separated from general waste it is then weighed and collected on a weekly basis along all the different catering sites. Annual Environmental Report summarisations state that the total waste handled was 345 tonnes, out of that 203 tonnes were converted to energy and the total waste recycled was 142 tonnes. Alongside a 5.1% reduction in waste generated by the University from the previous year.

Publication of a Sustainability Report

We publish an Annual Environment Report, which includes initiatives aimed at waste management, carbon reduction, biodiversity and energy use. Monthly reports are also received from the energy recovery facility handled by the University partner Veolia that record how much energy has been turned into waste.
Additionally, BCU has a Sustainable Catering Report, this report is about providing sustainable, healthy, ethically sourced, seasonal and local food for students, staff, and visitors. As well as a Sustainable Travel Plan focused on reducing the carbon footprint associated with travel all 3 scopes, a Biodiversity Action Plan focused on enhancing and protecting nature across the estate and wider community, and a Sustainable Future Plan setting out guidelines and frameworks for 2030 and beyond.



13 CLIMATE ACTION





SDG13

Climate action

Low Carbon Energy Tracking

We track energy closely and report on consumption through our annual reports across all three defined scopes. All BCU sites (except 86 Heathmill Lane) are supplied by 100% renewable energy, reported by Bryt in March 2025 is comprised of 70.3% wind, 27.2% solar and 2.5% hydro. Our emissions are now primarily associated with natural gas consumption and Scope 3 supply-chain, travel and procurement activities. Direct emissions are tracked through metering, audits, and the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS).

Local Education Programmes on Climate

We educate and engage with the local community on climate action through various accessible training, outreach, and partnership programmes, such as the 'Climate Literacy for Sustainable Futures' skills bootcamp, which provides resident and professional with practical knowledge on climate literacy, net zero, sustainable cities, circular economy principles, biodiversity, and sustainable leadership. Through the 'Climate Action in East Birmingham' initiative, BCU works with local schools, faith groups, community organisations and residents to increase climate awareness, support community-led action and ensure local people help shape sustainable regeneration projects. In addition, as part of Strategy 2030, BCU promotes community volunteering, environmental projects and regional sustainability partnerships, such as 'Sustainability West Midlands' strengthening climate knowledge and participation beyond the university campus.

Climate Action Plan

BCU's climate action plan is set out through a suite of publicly available strategies, led by Our Sustainable Future our Net Zero Carbon Plan, which details the commitments of the university to embedding sustainability in governance, reducing operational emissions, achieving net zero ambitions, protecting biodiversity, promoting sustainable travel, sustainable procurement, and engaging local communities in climate action. The plan includes targets for carbon reduction, renewable energy, biodiversity enhancement, sustainable catering, and sustainability education. Associated delivery plans have also been published on the university's public website and shared externally, including the Travel Plan 2025-2030, Biodiversity Action Plan, Carbon Management Plan, and Sustainable Catering Plan. These plans include the involvement of the local government, and community, working directly with Birmingham City Council, Transport for West Midlands, FCPR Environment and Design, Carbon Trust, BaxterStorey, and others. Moving forward, the university is planning for a sustainable future, outlining a strategy for 2030 and beyond.

Inform and Support Government

The University supports local and regional government climate risk monitoring and early warning systems through applied research and specialist expertise in flood and water management. The Water, Environment and Communities research group provides research, knowledge exchange, and advice for policy makers and decision makers intended to support flood risk management at local, regional, and national levels.



SDG13

Climate action

Co-operative Planning for Climate Change Disasters

Through the Water, Environment, and Communities research group, BCU brings together expertise in water resource management, sustainable urban drainage, hydraulics, flooding, and community engagement. By conducting research into the causes and impacts of flooding BCU helps communities become better prepared for water-related environmental pressures. Which is shared with local authorities, the Environment Agency, Severn Trent, and community organisations across the West Midlands. BCU's flood resilience research informs flood risk policy and adaption strategies, including projects examining property-level flood risk adaptation for homes and businesses to improve preparedness and recovery from flooding. Initiatives such as Rising to the Climate Crisis, which supports policymakers and planners in delivering climate adaptation methods, and Project SATURN, undertaken with Birmingham City Council, aim to strengthen climate disaster resilience, and landscape adaptation strategies.

Environmental Education Collaborate with NGO

We collaborate with NGOs on climate adaptation through the SMART-SIP+ project in Bangladesh, which is designed to strengthen climate resilience and sustainable agriculture in rural Bangladesh. This project is delivered in partnership with NGOs Bright Green Energy Foundation, and Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor. Through working directly with rural communities, the project aims to improve food security, improve energy efficiency through solar irrigation pump and provide new micro-business opportunities to empower women. Birmingham City University demonstrates a strong commitment to climate adaptation through a range of research and collaborative initiatives that aim to improve resilience to environmental risks and climate-related hazards. Its international environmental collaborations include work in flood-affected Peru, where researchers partnered with local institutions and regional authorities to identify challenges facing vulnerable communities and develop evidence to inform future protection measures and policy responses. The University has also supported post-fire recovery and sustainable rebuilding efforts in South Africa, helping communities adapt to environmental change. Project SATURN contributes to climate adaptation by working with Birmingham City Council and European partners in Trento (Italy), and Gothenburg (Sweden) to develop resilient landscape strategies, improve risk mitigation, and integrate natural assets into climate planning. The project focuses on long-term resilience, sustainable land management, and stakeholder engagement to support adaptation to climate impacts. The University has pledged to work with City of Sanctuary to build a culture of welcome and hospitality for asylum seekers and refugees.

Commitment to Carbon Neutral University

Birmingham City University currently is committed to being net zero by 2043.



SDG13

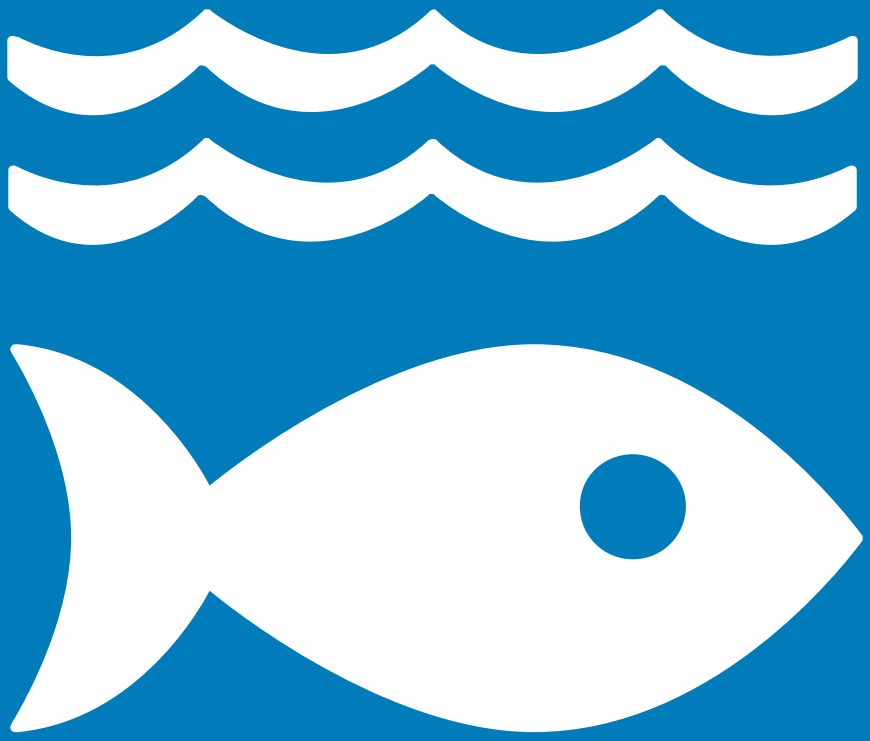
Climate action

Commitment to Carbon Neutral University

Birmingham City University's commitment to being a Carbon Neutral University is viewable via our publicly available sustainability strategy, Our Sustainable Future, and annual report documentation. Net zero carbon emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 are stated to be achieved by 2035/36, and for Scope 3 emissions by 2042/43, demonstrating a long-term institutional plan and commitment aligned with greenhouse gas accounting principles. The university has already achieved a 45% reduction in carbon emissions since 2005/6, and the Environmental Plan previously committed BCU to reviewing the requirements for becoming a net zero carbon university and improving Scope 3 emissions reporting and target-setting. BCU also has additional plans focused on Travel to reduce carbon emissions from internal and external travel related to operations through effective provisioning and flexible approaches to work and learning. Biodiversity to create attractive environments for students and staff while also delivering ecosystem services such as carbon storage, soil retention and pollination. Carbon Management to inform and direct the actions taken by the University in understanding and reducing carbon dioxide emissions, and Sustainable Catering to provide sustainable and ethical food that does not cost the planet and is affordable for students, staff, and visitors.



14 LIFE BELOW WATER





SDG14

Life below water

Fresh-Water Ecosystems (Community Outreach)

BCU focuses on community outreach for fresh-water ecosystems through workshops such as Canals: History, Heritage, and Practical Issues. In partnership with the Canal and Rivers Trust. Issues of planning, conservation of maritime and underwater heritage, and sustainability are discussed. Strategy 2030 commits BCU to creating and sharing knowledge that benefits communities and supports environmental sustainability through education, research and engagement. The Water, Environment, and Communities research group combines education and community engagement on a range of water related challenges. Engineering students can undertake a module titled 'Leading Engineering Endeavours', where they have the opportunity to educate schoolchildren, undergraduate students, and teachers about the challenges of water welfare. Through our BCU and CRT partnership we encourage volunteering to support the maintenance of the canal network surrounding our campuses.

Sustainable Fisheries

The University's work relating to sustainable fisheries outreach is the Sustainable Utilisation of Macroalgae (Seaweed) project in Indonesia, which worked with rural fishing communities, industry, government bodies, and academic partners to address the environmental and economic challenges associated with seaweed cultivation.

Food from Aquatic Ecosystems (Policies)

The University has a publicly available Sustainable Catering Policy, which requires food from aquatic ecosystems to be sustainably sourced from suppliers certified by the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC), explicitly excluding seafood that appears on the MSC red list. Sustainable fishing policy guidelines include examples such as the requirement for all tuna to be pole or line caught. This is supported by associated catering plans and targets, and Environmental Policy framework, ensuring the ongoing implementation of commitments. The implementation of these commitments is confirmed in the publicly available sustainable food guidance, reporting that 100% of fish served through campus outlets is MSC certified. Compliance is monitored through Food for Life accreditation processes and supply-chain reviews undertaken by the university's catering provider, BaxterStorey.

Monitoring the Health of Aquatic Ecosystems

We contribute to monitoring of aquatic ecosystems through research and operational water management activities. The Internet of Things for Smart Water Innovative Networks (IoT4Win) uses smart sensors, AI, and data analytics to provide real-time monitoring of water quality, quantity, demand, and infrastructure performance within water distribution systems. By using this data to identify leaks, losses, and resilience of water resources the associated water environments can be maintained and improved. The Biodiversity Action Plan is informed by ecological surveys that previously identified species of birds, bats, butterflies, and moths across its estate, establishing a baseline for ongoing biodiversity monitoring and management and has applications for use with aquatic ecosystems.



SDG14

Life below water

Maintain Ecosystems and their Biodiversity (Direct Work)

Birmingham City University (BCU) manages and enhances biodiversity through wildflower meadows, native tree planting, beehives, bird boxes, bug hotels, and student-led conservation projects and a whole range of other activities. Following consultation with staff, students, and the local community, the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was developed in 2025, and provides a framework for action, aiming to increase biodiversity by over 5% by the year 2030. We work to maintain and enhance ecosystems and biodiversity through both research and on-the-ground environmental management. The Smart Sustainable Green Cities research group has collaborated with Natural England and Defra to develop the National Framework of Standards for Green Infrastructure in England, guiding planning and development decisions for green infrastructure. The Sustainable Catering Policy in place at the university includes the requirement for sustainable fishing of Tuna and ensuring that 100% of fish served through campus outlets is Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certified.The University's wildlife initiatives have received a Gold Tier ranking from Ark Wildlife for promoting biodiversity and protecting natural habitats on campus. The university has also been awarded Hedgehog Friendly Campus Gold for 2025/26 for its work in protecting local wildlife, creating friendly wildlife spaces, and student-led events. The university provides volunteering opportunities with the Canal & River trust to clean up and look after the canal space within Birmingham. Volunteering Bulletin

Technologies Towards Aquatic Ecosystem Damage Prevention (Direct Work)

Our work towards ecosystem damage prevention comprises of multiple projects, frameworks, and plans. The IoT4Win project, in partnership with United Utilities and technology partners developed a smart water management solution that uses smart sensors, big data, and artificial intelligence to monitor water quality, quantity, and demand in real time. Allowing for rapid identification of leaks and reduce water wastage across urban infrastructure. The University's work relating to sustainable fisheries outreach is the Sustainable Utilisation of Macroalgae (Seaweed) project in Indonesia which worked with rural fishing communities, industry, government bodies, and academic partners to address the environmental and economic challenges associated with seaweed cultivation. Our sustainability strategy supports ecosystem damage prevention, with specific objectives related to environmental manage and compliance, such as the marking of manhole covers with correct identification across the estate, including drainage CCTV inspections. Alongside research into retrofitting of sustainable drainage systems, leading to ecosystem preservation through flood prevention and increased water quality.

Minimising Alteration of Aquatic Ecosystems (Plan)

We have plans and management processes in place that help minimise physical, chemical, and biological impacts on aquatic ecosystems. The sustainability strategy commits the University to continual environmentally conscious improvements and pollution prevention through its ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS). Including measures to achieve zero major environmental compliance breaches and improve drainage management through manhole identification and drainage inspections. The University's Environmental Policy further commits BCU to preventing pollution, managing and reducing water consumption and discharges. BCU also promotes practices that reduce contamination of drainage and wastewater systems, supported by guidelines and sustainability governance structures that oversee environmental performance and continuous improvement.



SDG14

Life below water

Water Discharge Guidelines and Standards

We protect water quality through Internal Water and Effluent Management Processes alongside its ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS), which drives environmental compliance, improvement, and pollution prevent across its estate. The University's sustainability strategy includes commitments to achieving zero major environmental compliance breaches, alongside identification and management of drainage infrastructure. Internal documentation details that "Only clean, uncontaminated water should be discharged to the surface water system. Only domestic type discharges, e.g. sewage and domestic kitchen effluent should be disposed of to the foul sewer via sinks etc. In order to discharge any other type of effluent to the foul sewer the permission of the local sewerage undertaker is required" for example. BCU also promotes practices that help protect wastewater systems through guidelines inhibiting and discouraging the disposal of food waste, fats, sanitary products, or other hazardous materials through drain systems. Helping to prevent pollution and support effective wastewater treatment. The University actively monitors water consumption, using water-meter logging systems to identify leaks and waste, supported by wider sustainability strategy and environmental communications frameworks. BCU also has spills response training delivered to key staff annually online and every 2 years in person. This enables staff to be aware of controls to protect the environment in the first place with good control measure and emergency response if a spill was to occur.

Action Plan to Reducing Plastic Waste

We make publicly available documentation to reducing plastic waste across campus through the Environmental Policy 2025, waste management initiatives, and Sustainable Catering plans. The University enforces this through its ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS). The Sustainable Catering plan and policy include specific actions to reduce disposable and plastic items, including reducing and removing single-use packaging, promoting reusable cups, proving non-disposable takeaway options, and reviewing packaging from delivery and catering operations. Such examples include replacing plastic disposable cutlery with wooden alternatives and removing single-use sauce sachets. BCU's general waste management and recycling initiatives are designed to help reduce the overall waste generated on campus, including plastic waste, as well as Waste Awareness Week, and a Waste and Resources Task group.

Collaboration for Shared Aquatic Ecosystems

We collaborate with external organisations and local stakeholders to support the stewardship of shared aquatic ecosystems. The Leading Engineering Endeavours programme in partnership with The Rivers Trust developed nature-based engineering solutions to tackle water pollution and raise awareness of water welfare challenges among school pupils, university students, and teachers. The programme involved ongoing engagement and feedback from The Rivers Trust, helping to promote practical action and education related to river ecosystem protection. The Climate Action in East Birmingham project included the revitalisation of the River Cole Valley and Grand Union Canal corridor as green and blue infrastructure assets, as part of efforts to transform the area from a legacy of industrial decline and social deprivation into a vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive Green Innovation Quarter.

SDG14

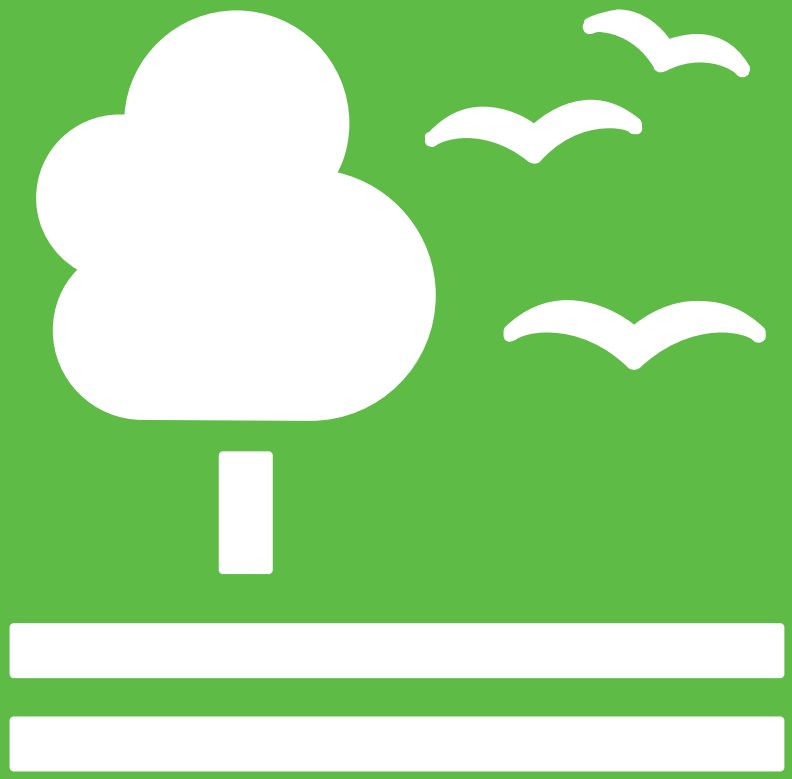
Life below water

Programmes Towards Good Aquatic Stewardship Practices

We develop and support programmes that encourage good aquatic stewardship through research, stakeholder collaboration, and knowledge exchange. The Sustainable Utilisation of Macroalgae (Seaweed) in Indonesia project aimed to identify sustainable uses for seaweed waste, reducing environmental impacts, and supporting sustainable management of marine resources. The project also contributed to the development of a national biogas roadmap. BCU has also led research into marine dumping on UK coastlines. Working with coastal authorities and stakeholders to analyse waste management challenges affecting coastline environments, the project aimed to promote awareness and to inform strategies to reduce pressures on coastal and marine ecosystems.



15 LIFE ON LAND





SDG15

Life on land

Events about Sustainable Use of Land

Our Sustainable Growth Initiative which grows and processes plants for internal use at the university. These natural dyes, fibres and fragrances are then used as materials as part of the courses and education at BCU. The soil used was a donation from HS2 and HS2 are happy to donate more in the future which then also reduces the carbon footprint for excavated soil. The Biodiversity Action Plan highlights the commitment that BCU has to sustainable land use. This is done through creating wild meadows, installing more nest boxes for common bird species, creating bird, bat boxes, and hedgehog boxes and many more. BCU hosts events such as Sketch and Stitch at the Birmingham Botanical Gardens, curated to change how people behave. This event was designed to give everyone of all ages the skills necessary around sketching and textiles to give materials a second life; by showing people how to repurpose old materials this event aimed to inspire creative ways to reuse old items.

Sustainably Farmed Food on Campus

We have strong commitment to sourcing sustainably farmed food. Through partnering with catering companies that are committed to lessening food production, and pushing for plant-based options the University lowers the emissions associated with meat production. All Eggs are free range, and all milk and meat are Red Tractor assured, certifying whether a company has met strict guidelines across food safety, animal welfare and environmental protection. BCU ensuring all meat, eggs and milk are red tractor assured this shows their dedication to animal welfare.

Maintain and Extend Current Ecosystems' Biodiversity

The BCU Biodiversity Action Plan commits to maintain and extend existing ecosystems, such as creating plans for eradication of invasive species, reducing the competitiveness of grass by introducing yellow-rattle seeds, engaging with the Canal and River Trust to enhance canals, and many more initiatives. BCU has also created wild meadows, bird boxes, and planted native bulbs on campus to maintain and extend ecosystems. Beehives/Apiaries have been built on the roof on the City Centre Campus, alongside Hedgehog Friendly boxes around the estate grounds as part of an initiative to support a range of habitats and ecological features.

Educational Programmes on Ecosystems

We provide several avenues for ecosystem education. The Climate Skills Bootcamp short course aims to provide its students with new skills, knowledge, and a holistic understanding of climate literacy with sessions being guided on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Biodiversity Literacy Training is all delivered at the University, providing students and staff with an understanding of what biodiversity is, why it's under threat, and what we can do to take meaningful action to reverse the fortunes for nature, both at the University and the communities where staff and students live. The annual Waste Awareness Week focuses on efforts around recycling and sustainability. The 2026 event was based around promoting sustainable waste disposal, arranged mass litter picks, and provided interactive games to attract engagement from students and educate them on sustainable waste disposal.



SDG15

Life on land

Sustainable Management of Land for Agriculture (Educational Outreach)

SMART-SIP+, led by Birmingham City University, is an educational outreach initiative which supports the sustainable management of agricultural land. Working with farmers in rural Bangladesh, the project shares knowledge on the effective use of solar powered irrigation systems, helping communities improve crop production while reducing dependence on diesel powered technologies. The project also provides practical learning opportunities through direct collaboration with farming communities. Farmers are supported in adopting techniques that reduce post harvest losses, improve food storage and processing and create additional economic opportunities.

Sustainable use, Conservation and Restoration of Land (Policy)

The University's Biodiversity Action Plan is a policy that ensures the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems associated with the University. This is achieved through a partnership with groups such as the Canal and River Trust to conserve the canals on campus. Additional efforts are made to support the ecosystems associated with the University by planting native trees, eradicating invasive species, new wildflower planting, and maintaining food growing sites around the estate.

Monitoring IUCN and Other Conservation Species (Policies)

One-way BCU is monitoring and protecting IUCN species is by making sure to monitor invasive species to ensure they do not outcompete native species. Hedgehogs, native to the UK, are listed as 'Near Threatened' in the ICUN Red List. Led by a policy commitment through the University's Biodiversity Action Plan, BCU has made significant progress to protect this species through the creation of 'hedgehog houses' across the campus grounds, insect hotels, safety ramps in ponds and many other interventions. there is also a 'Hedgehog Highway' which ensures that Hedgehog movement is not impaired. The hedgehogs are also monitored to ensure the collection of ecological data.

Local Biodiversity included in Planning and Development

BCU includes biodiversity in planning and development within its Biodiversity Action Plan. Currently all BCU buildings must comply with the Sustainable Buildings Standard (SBS), with an Energy Performance Rating Certificate (EPC) of A and a BREEAM standard of 'Excellent' at minimum. Additionally, BCU has over 700 solar panels over 5 buildings. BCU has shown a commitment in incorporating biodiversity into planning and development through the Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan states they will ensure that biodiversity is incorporated into planning and development by requiring all new buildings to have a biodiversity net gain of 10% and strive to go beyond the 10% wherever possible.

Alien Species Impact Reduction Policy

BCU is actively reducing the impact of alien species across its campus, an action which is enforced through biodiversity policy, the Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan states that the University is to regularly monitor any invasive species and working on active plans to work in eradicating such species where they are disrupting natural and native biodiversity.The case of the Himalayan Balsam, which was outcompeting native species has been eradicated by the University through a programme based on hand-pulling techniques. The area where invasive species took hold continues to be monitored.

SDG15

Life on land

Collaboration for Shared Land Ecosystems

BCU and Birmingham Botanical Gardens (BBG) have established a strategic partnership that demonstrates collaboration for shared land ecosystems. By combining academic expertise with one of the Midlands' most biodiverse natural environments, the partnership supports joint research, learning, and community engagement focused on the benefits of plants for people, places and the planet. Collaborative projects will explore sustainability, urban greening, health, and innovation, while providing students and researchers with access to unique natural resources. Project SATURN brings together partners from Birmingham, Trento, and Gothenburg, alongside local authorities, researchers, and stakeholders, to develop integrated approaches to landscape management. The project reconnects urban and rural environments, promotes sustainable land use and engages over 50 stakeholders in creating shared visions for resilient landscapes.

Water Discharge Guidelines and Standards

The University maintains an ISO 14001:2015-certified Environmental Management System and is committed to complying with environmental legislation, preventing pollution, and protecting the environment. Through its Environmental Policy, the University commits to managing and reducing water consumption and discharges, supported by monitoring, reporting, and continuous improvement processes. These measures help minimise risks to water quality and support the protection of local ecosystems.

Policy on Plastic Waste Reduction

BCU has outlined a policy around plastic waste reduction. Within the Catering Plan there is a ban on plastic utensils during events, conferences and forums, ensuring that non-disposable utensils are available and clearly advertised. There has also been a reduction year on year on disposable cups through provision of reuseable bottles, alongside initiatives such as requiring all packaging to be reusable, recyclable, or compostable wherever possible, with single-use plastics and non-recyclable packaging to be phased out across all catering provision by 2030. The University is also encouraging consumers to change their behaviour around disposable cups. By offering a 15p discount on drinks for those who bring their own cup this encourages less plastic waste. Policy on Hazardous Waste Disposal. BCU has a guide showing how to dispose of hazardous waste, this guide gives details on who to contact around disposal of hazardous waste and what constitutes hazardous waste.



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS





SDG16

Peace, justic and strong institutions

Elected Representation

We strive towards being a strong institution by ensuring that the views of students, academic staff, and other University employees are included in decision making across the institution. This is achieved through elected representation on its highest governing body under the Instrument of Government, which includes up to two student representatives nominated by the student body, up to two academic staff representatives, and representatives from both faculty and non-faculty employees.

Student's Union

The University recognises an independent Student's Union, with automatic enrolment for all students. The Union plays a vital role in supporting students through its Advice Team, offering guidance on academic, financial, and personal matters. It describes itself as having a confidential, non-judgemental and independent advice team prepared to aid students. We also provides a wide range of social activities through various societies and events, helping to promote inclusion and enhance the student experiences. These societies are a way to make friends and to learn a new skill, or campaign for meaningful change. Additionally, the Union contributes to university governance by providing input through the Student Voice Council, ensuring that student perspectives are fully represented in decision making processes. Furthermore, there are course representatives and lead representatives. Course representatives put together students concerns who then pass it on to the lead representative to have their voices heard by senior staff, to enact change and contribute to the life of the school through various projects and campaigns.

Identify and Engage with Local Stakeholders

BCU has formal written policies and strategies to identify and engage with local stakeholders external to the University. The Public and Community Engagement (PCE) Strategy outlines the University's approach to engaging with external stakeholders, ensuring meaningful collaboration. It highlights that the University is in an area where 99.6% of the businesses are Small to Medium Enterprises (SMEs), the University aims to take advantage of that by increasing collaboration with the businesses it identifies as being the beating heart of the economy. Additionally, the Sustainable Travel Plan 2025/30 demonstrates this engagement in practice, incorporating input from surveys and stakeholder interviews. Collaborating with Transport for West Midlands in potentially obtaining cheaper, more accessible student passes.

Participatory Bodies for Stakeholder Engagement

The University hosts multiple participatory bodies that facilitate stakeholder engagement, including the Industrial Advisory Group, which involves stakeholders such as Birmingham City Council (BCC) to support student placements and related initiatives. Additionally, the University has signed a Civic University Agreement with Birmingham City Council, committing to joint projects that contribute positively to the local community. BCU also collaborate with local community partners, such as Ashram Housing Association help to support student placement experiences and provide research opportunities for students and staff, including Ashram Housing Association.



SDG16

Peace, justic and strong institutions

University Principles on Corruption and Bribery

We have a clear Anti Bribery Policy in place, outlining its zero-tolerance approach to corruption and bribery. Alongside this there is training available for identifying bribery and corruption. This training is internally used by staff to inform them on what bribery can look like in everyday situations. How to spot the signs in other colleagues and how to report it. This training ensures that unsuspecting employees don't fall into these mistakes.

Academic Freedom Policy

BCU supports academic freedom through the Freedom of Speech Code of Practice which ensures that staff have the freedom to choose their research areas and to teach and speak publicly about their work. The policy applies to all members of the University, including both students and staff.

Publish Financial Data

We publish financial data regularly through the Report of the Board of Governors and Financial Statements. This includes financial data related to estates and facilities, support services, and academic and teaching support.

Provide Expert Advice to Government

The University provides expert advice to government through participation in advisory groups, submissions of evidence to parliamentary inquiries, and research that informs policy. Additionally, the University's Music Education Research Group has had its work cited in House of Lords debates on national music education policy.

Policy – and Lawmakers Outreach and Education

Birmingham City University engages in ongoing outreach, education, and capacity-building to policy and lawmakers through its Public and Community Engagement Strategy, published annually. The report shares evidence and data on key relevant topics including waste management, recycling performance, and sustainability progress.

Participation in Government Research

BCU undertakes policy focused research in collaboration with local and national government departments. This includes joint initiatives with Birmingham City Council, such as the Data Science Collaboration Project, which supports evidence-based policymaking.

Neutral Platform to Discuss Issues

The University provides a neutral platform and safe space for political stakeholders to discuss on policy challenges through its Public and Community Engagement Strategy. We also have formal agreements with Birmingham City Council and local partners to collaborate on shared civic issues.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS





SDG17

Partnerships for the goals

Cross Sectoral Dialogue about SDGs

We demonstrate active participation in cross sector dialogue on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through work such as the Smart, Sustainable, and Green Cities Research Group, that works with external stakeholders including local businesses, community organisations, international partners, and local authorities (Birmingham City Council, West Midlands Combined Authority) to address issues related to sustainability, urban resilience and net-zero challenges. Key SDGs delivered on through this initiative include SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities) by bringing together researchers and external partners to address urban sustainability, resilience, and the development of smart, sustainable cities. It also contributes significantly to SDG 13 (Climate Action) through its focus on net-zero challenges, climate resilience, and clean energy transitions, while SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) is demonstrated through collaboration with stakeholders including local businesses, community organisations, international partners, Birmingham City Council, and the West Midlands Combined Authority. In addition, the group's work on digital innovation, data science, AI, and sustainable infrastructure aligns with SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), and its emphasis on social justice and community-led solutions provides a contribution to SDG 10 (Reduced Inequalities). The SSG-Bridge project is a collaborative project between UK and Indian universities and innovation organisations, comprising of knowledge-exchange activities, delivering internation symposiums, and capacity-building programmes focused on sustainable urban development and community-led solutions. BCU's Strategy 2030, alongside the university's Sustainability Strategy further commit the university to working with public, private, and voluntary sector partners, communities and civic leaders to address sustainability challenges and contribute to sustainable development goals.

Collaboration with NGOs for SDGs

Our partnership with Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) for the project SMART-SIP+, delivers on multiple different SDGs through collaboration with an NGO, by better utilising excess energy generated by solar irrigation pumps (SIPs). The project is reliant on Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (SDG 9), Clean and Affordable Energy (SDG 7 and Zero Hunger (SDG 2), by turning unused energy into power for other applications such as cold storage, crop drying, water purification, and electrical vehicle charging. This also included stakeholders including NGOs (Bright Green Energy Foundation, Water and Sanitation for the Urban Poor) and government representatives to workshop in Dhaka. BCU also offering volunteering opportunities and collaborates with NGOs through BCUs brokerage service and volunteer days. One such example is FareShare, a national charity against food poverty (No Poverty SDG1).

Measuring Student Sustainability Literacy

We recognise a key component of our students wanting to engage with others around the SDGs is the understanding of what sustainability is. Recognising this, we created an annual green skills / jobs survey. The questionairre seeks to establish the understanding and interest of sustainability amongst our students, in the hopes that future surveys will demonstrate how University interventions increased both awareness and passion for sustainability, therefore measuring progress in increasing sustainability literacy.



SDG17

Partnerships for the goals

International Collaboration Data Gathering for SDG

We participate in international collaborations that support the gathering, development, and gathering of data through cross border research and capacity building projects. The Internet of Things for Smart Water Innovative Networks (IoT4Win) project, through a consortium of universities, industry partners, and end users, works to develop a IoT, smart system, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data management systems for water networks. The project collects and analyses real-time data on water quality, quantity, demand, and performance of infrastructure for outcomes around SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation. BCU is in partnership with the Burdett Trust Project in the development of a Cardiac Nursing Resource in Zambia. Through the development of training programmes and practice resources, the project supports the collection and sharing of healthcare knowledge and capacity-building data linked to the Good Health and Wellbeing SDG. BCU is in partnership with Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) for the project SMART-SIP+, to better utilise excess energy generated by solar irrigation pumps (SIPs). Turning unused energy into power for other applications such as cold storage, crop drying, water purification, and electrical vehicle charging. This also included stakeholders including NGOs and government representatives to workshop in Dhaka. The international project delivering and collecting data on SDG 7, Affordable and Clean Energy.

Collaboration for SDG Best Practice

Birmingham City University's Law department works with the United Nations through the Centre for Human Rights' project, that assesses and analyses institutional awareness, implementation processes, and reporting relating to the SDGs. The main focus is ensuring that progress is achieved through a human rights framework. Through these processes, BCU contributes to comparative analysis of the SDG implementation related to quality education, gender equality, reduced inequalities, climate action, and peace, justice and strong institutions.

Education for SDGs: Specific Courses on Sustainability

The University offers dedicate sustainability focused education through programmes and courses such as the MRes Sustainable Engineering, a postgraduate research degree focused on sustainability in engineering practice, urban design, project management, and interdisciplinary solutions to environmental and societal challenges. Additionally, Birmingham City University (BCU) embeds sustainability across a wide range of its curriculum through modules and core content related to environmental management, and responsive innovation. InnovationFest, a yearly event, sees students from department such as computing and engineering create practical, innovative solutions in-line with the UN's SDGs. The University's course portfolio includes numerous programmes and modules containing sustainability-related learning outcomes, making sustainability education available across multiple disciplines.

Publication of SDG Reports – Per SDG

A summary of all 17 SDGs can be found in this report. These summarisation documents/excel are to be the first attempt for the Times Higher Education criteria.

SDG17

Partnerships for the goals

Education for SDGs in the Wider Community

BCU offers dedicated sustainability-focused educational outreach activities in the wider communities, having provided numerous examples of this: Quality Education (SDG 4) - Engineering Endeavours works with the Rivers Trust to educate schoolchildren, undergraduates, and teachers about water welfare, as well as showing innovative project work at InnovationFest (International Collaboration Data Gathering for SDG. Birmingham City University (BCU) demonstrates participation in international collaborations that support the gathering, development, and gathering of data through cross-border research and capacity building projects. The Internet of Things for Smart Water Innovative Networks (IoT4Win) project, through a consortium of universities, industry partners, and end users, works to develop a IoT, smart system, using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data management systems for water networks. The project collects and analyses real-time data on water quality, quantity, demand, and performance of infrastructure for outcomes around SDG 6 - Clean Water and Sanitation. BCU is in partnership with the Burdett Trust Project in the development of a Cardiac Nursing Resource in Zambia. Through the development of training programmes and practice resources, the project supports the collection and sharing of healthcare knowledge and capacity-building data linked to the Good Health and Wellbeing SDG. BCU is in partnership with Bangladesh Agricultural University (BAU) on the SMART-SIP+, a project that aims to better utilise excess energy generated by solar irrigation pumps (SIPs), turning unused energy into power for other applications such as cold storage, crop drying, water purification, and electrical vehicle charging. This also included stakeholders including NGOs and government representatives to workshop in Dhaka, an international project delivering and collecting data on SDG 7, Affordable and Clean Energy.

Relationships with Regional NGOs and Government for SDG Policy

We contributes to regional sustainable development policy through our Gold Membership of Sustainability West Midlands (SWM). SWM works with us, local authorities, combined authorities, businesses, universities and the third sector to identify sustainability challenges, develop regional strategies, undertake evidence based research, monitor progress against sustainability targets, and provide recommendations for climate and sustainable development policies. Through participation in SWM's networks, consultations, projects and knowledge sharing activities, BCU contributes expertise that helps inform regional sustainability and policy development which addresses the 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

