



UNIVERSITY  
OF LONDON

# Sustainability Annual Report

2021–2022



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# Statement from the Pro Vice-Chancellor

**This year saw the Knowledge Quarter (in which University of London is homed) return to normal operations post-COVID. It was magnificent to see our estate thriving again with students and staff, but with this came the challenge of managing it sustainably, for example managing waste and energy usage.**

Nonetheless, we have continued to contribute towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals by reducing carbon emissions, promoting sustainable living, supporting biodiversity and last, but certainly not least: providing world-class education, wherever it is undertaken in the world.

Pride can be found in achievements such as the ongoing re-certification of our environmental management system, which is externally verified to the ISO4001 standard, and our student-facing behaviour change programme 'Reduce the Juice'. Not only has this engagement programme continued in strength, but in-person elements were reintroduced for students residing in London.

I would like to thank each and every stakeholder: be that student, staff, federation members, suppliers and so on, for their support in working to make the University of London a sustainable environment. We know whilst we have points to celebrate, there is still much to be done. Sustainability is an ever-moving target and requires as many of us as possible to play a role in positive change. I hope you will support us on this journey.



**Rita Akushie**

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Finance and Operations)  
of the University of London



# Introduction to the University

**The University of London is a unique federation of 17 independent higher education institutions, delivering world-leading education and research.**

Our federation represents one of the largest and most diverse student bodies in the world, reaching 40,000 students in over 190 countries.

From our multi-purpose central London estate to our University of London Worldwide arm offering distance-learning and online courses, our university is unique and uniquely placed to respond to the global climate emergency.

This report provides a snapshot of sustainability initiatives, activities and data for the academic year 2021–2022. The scope of this report covers the University of London only, rather than encompassing all our federation members. Many of our members will have their own Sustainability Reports you can find online.





# Linking to the Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a blueprint of 17 interconnected goals laid out to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all.

To continue the University's work in supporting the UN SDGs, we have shown within this report where areas of our activities contribute to achieving one or more of the 17 goals.

Look out for the SDG symbols throughout this report. Find out more about the SDGs by visiting [sdgs.un.org/goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals)

## Accreditation

The University of London is externally audited on a yearly basis for its Environmental Management System (EMS). **This is the system by which a company controls the activities, products and processes that cause, or could cause environmental impacts and in doing so minimises the environmental impacts of its operations.**

In 2021–2022 the University of London's EMS obtained the ISO4001:2015 standard, covering the following scope: The provision of facilities management services at the following key University of London buildings; Senate House, Stewart House, IALS, all university operated student residences and grounds.





## Our Estate (Scope)

In 2021–2022 our estate comprised of the following capital assets which form our Scope 1 & 2 emissions:

Senate House	Academic
Stewart House	Academic
IALS	Academic
The Warburg Institute	Academic
International Hall	Residential (PBSA)
College Hall	Residential (PBSA)
Connaught Hall	Residential (PBSA)
Handel Mansions Flats 1–24	Residential (PBSA)
31 Russell Square	Academic
Dilke House (partial, from March 2021)	Vacant
Nutford House, including Annex	Residential (PBSA)
95 Seymour House	Residential (PBSA)
Library Depository Egham	Library

### Changes from 2020–2021:

Dilke House	In scope from March 2021
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### The Warburg Institute





# Energy and Carbon



**In 2021–2022 we achieved a 73% reduction in Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions against our 2010 baseline of 14,766 tonnes of tCO<sub>2</sub>e.**



Our Scope 1 and 2 carbon footprint was 3974 tCO<sub>2</sub>e, equivalent to 19,870,000 miles driven in the average petroleum car. This is a 17% reduction from 2018–2019 (4817).

UoL is a member of The Energy Consortium (TEC), which purchases energy for the university within its framework. For the reporting year (2021–2022) we purchased 100% emissions free electricity, from renewable and nuclear sources.

**Initiatives/narrative:**

- In August 2022, we replaced UPS units in our large data center with more efficient units.
- We also started the process of migrating a few of our key business services to Cloud based computing across Spring 2022, with the hope that we can ultimately transition to Cloud based computing on the whole in the coming years. This should see further reductions in our carbon footprint.

**Carbon Footprint 2021–2022**

Type of emissions	Emissions sources	Carbon emissions
<b>Scope 1</b> Direct emissions from our activities	 Gas and fuels	1,105,103
<b>Scope 2</b> Indirect emissions from our energy use	 Electricity and district heating	2,803,50





# Waste and Resources



## This year saw a drop in recycling rates again, from 62% to 54% in 2021–2022.

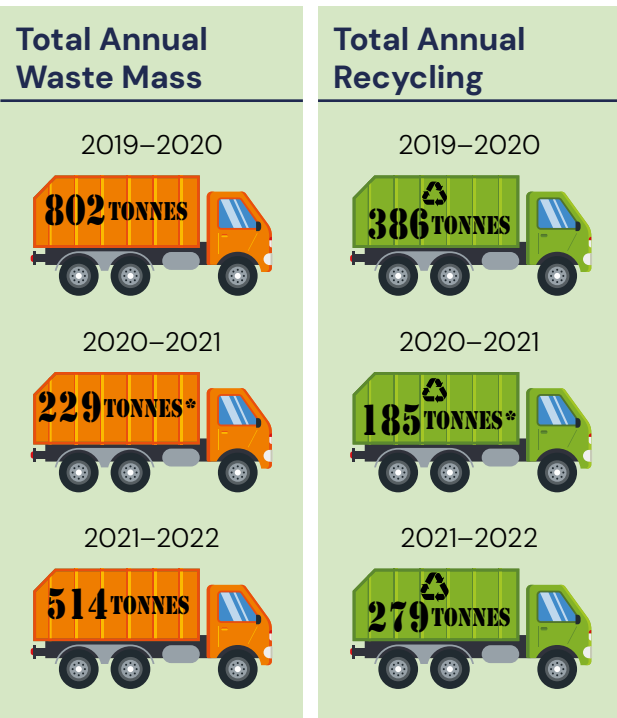
We mostly attribute this drop in recycling to the return to campus/workplace, post pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic period had a noticeable impact on recycling rates, and our focus in the coming years will be to provide education and training to students and staff about what can and can't be recycled.

However, we did also do positive work to move the dial on recycling rates too – the Sustainability Team worked with the Soft Services Team and the University's waste contractor to develop plans to reduce onsite waste, and with the Procurement Team to reduce the volumes of waste entering the estate.

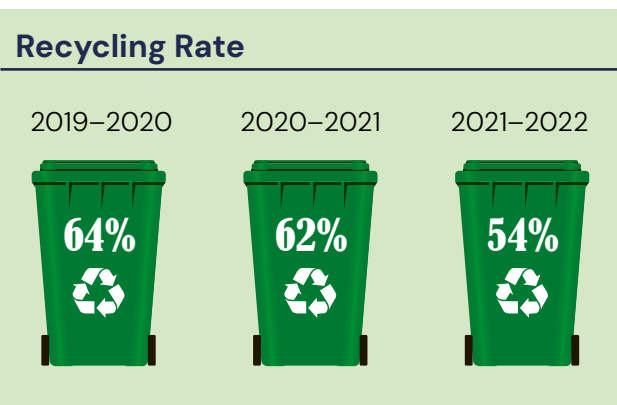
We maintained our zero-waste to landfill commitment\*. General waste is taken to a modern energy-from-waste facility where it is converted into energy for the National Grid.

### Initiatives:

- We continued to use Warp It internally – an online portal that enables the redistribution and reuse of unwanted items.
- All our Intercollegiate halls home a permanent British Heart Foundation donation boxes, saving items from potentially otherwise not being rehomed or recycled.



\* During lockdown, data not representative.





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\*Recycling rate is provided by our waste contractor's portal and is the total recycling rate from all buildings, academic, residential and commercial, where our waste contractor collects waste.





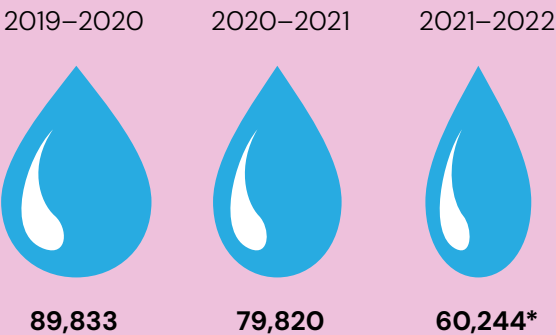
# Water



## Our water consumption this year again reduced from previous reporting years.

In 2021–2022, our building services department dealt with **471 incidents** logged under “leaks”, quickly dealing with problems once reported, which would have had a massive impact on curbing water loss across our estate.

### Total annual water consumption (m3)



### Non-residential water consumption (m3)



### Residential water consumption (m3)



\* Taken from HESA

# Biodiversity and Placemaking



## The University of London estate encompasses several green spaces, including Woburn Square Garden, Malet Street Garden and Gordon Square Garden.

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We are committed to maintaining and enhancing green spaces on our campuses to support biodiversity and wellbeing. Our grounds contractor, Nurture, continued to improve our green spaces with a horticultural focus.

### About our grounds contractor, Nurture:

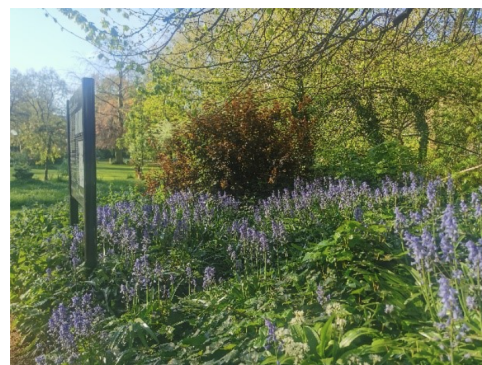
They achieved certification of their carbon neutrality in 2021, in accordance with the global PAS 2060 standard, helping to reduce the University's scope 3 emissions.

Nurture are working towards incorporating more battery-operated equipment and vehicles (e.g. vehicles and jet washers). They aim to electrify their whole fleet by 2030.

There is a strategy covering all the green space in the area owned by the University of London, The Bedford Estates and the University of London, called "Wild Bloomsbury". It aims to improve biodiversity, support wellbeing, build climate resilience and reduce air pollution for our local community. We also worked in collaboration with the Bloomsbury Square and Gardens groups.

As part of this overarching strategy, in 2021–2022 we carried out the following biodiversity and placemaking initiatives:

- Specific improvements were made to Woburn Square, a green space outside our prestigious Warburg Institute. These improvements were made with a focus on usability, meaning that we observed how the lawns were used by students, staff and members of the public and ensured that this was at the heart of our reseeded project.
- We also ran a number of engagement opportunities with stakeholders. This ranged from biodiversity tours and staff bulb planting session around the estate in Autumn 2021, to partaking in the 'No May May' campaign, where we also encouraged staff with their own gardens to do the same.
- The University of London also achieved Bronze for the Hedgehog Friendly Campus Award, in recognition of the actions undertaken to support hedgehog populations and educate stakeholders about the problems they face.

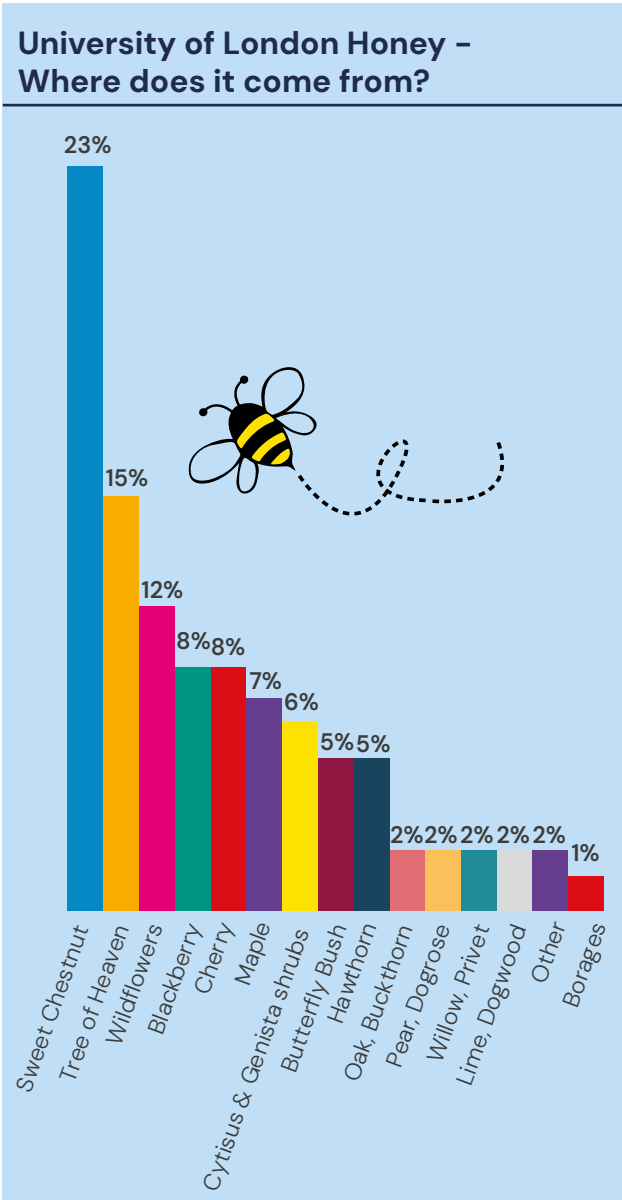




### The University of London bees:

The roof of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies (IALS) continues to be a home for our two honeybee hives. These bees collect nectar from the surrounding habitat and reward us with delicious honey that we sell on campus each year.

In collaboration with our beekeeper, we also planted a new bed of flowers in Torrington Square to further increase the availability of pollinator-supporting plants.



### In our Intercollegiate Halls of Residence:

Across our University of London Intercollegiate Halls, we have over 2300m2 of gardens for our students and the local wildlife to enjoy.

2021–2022 was another great year for the gardens in International Hall, which are maintained by a fantastic group of students and academic volunteers. The gardens have been an ongoing rejuvenation project since 2014 and they have progressed year-on-year. They are now a great source of pride for the hall and a relaxing area for residents.

The gardens are maintained with compost created from the scraps from the residents’ private kitchens. A range of wildflowers and bird feeders means that we have a steady stream of wildlife using the garden, and sustainable and organic solutions are being used to control pests wherever possible. For example, a solution of milk and water was used to control fungus, while some pests are controlled through introduction of predators such as ladybirds. Camden Council also provided flowerpots so that any students in our halls with or without a green thumb can get involved in some gardening.



# Catering and Food



Aramark are the University of London’s caterers, covering hospitality, Dellar Hall Café, and our 5 catered Intercollegiate Halls of Residence. The halls were College, Connaught, Nutford, International and Lillian Penson.

The Sustainability team meeting with Aramark key staff and the Catering Manager monthly (one for Halls, and one for Senate House). These meetings are productive and allow us to discuss sustainability actions and make continual progress.

In the coming years we will be working on several areas related to catering: reducing food waste and packaging, and how to provide more vegetarian and low carbon options on our menus.



\* A small percentage of this figure is from staff kitchenettes





# Engagement with Sustainability



**Reduce the Juice is the university's award-winning sustainability engagement programme. The aim of Reduce the Juice is to improve student and staff knowledge on sustainability topics. Beyond the University of London, Reduce the Juice worked with University of Surrey and UCL this year.**

The set-up of the engagement programme centered around two parts: online webinars across the academic year on a range of sustainability topics, and face-to-face engagement for the UK-based audiences.

In-person engagement reached over 1970 students, through visiting university halls of residence. In the University of London Intercollegiate Halls, the waste challenges saw improved recycling rates by an average of 3.6% percent across all halls.

The global audience who attended the online sessions was extremely valuable, and interesting to hear global perspectives.

If attendees to the webinars took part in the competition element, they could receive a Sustainability Advocate Award by completing three challenges.

In 2021–2022 we had a total of 794 students attend the webinars, which covered topics such as plastic use, biodiversity and sustainable food. Our most-attended webinar was on climate change.

The number of students engaged has dropped (from 1219 in 2020–2021), however we anticipate that this is mainly due to many lockdowns ending globally – when students were more likely to be at home, they had more time to attend online webinars.

"The webinars are a great way to gain knowledge about a wide range of sustainability-related topics and about how to implement strategies in our everyday lives."

Feedback from attendee

"It has helped my future career by broadening the scope of my knowledge of sustainability, as well as improving my creativity skills by my involvement in the challenges."

Feedback from attendee

## Staff Sustainability Champions Network

The Staff Sustainability Champions Network is our dedicated programme to engage staff in behaviour change.

Staff champions:

- Helping with Nurture
- Signage for meeting rooms
- Sustainable cooking events
- No Mow May – pollen count survey

# University of London Worldwide

**The University of London is the UK's largest provider of international online and distance education, which it delivers in partnership with 17 federation member universities, to improve access to higher education around the world.**

The University of London Worldwide (UoLW) model, which allows students to study remotely in their home countries or through local Recognised Teaching Centres, lends itself to providing a sustainable model for education delivery.

In 2021–2022, we had 41,585 active students studying through UoLW, and 76 Recognised Teaching Centres.

With the exception of the International Foundation Programme, which must be studied at a Recognised Teaching Centre – all of our programmes are available to study online.

Students sit exams either at an authorised independent examination centre (currently offered in 34 countries and 49 cities around the world) or via remotely proctored assessment which includes the use of live proctors where appropriate.

We offer a few courses specifically relating to sustainability:

- MSc, PGDip and PG Cert Global Environment and Sustainability (academic direction: Birkbeck).
- Short course: Environment, health and sustainable development (academic direction: LSHTM). Part of MSc Public Health.
- Short course: International environmental law (academic direction: QMUL). Part of LLM Postgraduate Laws.
- MOOC: Business Sustainability in the Circular Economy (academic direction: RHUL).
- Short course: Corporate governance, ethics and sustainability (academic direction: RHUL). Part of MSc Project Management.





## Quality education for sustainable development and human rights

Through connection and collaboration, the University of London's purpose, history and current global footprint make an important contribution to the achievement of a number of SDGs.

Our foremost and overarching commitment is to SDG4: Quality Education, with which all the other 16 SDGs are closely interlinked; and through which the University also brings a strong focus to bear on:

- **Good health and wellbeing** (SDG 3): our postgraduate programmes for health practitioners, clinicians, policy makers and researchers contribute to advances in global health policy and public health in a wide range of developing countries.
- **Gender equality** (SDG 5): the availability of UoL degrees in 190 countries means that roughly equal numbers of men and women take the opportunity to study with us through distance and flexible learning. In a number of countries women outnumber men in our student body, Sri Lanka being an example, where the proportion of women is 60%.
- **Decent work and economic growth** (SDG 8): alongside the intrinsic value of our degrees to individuals pursuing their chosen careers, UoL provides a range of employability resources and opportunities to our students wherever they are. Our alumni occupy influential positions in fields that are critical to economic growth, including finance, economics, business, law, IT, health and education.
- **Reduced inequalities** (SDG 10): equality of opportunity through global access to quality tertiary education has been a guiding principle for the University since our founding, when we were the first university in the UK to admit students regardless of gender, race or religious affiliation. The accessibility of our programmes today, in terms of both cost and flexibility, continues this tradition and provides an important platform of opportunity in developing countries.
- **Sustainable cities and communities** (SDG 11): our world-leading teaching, research and public engagement in the humanities and social sciences play an important role in building knowledge and understanding of the human dimensions to complex societal problems, many of which play out in urban contexts, including climate change, justice and equality, and individual and societal wellbeing.
- **Peace, justice and institutions** (SDG 16): our largest single programme is our LLB, delivered at any one time to over 15,000 students around the world. Many of our graduates occupy senior roles in national and international law contexts, while our LLM builds further expertise and specialisation. In addition, our postgraduate programmes in Human Rights and in Refugee Protection are helping to address one of the biggest issues of our time: mass forced migration.
- **Partnerships for the goals** (SDG 17): UoL is an active member of the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the International Association of Universities and European Universities Association. Through these and other networks we ensure that we both contribute to and benefit from knowledge and expertise in addressing the SDGs.





## Contact

For information about the Sustainability please contact  
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