



UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Annual Sustainability Report

2020–2021

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This report captures the sustainability activities, stories, achievements and data of the past 12 months at the University of London. Whilst our federation remains a supportive association, this report does not include the above for all 17 of our Member Institutions, many of whom have their own sustainability reports. Instead, we focus on the operations of the Central University throughout the 2020-2021 academic year.

We have maintained our strict level of transparency and integrity in the creation of the 2020-2021 Annual Sustainability Report. We continued our stakeholder engagement, facilitating open and honest communication, to ensure our report was telling the full story. The COVID-19 pandemic continued to impact the reporting year and some of the areas on which we report were impacted by national lockdowns and reduced occupancy in our buildings. Where this occurred, we have still published the relevant data to continue our ethos of transparency, but highlighted where and how we believe COVID-19 has impacted our data.



The University of London

The University of London has been providing ‘education for all’ since it was established by Royal Charter in 1836. With a mission to transform lives through knowledge, the university brings benefits to society through its research in the humanities. It connects enquiring minds across the world through public engagement.

At the heart of the University of London is collaboration; we are a federation of 17 London-based Member Institutions. The university uses its exceptional knowledge foundation to deliver globally respected academic programmes, changing the lives and prospects of hundreds of thousands of people. Sustainability is core to our work and it is built into the University’s 2020-2025 strategy. One of its key aims is to build on innovative sustainability practices, working towards our operational zero carbon goal.

Statement from Rita

Following another challenging year I am delighted that the university's work to improve our sustainability performance has continued to provide positive outcomes and we've seen real progress. University of London continues to be a leader of positive change and I am proud to share the achievements discussed within this report.



Rita Akushie
Pro Vice-Chancellor
(Finance and Operations)

During the 2020-2021 academic year we have continued to positively contribute towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals by reducing our carbon emissions, supporting worldwide learning and promoting biodiversity. We have reduced our waste output across our estate over the past year by nearly 50% when compared to the previous year and have made strides in areas that benefited staff, students and our local community, such as improving our green spaces and continuing staff, student and community engagement. Additionally, the University of London Worldwide team continued to deliver 140,000 examinations online, further reducing our related carbon emissions.

Our award-winning behaviour change programme 'Reduce the Juice: Connect' goes from strength to strength and has allowed us to amplify the voices often left unheard in the climate debate by sparking discussion among students across the globe. And we are not stopping there. In 2021-2022 we are planning to deliver a hybrid programme that maintains great online discussion alongside in person engagements, which drive measurable environmental improvements.

I would like to thank every member of staff that has supported our improved environmental performance during the past year. We have shown what we can achieve when we come together with a common goal, and I look forward to seeing future accomplishments tackled with the same sense of purpose.

Reporting Against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

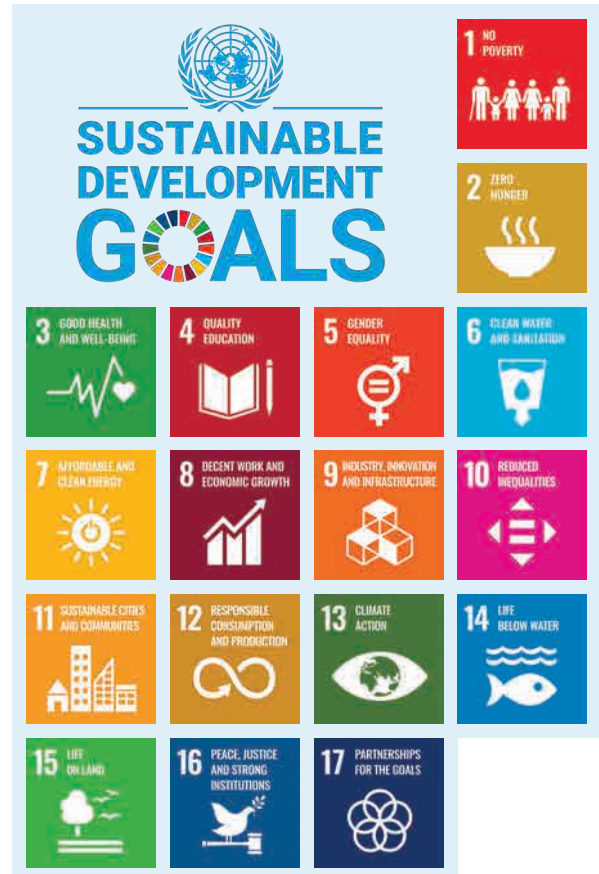
The UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) are a blueprint laid out by the United Nations to achieve a more sustainable future for all.

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 the report to see where our work is contributing to this global effort.



Alignment with the University's 2020–2025 Strategy

We have aligned this annual sustainability report with the University's 2020-2025 Strategy. Throughout the report sections are highlighted with numbers to indicate the strategy point they align with.



Energy and Carbon

In 2020-2021, we achieved a 66% reduction in carbon emissions against our 2010 baseline. This is a 6% year-on-year reduction from 2019-2020.

We are pleased with these reductions as they show that our efforts across the estate have once again produced positive environmental outcomes. We would also highlight that due to the coronavirus pandemic many of our buildings experienced low occupancy, which has also contributed to the reductions.

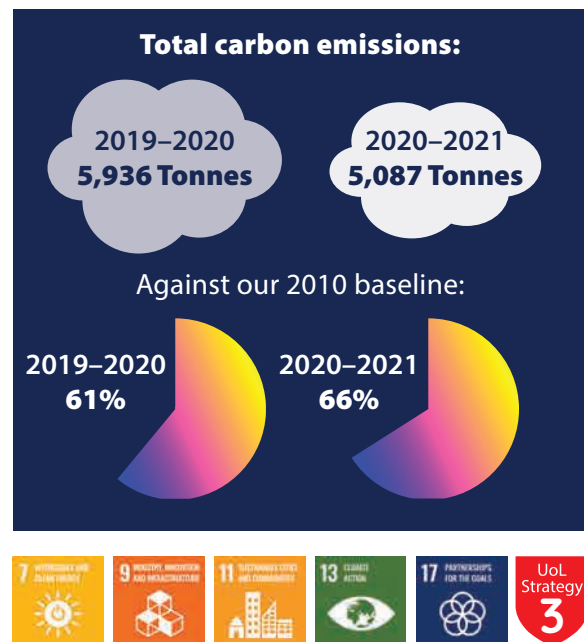
One of the positive changes has been the completion and implementation of the University's Energy Performance Contract (EPC) with Bouygues Energy. The project implemented energy conservation measures across Senate House, Stewart House, International Hall and College Hall. During the reporting year, the implemented measures were monitored and continually adapted to ensure our energy and carbon emissions reductions were maximized.

Heating and ventilation

We have been working to increase efficiency and reduce emissions across our estate. This has been achieved through working with our maintenance provider, the Salisbury Group, to improve our heating and lighting controls and ensure our heating, ventilation and air conditioning runs as efficiently as possible. Compliance with Covid-19 requirements and comfort levels for the building occupants were maintained throughout.

The Energy Consortium

Alongside these improvements we changed our energy suppliers and joined The Energy Consortium (TEC). TEC purchases energy for the university within its framework and we are proud to say that during the reporting year we continued to purchase 100% clean renewable electricity. We are excited to be members of the TEC consortium and are looking forward to working alongside other higher education institutions across the UK to drive innovation around sustainable energy.



Scope 1 and 2 Emissions

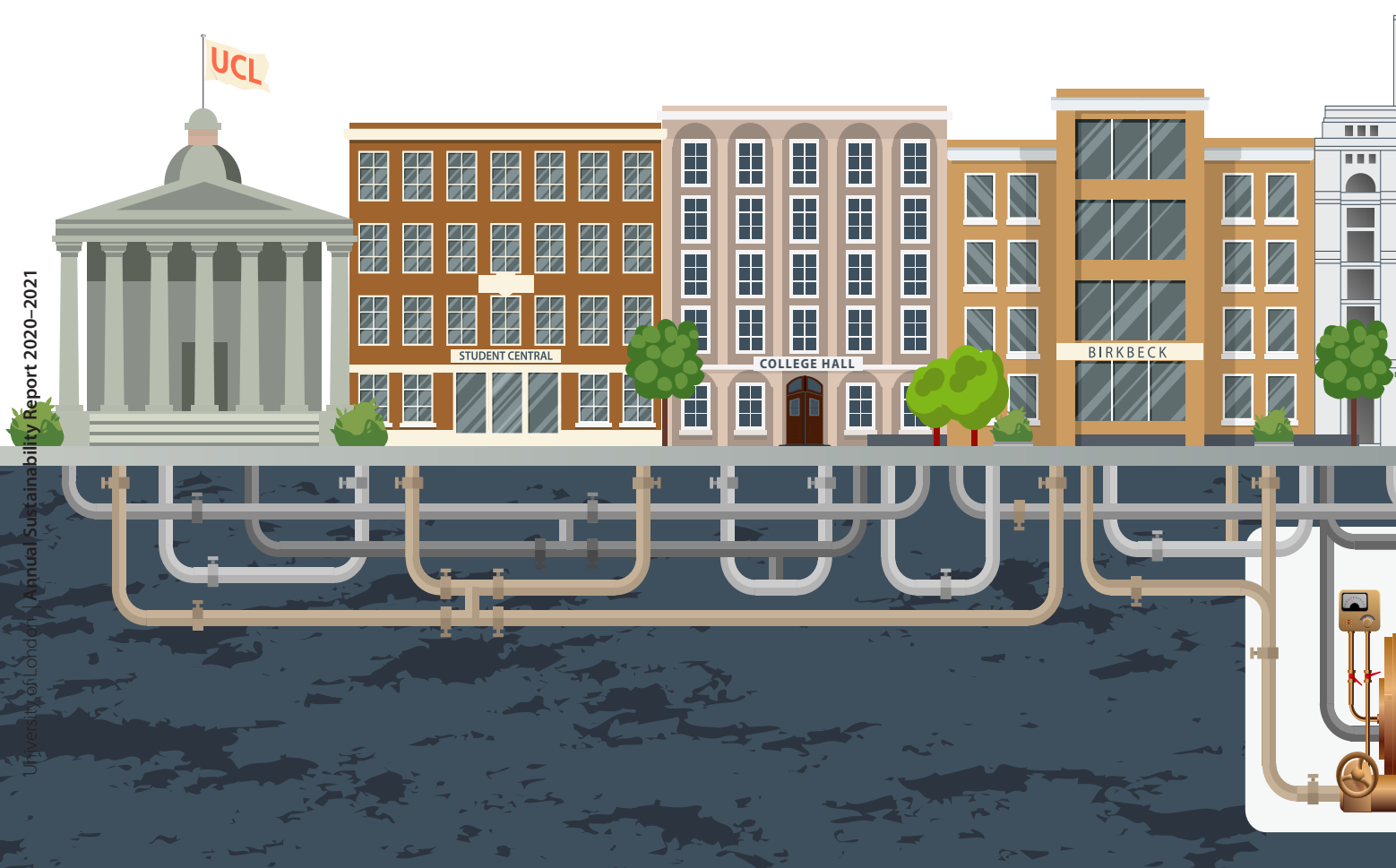
In line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol requirements, the university reports its emissions across Scopes 1 and 2.

Scope 1 emissions are those resulting directly from the university's operations. Scope 2 emissions are those resulting from the institution's purchased electricity and heat.

The university's main building and administrative centre, Senate House, does not consume any gas or heat from the Bloomsbury Heat and Power (BHP) district heating network (see below). Senate House was designed and built as a 100% electric building back in 1939. This put the building and Holden's original design well ahead of its time as the world now pivots to all electric buildings. Already having electric heating in Senate House puts us in a good position to continue to benefit from future decarbonisation of the grid. To reduce the building's consumption and strain on the power network the university intends to continue to improve the building's efficiency, such as windows and insulation.

The university's Scope 1 emissions also continue to be relatively low due to our limited gas consumption. Our direct gas consumption remains low as the majority of our central estate is heated by the BHP district heating network. The emissions from the network are captured within our Scope 2 emissions as the heat is purchased from Equans who run the network for the consortium.

We are making changes that will address the university's Scope 2 carbon emissions in the coming year. One of the main projects is the move to cloud-based computing. This shift will mean the removal of data centers housed in the Stewart House basement, which currently drive high electricity consumption within the building. With this change, we are projecting a further 2.4% reduction against our Scope 1 and 2 baseline, equating to a saving of 356 tonnes of carbon emissions annually.

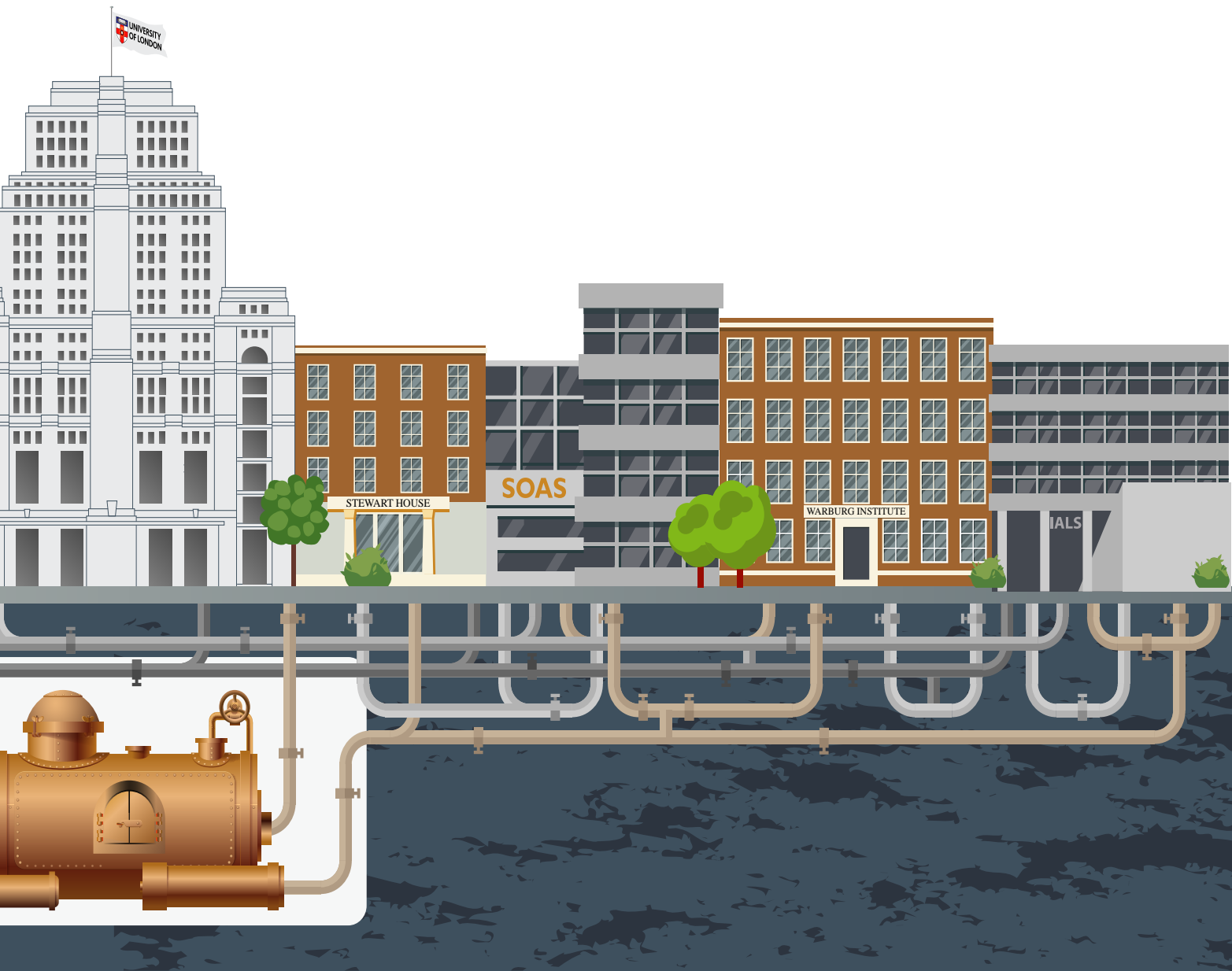


Bloomsbury Heat and Power Consortium

The university continued its collaboration with UCL and SOAS to upgrade the BHP district heating network. During the past year the design of the upgraded system was completed to RIBA stage 3.

The intention is for the system to derive the majority of its heat supply from the local sewer network, with additional capacity provided by air source heat pumps and electric boilers. Gas boilers (capacity existing) will only supply less than 1% of the demand and are retained as backup. Current modelling suggests that the initial upgrade we will drive an 88% emissions

reduction compared to the existing scheme. The upgrade works are scheduled to start in 2024 and could see the universities extending the heat network to other parts of the campus. As part of the future plans, the intention is for the existing gas boilers to be removed by 2030, enabling the network to achieve net zero carbon the same year.



Waste and Resources

2020 was a big year for our waste disposal activities as we began working with a new waste contractor, Paper Round.

Our aim when selecting our new waste contractor was to support our continued ambitions to drive down total waste volumes and improve on our recycling rate. Paper Round were selected as they mirror these ambitions and will lend valuable expertise to help us achieve our goals.

In 2020–2021, we are proud to have maintained our zero waste to landfill promise. The impacts of COVID 19 upon occupancy levels coupled with improved data reporting methods saw large reductions in our total waste mass from 802 tonnes in 2019–2020 to 472 tonnes in 2020–2021¹. Non-recyclable waste is the largest contributor to the university's waste mix closely followed by mixed recycling. The waste that cannot be recycled is taken to a modern energy from waste facility where it is converted into energy. This energy goes back into the national grid to be used by homes and businesses.²

We saw a drop in recycling rates, from 64% (2019–2020) to 61% (2020–2021) of total annual waste, and in response have been exploring options alongside Paper Round to improve these rates through improved signage and education. We are planning to implement these initiatives through an updated waste and resources strategy that will be completed in 2023.

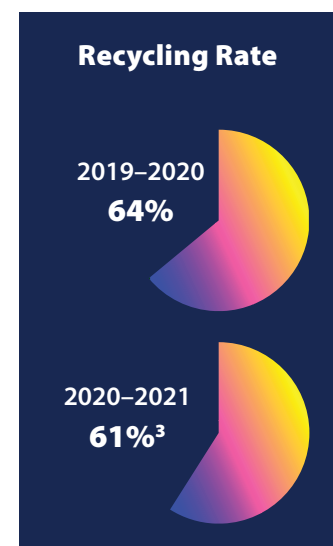
Our student residents have also been supporting our drive to reduce waste. In Connaught Hall we carried out a review of the waste receptacles and made alterations to make it easier for students to dispose of their waste correctly. In Lillian Penson Hall, residents have built a relationship with local charity shops, which supported the local community in adopting a circular economy approach through rehoming already loved clothes and belongings.



¹ We are attributing this in part to improved data reporting from Paper Round, but largely to the continued low occupancy in many of our buildings due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

² Information taken from www.recorra.co.uk/service/recycling-waste-website.

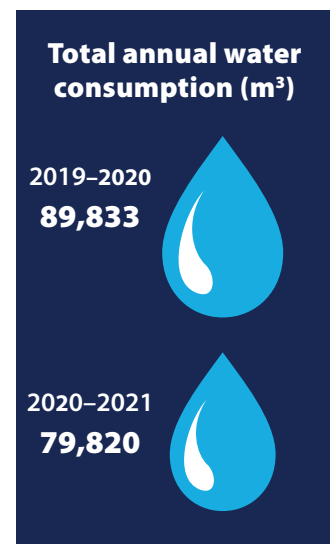
³ Due to transfer of waste providers data covers the period October 20 – July 21.



Water

Our total water consumption reduced from 89,833 in 2019-2020 to 79,820 in 2020-2021. .

These reductions applied across both non-residential and residential buildings and can, in part, be attributed to reduced occupancy because of COVID 19. In future the university will improve the metering and alarms across the estate so we can more accurately measure and further reduce our water consumption.¹



¹ We have attributed some of these reductions to lower occupancy due to COVID.

Biodiversity

During a large part of the year, when our estates and surrounding areas were quieter than usual Nurture, our grounds management contractors, continued to maintain and improve our green spaces with a horticultural focus.

This means that we prioritise the health and environmental contribution of trees, flower beds and plants over their aesthetic appearance.

In line with the Wild Bloomsbury project which we have developed alongside UCL and the Bedford Estate, our estates are maintained to establish wildlife and bee corridors around the Bloomsbury area. This approach means that the Wild Bloomsbury project is on track to ensure positive improvements for flora, fauna and humans in the Bloomsbury area.

Nurture achieved certification of their carbon neutrality in 2021, helping to reduce the university's scope 3 emissions. Developments in technology over the past few years have meant that all jet washers and strimmers are now battery operated. All the vehicles used for grounds maintenance on the university campus are already fully electric but beyond our estate, Nurture are working to electrify their whole fleet by 2030.

In 2021, 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 are proud to say that despite the unfortunate disruptions to 'normal' life in 2020-2021 we continued with many of the great projects that were started last year. This include achieving the Bronze Hedgehog Friendly Campus award, building on work started in 2019-2020.

2020-2021 was another great year for the gardens in International Hall, which are maintained by a fantastic group of student and academic volunteers. The gardens have been an ongoing rejuvenation project since 2014 and they have progressed year on year. They are now a major source of pride for the hall and a relaxing area for families and students. The gardens are maintained with compost created from the scraps from the residents' private kitchens. A range of wildflowers and bird feeders mean 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.

With a focus on biodiversity and improving the ecological health of green spaces we are ensuring that we are in-line with the UK's commitment to halt biodiversity loss outlined in the government's 2020 biodiversity strategy.





Catering

We have seen a reduction in annual food waste, some of which may be attributable to Covid.

Our cafés in Senate House remained closed for the majority of the year due to our staff working from home. However, our intercollegiate halls remained busy and throughout the year we maintained a flexible arrangement where students could bring takeaway containers at lunch and dinner so we could respect people's desire for safety while simultaneously reducing food waste and single use plastics. We continue our policy of not serving fish on the "fish to avoid list" and 100% of our eggs are free range.



Conferencing and Events

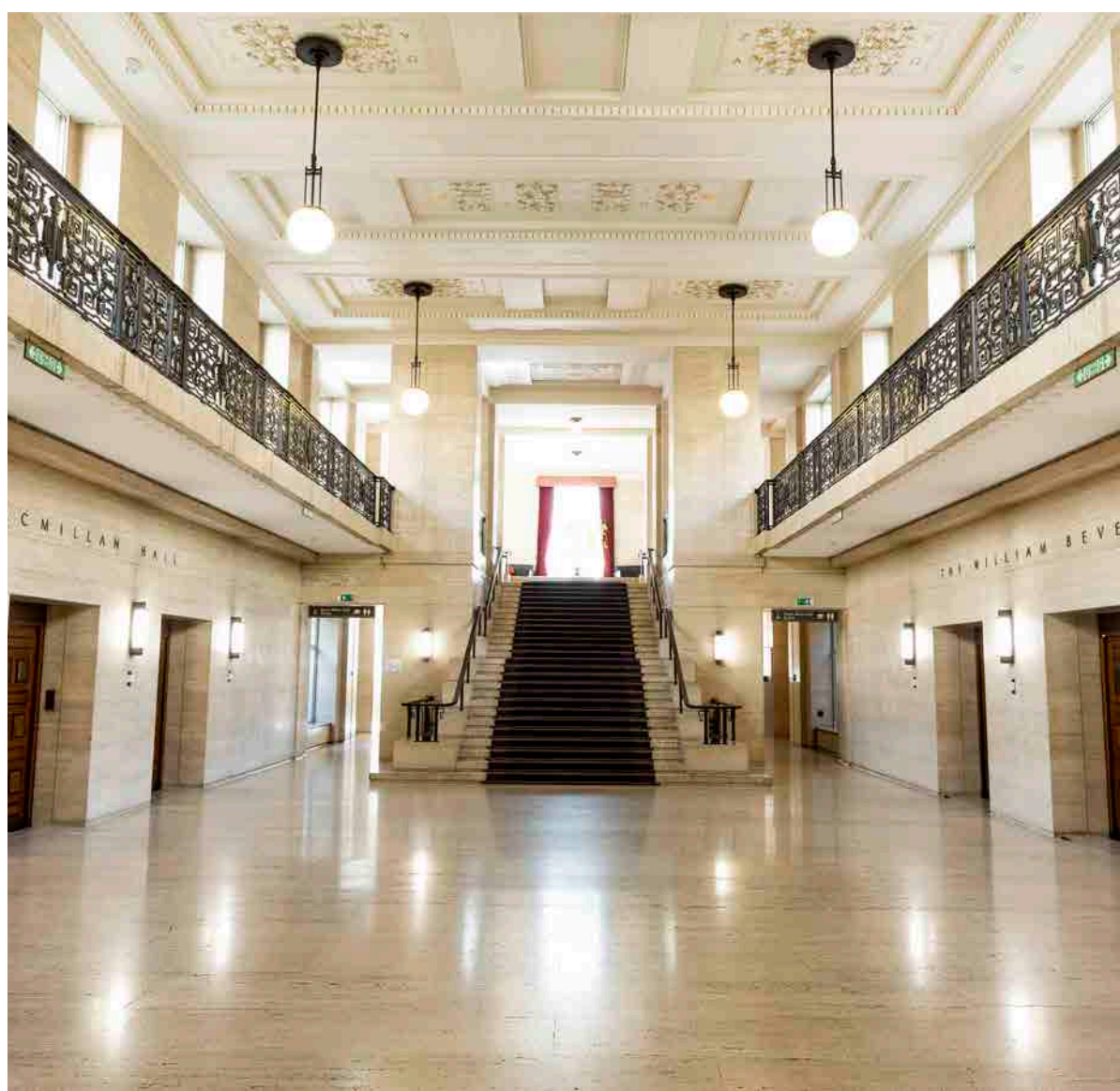
COVID-19 limited the ability to host conferences and events, but it did not stop the hard work of our team and we are proud to announce that in 2020 we received Gold status under the ECOsmart scheme from Greengage.

This accreditation assesses:

- ▶ food and beverage
- ▶ energy and water conservation
- ▶ waste management and recycling
- ▶ corporate and social responsibility
- ▶ rooms
- ▶ facilities
- ▶ consumables

By achieving Gold status our event spaces have met and embraced certified standards of sustainability.

The work highlighted in these previous sections of the report also aligns our work within the university's strategic aims to ensure we are continuously adapting our organisation to anticipate the university of the future.



University of London Worldwide

The University of London Worldwide model, which allows students to study remotely in their home countries or through local recognised teaching centres around the world, has a positive impact on our carbon footprint and environmental impact (data on the students not having to travel and the associated carbon savings).

In 2020-2021, we continued to offer an online teaching approach and all assessments were held online. This was made possible by a collaborative effort across the whole university, and we used what we had learnt from the previous year to inform our approach. Offering our courses and examinations online to 42,000 candidates has helped to reduce the environmental impact of the Worldwide programme. We have significantly reduced the distribution of hard copy materials, textbooks and question papers across the globe. Additionally, students still completed their programmes despite the impact of the coronavirus pandemic both in the University of London and in their home country. Over 10,000 awards were made in 2021.

We are transforming our worldwide teaching offering in the future and have a target to make all our courses entirely digital by 2024. This will mean that we can continue to be resilient, and our teaching will be inclusive for students who may not be able to travel to learning centres. We made great steps towards this in 2020-2021 with our undergraduate economics, management and social science courses moving online. From a printing perspective that meant that 11,000 subject guides, which vary in size between 60-150 pages, were no longer printed. This paper saving equates to 36 trees according to the "10 thousand trees" calculator.



1,300

modules last year,

49

different programmes,

200

different awards

42,000

students

140,000

online assessments in 2021

Students reached during our live webinars:

1,865



University of London in Paris

The University of London institute in Paris (ULIP) offers students the chance to receive a UK degree while being based in the heart of Paris. The institution is a vital bridge between British and French academic communities.

One of ULIP's Students' Union societies is affiliated with the charity Student Action for Refugees (STAR). STAR works to support the rights of refugees and asylum seekers by raising awareness in communities of the issues faced by refugees and asylum seekers. The charity supports individuals as they begin to restart their education.

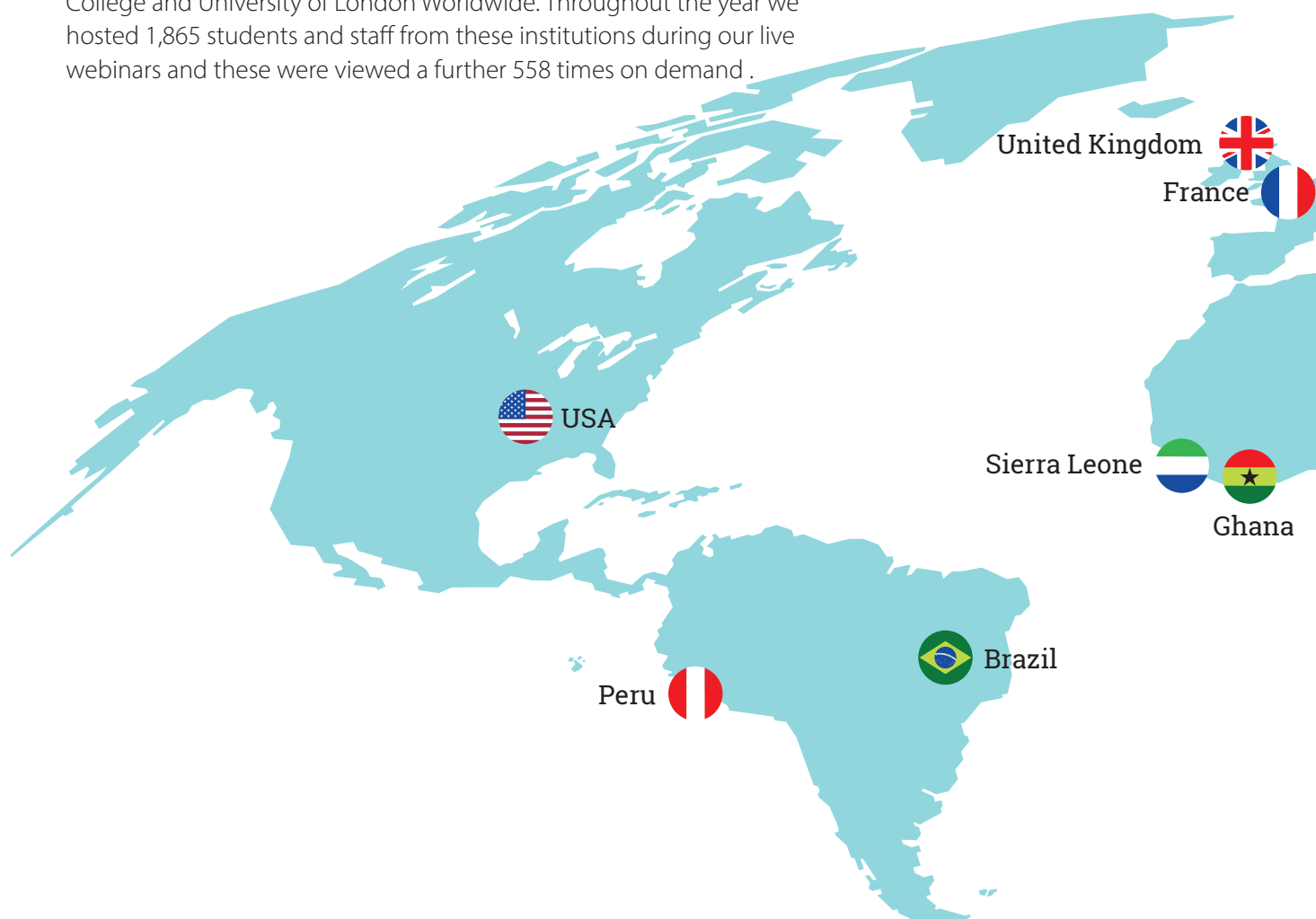


Reduce the Juice: Connect

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.

As a result, they will drive positive environmental change in their personal lives and across their wider network. Prior to 2020-2021, the programme primarily operated through face-to-face competitions. In 2019-2020 we took the programme online and offered students the chance to learn about sustainability topics ranging from fast fashion to COP26 via webinars. We have rebranded the project to reflect the connections made globally as part of the campaign.

2020-2021 was the first full year of Reduce the Juice: Connect, and we are proud to say that it came on leaps and bounds as we changed the way we deliver the campaign. Our partners for the year were the University of Surrey, London School of Economics (LSE), Goodenough College and University of London Worldwide. Throughout the year we hosted 1,865 students and staff from these institutions during our live webinars and these were viewed a further 558 times on demand .



One of the benefits of moving Reduce the Juice online has been the involvement of the University of London Worldwide students. This has helped give a truly global focus to our discussions, as our students from around the world have been getting involved in our webinars, contributing different perspectives to our discussions. We have received positive feedback from both international and UK based participants and will be looking to increase international discussions in the 2021-2022 version of the programme.

This year also saw 43 students receive the Sustainability Advocate Award, a certificate that recognises their commitment to the programme, knowledge gained on sustainability issues and the actions they took to improve their impact.

In 2021-2022 we will offer a hybrid approach. We will maintain the positive global aspect of Reduce the Juice: Connect, while offering face-to-face competitions once again.

Reduce the Juice: Connect furthers our position as the UK's leading provider of distance learning worldwide, and is a modern programme that allows students from across the globe to access education about sustainability.



On Demand
Views of our
webinars:

558

Sustainability
Advocate Awards
Presented:

43

Countries
represented on
the Reduce the
Juice Programme:

20



Knowledge Quarter Partnership

University of London is a member of the Knowledge Quarter, a group which brings together the knowledge-based organisations in the central London area around King's Cross, the Euston Road and Bloomsbury.

In the 2020–2021 academic year, the Sustainability Team continued to play an active role in supporting the group. The team presented several times to the Knowledge Quarter members on topics from waste reduction to zero carbon, sharing our in-house expertise with local organisations from small to large.

In 2020–2021, the university was a founding member of the Knowledge Quarter's Zero Carbon Steering Group, which aims to create the vision and drive action to get the knowledge Quarter area to net-zero by 2030.



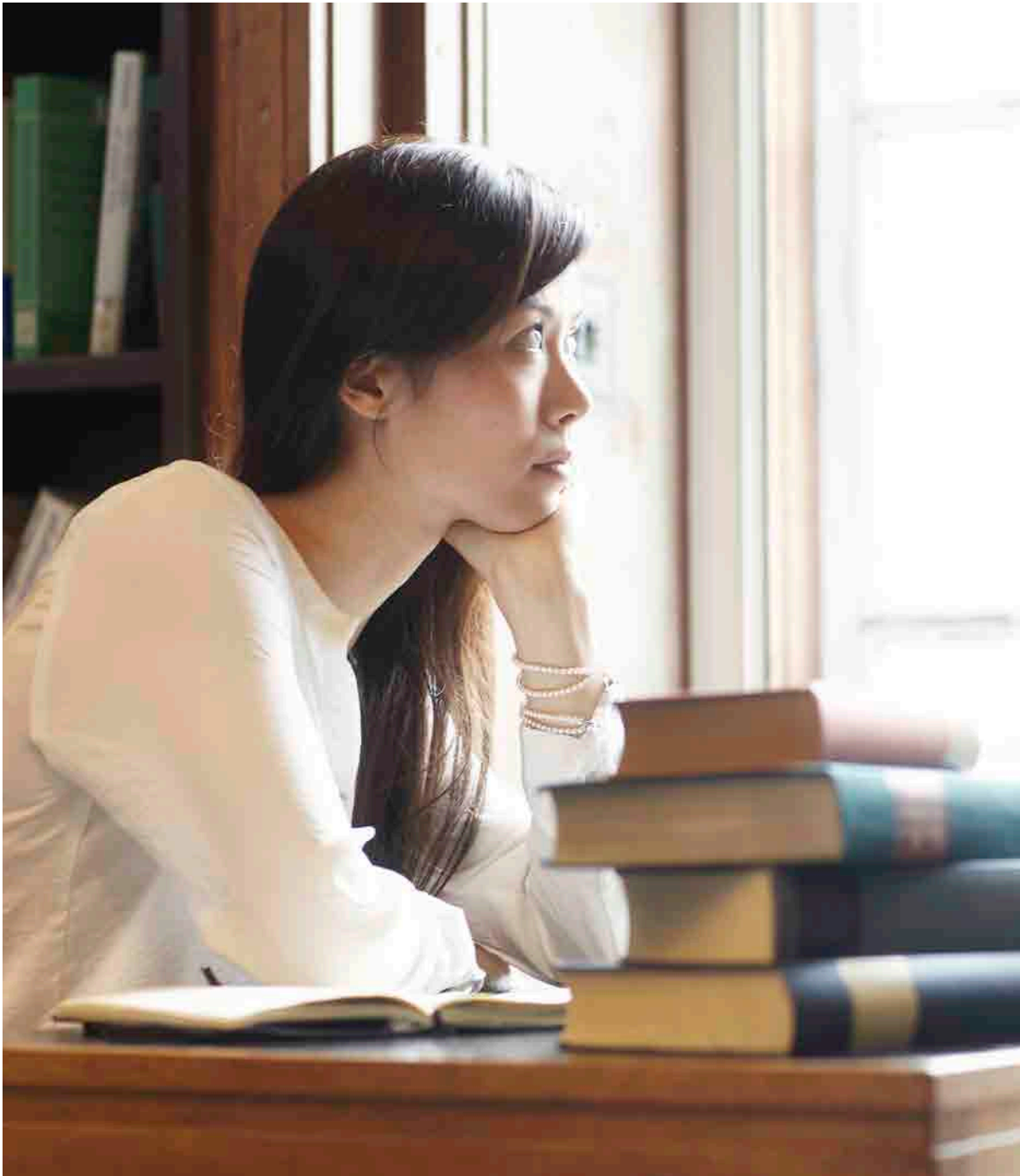


Accreditation

University of London continue to work hard to ensure that our key buildings operate with the highest of environmental standards and undergo annual internal and external audits to ensure these standards are being met.

In 2020–2021 the University of London's Environmental Management System has obtained the ISO 14001 version 2015 certification for the following buildings and spaces:

- ▶ Senate House
- ▶ Lillian Penson Hall
- ▶ Connaught Hall
- ▶ Stewart House
- ▶ International Hall
- ▶ College Hall
- ▶ Nutford House
- ▶ IALS
- ▶ our grounds





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