

Sustainability partnerships

Partnerships are key to the achievement of sustainability. The University is continually working to extend its partnerships and share learning and practice in sustainability. It is fundamental to the civic aims of the University that it engages with the world beyond the campus walls and with a wide range of community needs and interests. Collaborative strategies for public engagement, corporate responsibility and knowledge exchange underpin the University's approach to sustainability.

Campus and Community

Local collaborations and local action are key priorities for sustainability, and the University campuses are an important resource to be harnessed for promoting such projects.

Community Garden

In 2009, staff at the University began to work in collaboration with the Whaddon Safer Community Team and St Paul's Road Residents Association to create an Edible Garden at Francis Close Hall campus, for the use of students and members of the local community.

Biodiversity Assessments

Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust carried out initial biodiversity assessments at Park Campus during 2008. This collaborative work with the University continues to grow. A memorandum of understanding was signed with Gloucestershire wildlife trust in 2009.

Academic Connections

The University supports the exchange of knowledge through students and staff collaborating with external partners through their teaching, studies and research.

Expert Seminars

The Sustainable Landscape Series was developed as part of the Landscape Architecture programme to provide a forum for expert professional speakers to discuss sustainability issues in their professional practice with colleagues, university students and academics. The series has been promoted by the Landscape Institute and received sponsorship from major landscape architecture practices.

'Café Scientifique' is a series of informal events held at local venues, to debate issues of importance that emerge from the scientific community. Presentations are also organised on specific topics such

as climate change, in partnership with local organisations such as Cheltenham Friends of the Earth. The University is also committed to promoting dialogue and debate about religious and ethical perspectives on sustainability through its chaplaincy and other educational groups based at the University.

Educational Dialogues

The University hosts the [John Ray Initiative](#), an educational charity promoting environmental stewardship by blending Christian and scientific understandings of nature.

Business Development and Good Practice

Working towards sustainability requires the involvement of a range of organisations across the private and public sectors, helping to share good practice in environmental management, corporate responsibility and leadership for sustainability. The university generates networking opportunities and shares good practice through events such as the Elisabeth Bittner masterclass held in June 2010.

Business Development

The University took part in the [Enviroskills](#) partnership with the South-West Regional Development Agency, which provided business support, skills assessments and training over a three-year period to SME environmental technology businesses, to identify skills and maximise innovation and growth.

Professional Networks

The University collaborates with Gloucestershire Enterprise Network and a range of professional bodies to organise the [Growing Gloucestershire](#) conference, which takes place annually in June with the aim of nurturing business, enterprise and professional development across the region.

Corporate Social Responsibility

As part of its commitment to improving public sustainability reporting, the University participates in the HERDA-SW Business in the Community (BITC) Corporate Responsibility Index and hosts the [Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges](#) (EAUC). The EAUC promotes good corporate practice for sustainability across tertiary education and organises a benchmarking scheme for higher education institutions to monitor their environmental and corporate responsibility practices using the BITC model. The University is continually seeking to improve its profile in environmental management on campus, drawing on expert advice and partnership work to create more resource-efficiency across the organisation.

Recycling Practice

Working with the [WRAP](#) Recycled Paper Advisory Team, the University has switched to the use of recycled paper to assist its sustainability objectives without incurring additional costs. The Students' Union has also worked in partnership with Cheltenham Borough Council to increase recycling activities among students.

The University also takes part in the Gloucestershire Environment Partnership to develop and promote effective sustainability strategies among businesses and organisations across Gloucestershire, particularly to support more effective resource management.

Waste Management

Partnership work with local company Printwaste has enabled the University to significantly increase its recycling rates and to reduce the amount of waste for landfill and disposal. The benefit of the partnership to Printwaste has been in the expansion of their materials portfolio for recycling, an increase in customer base and volume of business.

Local and Regional Partnerships to support Sustainability

Gloucestershire's regular threat from flooding is an example of a pressing sustainability issue where the University applies its knowledge and expertise in partnership work. The University supports local efforts to protect the region, inform public understanding and limit the damage caused by severe and unexpected flood activity.

Community Awareness

Partnerships for sustainability are built at the level of local government, with the business community, with voluntary groups and grassroots organisations, and with individuals and families, to raise public awareness, support collaboration and cohesion, and to involve local communities at all levels in working towards sustainable futures. Within the University, staff and students are engaged in activities to connect their educational and research work with local needs and issues.

From 2004 to 2006, the University hosted the Lower Severn Community Flood Information Network, funded by the Royal Society and the Environment Agency, to inform the public and capture local experiences of flooding. Landscape Architecture students at the University have worked on land art installations and used landmarks to interpret flooding and raise awareness.

The [Cheltenham Low Carbon Partnership](#) works collaboratively to reduce carbon emissions in the town through monthly meetings of

members and specialist seminars for all interested parties locally. The University works in collaboration with other members such as Cheltenham Borough Council, Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Gloucestershire Primary Care Trust, GCHQ, Cheltenham Voluntary Sector Forum, Vision 21 and a range of local businesses.

Health Promotion

The University supported the successful bid for the [Tewkesbury Living for the Future Project](#) funded by the Healthy Communities Challenge Fund. Tewkesbury is one of 9 successful bids nationwide. The project will engage workplaces and schools to build capacity and understanding of wellbeing, eating and the physical environment, to tackle obesity and inactivity.

RCE Severn

Learning and action for sustainability is being promoted across the Severn region through the projects and partnerships created in the UNU Regional Centre of Expertise (RCE) in ESD.

The Severn RCE is part of a United Nations University initiative to promote dynamic and innovative networks that can join up thinking and practice in education for sustainability at local and regional levels. Partners in the RCE network come from business, government, educational, community and voluntary organisations.

The RCE provides a platform to help initiatives develop among groups and organisations linked together through the University. The [UNURCE Network](#) connects the Severn region to a growing international initiative, where learning can be shared to support sustainability in practice and projects can be created among those working towards similar goals in different global settings.

RCE Severn activities include national stakeholders forums on Student Engagement (2009) and Sustainable Transport (2010) as well as seminars and masterclasses, and regular emails on partner activities and developing partner collaborations.

Global Partnerships

The University seeks to develop global perspectives and understand the needs of different communities across its educational activities, in support of critical learning for sustainability. The University is working with a range of overseas academic partners to explore sustainability in teaching, research and through systemic change across the education sector. Experience and practice in transformative learning for sustainability is made possible by learning partnerships established between University of Gloucestershire and other universities and colleges worldwide.

International Exchanges

The [University of Liberal Arts in Bangladesh \(ULAB\)](#) shares the University of Gloucestershire's concern with active learning for sustainability and citizenship. This collaboration between the two institutions is helping to generate a range of insights into organisational change for sustainability.

The activities and projects of the International Research Institute for Sustainability also benefit from the input and expertise of a range of external Honorary Fellows based at institutions overseas. Specific global exchange activities are also encouraged through active teaching, research and project links in other countries, so that students can benefit from intercultural learning opportunities that are directly linked to their studies. Staff can also develop their academic work in collaboration with overseas partners.

Global Outreach

The Faculty of Sport, Health and Social Care has a strong tradition of working in partnership in support of stronger communities and increased health and wellbeing, in the public sector, among professional groups, and in wider global settings. Sport Malawi is one of the faculty's outreach projects, devised with the Chaplaincy team. The project team visited a network of villages in Malawi in 2009 to explore the value of sport as a tool for development, using coaching and educational skills to help young people to develop and to support their wider communities.

UNU RCE Severn regularly participates in international activities to further global partnership activities, including European and international RCE conferences.

Getting Involved

- Would you like to become involved in a sustainability partnership with the University, in connection with its campus practice or academic work?
- Could your business benefit from providing placement experiences for students to focus on sustainability issues?
- Do you have ideas for collaborative ventures or public engagement activities that connect with sustainability?
- Do you wish to engage with the University through a Knowledge Transfer Partnership? If so, please contact Professor Daniella Tilbury, Director of Sustainability: dtilbury@glos.ac.uk