# **Student and staff sustainability behaviours surveys 2020**

## **1; Student sustainability behaviours survey 2020**

### **Student survey highlights**

* Lower response rate
* Students’ awareness of on-campus sustainability measures remained stable, despite students being on campus less frequently.
* Slight increases in students adopting sustainability behaviours and consumption practices.
* Slight drop in participation in student sustainability initiatives at the university and in community volunteering.
* Increasing awareness of the university’s sustainability promotional/campaign efforts and more positive rating of these initiatives.
* Increased awareness of efforts to promote the SDGs

Responses from students to the survey were much lower this year (n= 106), with disruption due to the Covid-19 pandemic having an impact over the survey period from November 2020 to February 2021. Therefore, direct comparisons with the results from the previous year’s survey should be treated cautiously.

***Sustainability awareness on campus and sustainability behaviours amongst students***

The survey asked about students’ awareness of on-campus sustainability measures, the sustainability measures within their student residence and also their own personal sustainability behaviours.

Awareness of recycling of glass, plastic and paper on campus was similar to last year, with 57% knowing either a fair amount or a lot about this compared to 55% last year, as was awareness of electronics recycling which remained low at 61% knowing not much or nothing about this. Additionally, awareness of the disposal of food waste was almost the same as the previous year, with 39% knowing either a fair amount or a lot about this, as was awareness of donating unwanted items which remained low with 51% knowing not much or nothing about this. It is pleasing to see that despite changes to on-campus activities and patterns of attendance, awareness of these measures was not negatively impacted upon, although it may have hampered efforts to further raise awareness of some measures.

There was slightly more awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 27% knowing either a fair amount or a lot about this compared to 16% last year. It appears that efforts to highlight the SDGs in university activities and in the curriculum are beginning to have an impact, although work remains to be done here.

In terms of household recycling and energy efficiency measures, compared to last year, a similar high proportion of students (85%) had a recycling bin in their current student residence, but fewer had a compost bin (61%) or recycling information posters (62%), perhaps reflecting the fact that more students were living at home than in student halls where these things are available. More had programmable thermostats (65%) and compact fluorescent light bulbs or LED light bulbs (51%), but slightly less had water saving items (24%), fewer had energy saving systems such as solar panels (5%) and far fewer had indoor light motion sensors (11%), again perhaps reflecting more living at home rather than in halls or rented accommodation.

In terms of students’ sustainability behaviours in energy and resource consumption, in comparison to last years’ survey, a higher proportion (82%) said they always turned lights off when leaving a room and slightly more (59%) switched off electrical devices when not in use. Compared to last year, slightly more said they would always set their thermostat to 18 degrees or lower during cool or cold weather (31%), would always operate a washing machine only when they had a full load of clothes (75%), would always limit the time they had in the shower (35%), would always use a reusable water bottle, coffee cup, travel mug, etc. (78%) and would always print double sided to save paper (55%). A slightly higher percentage of respondents always checked the recycling labels on products before deciding which bins they should be deposed in (56% compared to 44%).

In terms of sustainable consumption practices, in comparison to last year, a higher proportion said they either sometimes or always shopped for items with minimal packaging (70% compared to 59% the previous year) reflecting the impact of campaigns against single use plastic and excess packaging both at the university and nationally. A slightly higher number donated unwanted items to charitable organisations, etc. (57% compared to 44%) and slightly more had purchased something second-hand from a charity shop or from an online site (60% compared to 55%). Slightly more had also repaired a broken item or visited a local Repair Café (50%compared to 41%)

A much higher proportion always went for a walk/looked at nature to relax or feel better (61% compared to 44%), a continuation of behaviours developed during lockdown.

In terms of participation in student sustainability initiatives at the university, engagement remained broadly the same overall at 6% indicating they had participated, although slightly fewer participated in student switch off (8%) possibly due to fewer students being on campus. Equally, slightly fewer had used the university mile this year (13% compared to 16%). Overall, there was a slight dip in those engaging in community volunteering (16% compared to 19%), although given that the pandemic may have limited opportunities this relatively stable figure is encouraging.

Slightly more said they had participated in a university course that addressed sustainability (13% compared to 9% the previous year) suggesting that more courses are making sustainability matter more prominent in their curricula.

Pleasingly, awareness of the university’s sustainability promotional/campaign efforts increased in relation to last year. Slightly more were very or somewhat aware of efforts across the range of issues surveyed and there was increased percentage of respondents rating the university’s efforts either good or very good.

| Issue | % very or somewhat aware 2019 | % very or somewhat aware 2020 | % rating efforts good or very good 2019 | % rating efforts good or very good 2020 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conservation of energy | 54 | 64 | 56 | 72 |
| Bus | 50 | 58 | 43 | 52 |
| Cycling | 61 | 74 | 51 | 69 |
| Car share | 46 | 59 | 37 | 48 |
| Recycling | 71 | 81 | 75 | 80 |
| Sustainable food | 46 | 60 | 40 | 63 |
| GHG emissions | 38 | 53 | 35 | 55 |
| Biodiversity | 36 | 57 | 39 | 67 |
| SDGs | 29 | 49 | 30 | 55 |

In particular there were significant increases in awareness of efforts to promote sustainable food, tackle greenhouse gas emissions and also the Sustainable Development Goals and it is pleasing to see the positive impact of initiatives in these areas in raising awareness

Overall students responding were either very committed (35%) or somewhat committed (54%) to sustainability compared to last year (26% very committed) and 66% somewhat committed.

Similarly to last year’s survey, the majority of the respondents were full time undergraduate home students and were female and aged under 25.

## **2; Staff sustainability behaviours survey 2020**

### **Staff survey highlights**

* Lower response rate
* Staff awareness of on-campus sustainability measures remained stable, despite being on campus less frequently.
* Staff adoption sustainability behaviours and consumption practices remained fairly stable, but with some dips in those controlling thermostat temperatures and those shopping second-hand or repairing items.
* Increasing awareness of the university’s sustainability promotional/campaign efforts and more positive rating of these initiatives.
* Increased awareness of efforts to promote the SDGs.

Responses from staff to the survey were lower this year (269 – 53%) compared with 374 (74%) the previous year.

***Sustainability awareness on campus and sustainability behaviours amongst staff***

The final section of the survey asked about staff awareness of on-campus sustainability measures, and the sustainability measures within their home, and also their sustainability behaviours.

Awareness of recycling of glass, plastic and paper on campus was similar to last year, with 69% knowing either a fair amount or a lot about this compared to 67% last year (although with a higher percentage knowing a lot), as was awareness of electronics recycling which remained low at 49% knowing not much or nothing about this, compared to 51% in 2019. Additionally, awareness of the disposal of food waste was almost the same as the previous year, with 37% knowing either a fair amount or a lot about this, as was awareness of donating unwanted items which remained low with 48% knowing not much or nothing about this. It is pleasing to see that despite changes to on-campus activities and patterns of attendance, awareness of these measures was not negatively impacted upon, although it may have hampered efforts to further raise awareness of some measures. There was slightly more awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with 26% knowing either a fair amount or a lot about this compared to 20% last year. It appears that efforts to highlight the SDGs in university activities and in the curriculum have had some impact, although work remains to be done here.

In terms of household recycling and energy efficiency measures, compared to last year, a similar high proportion of staff (98%) had a recycling bin at home, but fewer had a compost bin (56%). More had programmable thermostats (89%) and compact fluorescent light bulbs or LED light bulbs (87%), but slightly less had water saving items (34%), fewer had energy saving systems such as solar panels (10%) or indoor light motion sensors (11%).

In terms of staff sustainability behaviours in energy and resource consumption, in comparison to last years’ survey, a similar proportion (80%) said they always turned lights off when leaving a room and slightly more (61%) switched off electrical devices when not in use. Compared to last year, slightly fewer said they would always set their thermostat to 18 degrees or lower during cool or cold weather (34%), but slightly more would always operate a washing machine only when they had a full load of clothes (85%), and the same percentage would always limit the time they had in the shower (38%). Compared to last year, almost 10% more would always use a reusable water bottle, coffee cup, travel mug, etc. (72%) and a similar number would always print double sided to save paper (64%). A slightly higher percentage of respondents always checked the recycling labels on products before deciding which bins they should be deposed in (64% compared to 59%).

In terms of sustainable consumption practices, in comparison to last year, a higher proportion said they always shopped for items with minimal packaging (30% compared to 27% the previous year) and a similar number donated unwanted items to charitable organisations, etc. (42%), although slightly fewer had purchased something second-hand from a charity shop or from an online site (25% compared to 29%). Slightly fewer had also repaired a broken item or visited a local Repair Café (20% compared to 21%). This drops perhaps reflect disrupted consumption patterns as a result of Covid-19. A much higher proportion always went for a walk/looked at nature to relax or feel better (71% compared to 59%), a continuation of behaviours developed during lockdown and a higher percentage (24% compared to 20%) used the university mile.

Pleasingly, awareness of the university’s sustainability promotional/campaign efforts increased in relation to last year. Slightly more were very or somewhat aware of efforts across the range of issues surveyed and there was increased percentage of respondents rating the university’s efforts either good or very good.

| Issue | % very or somewhat aware 2019 | % very or somewhat aware 2020 | % rating efforts good or very good 2019 | % rating efforts good or very good 2020 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Conservation of energy | 73 | 80 | 61 | 64 |
| Bus | 69 | 75 | 48 | 56 |
| Cycling | 84 | 85 | 61 | 71 |
| Car share | 80 | 80 | 45 | 57 |
| Recycling | 85 | 91 | 66 | 77 |
| Sustainable food | 53 | 69 | 33 | 58 |
| GHG emissions | 50 | 61 | 31 | 53 |
| Biodiversity | 52 | 63 | 44 | 57 |
| SDGs | 34 | 62 | 24 | 52 |

In particular there were significant increases in awareness of efforts to promote sustainable food, tackle greenhouse gas emissions and also the Sustainable Development Goals and it is pleasing to see the positive impact of initiatives in these areas in raising awareness

Overall staff were either very committed (42%) or somewhat committed (55%) to sustainability compared to last year (35% very committed) and 60% somewhat committed, showing an increase in those who were very committed.

Similarly to last year’s survey, the majority of the respondents were female, a full-time employee of the university for over three years and aged over 35.

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October 2021.