UCL

Sustainable UCL
Annual Report
2019-20

FOREWORD

To make change possible, we need to show that change is possible today.

It has been an extraordinary year; one that none of us could have imagined when we launched our new sustainability strategy, Change Possible, last October.

REIMAGINING A SUSTAINABLE WAY OF WORKING

The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that the vast majority of university students and staff have moved to learning and working remotely.

It was therefore wonderful to watch so many of the UCL community continuing to take action on sustainability despite the circumstances. From the record breaking number of Green Impact teams this year, to the success of our new bike buddy scheme helping new cyclists travel to campus safely and the first full year of our student sustainability council this year has seen an increase in sustainability activity from students and staff alike.

These new circumstances have also led us to reflect on how UCL should operate for a sustainable future. It has been inspiring to see everything from award ceremonies to international conferences thriving virtually; providing insights into how we can support the UCL community to make global connections with less need to travel in the future.

This year UCL divested from fossil fuels and achieved first place in the University Carbon League Table out of 519 institutions. And as part of our commitment to a zero-carbon institution by 2030, we have also been reviewing measures to further reduce energy use in UCL's buildings – during the first lockdown period we saved as much CO_2 as would be absorbed by 38,000 trees.

INSPIRING A NEW COMMUNITY OF CHANGE MAKERS

A key commitment in the new sustainability strategy was for all students to have the opportunity to study and be involved in sustainability by 2024. As well as providing a sustainable welcome for new students through our sustainable UCL induction, many departments at UCL are exploring the sustainability connections in their teaching. Through our programmes, we hope to engage students in conversations about sustainability across the world.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, we have taken continued action on sustainability to make UCL a healthier place and increase the strength and future resilience of our community.

This report documents our progress towards UCL's sustainability commitments one year since the strategy launch.

Professor Geraint Rees
Chair of UCL Sustainability Steering Group

> "*Despite the extraordinary challenge of the last year it has been incredible to see the progress that the UCL community has continued to make towards achieving our sustainability goals. As we look forward to the next year and in particular the UK hosting COP 26, the need for global action on a wide range of sustainability agendas has never been greater; UCL is committed not only to developing the radical ideas to shape this action but also to show what it means to be a truly sustainable university.*"

Dr Michael Spence AC
UCL President & Provost

CONTENTS

UCL INSPIRES ACTION

UCL Inspires Action is one of the three foundation programmes that embeds sustainability across our institution.

As London's global university with a diverse community, we have the unique opportunity to inspire a generation of change makers that will take the lead on climate and sustainability action across the world.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2019-20

View the progress we have made against our priority actions:

Priority Action →	Progress
Work with the Connected Curriculum to launch a sustainable curriculum toolkit and incentive scheme	In progress
Revise sustainability induction module for all staff, students, and contracted staff	*Completed*
Review all relevant job descriptions to ensure sustainability is represented	In progress
Integrate sustainability into leadership training and Academic Careers and Core Behaviour Frameworks	**Embedded sustainability aspects in the new Lead@UCL training**

PROVIDING SUSTAINABILITY IN THE UCL EDUCATION

UCL has committed to providing every student at UCL the opportunity to learn about sustainability by 2024, through the curricular, co-curricular and extra-curricular offer.

41 → **sustainability** specific modules are listed in the *UCL Course Catalogue*.

517 → **students** completed the *Sustainability Induction Moodle Course*

1,274 → **students** completed the Green UCL discovery module in the *Introductory Programme*

959 → **staff** completed the *sustainability staff induction*

To achieve our aims, we also need to support staff to become sustainability champions. View our progress below:

30 → **students** volunteered as *Green Impact* Project Assistants, helping staff make their departments more sustainable

25 → **societies** made a sustainability pledge

49 → **Sustainability Awards** were given to academics, professional staff and students

HIGHLIGHTS

SUSTAINABILITY WEEK 2019

Every year, the sustainability team invites the UCL community to celebrate sustainability with an event packed week. This year, the team collaborated with student societies, creating a Wild Bloomsbury Forest installation, which students then planted on the roof of the UCL Institute of Education. Political debates, quizzes, swap shops, repair cafes and cycle training were some of the many events inspiring students and staff to make change possible.

LINK

UCL STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY SYMPOSIUM

The Climate Action Society (CAS) organised a sustainability symposium with panel discussions on tackling the climate emergency and a speed networking session for those interested in a career in the field.

LINK

INSPIRING ACTION IN THE CLASSROOM

UCL chemists calculate their carbon bootprint

800 first year undergraduates from departments across the Faculties of Mathematical and Physical Sciences and Life Sciences estimated their carbon bootprint as part of their induction. The activity involves taking meter readings at home and measuring distance travelled to arrive at an estimate of their annual emissions.

LINK

NEXT STEPS FOR ➜ 2020/21

➜ Extend the sustainability introductory programme
➜ Create a framework for living lab teaching projects
➜ Support departments to further embed sustainability

Climate Change and the Law

Researchers in the UCL Centre for Law and Environment teach climate change across the curriculum, from a 15-hour 'Climate Change case study' for first year law undergraduates to a specialist masters module.

LINK

Designing climate resilient cities

Students completing the MSc in Sustainable Urbanism work with a city or municipality on a long-term sustainable or climate resilient plan for a large-scale urban area that addresses real-life sustainability and climate challenges.

LINK

UCL IS RUN SUSTAINABLY

UCL's second sustainability foundation programme, UCL is run sustainably, is based on the recognition that for UCL to thrive in the 22nd century, we must make a sustainable and socially responsible way of operating the new normal.

That is why sustainability is a key consideration in our planning processes and culture.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2019-20

View the progress we have made against our priority actions:

Action →	Progress
Establish UCL Sustainability Student Council and Staff Sustainability Forum to increase accountability	**Established UCL's Student Sustainability Council in collaboration with the Students' Union. Planning to establish Staff Sustainability Forum in 2021**
Created annual sustainability benchmarking reports for faculties about their sustainability impacts plus new carbon reporting in Tableau.	**Created annual benchmarking reports for faculties and professional services about their sustainability impacts using data from across the UCL campus and community.**
Roll out first phase of UCL's sustainability infrastructure	**Installed 9 extra water fountains (taking the total number to 85), and installed approx. 600 cycle racks, creating 1,000 cycle parking spaces across UCL.**

MAKING UCL'S BUILDINGS SUSTAINABLE

UCL has updated its Sustainable Building Standard in line with our ambitious new Strategy goals. We will continue to drive high performance building standards through all our construction work.

LINK

HIGHLIGHTS

WE ARE ACCREDITED TO ISO 14001 AND ISO 50001 STANDARD.

The *ISO 14001* and *ISO 50001* combined Energy and Environmental Management assessments certify that organisations have implemented an effective environmental management system. The assessment covers areas ranging from sustainable materials, to energy efficiency and the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and consumption. UCL successfully met these standards for recertification.

LINK

UCL'S STUDENT SUSTAINABILITY COUNCIL – A FORUM FOR STUDENTS TO SHAPE UCL'S SUSTAINABILITY APPROACH

In 2019, the Students' Union and Sustainable UCL held the first Student Sustainability Council Session. The Student Sustainability Council is the chance for students to shape UCL's Sustainability Agenda and the Students Union's Sustainability Visions in termly council sessions.

LINK

46
Green Impact
office teams won awards for making their departments more sustainable

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY INTO UCL FACULTIES AND DEPARTMENTS

The contribution each department and faculty can make to sustainability at UCL varies depending on what teaching and research they do and how they are run. The department of History, the Medical School and the Faculty of Brain Sciences have developed bespoke sustainability plans that are aimed at maximising the positive environmental impact each can make.

41
staff teams
participated in *LEAF*, making their laboratories more sustainable

NEXT STEPS FOR → **2020/21**

→ Link the sustainability strategy to other university policies and strategies
→ Review the university's governance arrangements and further embed sustainability into decision making
→ Provide faculties with sustainability benchmarking reports for 2019-20 and action plans

UCL SHAPES THE DEBATE

Our third foundation is "UCL Shapes the Debate".

It focuses on creating a dialogue with local and global communities to co-create and test sustainability solutions and disseminate sustainability research.

We've committed to increase our sustainability research with increased focus on the Sustainable Development Goals.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2019-20

View the progress we have made against our priority actions:

Action →	Progress
UCL adopts the Sustainable Development Goals as a framework for Action. →	Completed
Achieve Living Wage accreditation →	Application in progress
Establish Sustainability Community of Practice →	On hold due to COVID
Establish local community sustainability forum to share our work and increase linkages →	On hold due to COVID

Managing the health effects of climate change
UCL scientists are part of the Lancet Countdown – a collaboration between universities and UN agencies – that tracks how climate change affects public health.

LINK

Exploring China's carbon emissions to tackle climate change
A jointly funded collaboration between UCL and Peking University is helping to tackle climate change by researching how China's carbon emissions impact on mitigation

LINK

OUR RESEARCH IS MAKING A GLOBAL IMPACT

Partnering with Camden Council to create mission-led renewal from COVID-19
Professor Mariana Mazzucato (UCL) is co-chairing an expert team of community, business, and academic leaders to catalyse Camden's renewal and recovery from Covid-19.

LINK
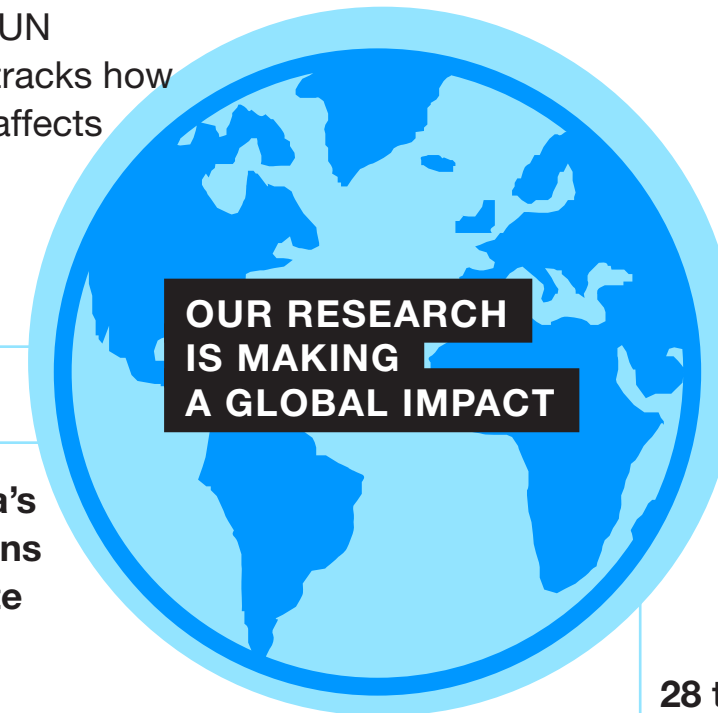
28 trillion tonnes of ice lost in 26 years
A team including UCL scientists has found that 28 trillion tonnes of ice have disappeared from the surface of the earth since 1994 due to global heating.

LINK
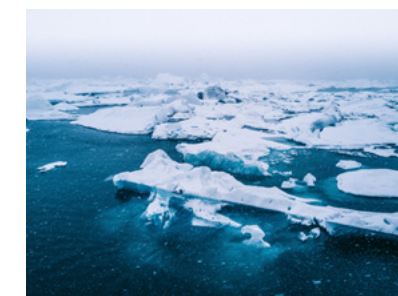
Sustainable policymaking

UCL research on sustainability is influencing policy making across a range of issues; with 86 citations in UK policy documentation this year.

Number of UCL research citations in UK government policy documents by SDG theme:

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION — **1**	**7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY** — **16**
13 CLIMATE ACTION — **22**	**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES** — **42**
14 LIFE BELOW WATER — **2**	**15 LIFE ON LAND** — **3**

For UCL's work on the SDGs visit:

LINK

UCL and UN Environment Programme (UNEP) join forces to drive sustainability
UCL has entered a new collaboration with UNEP to help achieve a sustainable world in a generation – through a range of activities focusing on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

LINK

UCL experts advise UK Committee on Climate Change
UCL chaired working groups that fed into the UK's Committee on Climate Change's latest report 'Net Zero – The UK's contribution to Stopping Global Warming' and informed key recommendations.

LINK

For more stories on how UCL is collaborating with policymakers on climate change visit:

LINK

UCL's sustainability research in the media

In 2019/20 there were 115 media articles on sustainability or climate change citing UCL research or academics.

New policy priority tool to supercharge sustainable development

LINK

Community campaigns make a difference on climate change

LINK

How entrepreneurial states can achieve sustainability objectives through a mission-driven approach to spending

LINK

The search for a cleaner, greener plastic

LINK

Climate crisis is likely to profoundly affect global health

LINK

For more UCL media stories click here:
LINK

HIGHLIGHTS

THE BARTLETT SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE DECLARES A CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY

In October 2019, The Bartlett School of Architecture declared a climate emergency, kick starting a Bartlett Citizen Assembly on how architectural education and research can be harnessed to avert catastrophic climate change and irreversible biodiversity loss.

LINK

Visit the UCL Climate Hub for more information on our climate change research and action

LINK

NEXT STEPS FOR ➡ 2020/21

→ Further embed the SDG's into UCL teaching and research
→ Work with the UCL London and National framework to ensure UCL has a positive impact on the local environment
→ Develop a cross UCL approach for COP 26 building on the new UCL Climate Hub
→ Achieve Living Wage Accreditation

POSITIVE CLIMATE

Positive Climate uses UCL's wealth of climate change expertise and research to reduce carbon emissions.

UCL has committed to zero carbon buildings by 2024, and a net zero carbon institution by 2030.

By switching to renewable electricity, we made it almost halfway towards our 2024 zero carbon buildings target, namely 47%.

We have also progressed one fifth, 21%, towards the 2030 target of becoming a zero carbon institution.
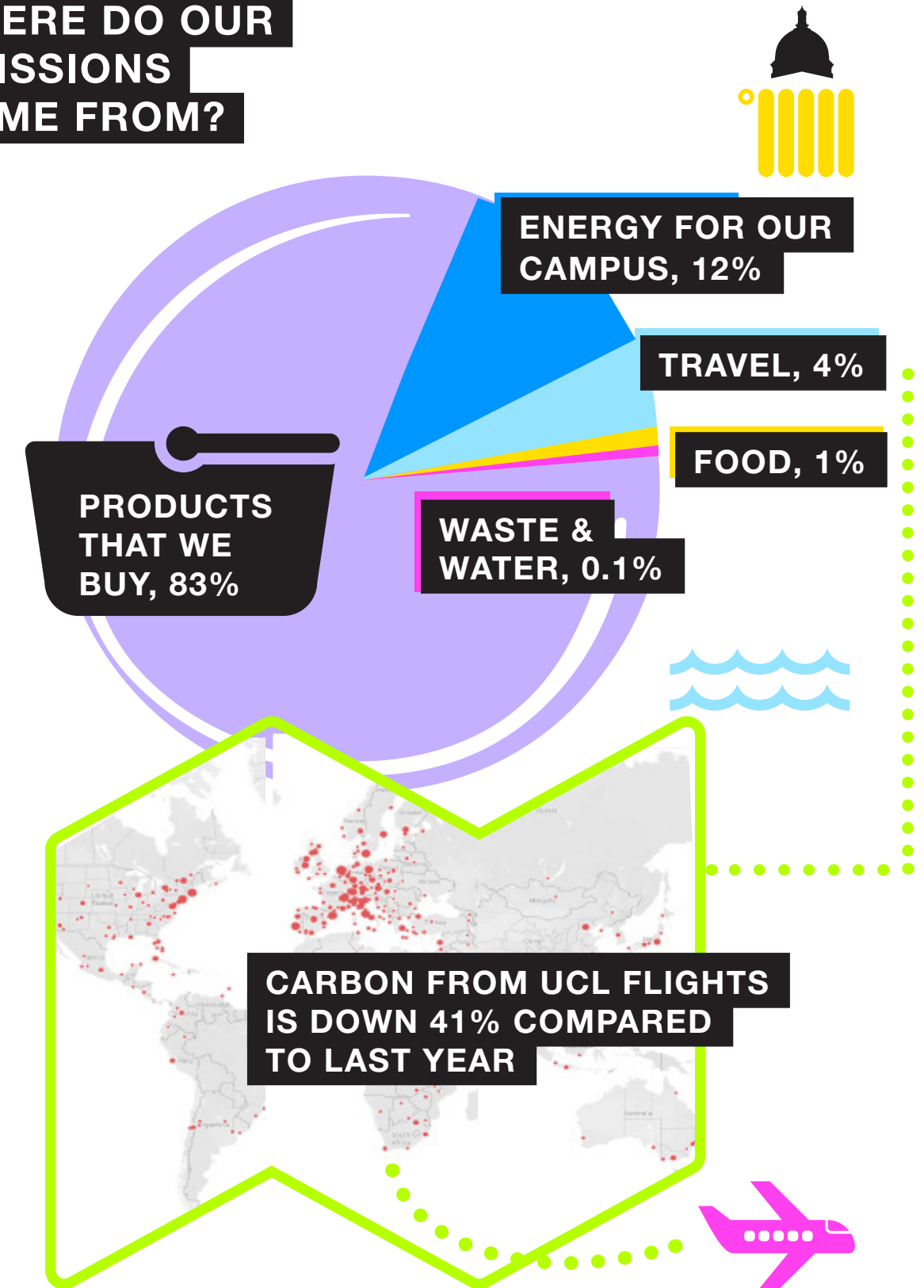
WHERE UCL ENERGY IS USED
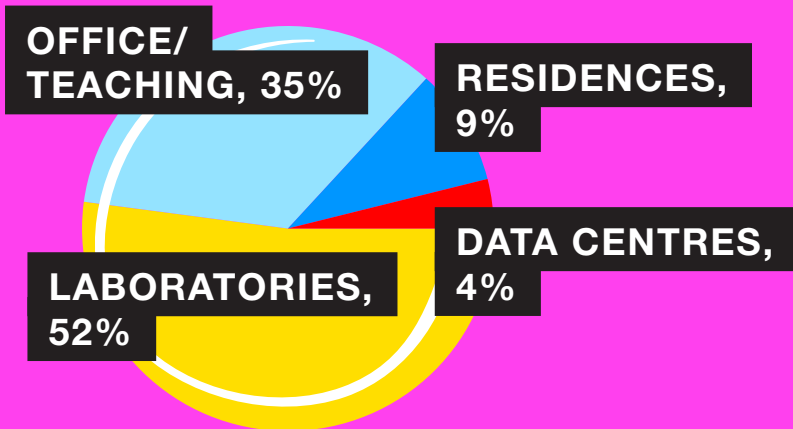
- OFFICE/TEACHING, 35%
- RESIDENCES, 9%
- DATA CENTRES, 4%
- LABORATORIES, 52%

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2019-20

View the progress we have made against our priority actions:

Action	Progress
Perform a climate review of UCL investments	Fossil fuel divestment
Continue programme of energy efficiency improvements	Installed LED lighting and upgraded heating/cooling controls.
Review UCL buildings for climate change resilience	Delayed due to COVID
Launch Climate Accountability Scheme	Piloted October 2019 to March 2020.
Climate change integrated into institutional decision frameworks	Ongoing
Introduce 100% vegetarian catering for events and hospitality	Adopted by 7 departments, including senior management

Since last year, we've reduced our energy consumption by the same amount used by 800 homes or produced by 2 wind turbines.

WHERE DO OUR EMISSIONS COME FROM?

- ENERGY FOR OUR CAMPUS, 12%
- TRAVEL, 4%
- FOOD, 1%
- PRODUCTS THAT WE BUY, 83%
- WASTE & WATER, 0.1%

CARBON FROM UCL FLIGHTS IS DOWN 41% COMPARED TO LAST YEAR

HIGHLIGHTS

A CARBON PRICING SCHEME FOR UCL

Designed by UCL researchers and professional staff, UCL's Carbon Accountability Scheme brings together elements of carbon pricing and behavioural support to reduce carbon emissions from buildings and operations.

Fifteen departments took part in the pilot in the academic year 2019/20, to determine how the scheme might be implemented across UCL.

Each department received a carbon reduction target and financial incentives to reach them as well as support in taking action.

Overall, departments reduced 160 tonnes of CO2 saving £75k.

🔗 *LINK*

CARBON FOOTPRINTING FOR MEALS ACROSS UCL CANTEENS

The food industry contributes 25% of all greenhouse gases that are emitted globally, yet it is hard for customers to know what choices to make. In February 2020, meals served in The Refectory included carbon footprinting labels.

🔗 *LINK*

UCL DIVESTS FROM FOSSIL FUELS

In December 2019, UCL divested from fossil fuels and committed to not invest in companies involved in fossil fuel extraction or production in the future. It has made public its portfolio of investments for transparency and adopted a Socially Responsible Investment Policy.

🔗 *LINK*

THE UCL GROVE IS THRIVING THANKS TO A NEW CARBON -OFFSETTING SCHEME.

UCL staff, students and alumni have planted 176 trees to date in a UCL Grove developed with Trees for Life to voluntarily offset their carbon emissions. You can see all donations *here.*

NEXT STEPS FOR ➡ **2020/21**

→ Improving control of our building heating and cooling systems
→ Improving sub-metering across campus
→ Exploring options for UCL to become a climate-positive investor
→ Making more of our energy and carbon data available for research
→ Developing a masterplan for UCL's zero carbon district energy system
→ Further developing the Carbon Accountability Scheme

PEARL: UCL'S FIRST NET-ZERO CARBON BUILDING

The unique purpose-built laboratory facility will enable full-size environments to test how people use infrastructure and cities. Thanks to a combination of highly efficient building fabric and services, and an extensive solar roof, it will lead the way for future zero carbon developments.

🔗 *LINK*

STUDENT ACTION ON ENERGY REDUCTION

Students from the Centre for Behaviour Change and the *UCL Behavioural Innovations Team* put their studies into practice by collaborating with Sustainable UCL on a series of digital screens. The screens are tailored to each building to nudge passers-by to adopt energy saving behaviours.

"As a team we really enjoyed the open mindedness Sustainable UCL have to incorporating behavioural science into their work. We learnt a lot about what it is like to work on a real-life sustainable problem, learning from Hannah and Ciaran the real-life barriers they face but also the passion we shared for changing behaviour for a positive environmental effect. Ultimately, combining the innovative tech behind Fabriq with well-considered behavioural insight was enjoyable and productive."

Kezia Stewart
Founder UCL Behavioural Innovations Team

🔗 *LINK*

THE LOOP

The Loop tackles unsustainable consumption by redesigning the way we use materials and specifying the best products for people and planet.

By 2024, we've committed to increasing our recycling rate to 85% and decreasing waste per person by 20%.

So far we have reduced waste per person by 33% due to the UCL community working and studying away from campus.
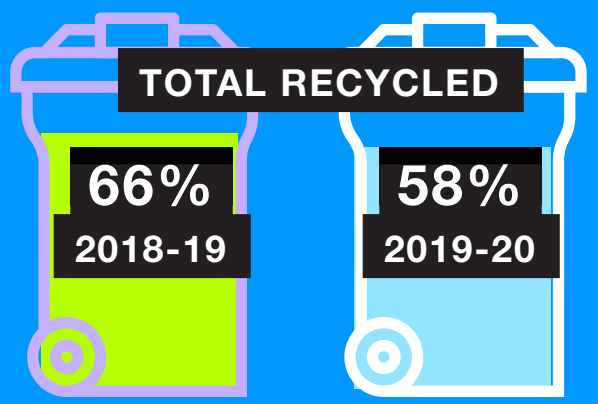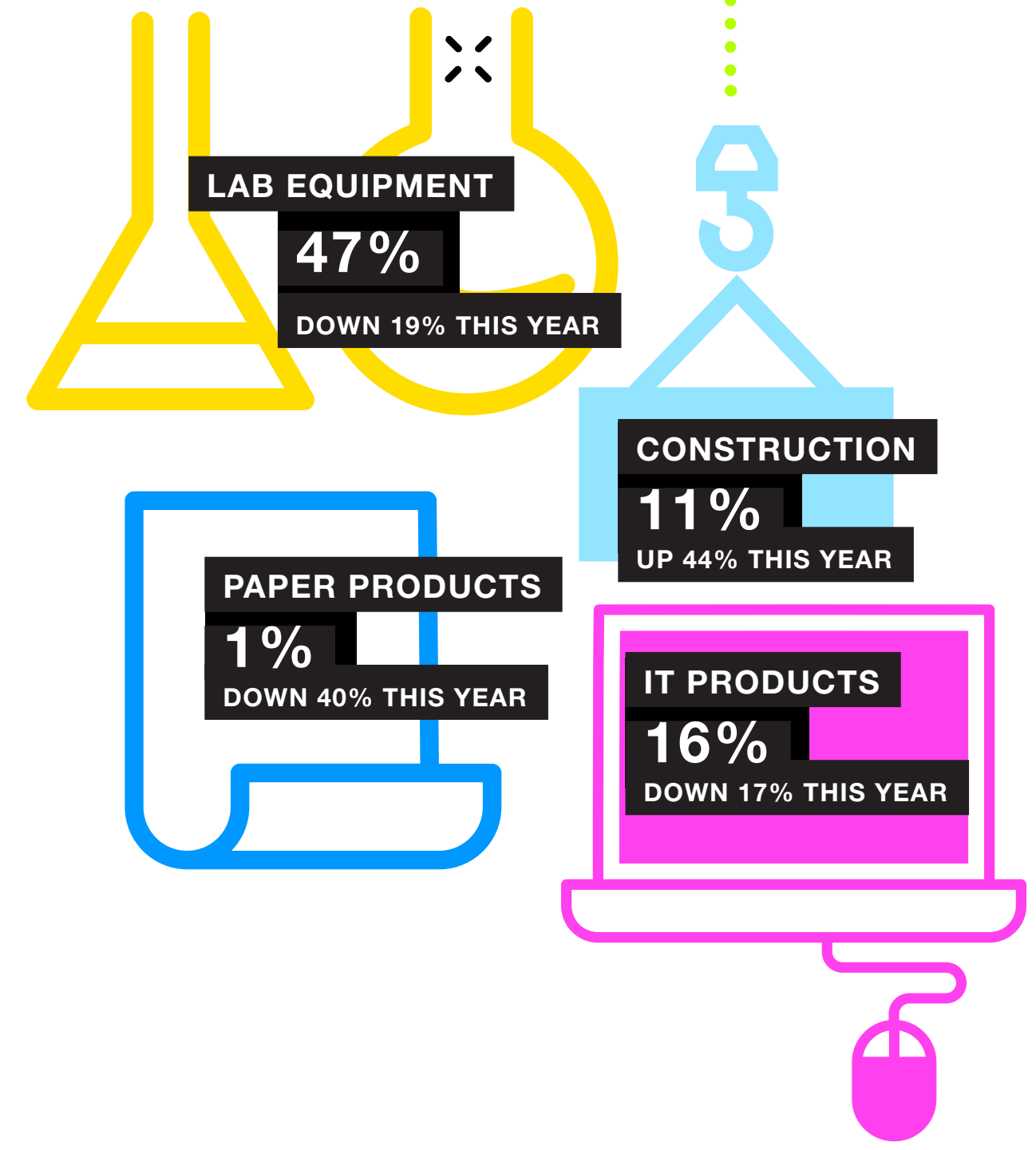
TOTAL RECYCLED

66%
2018-19

58%
2019-20

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2019-20

View the progress we have made against our priority actions:

Action	→	Progress
Train purchasing staff in sustainable and ethical procurement best practice	→	Completed
Review event catering to reduce food waste and expand existing waste food redistribution schemes	→	Delayed due to COVID
Establish a UCL Logistics hub and start track and trace for deliveries	→	Completed
Launch high profile recycling communications campaign	→	Pilot completed, review delayed due to COVID
Roll-out key single-use plastic alternatives in catering and laboratories	→	Ongoing

CARBON EMISSIONS FROM THE PRODUCTS UCL BUYS

LAB EQUIPMENT
47%
DOWN 19% THIS YEAR

CONSTRUCTION
11%
UP 44% THIS YEAR

PAPER PRODUCTS
1%
DOWN 40% THIS YEAR

IT PRODUCTS
16%
DOWN 17% THIS YEAR

HIGHLIGHTS

UCL LEADS GLOBAL CHANGE TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE SCIENCE.

Developed by UCL, LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework) has helped 225 laboratories across UCL and 23 institutions to reduce their resource use and carbon impact. The programme contains guidance and calculators to enable lab users to understand their laboratory's resource use and take targeted action to reduce it.

Each laboratory group achieved average annual savings of £3,700. Total savings over the two-year pilot across all groups was £641,000, eliminating 648 tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO2e) annually, the same as taking 140 passenger vehicles off the road in a year.

🔗 *LINK*

UCL'S FIRST PLASTIC FREE SHOP

We've committed to becoming a single-use plastic free campus by 2024. In 2019 UCL's Refectory shop began trialling plastic free alternative products. Students and staff can purchase plastic-free snacks and drinks. Careful consideration has been taken to ensure their replacements are more sustainable. The pick and mix counter reduced plastic packaged snack options in the shop by 50%

NEW DISPOSABLE-FREE HOSPITALITY SERVICE

In spring 2020, UCL replaced all single-use plastics from the delivered hospitality service with reusable crockery, cutlery and serving trays, saving half a million disposables per year.

🔗 *LINK*
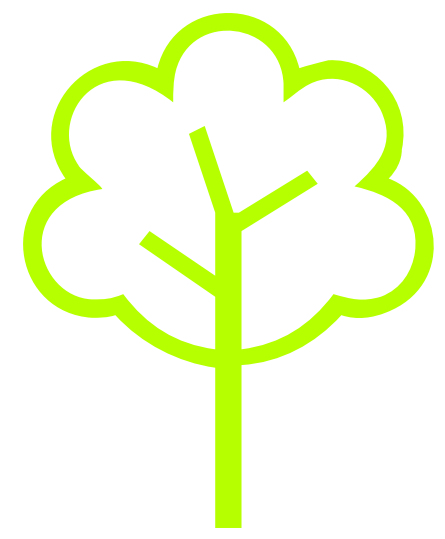
PLANTING THROUGH PRINTING

UCL has offset 18,922,619 pages of paper by reforesting 2,271 trees since joining the PrintReleaf exchange in January 2020.
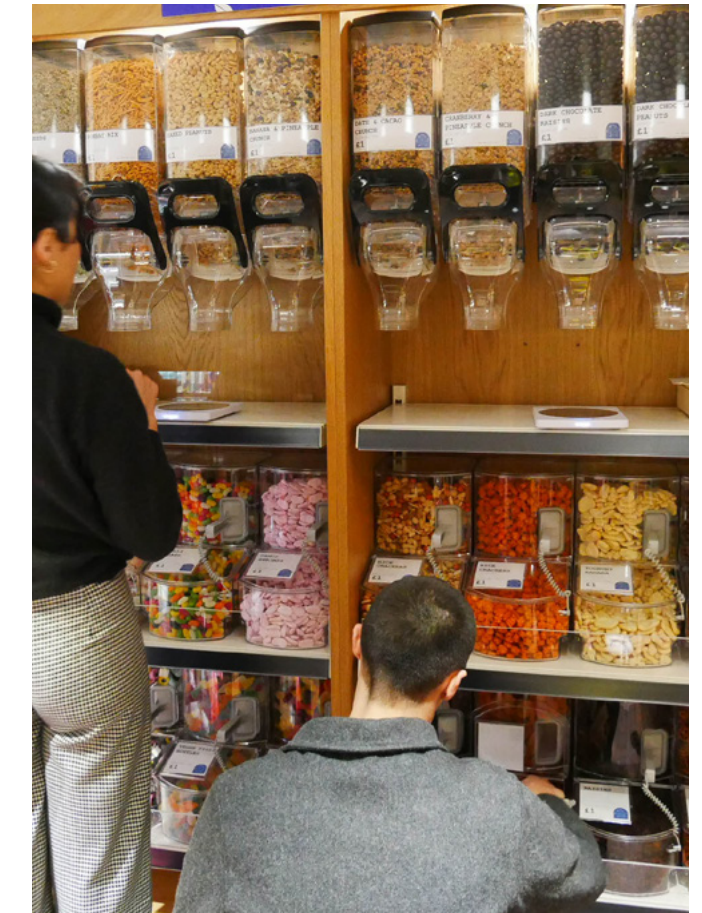
EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY INTO CONTRACTS

Considering UCL's new Sustainability Strategy, UCL procurement have changed many of UCL's contracts to consider people and planet. Learn more about the sustainability benefits in our latest contracts here.

🔗 *LINK*

NEXT STEPS FOR ➡ 2020/21

➡ Create a responsible supplier list to help staff make more informed choices
➡ Add disability requirements into procurement processes
➡ Review the furniture reuse and recycling process for efficiency
➡ Agree a new travel provider contract, which will include carbon-offsetting options and make it easier to book international train travel.
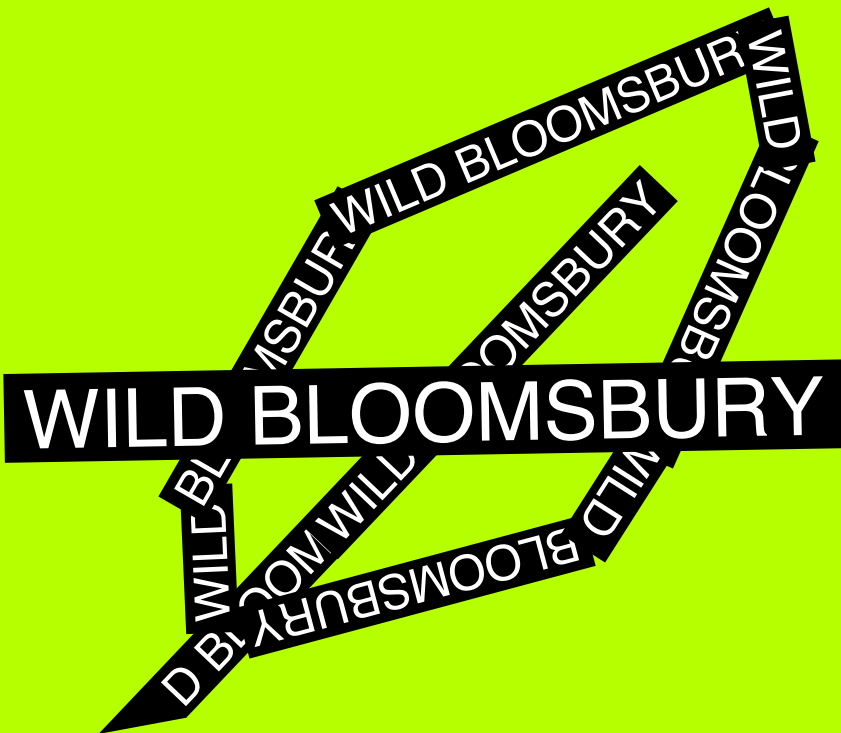
WILD BLOOMSBURY

With Wild Bloomsbury we are introducing nature-based solutions to Bloomsbury.

We've committed that by 2024, we will have created 10,000m2 extra biodiverse space – equivalent to more than one and a half football pitches – to increase wellbeing and reduce the impacts of pollution in the heart of London.

We are undertaking base-lining to understand the potential for biodiversity and the opportunity areas for nature-based solutions across Bloomsbury.

PRIORITY ACTIONS FOR 2019-20

Here are the priority actions for "Wild Bloomsbury" for 2019- 2020 and our progress on each:

Action		Progress
Design a Living Landscape plan for UCL East with the community	→	Completed
Establish Wild Bloomsbury Network to co-create nature-based conceptual framework for Bloomsbury	→	Completed
Develop an active travel strategy for UCL in partnership with Camden and other local stakeholders	→	Ongoing
Develop a series of nature-based wellbeing initiatives at a minimum six per year	→	Delayed due to COVID
Launch live air pollution monitoring for the UCL campus	→	Ongoing
Implement active travel infrastructure programmes	→	600 new cycle racks installed

UCL'S NEW BIKE BUDDY SCHEME.

UCL has launched a buddy scheme to connect experienced UCL cyclists with staff and students who are new to commuting by bike, to assist them with feeling safe on their route to and from UCL.

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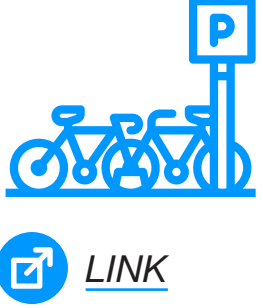
HIGHLIGHTS

MORE CYCLING RACKS FOR UCL

Over the summer closure, UCL has installed approx. 600 cycle racks, creating 1,000 spaces across UCL, and it has been well received by the UCL community.

Harry from the Department of Mathematics said about the newly installed bike hangars:
"Thanks so much to Sustainable UCL for the bike hangar. It's been miserable coming in these past few weeks with a lot of rain and it's just been an absolute life saver having a parking space in the hanger. It's really made a big difference for me during this period and I'm very grateful!"

🔗 *LINK*

A BLOOMING GARDEN AT THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

After a week-long pop-up Wild Bloomsbury garden installation at the New Student Centre during Sustainability Week, 40 students volunteered to plant the trees and shrubs from the installation on the roof of the Institute of Education.

NEXT STEPS FOR ➡ **2020/21**

➡ Baseline environmental and social opportunities and challenges in Bloomsbury
➡ Define the environmental and ecological underpinnings of Wild Bloomsbury
➡ Implement the first Wild Bloomsbury interventions on campus
➡ Embed Wild Bloomsbury targets into UCL Capital Projects

REDUCING TRAFFIC ACROSS BLOOMSBURY

By consolidating deliveries, re-routing vehicles to our Logistics Hub and carrying out postal deliveries using Cargo Bikes, we have reduced vehicles on site per month from 14,000 to 700, with only 40 vehicles on site per month between the hours of 7am – 7pm.

UCL JOINED THE LONDON CELEBRATION OF INTERNATIONAL CAR FREE DAY

As momentum towards traffic-free town centres continues to build, the World Car Free Day London Summit on 19th-20th September brought together civic leaders, architects, data scientists, community organisations and property developers to celebrate the transition to traffic-free city centres and UCL was one of them.

Organised by students at the Bartlett, UCL created a temporary parklet space on Gordon Street, opening the street up to pedestrians and cyclists, while keeping traffic out in celebration and support of the summit.
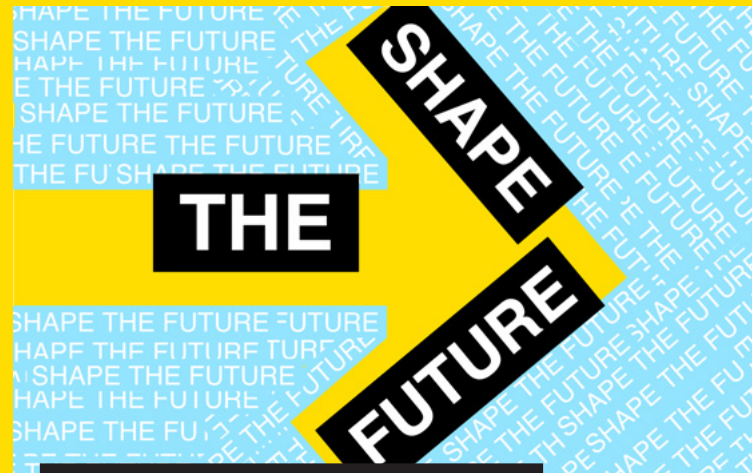
🔗 *LINK* *VIDEO*

WHAT WILL YOU DO?

Do you feel inspired by UCL's sustainability achievements? Take a look at the breadth of sustainability opportunities available at UCL and become part of the change.

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

→ Develop a sustainability plan for your department or Faculty

→ Join our Carbon Accountability Scheme

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES STAFF

→ Take part in Green Impact if you work in an office

→ Take part in LEAF if you work in a laboratory

→ Sign your department up to 100% vegetarian catering

ACADEMIC STAFF

→ Embed sustainability in your curriculum

STUDENTS

→ Join a green student society

→ Take part in the Living Lab programme

→ Become a sustainability ambassador

→ Join the Sustainability Council

"Both the UCL Sustainability Strategy and our own Union strategy are aligned in their work towards a sustainable future. We aspire to be the most sustainable Students' Union in the world, and we're excited to take on this challenge in partnership with UCL."

Carol Paige
Democracy Operations and Community Officer, Students' Union UCL

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