



Department for Social Responsibility & Sustainability

Our purpose

Providing high quality advice, support and action on social responsibility and sustainability.

- We understand and explain what the important risks and opportunities are
- We develop the University's response to these challenges and opportunities
- We deliver and facilitate programmes to catalyse action and collaboration

We contribute to the University's broader vision of making "...a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to the world" (Strategic Plan 2016).



Our priorities

Climate and energy	Circular economy	Community
Supply chain SRS	Responsible investment	Learning, teaching and research

Our programmes

- Energy Engagement and the Sustainable Campus Fund
- Sustainable Travel Programme
- Sustainable Labs Programme
- Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy Programme
- Community Engagement Programme
- Fairness in Trade and Sustainable Procurement Programme
- Sustainability Awards Programme (Offices, Laboratories, Residences)
- Learning and Development (Be Sustainable Series)
- Student Engagement Programmes



Edinburgh Local



Our values

We value evidence in making our case and we are always willing to listen and learn

Working with others is how we do our business

We recognise we need to keep earning the right to be heard

We have a shared respect for people and natural systems and take a long-term view

We believe in succeeding and failing together

We practice what we preach



Some examples

Replacing and updating
fume cupboards in the
School of Chemistry



Updating and upgrading
lighting around the
University



The Sustainable Campus Fund: delivering cost, carbon and energy savings.

The Sustainable Campus Fund is an internal investment vehicle that provides financing to parties within the University for implementing energy efficiency, renewable energy, and other sustainability projects that generate cost savings.

Projects proposed are screened using a points-based system that considers financial payback and minimum ROI of 6%, carbon savings, match funding, innovation, creativity, collaboration and additionality.

Savings are being achieved through a wide spread of projects. A network of over 100 Energy Coordinators has helped to disseminate information about the fund. Organisations such as the Wellcome Trust, Scottish Funding Council, Edinburgh City and other Universities have expressed interest in learning from our Fund delivery

In the first 1.5 years, projects funded through the SCF are estimated to bring annual financial savings of £320k, annual carbon saving of 1200tCO₂e. Approved projects to date have an average ROI of 355% and a combined payback of 2.8 years.

Sustainable ICT: Achieving efficiencies, protecting human rights and contributing locally

At the University of Edinburgh, we have established a range of projects related to socially responsible ICT. We have looked at the risks and opportunities in ICT supply chains, have established a Conflict Minerals Policy, and were a founding member of Electronics Watch. A PC Reuse project has reused over 700 computers internally helping to save nearly £200k and supported a local social enterprise. As part of our community engagement programme, 21 student volunteers have been assisting digital literacy development in our local community.

A Sustainable IT Group oversees an implementation plan and brings together a cross section of stakeholders from across the University to consider priorities and actions.



Photo: Electronics Watch
Biannual Report

ESSA project 2016/17



The ESSA Project: Links to learning, teaching and research and the University as a Living Lab

The 'European Students Sustainability Auditing' Project is a three year Erasmus + funded project that aims to learn more about social responsibility and sustainability in universities across Europe.

A cohort of 60 Student Auditors play a key role in the project by auditing and reporting on how participating universities are performing on social responsibility. Audits have been completed in Edinburgh and Porto, with 93% of students involved highlighting that their involvement exceeded their expectations and provided them with valuable employability skills. Participating students are awarded a Certificate in Social Responsibility Auditing by the University of Edinburgh (SCQF Credits 10, ECTS Credits 5) through a Student-led, Individually-Created Course (SLICC).

The University is one of three partner universities, including Kaunas University of Technology and the University of Porto. Project management is undertaken by the National Union of Students.

Over the last three years the Department has supported colleagues to secure nearly £2m of additional income, whilst also raising £100,000 directly, and £5m of zero interest loan from Scottish Funding Council for solar and energy efficiency projects.