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Prepared on 06 October, 2021 by Siôn Pickering for the Department of Social Responsibility and Sustainability.

# Fairtrade Award 2019-22: Progress Report

## Description of the paper

This paper provides an update on the progress made in 2020-21 towards the University's submission to the 2019-22 Fairtrade University and College Award.

## Background

The University participated in the initial Fairtrade Award pilot in 2018, gaining a 2-star certificate. It was agreed the University would take part in the Fairtrade Award again in 2019-21, with submissions due in February 2021. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic which closed the gift shop and catering outlets (including halls of residence and cafes), cancelled all in-person events, and restricted procurement of goods to essential items, the University deferred its submission to 2022.

SRS are leading the Fairtrade Award Working Group (FTWG) to progress this submission. This group consists of staff from ACE, the University Gift Shop, the Students' Association and SRS. Procurement would normally sit on this group. However, due to resource limitations, Procurement are not currently permanently represented on the FTWG.

## Progress in 2020-21

### Regular Working Group meetings

Since July 2021, the FTWG have reconvened and are now meeting monthly to update on actions taken in regards to Fairtrade. SRS have collated a progress report, which is updated following the Fairtrade Award Working Group meetings. This can be found on the [SRS website](#).

### Policies and Strategies

An updated Fairtrade Policy was agreed and released by the University in December 2020. This further strengthens the University's commitment to Fairtrade. The full policy can be seen on the [SRS website](#).

In late 2020, SRS completed an analysis of how fair trade could be better integrated into strategic documents. Following this, the Sustainability (and Social Responsibility) Policy was updated to include specific language around supporting fair trade.

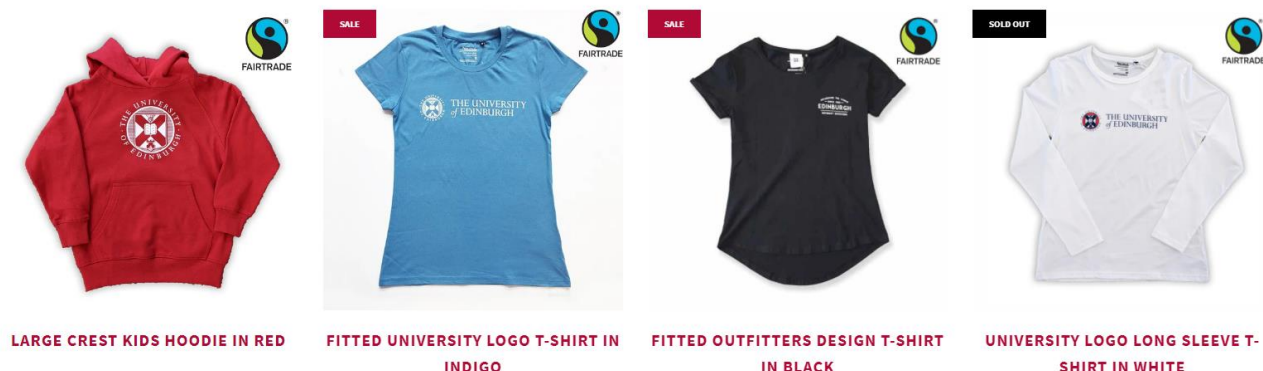
### Promotion of Fairtrade initiatives

As in previous years, the University has taken part in Fairtrade Fortnight in February 2021. This year consisted of an online "crafts" event where attendees were invited to bring along a craft that encompassed the Fairtrade theme. In addition, social media posts and other digital channels were used to further the Fairtrade message over this time.



Example of the Fairtrade craft event arranged by SRS for Fairtrade Fortnight 2021

Fairtrade continues to be a prominent theme on the SRS website and the University Gift Shop has updated its own website to include clearer descriptions of Fairtrade items, including the Fairtrade logo on relevant clothing and the ability to search for Fairtrade across the whole online store.



Screenshot of Updated University Gift Shop website highlighting Fairtrade products using the Fairtrade logo. See <https://giftshop.ed.ac.uk/> for more information.

## Procurement, retail and catering

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the majority of University cafes, hospitality and catered facilities were run on limited capacity throughout the 2020-21 academic year. However, Fairtrade continued to be served as standard across all University hospitality for tea, coffee, sugar and hot chocolate. Where possible, sales promotions included Fairtrade items, for example within “meal deals” at University cafes.

ACE have increased their Fairtrade lines, in particular through their new outlet focused on sustainable and healthy living – Bloom.

One of the most significant challenges facing the University in regards to Fairtrade is the resilience of current supply chains. A number of factors, which include Covid-19, have led to a strain on University and Students’ Association supply chains. In real terms, this has meant that menus may have needed to be adapted at short notice, new suppliers have been engaged for key goods or services, and stock has been sourced from suppliers with a reduced workforce.



New graphic installation in Bloom café (Kings Buildings) highlighting Fairtrade as part of Good Food Policy.

This has meant that the University has not been able to engage with suppliers on the topic of Fairtrade or ethical purchasing to the same extent as previous. As supply chains begin to settle, and resilience grows, it is expected that the University and Students’ Association will be able to focus once more on Fairtrade within our procurement.

## Providing Research and Learning Opportunities

A number of Fairtrade related research opportunities were realised in the 2020-21 academic year. Most notable was the collaboration with the Students as Agents for Change (SACHA) project initiated by the University Careers Service. This brought together three groups of students to answer the question posed by the Edinburgh Fairtrade Forum and the Scottish Fairtrade Forum: How can Scotland move beyond awareness raising and have the Fair Trade concept instilled in public consciousness and buying practices? The output from these projects can be seen on the SRS website (groups [1](#), [2](#) and [3](#)).

SRS are exploring the possibility of developing a dissertation project examining / comparing the range of ethical certifications available to the University. It is hoped this research goes ahead in the 2021-22 academic year.

SRS have updated a number of training courses which were released over in the summer of 2021. These updated courses continue to highlight the importance of Fairtrade to our staff and students and include: [Introduction to Sustainability](#); [Taking Action in a Sustainable World](#); and [Carbon Literacy](#).

## External Groups

The University is an active participant on several local Fairtrade groups, including the Edinburgh Fairtrade City Steering Group, the Scottish Fairtrade Forum, and the Cross Party Group on Fair Trade. As an active partner, we support these groups to further the Fairtrade movement locally and nationally.

## Actions for 2021-22

The Fairtrade Working Group (FTWG) will be working to complete the 2019-22 award submission by February 2022. This will involve undertaking a number of actions, involving all group stakeholders across the five Fairtrade Award themes:

- Leadership & Strategy
- Campaigning and influencing
- Procurement, retail and catering
- Research & Curriculum
- Outcomes

These actions are highlighted in the September [Progress Report](#) (note, this document is updated following FTWG meetings, and so a more up-to-date version may be available via the [SRS website](#)).

In addition, the FTWG will be responsible for facilitating an audit of the University and Students' Association award submission before the end of the 2021-22 year. Following this, it is expected that the FTWG will review their work and establish next steps for the University and Students' Association in regards to Fairtrade.