



Annual Sustainability Report

2023-24

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Introduction

2nd

most sustainable university in the world according to UI GreenMetric

1st

Class ranking in People & Planet University League

12

years ISO 14001 accredited

61st

out of 1,963 in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings

100%

course requirement for SDG inclusion

1268

UN SDGs aligned research outputs

5000+

Green Rewards users engaged

900 +

suppliers signed up to Net Zero Carbon Tool

Platinum

accredited Hedgehog-Friendly campuses

13

years Green Flag accredited (Clifton and Brackenhurst)

15

years Fairtrade accredited

30

LEAF accredited labs

46

peregrine falcon chicks fledged from NTU

200

bikes hired at NTU Cycle Hub

1200

redistributed items of furniture via Warp It

1.5

tonnes household items donated by students to charity



”

At NTU, our commitment to sustainability is not only a strategic priority but also a shared responsibility that permeates every aspect of our University's work.

'Embracing Sustainability' is at the heart of our University, reimagined strategy, with our ambitious aim of becoming the most environmentally responsible university in the UK by 2026.

We are dedicated to transforming knowledge into action, by working together with our students, colleagues, and the wider stakeholders and communities we work with.

This report details our progress on a wide range of sustainability initiatives across our University over the past year. The report highlights how we are delivering on our commitment to meet challenging targets for sustainability, and on our efforts to advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

I hope you will enjoy reading it and be inspired by it. If you have any comments or ideas, please let me know.

Steve Denton, Chief Operating Officer

Everyone within the NTU community has a key part to play in ensuring that our University and the legacy we are creating is sustainable.



Governance

Here at Nottingham Trent University (NTU), Embracing Sustainability is one of the six strategic themes in our [University, reimagined 2020–26 Strategy](#).



The ambition of “Embracing Sustainability” is to curate an intergenerational conversation with our students, colleagues and stakeholders, and enable NTU to be recognised as the most environmentally responsible university in the UK.

To achieve our “Embracing Sustainability” ambition, we have adopted four approaches:



Align our activities with the United Nations Global Sustainable Development Goals, recognising environmental, social and economic sustainability in a triple bottom line and supporting our partners and suppliers to do the same.



Set and meet specific and challenging targets for reducing our environmental footprint and ensure our campuses are exemplars of sustainable practice.



Prioritise research that promotes sustainability.



Reflect our social responsibility in our curriculum, our partnership with the Nottingham Trent Students’ Union, and our support for social action.

Roles and responsibilities

NTU has held ISO14001 certification for its [Environmental Management System](#) (EMS) since 2012, demonstrating our commitment to reducing our environmental impacts. Our Environmental Policy is coordinated by the Sustainability team, through university-wide consultation with stakeholders, and approved at executive level by the Chief Operating Officer.

In 2024, NTU launched new mandatory sustainability requirements for all courses. [Education for Sustainable Development](#) is led by colleagues in the Centre for Academic Development and Quality, and reviewed at executive level by the Pro Vice Chancellor – Education.

NTU’s [Safety and Sustainability research theme](#) exemplifies our dedication to research with real-world benefit. By integrating expertise from a broad range of disciplines and backgrounds, the theme aims to safeguard lives and protect the future of our planet, ensuring a safer, greener future for all.

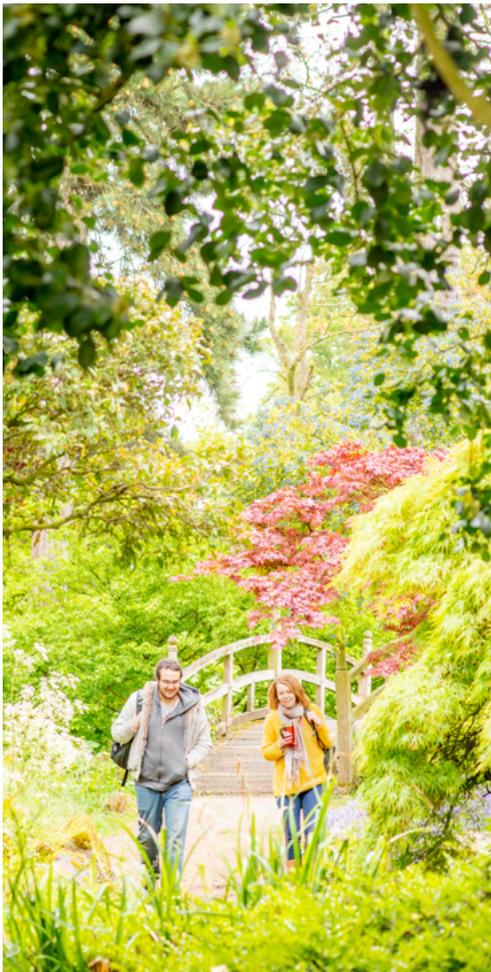
NTU’s signatory of the [SDG Accord](#) reflects our commitment to promote environmental, social and economic justice within and beyond NTU. Under the [Universities for Nottingham Agreement](#), we combine civic expertise with local partners to facilitate sustainable action across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire.

The themes ensure we are bold, do the right thing for our people, our communities and our environment, and that we collaborate with the world’s brightest minds to push boundaries, disrupt the status quo and change lives.



Awards and certifications

Nottingham Trent University is recognised as one of the most sustainable universities, both in the UK and globally. The following accolades reflect our vision, ambition and leadership in sustainability, and evidence how this external recognition has been upheld during 2023-24.



2nd in the UI Green Metric World Sustainability Ranking 2024



Signatory of the Nature Positive University Alliance since 2022



Ranked 1st Class and 16th in the UK in the People and Planet Ranking 2024



Green Flag Award holders since 2012 at Clifton and Brackenhurst Campuses



61 out of 1,963 institutions worldwide in the Times Higher Education ranking



Platinum Hedgehog Friendly Campus awarded 2024



246 out of 1,403 institutions in the QS World Sustainability Rankings



Three-star Food Made Good Award from the Sustainable Restaurant Association 2024



EcoCampus Platinum and ISO14001 certification for NTU campuses 2024



Fairtrade University and College Award 2022-2024



We're continually investing into our campuses to develop inspiring and innovative spaces, ensuring new developments support our sustainability goals.

Operations

As part of NTU's strategic commitment to net zero, sustainability is core to the development of our estate. Completed in 2024, our new Design & Digital Arts building is designed with sustainability in mind. It has a blue roof to alleviate flooding, utilises recycled materials in construction and fit-out, and is fully electrified to contribute to the decarbonisation of our estate.

NTU also completed two major refurbishment projects at the Belgrave Postgraduate Centre and Clifton Tissue Culture Lab. These projects use space on campus consciously by refurbishing existing buildings and have incorporated sustainability throughout their design, including energy efficient heating and lighting, sustainable materials and water-saving measures.

In 2023-24, our Estates team also:

- invested £1m in LED lighting and smart controls in Newton building
- completed upgrades to Brackenhurst Main Hall including environmentally friendly sheep wool roof insulation
- completed the latest phase of window replacement in Chaucer building to increase the building's environmental performance



Curriculum

Modern methods of construction



NTU's School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment (ADBE) continue to promote sustainable construction through a wide range of modules and taught courses. NTU's Mansfield Hub offers the Modern Methods of Construction undergraduate course, which addresses the industry's carbon footprint and develops the skills required to lead transformation across the built environment in the local area and beyond.

Nottingham Business School

Nottingham Business School (NBS) has a strong reputation for sustainability, having been awarded PRME (Principles for Responsible Management Education) Champion for 4 terms in recognition of its commitment to sustainable and responsible education. In 2024, academics from NBS were recognised for their expertise in carbon management at the Business Book Awards. Through the Sustainability in Enterprise module, NBS student consultants deliver innovative carbon and sustainability solutions to local businesses.



Impact of the NBS Sustainability in Enterprise module in 2023-24

School of Art & Design

In 2024, the Nottingham School of Art & Design began delivering Climate Fresk workshops as part of a newly-created Climate Action Strategy for the School. Over 150 colleagues and 400 students have since improved their awareness of and critical thinking towards climate change. The School also delivers training on the sustainable ALBERT standard within studio-based courses and have introduced a Changemakers Climate Justice Award for student projects with real world impact in the industry and beyond.



Research

GridLab NTU

The GRIDLAB project, led by the School of Science and Technology, takes a comprehensive approach to energy systems, focusing on integrating clean energy into power grids while addressing challenges like flexibility and uncertainty. The project explores integrated energy grids, smart grids and resilient power systems, utilising advanced facilities such as the Distribution Microgrids Simulator and Real-Time Digital Simulators to enhance energy technology and management research. GRIDLAB contributes to cleaner air initiatives as part of NTU's global research.



Centre for Doctoral Training

In the 2023-24 academic year, NTU and the University of Nottingham received a £12 million collaborative investment for the Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Resilient Chemistry. The research undertaken by the CDT will create sustainable, circular processes for industries reliant on chemical manufacturing, contributing to carbon neutrality. This initiative is part of Universities for Nottingham's sustainability mission and supports the ambition to make Nottingham the UK's first carbon neutral city by 2028.



Partnerships

Bolsover Net Zero Innovation Centre

Funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, the Bolsover Net Zero Innovation Programme provides free carbon management support for businesses in the Bolsover district. Delivered by the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment along with the Nottingham Business School, the programme provides a combined approach of bespoke on-site audits, consultancy and carbon management workshops that help deliver operational cost savings and cultivate a competitive edge for businesses.

Centre for Sustainable Construction and Retrofit

Launched in 2023, the Centre for Sustainable Construction and Retrofit develops solutions, skills and support locally and nationally to enable the transition to net zero within the built environment sector. The Centre provides courses and skills training, socio-technical research, and consultancy opportunities for businesses. Led by the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment, the Centre brings together a range of expertise to help the sector decarbonise and contribute towards meeting the ambitious UK climate change targets of reaching Net Zero Carbon by 2050.

Carbon reduction in business

Nottingham Business School is delivering "How to Drive Carbon Reduction" and "Sustainability in Your Business" workshops for small and medium-sized enterprises across the D2N2 area of the East Midlands. The workshops are delivered in partnership with the East Midlands Chamber, funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. So far, they have reached 44 participants from 38 businesses, supporting them to identify environmental impacts and develop carbon reduction plans.



NTU aims to protect and enhance biodiversity across campuses and has committed to being a **Nature Positive University**.

Operations

Landscaping

In 2023-24, NTU's Landscaping team continued its commitment to enhancing NTU green spaces by retaining the Green Flag Award for the 13th consecutive year at Clifton and Brackenhurst campuses. The team supported biodiversity through habitat creation, hedgehog-friendly initiatives, and the expansion of rewilded and wildflower areas. Maintenance practices focused on supporting pollinators and protected species such as newts, bats and badgers across our campuses.

The Sustainability team also created a Habitat and Species Conservation Management Plan in collaboration with Landscape Services, Home Farm and academics from the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences (ARES). This embeds biodiversity-friendly management practices such as prioritising the planting of native nectar and berry-producing species, and retaining dead wood on site to encourage pollinators, birds and other invertebrates onto campus.



In 2023-24, NTU commissioned Habitat Mapping of Clifton, City and Brackenhurst campuses. This information, alongside iNaturalist Species Monitoring, supports with the Biodiversity Baseline of the estate in line with our Nature Positive Pledge.



Mansfield and Confetti

Mansfield and Confetti (now part of City) campuses are now part of NTU's Environmental Management Scope. In 2023-24, Mansfield became a Bronze Hedgehog Friendly Campus by improving awareness of and access for hedgehogs and other wildlife on campus. Confetti opened a roof garden for colleagues and students to enjoy green space within the city centre, with staff undertaking Environmental Management training.

Capital developments

This academic year, new developments facilitated additional green spaces across NTU's campuses. As part of the Belgrave Postgraduate Centre retrofit, external spaces underwent wildlife-friendly planting schemes including log piles and insect hotels. A green wall is featured as part of the Design and Digital Arts building at City Campus, with plants selected to benefit pollinators. The Tissue Lab at Clifton Campus is now also surrounded by wildflower turf.

Curriculum

Great Crested Newts

Since 2018, NTU and Natural England have collaborated to enhance Great Crested Newt (GCN) habitats at Brackenhurst, aiming to create an exemplary farmland GCN environment. Since 2019, 83 FE Wildlife and Countryside students have gained vocational experience in environmental management, while MSc Biodiversity Conservation students have learned about protected species recovery and worked as paid survey assistants each year since 2021.



Curriculum

Waverley Dye Garden

In 2022, the School of Art & Design established a sustainable, chemical-free [natural dye garden](#) using recycled materials outside the Waverley building. This garden provides natural dyes for student projects and serves as a resource for research and wellbeing. In 2023-24, the team hosted a community day, inviting staff, students and the public to learn about natural dye processes, create wildflower seed bombs, and participate in a flower drawing workshop with NTU Wellbeing.

Wild Isles – BBC Concert Orchestra

The [Wild Isles Film Project](#), led at NTU by our Culture team, launched in September 2023. The brief challenged creative NTU and Confetti students to create short films on nature and sustainability, with the best submissions musically scored by University of Nottingham students and performed live at the Royal Concert Hall by the BBC Concert Orchestra in March 2024.

Research

Hedgehog monitoring

Launched in 2024, the [National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme \(NHMP\)](#) aims to estimate hedgehog populations in UK habitats using AI, trail cameras and volunteers. Collaborating with wildlife organisations and NTU's School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences, volunteers will classify images from cameras nationwide. The research seeks to track population changes and identify decline factors to inform effective conservation strategies.

Partnerships

Buglife – wildflower planting

In October 2024, conservation charity Buglife funded the enhancement of amenity grassland at Brackenhurst Campus by providing native wildflower seeds and plugs. These were planted on road verges at the campus with students from the Conservation Society as part of Buglife's B-Line initiative.

Foodshare Allotment

NTU's [Foodshare Allotment](#) offers students and staff a chance to gain practical skills and learn to grow a variety of fruits and vegetables. In 2023-24, crops grown at our Clifton Campus allotment were donated to local charities such as Guru Nanak's Mission and Windmill Community Gardens for community meals. Throughout the year, staff groups from Employability, Student Services, NTU Faith and NTU Global volunteered their time at the allotment.

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

For over 20 years, NTU has worked in partnership with Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust on various projects. The partnership allows us to enhance our green spaces, support wellbeing and encourage young people to become wildlife champions. Our most notable collaboration is caring for a breeding pair of [peregrine falcons on our City Campus](#).



46 peregrine falcon chicks have fledged from NTU's Newton building at City Campus.



NTU is committed to the development of sustainable travel and transport solutions on all our campuses and in the surrounding areas.

Operations

NTU encourages active and public transport by promoting low-carbon, low-cost travel options. This not only supports our strategic plans, but also wider local ambitions such as Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028. In 2023-24, our Cycle Hub loaned 110 bikes, including 24 e-bikes, and provided maintenance services to cyclists on site.

NTU's cycle to work scheme saw 66 staff members purchase bikes through salary sacrifice, marking a 40% increase from the previous year. There are 868 bike spaces and facilities such as lockers and showers across our campuses, and in 2023-24, new state-of-the-art cycle facilities opened at the Clifton Health & Allied Professions Centre.

For those that travel by car, NTU introduced a car sharing scheme at our City Campus, encouraging a reduction of around 600 single journeys to site. Furthermore, the 32 electric vehicle charging points across our site used 44,083 kWh of electricity, facilitating the use of this more sustainable vehicle type.

Partnerships

- 01** Collaborations with NCT and Net Tram provide discounted travel for staff and students. In 2023-24, NCT student bus pass sales increased by 20% to 3,484. Through the My Benefits programme, 377 staff members purchased public transport passes.
- 02** In 2023-24, NTU partnered with Lime Bikes, which saw the introduction of parking bays on our City Campus. NTU also worked with cycling charity Women in Tandem to offer a bike maintenance session attended by both staff and students.



Curriculum

Global mobility

In 2023-24, NTU Global integrated sustainability into international travel through the Sustainability in Practice Global Mobility Module, developed with NTU Green Academy. This module covers key topics like SDGs, the carbon impacts of travel and local solutions, empowering students to make mindful travel choices and reflect on their experiences at a returners' event. NTU Global also funded a "Green Travel Scholarship" for four students to travel to study abroad locations via methods other than air travel.



Research

E-scooters

2023-24 research between the School of Architecture, Design and the Built Environment, the School of Social Sciences and Nottingham Business School examined the risks faced by e-scooter users in Nottingham, focusing on air quality and safety. The study used surveys, air quality sensors, GPS tracking and 360-degree camera footage to analyse risks. By employing sensor fusion and AI, the research revealed significant environmental and physical hazards for e-scooter riders, emphasising the need for improved safety and sustainability measures.

NTU is committed to minimising waste generated through effective resource management, focusing on avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling.

Operations

NTU is committed to applying a waste hierarchy of “avoid, reduce, reuse, recycle, dispose” to minimise the impact of waste. We support colleagues and students in responsible waste management by providing robust processes, awareness campaigns and guidance such as our Waste A-Z. In 2023-24, NTU generated 1,282 tonnes of waste, with only 6% sent to landfill.

Furniture repurposing

The NTU Facilities team identified 760 desks in the Newton building needing upgrades. Instead of replacing them, they swapped only the desktops, as the steel frames were still in great condition. This diverted 5,320kg of waste from landfill and saved £152,000 compared to buying new. NTU encourages reuse of furniture by enabling colleagues to list and request items via the Warp It platform. To date, Warp It has helped the University avoid 37,377kg of waste and save more than £321,000.

Research

Sustainable poultry feed

Researchers from the School of Animal, Rural and Environmental Sciences (ARES) and partners were awarded £3 million for the ‘FeedFlow’ project, aiming to reduce emissions and tackle waste in poultry production. Using black soldier fly larvae, the project converts food waste into a nutrient-rich protein source. ARES researchers received Highly Commended at the 2024 Green Gown Awards for their replacement of soya with a co-product of bioethanol production in poultry feed to reduce deforestation and carbon emissions in the industry.

Curriculum



NTU Fabric Shop

The NTU Fabric Shop at the Nottingham School of Art & Design promotes numerous eco-friendly practices and enables fashion design students to make sustainable choices in their studies. The shop allows students to buy only what they need to encourage waste reduction, stocks ethically sourced fabrics like banana fibres, hemp and recycled plastics, and sells and distributes donations of dead stock to and from a range of partner organisations like local schools.

Partnerships



Big Clear Out

Our annual Big Clear Out campaign had another successful year, seeing 1,500 kg of household items and non-perishable foods donated to the British Heart Foundation and local foodbank Himmah. The Big Clear Out is a yearly initiative led by the NTU Sustainability team in collaboration with the Community Liaison team, halls provider UPP and NTSU.

Student Professional Wardrobe

In January 2024, the Student Professional Wardrobe was launched by NTU Employability in partnership with White Rose. The NTU community is invited to donate unwanted clothing, providing students and graduates with free, professional clothing, for up to three years post-graduation. To date, the scheme has collected 2,477 kg of clothing, diverting waste from landfill and provided 1,094 garments to students. In 2024, the scheme won an AGCAS Sustainability Impact Award.



NTU work with our partners and suppliers to embed environmental, social and economic sustainability in a triple bottom line.

Operations

We continue to be recognised as a leading institution for sustainable procurement. The pioneering [Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool](#) shows the positive impact of our sustainable purchasing decisions and is continuing to make reductions to our carbon footprint. So far, the Tool has 195 NTU suppliers signed up, committing to over 3,300 actions to support net zero.

NTU also supported 31 UK partner universities to implement the Tool in their own supply chains, uniting over 100 sustainability and procurement professionals. The Tool has over 900 registered suppliers and has helped over 350 SMEs create free carbon reduction action plans. In 2024, the Tool won the Gold AUDE Award for Sustainability Impact Initiative and a Green Gown Award in the Money for Good category.

NTU continues to embed sustainability into our purchasing decisions.

- As part of our resurfacing works at Brackenhurst equestrian arena, the old surfacing was re-used rather than being sent to landfill.
- Our fruit and vegetables contract prioritised local suppliers in a 60 mile radius.
- We implemented VarioPRINT and HeatXchange technology at our Print Shop to reduce environmental impact of printing.

NTU is a Fairtrade university

For over 15 years, NTU has been recognised as a [Fairtrade university](#) through our SOS-UK Fairtrade University and College Award. Alongside NTSU, we provide Fairtrade products in our refectories, shops, cafes and other outlets; use Fairtrade tea, coffee and sugar for meetings and hospitality events; and encourage our staff to purchase Fairtrade cotton workwear where possible.

Partnerships

Supply chain partnerships

Working with Amazon for Business, NTU utilise sustainability certificates to help identify environmentally responsible products. The platform also prioritises local East Midlands suppliers in product searches. Our partnership with our supplier for Apple products has enabled us to restrict purchases to products which meet our sustainability criteria, receive deliveries via electric vehicles, and reduce the number of trips to campus by limiting delivery days.



Research

Logistics

In 2023, NTU and Baxter Freight secured funding for a [Knowledge Transfer Partnership \(KTP\)](#) to enhance sustainability in logistics, which sees academics investigating supply chains, sustainability and organisational change. The KTP supports sustainable innovations and helps businesses manage their carbon footprint.



Curriculum

Graduation gowns

In 2023, NTU fashion students were invited to redesign the [University's graduation gowns](#), focusing on both sustainability and NTU's brand. The winning design by MA student Georgia Stevenson draws inspiration from the angles of the Arkwright building and incorporates the University's pink coat of arms. In collaboration with gown supplier Graduation Attire, the design uses eco-friendly materials, including 30 recycled plastic bottles per gown, and they are free of single-use packaging with reusable protective garments. They are also stocked for 10 years and regularly cleaned, checked and repaired to increase their longevity.



NTU is working to promote inclusion, equity and social justice both locally and globally.

Operations

NTU is committed to reducing inequalities within both the University and the wider community through a variety of initiatives that support students and colleagues alike. We provide practical assistance, including:

- food boxes for students facing financial difficulties
- hardship funds to help those in need
- wellbeing services designed to promote mental and physical health such as the Moves+ app to encourage an active lifestyle.

We also foster inclusion through a range of colleague and student networks and societies tailored to demographics including women, parents and BME communities. This ensures that diverse groups have ample opportunities to connect and share their experiences.

Beyond campus, NTU's commitment to social responsibility is evident in our EDI (Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion) policies. This includes holding an Athena SWAN Institutional Bronze Award and employing a Supplier Engagement Tool which ensures our supply chain aligns with our commitment to addressing broader social issues such as modern slavery.



Curriculum

Sustainable childhoods



In the Nottingham Institute of Education, the Sustainable Childhoods module plays a key role in reducing inequalities by empowering students to understand and address the diverse challenges faced by children from underrepresented and disadvantaged backgrounds. It also encourages students to engage with global initiatives and professional practices that promote equity and sustainability, fostering an inclusive approach to childhood development. The module's innovative approach earned a nomination for the 2024 Green Gown Awards.

Partnerships



Climate Justice Hub

In June 2024, the University of Nottingham's Human Rights Law Centre and Nottingham Trent University's Climate Justice Hub hosted a seminar on 'Climate Change and Migration: New Challenges, Legal Responses, and Policy Solutions'. Fifteen presenters covered climate-induced mobility topics, including EU migration policies and the law of the sea. The event featured a keynote from Ian Fry, former UN Special Rapporteur on climate change, and a workshop by Sarker Shams Bin Sharif. Selected papers will be published in a special issue of the Socio-Legal Studies Association (SLSA) Blog.

Research



Intellectual property and the SDGs

In 2024, Nottingham Law School's (NLS) Intellectual Property Research Group contributed to the Guide to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), highlighting the link between intellectual property (IP) rights and sustainability. Developed by students and staff, the Guide showcases how IP supports SDGs such as Quality Education and Sustainable Cities. Key contributions include discussions on copyright in education, green technology investment and collective action. The Guide emphasizes IP's role in fostering innovation and equity, reflecting NLS's commitment to promoting accessible knowledge for global benefit.

NTU works with partners openly and honestly to find solutions to challenges, realise our aspirations, and make the most of opportunities.

Operations

Green Rewards

The [NTU Green Rewards programme](#) encourages sustainable actions among staff and students through an app that rewards points for logging activities and participating in challenges.

Activities cover key themes such as travel, purchasing, carbon reduction, digital behaviours and wellbeing. Users can earn points for actions such as deleting unnecessary files, recycling or taking a lunch break. Since its launch in 2019, Green Rewards has seen:



Additionally, the Universities for Nottingham Civic Agreement led to the creation of a [county-wide Green Rewards](#) platform available to all Nottinghamshire residents.



Download the Green Rewards app

Use the Green Rewards app to monitor your carbon use and earn rewards for making more sustainable choices.



Curriculum

Work-like experience

In an effort to enhance skills and employability for students at NTU, all undergraduate courses now include 240 hours of assessed work-like experience (AWLE) within the curriculum. This AWLE can be implemented through placements, employer-led projects, community engagement, volunteering, or Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL). Many courses have chosen to incorporate sustainability within their employer-led projects.

In 2023-24, joint honours Arts and Humanities students engaged in projects with the NTU Sustainability team focused on water accessibility on campus. Psychology students worked with “No Job in the Arts” to promote public engagement on environmental issues. Meanwhile, Fashion Design, Textiles, and Knitwear students collaborated with peers from India, China and Scotland to create the Rebel Tartan, addressing the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Research

Citizens, environmental sustainability and local democracy

A team from within NTU’s School of Social Sciences, in collaboration with Nottingham City Council, conducted research on [community engagement in climate policy](#) to support the Carbon Neutral Nottingham 2028 initiative. The project ran online focus groups with Nottingham residents aged 16 and older to gather their environmental concerns and ideas on carbon-reducing actions. The study aimed to empower citizens in the democratic process, ensuring their views informed sustainable climate policies. It also inspired broader public engagement with climate change, fostering collective responsibility.

Partnerships

European Inclusive Communities Challenge

In 2024, as part of the annual [European Cities Challenge](#), 48 NTU students and 10 academic mentors travelled across Europe to explore projects promoting inclusive communities. Organised by NTU Global, the group visited various countries, researching community engagement, inclusive spaces and net zero carbon. Tasked by Mansfield, Ashfield and Bolsover District Councils, participants focused on creating inclusive communities and presented their findings at the NTU Mansfield Hub. These insights continue to inform regeneration plans for the three districts.



Co(I)laboratory Universities for Nottingham Research

[Co\(I\)laboratory](#), a pioneering research program funded by the £5.1m Research England Development Fund, is a collaboration between NTU and the University of Nottingham, under the Universities for Nottingham partnership. The program focuses on driving positive change in Nottinghamshire through community-engaged research.

As part of this initiative, in 2024, an NTU student was funded to research the barriers to micromobility, specifically e-bikes and e-scooters, exploring perceptions of safety and legal practice. Other projects within Co(I)lab are exploring housing retrofits, social housing, health inequalities and deprivation.



In 2023-24, the [Centre for Student & Community Engagement](#) (CenSCE) worked alongside a diverse range of local stakeholders to help recruit staff and student volunteers, arrange community action and coordinate student-led projects. These include but are not limited to:

- Age UK Notts
- Base 51
- Bulwell Forest Gardens
- Emmanuel House
- FoodCycle
- Emmanuel House
- Himmah
- Nottingham City Libraries, Museums and Parks
- Nottingham Women's Centre
- Reach UK
- Refugee Roots
- White Rose Trading



East Midlands Climate Ambassadors

In 2023, under the Universities for Nottingham initiative, Nottingham Trent University and the University of Nottingham became the East Midlands hub of the [Climate Ambassador Scheme](#), which invites volunteers to support local nurseries, schools and colleges in embedding sustainability. This initiative provides a platform for our colleagues to volunteer, making a tangible impact on the next generation's approach to sustainability while gaining valuable experience in environmental education.

NTU Enterprise

Throughout 2023-24, the [NTU Enterprise team](#) provided a range of entrepreneurial and business development courses aimed at individuals from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds, such as women, ethnic minorities and those from disadvantaged communities. By delivering tailored programmes and resources, the Centre equips both students and Nottinghamshire locals with the skills and confidence needed to start their own businesses or advance their careers.

Libraries

The [Libraries and Learning Resources](#) team launched the Sustainability Best Practice Group, conducting an audit of existing practices and implementing several sustainable initiatives. A key highlight was the introduction of an electric library van to transport books between campuses. The team promoted sustainability through book displays and organising resources in Library OneSearch in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, making sustainability-focused materials more accessible to users.

The Libraries team also supported NTU's Stamp Out Stress campaign, collaborating with Student Support Services and NTU Sport to promote wellbeing. At Brackenhurst and Mansfield, colleagues helped maintain campus flowerbeds, contributing to the upkeep of the grounds.



Employability

In 2023, the Employability team joined the [Sustainable Recruitment Alliance](#), committing to sustainable practices and supporting organisations in attracting early-career talent. The Employability team further encourages sustainable careers for NTU students through the [Sustainability Employability Award](#), which accredits extracurricular and co-curricular activities which directly align with the SDGs. In 2023-24, 50 students engaged with this award.

Additionally, in 2024 NTU Employability launched a recycling campaign with [Future Makers](#), repurposing plastics into functional products for a community pavilion. They also stopped providing single-use water bottles at career fairs, developed and delivered Green Skills training, and volunteered as a team at Stonebridge City Farm.

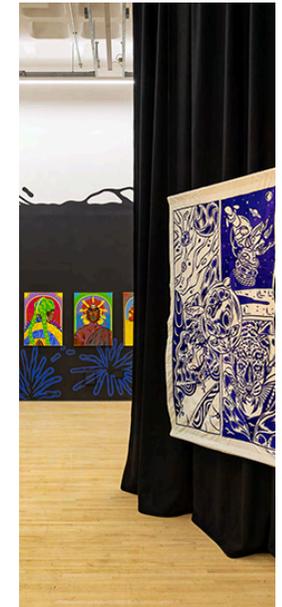


NTU Arts

Throughout 2023-24, [NTU Arts](#) emphasised sustainability through a series of creative initiatives. Notable events included the "Plants Beyond Empire" series, which explored the human-plant relationship within postcolonial contexts, while workshops like Dalit Futures and the Online Dalit Film Festival provided a platform for marginalised communities to share their stories and creative expressions.

NTU Arts continue to collaborate with local independent bookshops to procure literature and host environmentally conscious events, which have included a tile-making workshop with NTU Sustainability. In Green Week 2023, NTU Arts enabled an interactive fireworks show with projection mapping to reduce the ecological impact of traditional fireworks.

These initiatives reflected a commitment to fostering inclusivity, creativity and environmental responsibility while highlighting the importance of diverse cultural perspectives in sustainability efforts.



Catering

In 2023, [NTU Catering](#) were awarded a 3* award from the Sustainable Restaurant Association. Throughout the academic year, NTU Catering continued to prioritise sustainability by offering seasonal, local and ethically sourced meals, and continuing to increase plant-based options across campus outlets.

Surplus food was donated to local charities such as Matthew 25:40 and the YMCA, while unsold products were made available to students via free pick-up points. Catering also provided food parcels to students experiencing hardship, collaborated with local suppliers like Campbell's R-Oil to reduce carbon emissions, and maintained certification for sustainably-sourced ingredients, including MSC-accredited dishes.



Sustainability in Labs

NTU is proud to have signed up to the [Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework](#) (LEAF), which is a nationwide sustainability standard for laboratory operations. Developed by University College London, LEAF has been designed to facilitate improvements in laboratory sustainability, practice and research quality.

By using the LEAF tool, NTU is reducing the environmental impact of our laboratory spaces whilst maintaining the high quality of work taking place within them. Lab users are presented with preset actions to complete starting with Bronze, working up to Silver then Gold. These actions support users in focusing efforts on key areas to improve performance such as waste, energy, water, resource use and ICT.

Current number of labs with LEAF accreditation at NTU:



In a notable stride towards sustainable labs, NTU Professor Sheri Scott received the Highly Commended 'Staff Champion' award at the [2023 Green Gown Awards](#). Her achievements include founding a national group for clinical laboratory sustainability, collaborating with NHS England, and promoting greener lab practices. She has inspired over 2,500 lab professionals, facilitated Green certification for over 20 diagnostic labs, and published guidelines on sustainable practices.



Sustainability in Sport

In 2023-24, [NTU Sport made significant progress in sustainability](#). Students donated old sportswear, reducing waste and supporting the community. At the Clifton Sports Hub, compostable air fresheners were introduced, and the team focused on reusing bibs and cleaning cloths to minimise waste. Coordinating deliveries with approved suppliers further reduced overconsumption and packaging waste.

A £1.5 million investment in energy-efficient and water-saving renovations was made across facilities. In 2024, a self-wetting hockey ball was introduced to cut water usage. NTU Sport and Estates partnered with Poligras to install Green Technology turf on the [Clifton hockey pitch](#), saving 73 tonnes of CO2 and reducing water consumption by 40%. Sustainability was also a key criterion for the Committee of the Year award at the NTU Sports Awards.

Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab

In 2023-24, NTU's [Responsible and Sustainable Business Lab \(RSB\)](#) made notable strides in sustainability and research, focusing on responsible business and climate action. The lab hosted cross-disciplinary events, emphasising sustainability grants, faculty development and climate change discussions.

The RSB provided carbon literacy training to over 100 businesses, aiding in carbon footprint reduction, and supported net zero research through Dr. Jacqueline Kirk's ESRC Policy Fellowship. Globally, the lab engaged in projects like the WE-DARE initiative, addressing gender-based violence in South Africa and Nigeria, and delivered the Values-Driven Leadership in Action programme, empowering leaders to tackle ethical challenges, especially in Africa.

By integrating research into teaching and public programmes, RSB advanced sustainability and responsible leadership, aligning with NTU's commitment to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and meeting NTU's net zero carbon ambitions.



Sustainability Training at NTU

NTU offers several sustainability training programmes to help students, colleagues and partners improve their environmental awareness and adopt climate solutions. For students and colleagues, the free, self-paced Sustainability in Practice (SiP) certificate covers the basics of sustainability aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals.

The NTU Sustainability team run 3-hour Climate Fresk workshops for NTU teams, summarising the IPCC report in an interactive, accessible format. Environmental awareness training is provided to relevant professional services colleagues to outline NTU's Environmental Policy and relevant procedures.

1,719

completed Sustainability in Practice module

500+

completed Climate Fresk workshops

300+

completed Environmental Awareness Training

NTU offers a 6-hour FutureLearn course "Climate Literacy Training for Educators, Communities, Organisations and Students" developed by Nottingham Business School (NBS) colleagues in collaboration with PRME to empower high-impact climate decisions. In 2023-24, two global trainings took place, with around 200 participants from 72 countries. NBS also supported sessions in Jordan, India, Australia and the US. Additionally, the "Climate Solutions for a Net Zero Future" microcredential aims to build climate literacy in business and develop skills for green jobs.

Nottingham Trent Students' Union

In response to students' desire for increased focus on environmental sustainability, Nottingham Trent Students' Union (NTSU) launched its Sustainability Strategy in summer 2023. This initiative established key sustainability objectives, secured a path through EcoCampus to achieving ISO14001, and enhanced engagement with NTU and other stakeholders.

A major milestone for NTSU was the development of an Environmental Management System (EMS) which helped them to identify impacts and target reductions in waste, emissions and other metrics. The EMS enabled NTSU to progress towards ISO14001:2015 standards, optimised resource efficiency, and improved sustainability awareness through staff and student training. This was recognised with EcoCampus Gold certification in December 2024.

NTSU is a founding member of the National Union of Student's UK "Sustainable SUs Charter". Working in partnership with their supply chain has advanced NTSU's environmental impact, driving a shift towards plant-based menus and reducing meat and dairy consumption to lower food-related carbon emissions. Sustainable procurement practices aligned with the Better Sourcing Framework increased the proportion of responsibly sourced, low-carbon food and beverage options.

Regular carbon reporting and transparency measures enabled the union to track progress, while the commitment to continuous improvement was recognised with the Green Impact Award 2023 and 2024 at the highest level – Excellent. By embedding sustainability across all operations, NTSU has progressed towards long-term ecological responsibility and continues to refine its approach for future impact.



Reflections

We draw on the diverse expertise of our colleagues, students and partners to collaborate in finding sustainable solutions to global challenges.

Challenges

NTU is a demand led university. Balancing expansion to meet demand with our ambitious sustainability goals remains a key challenge. The increasing demand for resources and infrastructure often conflicts with our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint. We are committed to finding innovative solutions to minimise our environmental impact, including investing in sustainable building practices and promoting greener transportation options as we deliver our inspiring blend of academic excellence and a vibrant campus life.

Like many universities across the sector, we have to carefully prioritise where we invest in sustainability projects. Despite these challenges, we remain focused on finding ways to integrate sustainability into our operations and curriculum.

Engaging students in these efforts continues to be a priority. We are working to encourage greater student participation through sustainability campaigns, events, and by embedding sustainability more deeply across academic programmes to foster long-term impact.



Next steps

Looking beyond 2023-24, NTU's continued ambition is to enhance our sustainability performance and solidify our position as a global leader in the higher education sector. To support this goal, several key initiatives were maintained and introduced in 2024-25, and progress will be reported in future publications. The following items display our ongoing commitment to best practice.



- The Safety and Sustainability Research Theme was introduced to drive impactful research that aligns with our sustainability objectives.
- We further committed to embedding the SDGs in our courses, ensuring that sustainability principles are integrated into the curriculum.
- Our focus on building Work-Like Experience opportunities continues to enable students to engage with sustainability in real-world settings.
- We continue to take action towards net zero by further reducing our carbon emissions and increasing energy efficiency across campus.
- Ongoing investment in our estate ensures our infrastructure supports sustainable practices, with upgrades focused on energy efficiency.
- We continue to implement and track Environmental Management objectives, driving progress towards our sustainability targets.
- We continue to celebrate successes and share progress with our community, highlighting achievements and inspiring further engagement in sustainability.

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Explore NTU's ongoing innovative projects, events, and research initiatives that are dedicated to Embracing Sustainability on our [Sustainability Stories](#) [webpage](#).