



SUSTAINABLE FOOD & DRINK ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

The University Catering and Retail Services Team is committed to leading by example in sustainability, with a clear public commitment to reducing its carbon footprint. This commitment is embodied in the University's Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan, which focuses on three principal areas:

Sourcing: Prioritising locally sourced produce from suppliers that meet exacting standards for sustainability and ethical practices.

Environment: Reducing plastic usage, minimising packaging, and decreasing the consumption of ruminant meat.

Society: Enhancing consumer information, highlighting seasonal produce, and actively engaging with students and staff.

To advance these goals, the Catering and Retail Services Team has implemented eight core initiatives that are monitored and evaluated annually. These initiatives, shaped by principles of behavioural science and pricing strategies, aim to promote informed choices rather than restricting options. By providing clearer information, the initiatives empower students, staff, and visitors to make more sustainable dining choices. Examples include:

- A “meat-second” approach on menus, which places plant-based options as the primary choice.
- A 40p charge on disposable cups to encourage reusable alternatives.
- Promotion of plant-based dishes through dedicated events and seasonal pop-ups.

We track the impact of these initiatives using a dashboard that monitors metrics aligned with our sustainability goals. Key performance indicators include the percentage of vegan meals sold, the ratio of dairy to non-dairy drinks, and the number of hot drinks served in reusable cups.

Educational Engagement with Students

Our team is deeply committed to supporting the student community, providing educational activities designed to enhance culinary skills and knowledge around sustainable food practices. These activities include:

- Cooking Demonstrations: Direct sessions where students learn sustainable cooking techniques and practical meal preparation.
- Consultancy Opportunities: As part of academic studies, students engage in consultancy projects that offer real-world insights into sustainable food services.
- Insight Groups: Students are invited to participate in insight groups, where they can contribute ideas and feedback that shape our service's strategic priorities.
- Food Cultural Events: We celebrate our diverse campus community by hosting “taste of home” events, offering students from around the world a chance to share their culinary traditions with peers and enjoy a sense of home.



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Key Achievements This Year

- Plant-Based Milks: 12,780 litres of plant-based milk used — representing 10.05% of all milk consumption.
- Dairy Milks: Dairy milk usage reduced by 4,597 litres compared with the previous year.
- Cross Keys: Sales of vegan and vegetarian meals increased by 5.87%, with 13,970 meals served — equating to 64.24% of total meals sold.
- Residences: A total reduction of 7,647 meat-based dishes served across three residences. Meat purchases decreased by 2,442 kilograms, with venison introduced as a more sustainable meat option.
- Reusable Cups: 46.39% of all hot drinks were served in reusable cups, continuing efforts to minimise single-use waste.
- Fairtrade Hot Drinks: Sales of Fairtrade hot drinks increased by 3,627 drinks, a 1.29% rise year-on-year.
- Veganuary (Retail Outlets): 5,325 vegan meals served during January — 50.74% of all meals for the month.
- Veganuary (Forum Kitchen): 612 vegan meals served in January, accounting for 27.54% of total meals — a 9.5% increase on the previous year.
- Veganuary (Licensed Premises): Vegan meal sales increased by 1% compared with the previous year.
- Campus-Grown Produce: Over 1 tonne (1,000 kg) of fresh produce harvested from the campus kitchen garden and incorporated into on-site menus.

Building a Stronger Future

- This year, we have deepened our collaboration with the Grounds team to expand the 'garden kitchen', which uses both traditional planting and hydroponics to provide fresh, sustainable produce year-round. This initiative has been instrumental in promoting local, campus-grown food, and we plan to expand it further in the coming years.
- We have invested in Ridan Composters for the residences, allowing us to compost food waste that will, in turn, help grow future produce for the kitchen garden.
- The Catering and Retail team remains committed to using and promoting Fairtrade products, embedding ethical and sustainable practices across all areas. We are proud to have achieved a two-star rating in the Fairtrade Universities and Colleges Award for 2022-2024. We are working towards our 2026 submission.
- As part of our membership with the Sustainable Restaurant Association, we are delighted to have retained our three-star rating—the highest possible grade—under the SRA Food Made Good Sustainability Standard. Our overall score increased from 71% to 76%, reflecting improvements across the Sourcing, Society, and Environment pillars, and highlighting the team's ongoing commitment to continuous improvement through reduction, reuse, and recycling initiatives.
- We've invested in new, energy-efficient cook-line equipment at The Ram Bar, helping us cook smarter and more sustainably. The upgraded system offers precise temperature control, better cooking performance, and longer-lasting oil thanks to improved filtration and monitoring. With the addition of an oil testing kit, our chefs can now track oil quality and change it only when needed—reducing waste, saving energy, and keeping our food at its best.



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