

The future of sustainability at UAL

Thank you for taking part in the sustainability workshop at CSM on 17th December 2015 and for your active participation, enthusiasm and willingness to be involved.

Two connected conversations took place. This concise summary captures many of your ideas. These will help inform UAL's future university-wide sustainability programme.



1. What ideas you have to make your college, and UAL, amongst the most sustainable universities in the world?

● **Your votes.** You worked with us to categorise your ideas into four main themes: “Teaching & Learning” – “Communication & Collaboration” – “Empowerment & Responsibility” – “Our own estates: food, resources, energy”.

Then you voted on the categories you felt were the most important to focus on during the second detailed conversation, given the need to narrow down. We've interfered with your words as little as possible, intervening mainly to tidy up duplicates.

Teaching and learning ●●

Agreement that sustainability needs to be made more visible within curricula, and that the opportunities to build it into coursework could be made clearer and more engaging.

- Better integrate sustainability into curriculum – and stronger promotion of inter-disciplinarity. Some even talked about mandating this – “Courses should be re-validated to include a mandatory sustainable element”
- More sustainability practitioners involved in teaching and presentations
- Stronger links to industry on sustainability so learning materials are more accessible and current
- Linking FAD-BA-MA learning across courses
- More guidance on what counts for sustainability in professional practice
- More support for student-led initiatives – enabling and empowering students to run sustainability projects
- Ethical component to the assessment of coursework

Communication and collaboration ●●●●

General sentiment that more of both is needed, within and between colleges, staff, students, external voices. And more communication about successes, internally and externally.

- Bigger student voice on all committees within UAL
- Develop student/staff elections: the Number 1 sustainability issue to form the focus of a campaign/programme each year – UAL-wide – but with colleges taking their own approaches to delivery
- Introduce a new (high-profile) sustainability award
- More commitment and resources for staffing sustainability issues/collaborations. This was a widespread sentiment... “need for a full-time post at each college”
- “We are an art school - we need to re-brand sustainability & make it sexy”... “make it real! Positive!”
- Extend Green Week
- “We need to make a map - where do we want to go & how to get there”
- More collaboration with external partners
- “More sharing of best practice within UAL, the sector and outside!”
- We need to include everyone in the college – some seen as resistant – and this is a challenge

Empowerment & Responsibility: behavioural change ●●●●●●●●

A popular category, this stood for two clusters of issues: clear statements of intent, policy, strategy and direction on the one hand, and the less tangible issue of behaviour change on the other.

- Need for strong leadership and demonstration of commitment
- UAL-wide projects responding in a very visual way to pressing sustainability issues
- Overt *Ethical Policy* stating clearly the UAL ‘red-line’ issues e.g. tobacco
- New staff induction – compulsory session on sustainability
- Need for a manifesto which develops into strategy from staff and students, and the communities around UAL. Manifesto must “apply to the individual colleges identities”
- Need for a personal responsibility agenda, e.g. around carbon footprints
- Cultural shift towards embedding sustainability
- “Capture the negatives, not just the optimism and ask: What prevents more sustainable practices in the college? Why do people groan?”
- The university to lead by example – e.g. why not move immediately to paperless courses?

Our own estates: food, resources, energy ●●●

Energy – in particular renewable generation, sources of supply and energy efficiency – was the most prominent talking point regarding resource use during the first discussion.

- Food offer: less meat and fish (vegan also frequently cited)
- Look at options for tackling food waste and food packaging waste
- Supply chain: each commodity public about its impacts (labour, carbon, water)
- Ban disposable cups/plastic boxes – incentivise this

- Recycling needs to be taken more seriously – otherwise it becomes a very visual failure to get the basics right
- Green roof terrace with food growing
- Focus on energy efficient buildings and monitor energy consumption
- Retail shop encouraged to source more sustainable alternatives
- Look at new embedded energy options and renewable energy generation
- Look at accessibility and sustainability together – and focus on active travel
- Produce our own alternative energy and food

2. How do we get there?

A short, lively discussion focused on the ‘Empowerment and Responsibility’ and ‘Communication and Collaboration’ topics. There were conversations about targets UAL could set, specific actions it could take, and on barriers to making progress.

There was a good degree of consensus the a key requirement is to identify the **resources** necessary to push UAL’s sustainability agenda further – particularly, people, but also budgets.

Clear structures for communication and collaboration between colleges was cited as a clear need – in order to ensure people know about initiatives taking place elsewhere, to share ideas, build on the platforms developed by others, and generally form a **culture of co-ordination** and celebration of successes.

One group put forward the idea for a **UAL Sustainability Summit** – with each college/department sending delegates to discuss sustainability issues and take responsibility for taking action back to their own college.

Incentives could have an important role to play – encouraging sustained behaviour change. They don’t have to be big, in fact, small (probably monetary), **nudges** could work and could be linked through a smart, co-ordinated initiative.

One popular idea was for an **election-style vote** on priority sustainability issues, complete with debates, campaigns, talks from external partners and academics. This could also be linked to the curriculum.

Thanks you once again for your input, which will feed into recommendations to be presented to the UAL Sustainability and Environment Project Board in January 2016. To discuss further, please contact matt.prescott@mint-environment.com.

Important survey!

We’d be very grateful if you would now complete this online survey by 29th January 2016 and encourage others linked to UAL to do so too: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/UAL-sustain> The results from the survey will also be helping to inform the future of sustainability at UAL.