We’ve reduced our carbon emissions by 10%

In the first year of our carbon reduction programme, the University has cut carbon emissions by 10%. In March 2011, the University committed to an ambitious target of reducing its carbon emissions by 2015/16 against a 2008/09 baseline.

This is a great result and a good reflection of how lots of individual contributions can lead to a huge University-wide contribution. Of course, there’s no room for complacency and we are pushing forward to make sure further year-on-year reductions are achieved. If you’ve got any ideas on how to reduce the carbon footprint further, please email eest@reading.ac.uk.

Finally, if you’d like to keep up to speed along with our 200+ followers on Twitter, you can follow us @UniRdg_EEST.

Reducing future carbon emissions

As well as our fantastic achievement of a 10% reduction in carbon emissions last year, we have many more projects in the pipeline. Here is a flavour of the many technical projects we are investing in to complement our energy awareness and behavioural change campaigns to reduce our carbon emissions.

Significant work has been done to improve the insulation of buildings, particularly through improved roof insulation and insulation of heating pipework. There’s plenty more to be done and we have recently completed draught proofing surveys for a number of buildings to look at opportunities to address draughty windows and doors, as well as further roof and wall insulation opportunities. These projects will not only cut our carbon emissions, but will save money on our heating bills and improve building comfort too.

To complete this work, we’ve also made improvements to the way the buildings are controlled. This includes the timers for heating and ventilation systems. Projects to expand the reach of these systems and improve their intelligence have been implemented. Good examples of this are in the Students Union and a meteorology lecture theatre. Here ventilation timers have been replaced by CO2 sensors that detect when ventilation is required, instead of pumping out high-quality (not to mention warm) air. The success of these projects means we are now rolling out similar improvements to many more lecture theatres across the University.

Many of our vending machines are now fitted with ‘vending misers’, which significantly reduce the electricity consumption of the machines by adjusting each machine’s refrigeration motors depending on the occupancy levels in its vicinity.

Please forward any more suggestions to eest@reading.ac.uk.

Website changes

Due to the recent changes here at EEST the website is getting a refresh. You will notice new photos and information to help you spot us around campus.

The website also has new information about how and what to recycle, including waste reduction tips. You will also notice a Twitter feed informing you about the most recent environmental activities at the University.

If you have not looked at the website before, check out our awards page for all the fantastic achievements the University has accomplished so far. Go to www.reading.ac.uk/cleanandgreen or type EEST into the University of Reading search bar. Look out for more changes happening over the next few weeks!

Date for the diary

Green Week 2012
12–16 November 2012
Get updates at @UniRdg_EEST
Improved plastic recycling!

We are working hard to ensure that waste produced at the University has the lowest possible impact on the environment. We are aiming to divert 50% of waste away from landfill this year.

Wherever possible, we try to avoid landfill. Sending waste to landfill should be avoided for a number of reasons:

- landfill space is rapidly decreasing and becoming expensive
- it releases greenhouse gas emissions
- it causes the degradation of the surrounding environment including soils and groundwater resources.

A major landfill culprit is plastic. With the help of our waste management contractors at Select the University is now able to recycle even more different types of plastic via the mixed recycling bins!

The subject of recycling plastics can be a confusing one. Different types of plastic require different processing to be recycled. You may be familiar with the symbol of a single digit ranging from 1 – 7 surrounded by a triangle of arrows. This was introduced to enable consumers and recyclers to identify the different types of plastics. At the University we can now recycle codes 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 but not 4 or 7. So we can now recycle items including: drinks bottles, shampoo bottles, milk bottles, cleaning product bottles, large squash bottles, soup pots, margarine tubs, most bottle tops, polystyrene, and yoghurt pots.

Always check the packaging to find out if your plastic can be recycled at the University but if in doubt put it in the general waste bins – contamination of recycling bins means that the whole bin may go to landfill. Plastics that cannot be recycled are things like carrier bags, sandwich bags and cling film as this requires a different type of recycling process not yet available to us. But we will keep you posted of any changes.

Here in the Environment, Energy, Sustainability and Travel Team (EEST), we want to make recycling and waste disposal as simple as possible so we have come up with an A–Z of waste and recycling for all your waste and recycling queries. New posters are also being updated to spread the word. If we all do our bit hopefully we can reach that 50% target. If you have any further questions don’t hesitate to contact waste@reading.ac.uk.

Find us on Facebook: EESTatReading
Follow us on Twitter: @UniRdg_EEST

50% recycled
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