



QUEEN'S
UNIVERSITY
BELFAST

ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024-25





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VICE-CHANCELLOR'S FOREWORD



I am pleased to present the Queen's University Belfast Annual Sustainability Report 2024-25.

2024-2025 marked a dynamic and ambitious period for sustainability at Queen's University Belfast. It was a year in which we became the first and, to date, the only university in the UK to be awarded a prestigious Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS) Gold rating, a landmark achievement that bolsters our global reputation as a university dedicated to delivering on sustainability commitments.

Strategy 2030 sets out our ambition to shape a better world through life-changing education and research, and 2024-25 saw us continue to produce innovative, high-impact and globally recognised research that tackles pressing environmental challenges, as well as make significant progress in enhancing the sustainability of our campus and operations. In February 2025, Queen's became a signatory to the UKRI Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation practice, strengthening our commitment to embedding sustainability into our research practices. This agreement builds on our existing programmes and policies.

We also continued to perform strongly in sustainability-focused rankings. Queen's placed 79th in the world in the 2025 Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for our contribution to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and was ranked number one in the UK for our contribution to SDG 14: 'Life Below Water'. We also secured a top 100 global position in the QS University Sustainability Rankings 2025, reflecting our leadership in tackling pressing global challenges.

Our Annual Sustainability Report 2024-25 tells the story of a university community whose staff and students are deeply engaged with advancing sustainability across a broad collection of areas and initiatives and in pursuit of our ambitious Net Zero Plan.

The report features a wide range of case studies, key performance indicators and a summary of how we are integrating the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals throughout all aspects of University life. It covers five key themes:

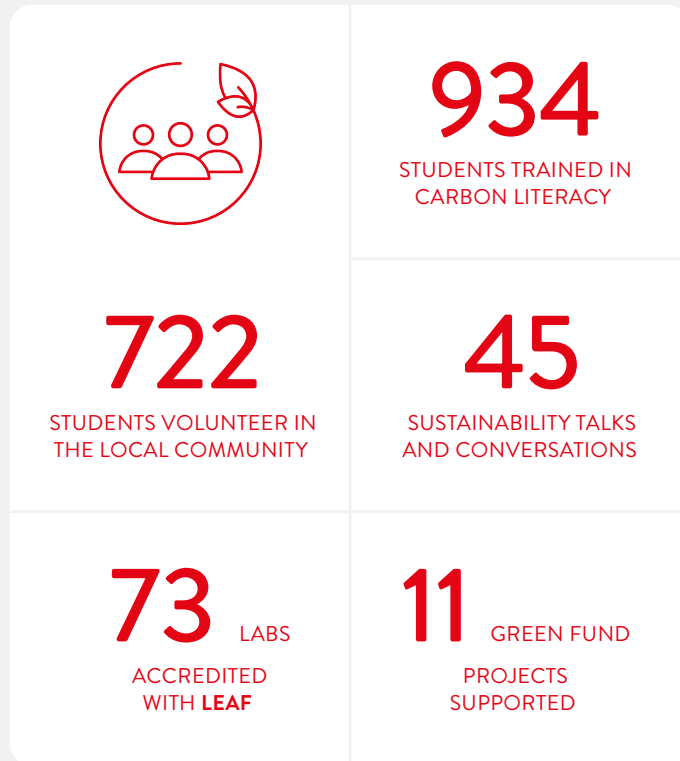
- Sustainability in Campus Activities
- Research and Sustainable Solutions
- Sustainability in our Education
- Outreach and Partnership
- Engaging our Community on Sustainability

This report reflects the collective efforts of staff and students across our University, and I extend my sincere thanks to them for all the hard work and dedication that has made 2024-25 a year of outstanding progress on our continued journey to Net Zero by 2040.

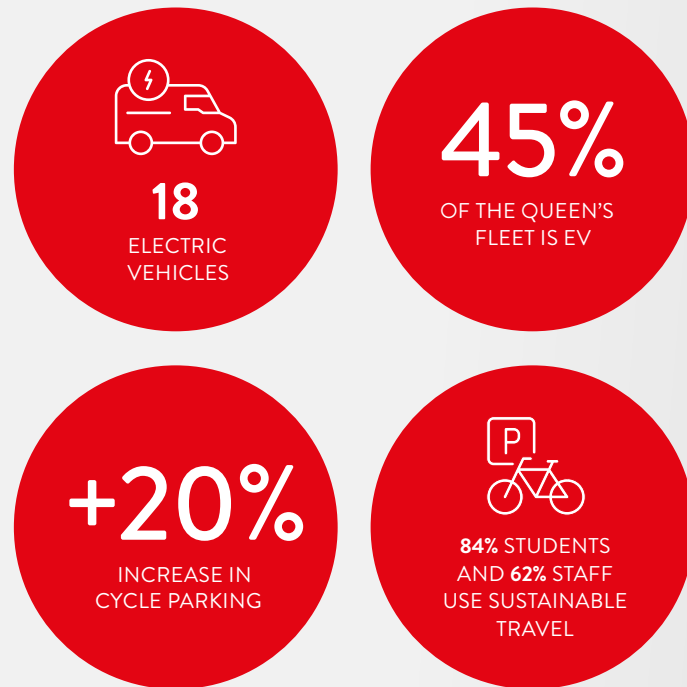
Professor Sir Ian Greer
President and Vice-Chancellor
Queen's University Belfast

SUSTAINABILITY IN NUMBERS 2024-25

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY



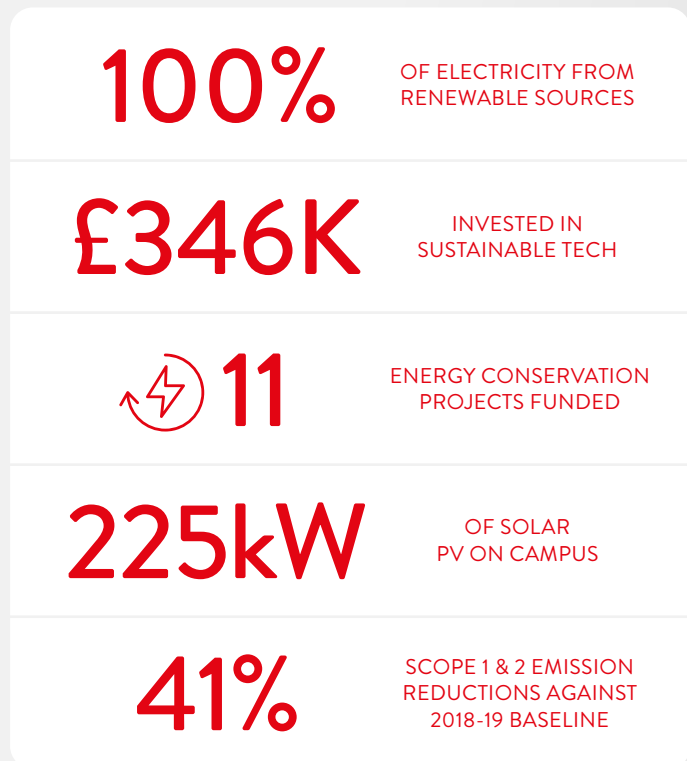
TRAVELLING GREEN TO QUEEN'S



MINIMISING OUR CONSUMPTION



ENERGISING NET ZERO AMBITIONS



BENCHMARKING

TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION IMPACT RANKINGS 2025

Ranked 79th in the world (up 24 positions)
 Number 31st for SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities
 Number 14th for SDG 14: Life Below Water (#1 in UK)
 Number 29th for SDG 15: Life on Land
 Number 32nd for SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

QS UNIVERSITY SUSTAINABILITY RANKINGS 2025

Ranked 67th in the world (up 36 positions)

NI ENVIRONMENTAL BENCHMARK SURVEY

Awarded platinum

GREEN FLAG AWARDS

Seventh consecutive Green Flag Award

AASHE SUSTAINABLE TRACKING, ASSESSMENT AND RATING SYSTEM

Awarded gold - first University in the UK

AMBASSADOR BELFAST BUSINESS PROMISE

Ambassador Status

ATHENA SWAN AWARD

Awarded gold

PEOPLE AND PLANET UNIVERSITY LEAGUE

2:1 Class University
 32nd in the UK (up 23 positions)

FAIRTRADE ACCREDITED

GOLD CYCLE FRIENDLY EMPLOYER

ISO ACCREDITATIONS

ISO 14001 Certification - Environmental
 ISO 50001 Certification - Energy
 ISO 45001 Certification - Health & Safety
 ISO 14064 Certification - GHG Reporting

PLANETARY HEALTH REPORT CARD

UNIVERSITY OF SANCTUARY AWARD



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Queen's University Belfast Annual Sustainability Report for 2024-25.

In 2023, we launched our Net Zero Plan, committing the University to achieving net zero emissions by 2040. This ambition continues to guide our actions alongside Strategy 2030, which sets out our pledge to embed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across our teaching, research, engagement and operations.

Our community is increasingly experiencing the impacts of global sustainability challenges, from intensifying heatwaves and cost-of-living pressures to widening inequalities and discrimination. These realities reinforce the importance of our collective responsibility and the urgency of our sustainability commitments.

As we recognise 180 years of progress, transformation and impact, Queen's continues to view sustainability as a key priority area of action. Over the past year, we strengthened our commitment to becoming a University of Sanctuary, increased on-site renewable energy generation, and advanced plans to integrate sustainability more fully into our education programmes.

The Annual Sustainability Report recognises the exceptional work taking place across Queen's, from reducing emissions and improving energy efficiency, to embedding sustainability throughout our teaching and research.

This report focuses on activities that have taken place between 1 August 2024 and 31 July 2025.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2024-25

SUSTAINABILITY IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

- Launch of the Local Sustainability Action Plan Programme which supports each School and Directorate to create their own Sustainability Plan.
 - Towards the end of 2024/25, we were delighted to achieve Gold rating in the prestigious Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS), awarded by AASHE. Queen's is the first and only university in the UK to achieve this accreditation. This recognition highlights Queen's leadership in sustainability across research, education, and campus operations, contributing to our Net Zero 2040 goal.
 - Staff continue to strive to integrate sustainability within their work, with 73 labs representing 180 physical lab spaces awarded with one of our accredited Sustainable Lab Programmes - Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) or Green DiSC.
-

RESEARCH AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

- In February 2025 Queen's became a signatory to the UK Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. This agreement aligns with Queen's and UKRI's shared objectives to integrate sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into research, innovation, and leadership.
 - We continue to work across disciplines and sectors to address local and global challenges by incorporating the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
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SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR EDUCATION

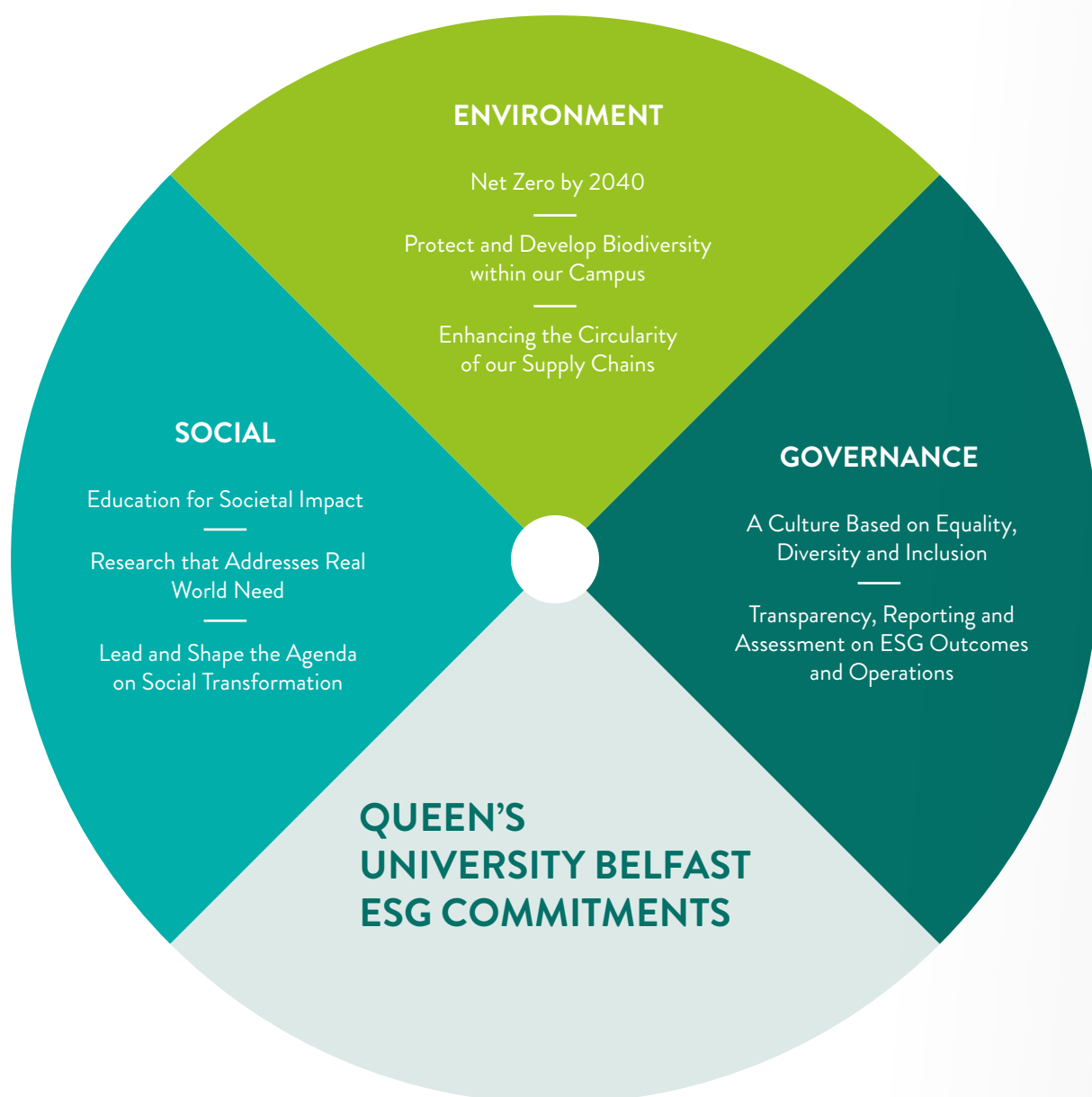
- In 2025 a university-wide Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Framework was approved. The framework provides a structured and consistent approach to embedding sustainability across teaching, learning, staff development and student engagement.
 - Carbon Literacy Training continued during 2024/25 with over 900 staff and students completing training.
 - Living Lab Projects continued to be encouraged throughout campus, with a number of students completing projects on sustainable construction and resource efficiency.
-

OUTREACH, PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT AROUND SUSTAINABILITY

- For the second time, the Reach Arts and Sustainability Festival was hosted in Queen's, bringing together a range of artists to showcase the role art plays in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises.
 - Our second allotment site formed in the Physical Education Centre, creating a vibrant site that is dedicated to enhancing wellbeing and improving biodiversity of the area.
 - In March 2025, we launched a sustainability themed podcast called 'The Ripple Effect' which aims to communicate key sustainability topics via a fun, informal channel.
-

ENVIRONMENT, SOCIAL AND GOVERNANCE

As part of Strategy 2030 the University is committed to ensuring we meet our Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) objectives.



SUSTAINABILITY IN CAMPUS ACTIVITIES

Staff and students across Queen’s University have continued to focus on reducing carbon emissions, while enhancing the sustainability of our campus infrastructure. These efforts cover everything from energy and buildings to catering, gardens, travel, purchasing decisions, and water consumption. Key actions undertaken within our campus operations during 2024-25 are detailed throughout this section.

OUR CLIMATE JOURNEY



In October 2023, we launched our Net Zero Plan. This plan sets out how Queen’s University will achieve net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2040 across our Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Below is an overview of our emissions associated with 2024-25.

SCOPE 1 & 2 EMISSIONS: We continue to make good progress against our carbon reduction targets, achieving a 41% reduction in our Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions against the 2018-19 baseline – ensuring we are on-target for our 50% reduction by 2030 interim target (please see Annex 1 for interim targets).

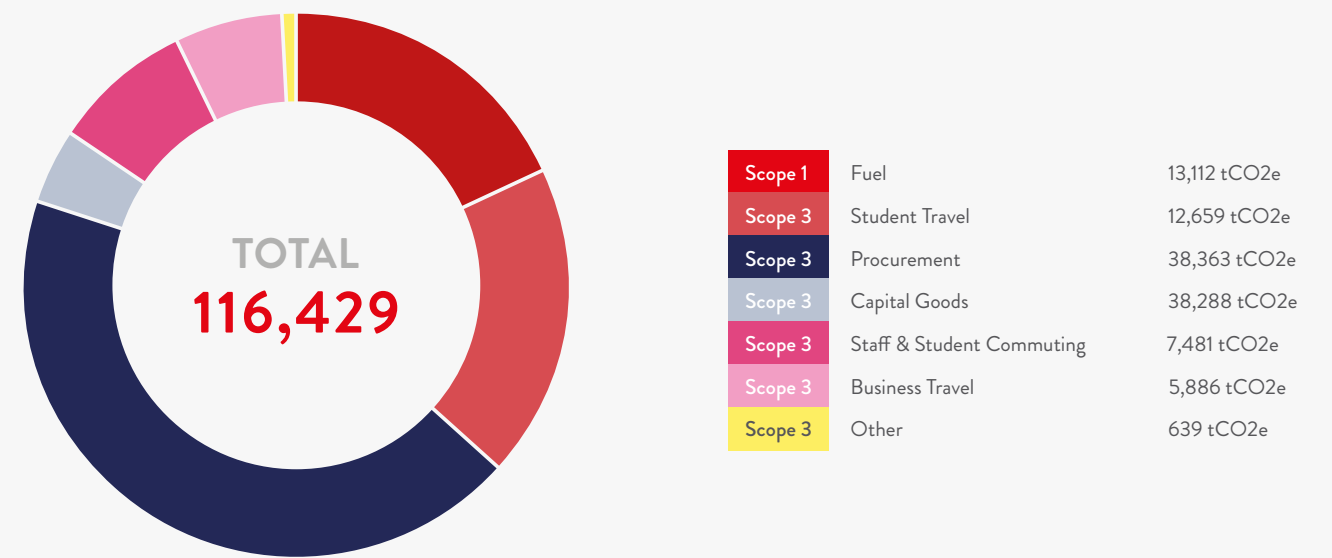
The reduction in carbon emissions is due to the procurement of our electricity from renewable sources and limited onsite generation from our Combined Heat Power plants.

SCOPE 3 EMISSIONS: Our indirect emissions account for around 89% of our total carbon footprint in 2024-25, a 5.7% increase from 2018-19.

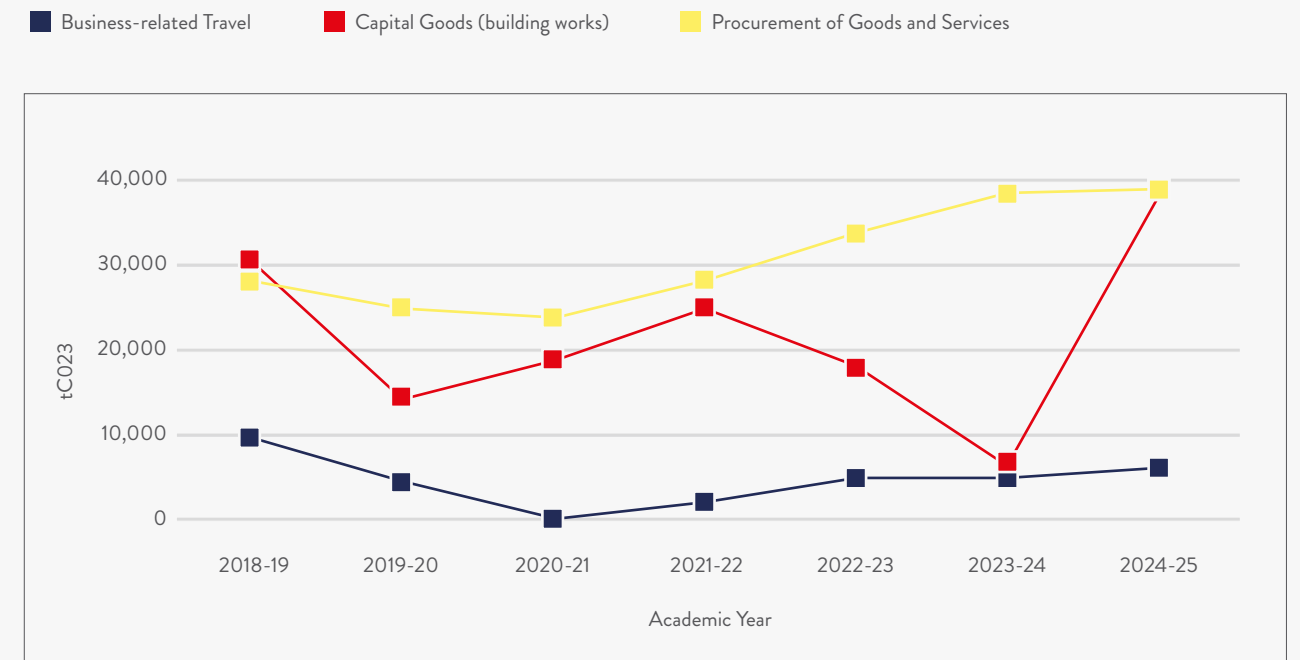
The increase is driven mainly by higher University spending and the use of expenditure-based reporting to calculate supply chain emissions, which make up 33% of the total. Investment in building and refurbishment of the estate accounts for a further 33%, with business travel contributing 5%.

A decrease in student travel to and from home address (11% of emissions) has been achieved due to a decline in international students as a result of changes to UK student visa and settlement laws.

TOTAL NET SCOPE 1, 2 AND 3 EMISSIONS FOR AUGUST 2024 - JULY 2025 (tCO2)



SCOPE 3 NET EMISSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH BUSINESS TRAVEL, PROCUREMENT AND CAPITAL GOODS FOR 2024-25



NOTE: In keeping with best practice and EAUC guidance, we are using a dual reporting method which includes reporting on location-based together with market-based emissions. For reporting purposes, this is referred to as gross emissions and net emissions. Further information on our data can be found within the Key Performance Indicators section of this report.

HARNESSING ENERGY FOR OUR BUILDINGS

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

On-site Generation of Renewable Electricity: Our Green Revolving Fund has recently funded the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) systems on the roofs of the Whitla Hall and Maths & Physics Teaching Centre on the main campus. Installed in 2025, the systems have a total capacity of 88 kW and will generate approximately 87,000 kWh of electricity. All this energy will be consumed on site, resulting in savings of 18 tonnes of CO2 annually.

We continue to evaluate the application of renewable technologies, including the expansion of solar PV systems. In 2024-25, the University completed a feasibility assessment for rooftop solar PV across the BT9 Elms Village and the BT1 and BT2 accommodation sites.

Heat Decarbonisation: Queen's University has two Ground Source Heat pumps (GSHPs) in the McClay library, and two GSHPs at the Riddel Hall Business School Student Hub. In the previous year, these have resulted in savings of 30 tonnes of CO2.

During 2024-25, preparatory work commenced for the installation of a hybrid heat pump system combining a heat pump and an air source heat pump in the Architecture Building. The system was successfully installed in September 2025.

Passivhaus: Construction has commenced on the University's new student accommodation at Weavers' Hall, Dublin Road. This development will be the University's first certified Passivhaus building and the largest student accommodation certified Passivhaus project on the island of Ireland. Passivhaus is a quality-assured standard for low-energy buildings, typically using around 75% less energy than a standard new build.

Freedom Cycles Workshop



ENCOURAGING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL AT QUEEN'S

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

Tracking our Commuter Travel: We conducted a biennial Travel Survey in early 2025, enabling us to track changes in travel habits and gather feedback from our community.

Enhancing our Sustainable Travel Infrastructure: In October 2024, we opened three unique on-campus cycle parking facilities. Queen's University, Belfast City Council, and the Department for Infrastructure worked together to create inclusive, accessible, and secure cycle facilities for a range of users, including students, staff and the wider community.

The cycling facilities provide secure cycle parking for 80 cycles, while also providing parking for non-standard cycles, including cargo bikes and recumbent cycles. One of the facilities is also home to the first publicly accessible free E-Bike charging provision in Belfast.

Our increased cycle parking complements other initiatives, including our local Bike Hub, Freedom Cycles, where our surrounding community can access hire bikes, second-hand bikes and maintenance checks.



2025
STUDENTS USING
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

84%

UP FROM 82%
IN 2022

2025
STAFF USING
SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

62%

UP FROM 56%
IN 2022

ENHANCING THE CIRCULARITY OF OUR SUPPLY CHAINS

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

Sustainable Buying Practices: We are committed to embedding sustainable practices across all procurement activities to reduce Scope 3 emissions and enhance the social value of its supply chain, supporting delivery of the Net Zero 2040 target. Key initiatives include updates to the Supply Chain Code of Conduct and requirements for suppliers to develop and share sustainability plans.

Buying Less and Buying Better – Sustainable Food: Our catering service has long assessed Scope 3 impacts within its supply chain and has implemented a range of actions to address environmental, social, and economic considerations, including:

Fairtrade accreditation

Buying local produce

Purchasing fish accredited by the Marine Conservation Society

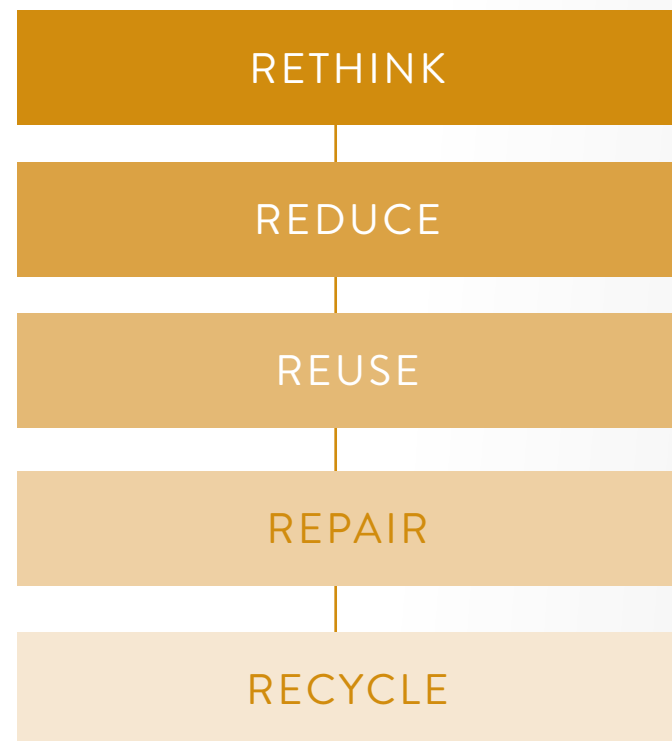
Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs)

Encouraging the use of reusable items



Understanding and Reducing Scope 3 Supply Chain Emissions: Purchased goods and services represent a significant proportion of our Scope 3 emissions. Schools and Directorates are encouraged to review emissions from their procurement, with particular focus on carbon ‘hot spots’ such as laboratories, IT, facilities management, and construction.

Reducing emissions also requires changes in purchasing behaviours. Staff and students are supported to reconsider how and what they buy through an ongoing campaign promoting the 5 R’s - Rethink, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, and Recycle. Initiatives include a Repair Fund for laboratories, swap shops, repair cafés, a reuse platform for furniture and equipment, and infrastructure to support reuse, such as hydration stations and reusable cups.



SAVING WATER - ONE DRIP AT A TIME

CLEAN WATER & SANITATION 6

The School of Natural and Built Environment joined forces with the Sustainability Team to tackle potential leaks within unmetered water supplies.

As part of their Master’s project a student undertook a Living Lab project to determine if metering equipment, supplied by the Sustainability Team, enables any potential water leaks to be discovered within the David Keir Building Concrete Lab. The student also looked at the possibility of tracking water consumption using the equipment. Following the successful completion of the project, further unmetered water supplies will be assessed using the equipment.

NURTURING BIODIVERSITY ON-SITE

LIFE ON LAND 15

We have an extensive 100-acre estate which is home to a range of habitats and species. It is our ongoing responsibility to protect and enhance biodiversity on campus for the benefit of our community, as well as Belfast and beyond. Over the course of 2024-25, a range of initiatives were delivered to enhance nature found within, and around the campus. These included:

Maintaining Seven ‘No Mow’ Biodiversity Hotspot areas covering over 7000m²

Supporters of the ‘All Ireland Pollinator Plan’

80% Plants chosen from the RHS Pollinator Plant List

Reduction of pesticide and herbicide use

Nurturing and maintenance at Lennoxvale Tree Nursery

SCHOOLS AND DIRECTORATE LOCAL SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLANS

PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 17

The Local Sustainability Action Plan (LSAP) Programme, launched in November 2024, encourages collective engagement on sustainability across the University. LSAP supports Directorates and Schools to understand their sustainability impacts and to develop a bespoke sustainability action plan. This approach helps to share responsibility for sustainability and supports the University’s progress towards net zero emissions. In 2024-25, the programme was actively recruiting Schools and Directorates, with 25 areas being engaged through the programme.

GREENING OUR FLEET

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION 12

We have committed to moving 100% of our fleet to EVs by 2030, where alternatives exist. In 2024-25, 11 new EVs were purchased, bringing the total EV fleet to 52%.

This rollout is occurring alongside development of our electric vehicle charging infrastructure, with Queen’s providing double-headed EV chargers in 9 locations across campus, designed to improve accessibility and support our transition to a net zero campus.



RESEARCH AND SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

Queen’s University is committed to advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals while generating real-world impact. Academics within Queen’s University continue to research and address pressing global social, economic and environmental challenges. Our research has driven positive change for the planet, our communities and the economy.

The following provides a snapshot of sustainable research activities taking place across Queen’s University during 2024-25.

GREENING OUR RESEARCH PRACTICE

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION & INFRASTRUCTURE 9

In February 2025, we became a signatory to the UK Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice.

This agreement aligns with Queen’s University and UKRI’s shared objectives to integrate sustainability and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) into research, innovation and leadership. It builds on our existing programmes and policies, such as our sustainable lab certification programme, to embed sustainability into our research practices.

We recognise and are already working towards objectives in the six priority areas detailed in the Concordat.

THE SIX PRIORITY AREAS ARE:
Decision-making and engagement
Carbon
Procurement
Efficient use of resources
Foster a healthy living environment
Interactions with the physical environment

BOOSTING EMPOWERMENT AND WELLBEING FOR WOMEN IN ZANZIBAR

GENDER EQUALITY 5

A study by the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences and the Ministry of Health Zanzibar found that providing reading glasses to older craftswomen in Zanzibar enhanced their productivity, income, independence, and community involvement. While the women experienced greater economic and social empowerment after six months, their political empowerment remained unchanged, indicating that additional societal changes and mentorship are required to support leadership advancement.

STOP CHEWING: REVEALING THE MICROPLASTICS IN GUM

GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING 3

A first-of-its-kind study, led by researchers in the School of Biological Sciences, exposes the potentially harmful materials found in gum that are going unnoticed. Published in the Journal of Hazardous Materials, the research findings show that over 250,000 microplastics (MPs) were detected in the saliva of the study participant after one hour of chewing a single piece of gum.

Microplastics are being revealed to be a key health hazard, with recent research indicating that the consumption of these tiny plastic particles can cause damage to our digestive system, lungs, reproductive system and more.

By using innovative techniques to assess microplastic presence and quantity, we hope to offer a promising, more affordable tool for helping to reduce plastic pollution.

RESEARCHING THE PRODUCTIVITY GAP IN NORTHERN IRELAND

DECENT WORK & ECONOMIC GROWTH 8

A research report from the Business School has found that the productivity gap in Northern Ireland has significantly widened, with its ranking dropping from 7th to 10th place out of the UK’s 12 regions. Northern Ireland now only outperforms the East Midlands and Wales in the UK and remains behind the Republic of Ireland, where productivity is 8% higher than the UK average.

The findings are detailed in the ‘Northern Ireland Productivity Dashboard 2024’. The Dashboard shows how Northern Ireland performs across 18 different drivers of productivity relative to the UK average and other regions, and over time, highlighting where barriers to productivity growth exist, their severity, and whether progress is being made to address them. Key factors for this include out-migration or the ‘brain drain’ of qualified individuals, alongside political uncertainty.

ENHANCING E-WASTE RECYCLING VIA THE AYRTON CHALLENGE PROGRAMME

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION 12

Our researchers within the School of Chemistry and Chemical Engineering are part of an international team that has been awarded £2.9m to develop sustainable technologies for electronic (e-waste) recycling in Malaysia. The project is one of 13 UK research projects that will address urgent global energy and climate challenges. They have been funded through the Ayrton Challenge Programme.

The Ayrton Challenge Programme promotes equitable partnerships between UK and in-country researchers to ensure projects are locally relevant and impactful. By networking with other initiatives under the wider Ayrton Fund, these projects aim to deliver scalable solutions to energy and climate challenges globally.

UNDERSTANDING THE EXTENT OF FINANCIAL DISCRIMINATION AGAINST CANCER SURVIVORS



REDUCED INEQUALITIES 10

A new study published by researchers from the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences highlights that many of the current 20 million cancer survivors across Europe are being discriminated against when accessing financial services, including loans, mortgages, health and travel insurance.

This study shows the extent to which people continue to face financial discrimination years after their cancer has been treated and they have been declared “cancer free”. Research shows that on average, up to 25% of those living beyond their cancer in Europe are unable to access appropriate financial services, including life assurance, mortgages and travel insurance.

A European-wide effort led by the European initiative to ‘End Discrimination against Cancer Survivors’ is currently fighting this discrimination by supporting the introduction of legislation that will permit successfully treated cancer patients to not declare a previously diagnosed cancer, so that their diagnosis is essentially “forgotten”.

THE ALL-IRELAND GEOTHERMAL ENERGY PROJECT



AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 7

We are a partner in a major, all-Ireland geothermal energy project designed to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in order to help meet net zero commitments.

Led by academics from the School of Natural and Built Environment within Queen’s. The GEMINI project is a £17.3M multi-partner, all-island geothermal project with pilot demonstrator sites based in Belfast, Sligo and Dublin, with support from our experts. Our researchers will also be exploring resource assessment for shallow geothermal energy in the Belfast/Lagan Valley area and contributing to the resource assessment for deep geothermal energy in Co Antrim.

Over the next four years, GEMINI will help reduce GHGs associated with heat production, a goal central to EU, UK and Irish strategies to meet 2050 emissions targets.

UNDERSTANDING POVERTY IN NORTHERN IRELAND



NO POVERTY 1

Within Northern Ireland, 18% of the population still lives in relative poverty (DfC, 2024). Within the UK, three in ten children experience poverty. Despite the impact of poverty and social security policies, children’s voices are absent from debate and there is a lack of research on child poverty.

In partnership with Save the Children UK and Ulster University, the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work is focused on developing methodological approaches to participatory research with children on poverty. This project aims to understand poverty from children’s own perspectives. Children’s views and experiences of an adequate standard of living will be used to create a new measure of child poverty, enabling policymakers to develop more effective and equitable policies grounded in children’s views and experiences of poverty.

Student Hub, Riddel Hall is heated via Geothermal Technology.



THE GEMINI PROJECT IS A £17.3M MULTIPARTNER, ALL-ISLAND GEOTHERMAL PROJECT

SUSTAINABILITY IN OUR EDUCATION

Queen's University is committed to ensuring our graduates have the skills and knowledge to address the social, economic and environmental challenges that they will face in their future careers. As a signatory to the SDG Accord, our educational programmes increasingly reflect the ethos of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals across teaching, learning and the wider student experience. Over the course of 2024-25 a range of measures have been introduced to further embed sustainability within learning and teaching.

Physical Education Centre Allotment



DEVELOPMENT OF QUEEN'S EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) FRAMEWORK INTO OUR CURRICULUM

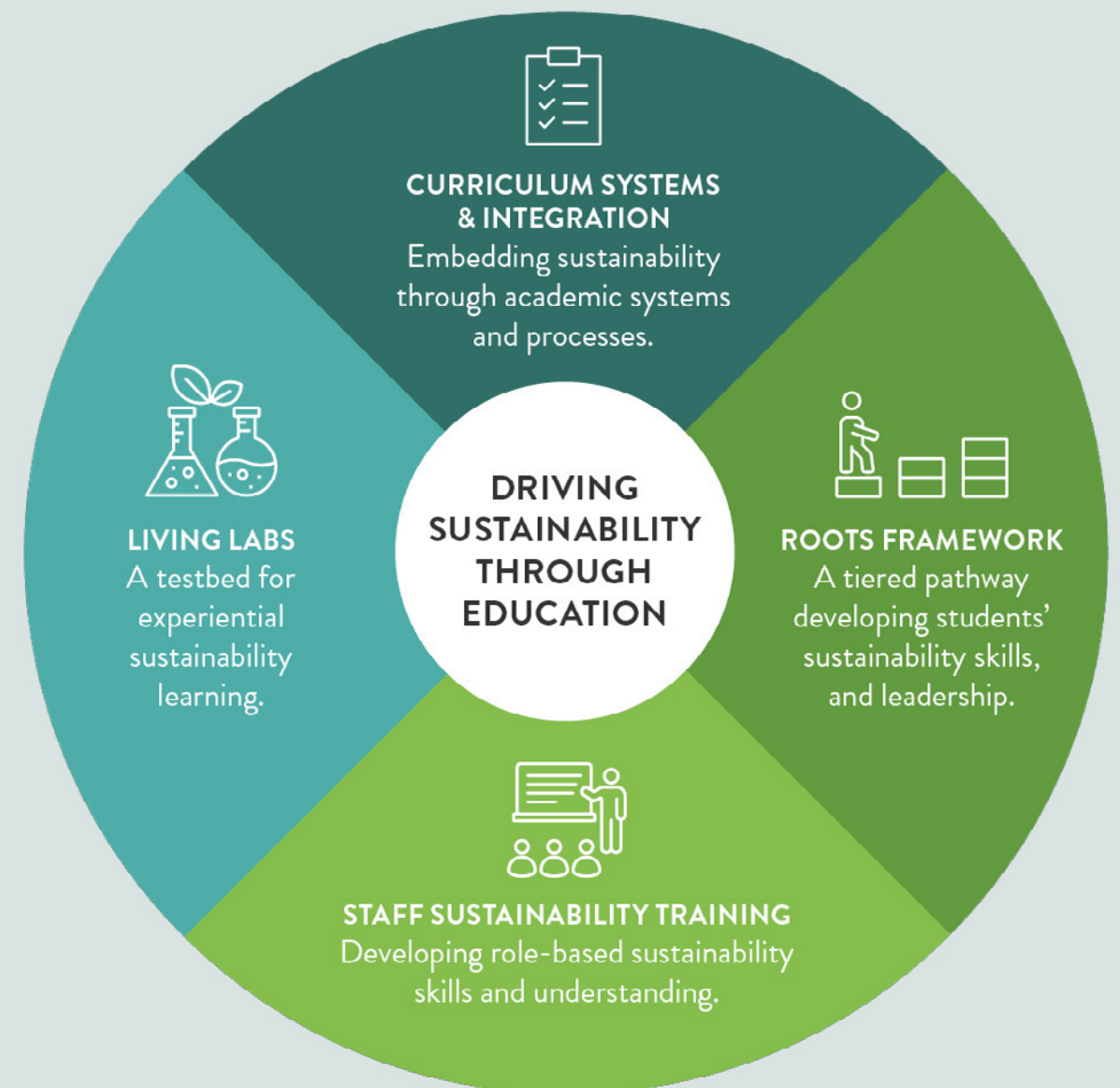
QUALITY EDUCATION 4

In 2025, a university-wide Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Framework was approved. The framework provides a structured and consistent approach to embedding sustainability across teaching, learning, staff development and student engagement. Please see the ESD figure for a breakdown of the ESD Framework.

The framework is underpinned by the European Commission's GreenComp model, which defines the competencies needed to live, work, and act sustainably. Queen's enables students and staff to build these competencies through learning, collaboration, and real-world application.

It was informed by a 2024 review of 2,173 modules, with 1,755 identified as sustainability-focused, inclusive, supportive, or containing sustainability-related learning outcomes. Ongoing SDG tracking is now embedded in academic processes to support continuous improvement.

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD) FRAMEWORK



EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

Launched in December 2024, Queen's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Community of Practice brings together staff from across the University to explore how we embed sustainability in teaching, research, and community engagement.

Open to academic, administrative, and professional services staff, the group meets regularly throughout the year to share examples, build confidence, and support each other in putting ESD into practice. The Community of Practice provides a forum for connecting the ESD Framework with local initiatives in Schools and Faculties.

DEVELOPING OUR LIVING LAB OPPORTUNITIES

RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION 12

We continue to identify opportunities to engage with students, academics and organisations on living lab projects, providing opportunities for our community to test research in real-world environments.

A student in the School of Natural and Built Environment undertook a Living Lab project as part of their undergraduate studies, assessing an existing Queen's building as a "material bank". The project identified opportunities to apply circular economy principles and increase reuse. The Estates Directorate is using this learning to help reduce embodied carbon where a building cannot be retained, so that materials with high carbon impacts can be preserved for future projects.

ENHANCING STUDENT EDUCATION VIA CARBON LITERACY TRAINING

GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING 3

Increasingly, Schools are embedding Carbon Literacy Training, facilitated by Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful, into their students' degrees. This highlights the importance the University places on sustainability and reiterates the role sustainability will play in their education, and their future careers.

Throughout 2024-25 a total of nine schools embedded carbon literacy training in their timetables, resulting in over 900 students receiving training. Students who have undertaken training previously are involved in assisting Keep Northern Ireland Beautiful in rolling out training to Level 1 students.

2024 - 2025

9

SCHOOLS ADDED CARBON LITERACY TRAINING TO THEIR TIMETABLES

900

STUDENTS ARE RECEIVING CARBON LITERACY TRAINING

EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT EDUCATION

GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING 3

In 2017, the Business School proudly became a signatory to PRME (Principles of Responsible Management Education) and, since 2020, the School has served as a PRME Champion institution. This reflects the School's commitment to demonstrating thought and action leadership on responsible management education in the context of the UN Sustainable Development Agenda.

The majority of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the School address ethics, responsibility, and sustainability within their programme-level learning outcomes. In addition, since 2022, the School has mapped the integration of the SDGs within their modules. This has allowed the Business School to understand its current position, as well as take steps towards increasing the breadth and depth of coverage of the Global Goals.

In June 2025, our Business School was delighted to host the PRME Chapter UK & Ireland Annual Conference and Doctoral Colloquium. The conference theme was "Partnering for Progress: Enhancing Collaboration, Building Communities, and Navigating Conflict to Accelerate Agenda 2030", which acknowledged the transformative power of partnerships in achieving environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

INTERDISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

QUALITY EDUCATION 4

Within the School of Arts, English and Languages, the Liberal Arts Level 1 module 'Understanding Now' introduces students to different disciplinary approaches to contemporary global challenges, including the climate crisis. Weekly lectures are delivered by academics from across the University whose research addresses environmental change, climate justice and sustainability.

Students explore political, cultural, scientific and historical perspectives and develop an understanding of how arts and humanities disciplines interpret and respond to climate change. The module helps students to make connections between their degree pathway and wider societal challenges from the outset of their studies.

STUDENT-LED SOLUTIONS FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

ZERO HUNGER 2

In the School of Electronics, Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, second-year students on Software Engineering and System Development took part in the Engineers Without Borders Engineering for People Design Challenge. Working in teams, students designed solutions to sustainability challenges facing communities in Makers Valley, Johannesburg. 'SustainYourself', a student team from Queen's University, was selected as a finalist in the 2025 UK and Ireland Grand Finals, with a low-tech mobile application designed to support community-led food growing and help address food poverty in the area. The project develops students' technical, teamwork and communication skills and shows how software engineering can contribute to sustainable development in partnership with communities.

OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIP

Queen's University is committed to being a civic university, transforming and enhancing society, and places. Staff across the University are dedicated to providing opportunities for communities to come together, learn about sustainability and enhance people's lives.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE INNOVATION: QUEEN'S SPIN-OUT COMPANIES GO GREEN

INDUSTRY, INNOVATION & INFRASTRUCTURE 9

QUBIS works closely with talented academics, ambitious entrepreneurs, astute investors and a host of industry experts to form successful spin-off companies that combine cutting-edge research and development with market-focused products and services.

Increased support by QUBIS to identify and support net zero projects has resulted in 25% of all disclosures being based within the net zero sector. Spin-outs with a net zero focus include companies such as Fjordstrong Ltd and Catagen Ltd.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY BELFAST RECOGNISED AS A UNIVERSITY OF SANCTUARY

PEACE, JUSTICE & STRONG INSTITUTIONS 16

In 2024-25, we were officially recognised as a University of Sanctuary for our support of local refugee, asylum-seeker, and migrant communities, and its efforts to expand access to higher education. Since pledging to seek this status in June 2024, the university has reviewed and coordinated its activities in line with the Sanctuary initiative. Current efforts include a range of support measures, such as weekly Sanctuary Coffee Mornings and enhanced assistance for those who have relocated due to forced displacement. Regular consultations also help ensure that the voices of minority ethnic, asylum-seeker, and refugee groups are reflected in university priorities.

EMPOWERING FUTURE FEMALE LEADERS VIA SISTERSINSPIRE

GENDER EQUALITY 5

In March 2025, we hosted the annual SistersINSPIRE event, an initiative designed to inspire and empower young women by showcasing leadership, career pathways and educational opportunities. The event welcomed around 100 sixth form schoolgirls and 15 teachers from schools across Northern Ireland.

Throughout the event, pupils had the opportunity to explore the campus, participate in events and activities selected according to their interests. Led by academics and students, sessions covered diverse topics such as women's contributions to cinema, engineering for a sustainable future, saving lives through medical simulation, the role of AI in learning, and the fundamentals of legal mooting.

This event builds on a long-term partnership with SistersINSPIRE, which aims to provide a mentorship programme with sixth form girls across Northern Ireland.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ADVANCES COMMUNITY RESEARCH

SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 11

A unique Belfast partnership between Queen's University and six inner city communities aimed at exploring urban challenges and transforming lives has been awarded £1m by a UK-wide programme. Over 30,000 citizens from the Markets, Sandy Row, Donegall Pass, Shankill, Grosvenor, and New Lodge will benefit from the initiative that has been set up to develop community collaboration and empower of local people.

The newly established Belfast Community Research and Innovation Network (BCRIN) aims to bridge the gap between research, innovation, and underserved communities, driving forward urban innovation through a collaborative, community-driven approach.

The Pantry Refill Station



ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY ON SUSTAINABILITY

Inspiring the hearts and minds of our staff, students, and local communities will not only foster positive societal change but also deepen our collective understanding of sustainability.

QUEEN'S PODCAST ON SUSTAINABILITY: 'THE RIPPLE EFFECT'



In March 2025, we launched an inaugural podcast focused on sustainability, entitled 'The Ripple Effect'. The podcast seeks to cast a spotlight on the remarkable sustainability initiatives taking place across the University. Through engaging conversations, the podcast explores both the challenges being faced and the positive changes being driven by staff and students alike.

Each episode features guests who are actively contributing to the sustainability agenda at Queen's, offering their unique perspectives and experiences. Discussion topics have included the Reach'25 Art and Sustainability Festival, efforts to promote biodiversity on campus, and opportunities for volunteering. Collectively, the podcast aims to inspire listeners to consider how everyone can play a role in creating a more sustainable future at Queen's and beyond.

MAKING WAVES AT QUEEN'S MARINE LAB FAMILY-FUN DAY



In August, Queen's Marine Lab in Portaferry welcomed the public to its annual Open Day as part of the Portaferry Sails and Sounds Festival, which celebrates the rich maritime culture of the region. This annual event allows visitors to explore the fascinating world of marine life and conservation while witnessing the groundbreaking research being undertaken within the marine lab.

Children and adults engaged with the dedicated technicians, researchers, and students working in the areas of marine conservation and sustainability. Guests also enjoyed getting up close to local marine and freshwater life. This hands-on experience allowed families to learn about the various species that inhabit the local waters and understand their importance in maintaining a healthy environment.

REACH'25 ART AND SUSTAINABILITY FESTIVAL



Reach'25 festival took place in April 2025, which showcased the role art has in tackling the climate crisis. The festival aims to showcase how art can serve as a powerful tool to engage the public on meaningful conversations about our planet's future.

This was the second year of the festival, which hosted a vibrant mix of events that engaged a wide range of audiences, from workshops and exhibitions to performances and talks. This included a panel event entitled 'Art as Medicine: The Power of Social Prescribing' and a multi-media event focusing on 'Lough Neagh: Environmental Challenges and Solution-Artists' Response'.

As part of the festival, 25 school children from Victoria College Preparatory School took part in an artistic workshop with Ingrid Hess, US artist and Associate Professor of Graphic Design at the University of Massachusetts Lowell, creating posters that expressed their feelings about the ecological controversy at Lough Neagh.



PRIORITISING STUDENT WELLBEING AROUND DRUG AND ALCOHOL USE

GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING 3

Our Students' Union is accredited to a UK-wide 'Drug and Alcohol Impact' programme. It is an accreditation programme run by Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK), which aims to create a social norm of responsible alcohol consumption by students.

In moving towards gaining accreditation, the Students' Union will introduce a range of initiatives to reduce harm, including renewed emphasis on support for students, drop-in sessions, providing students with advice around the mixing of substances and the associated risks that this poses, developing harm reduction policies, and increasing non-alcohol-focused events and social spaces, such as the new 'Reboot' gaming facility.

HARVESTING AT QUEEN'S – A STAFF ALLOTMENT

LIFE ON LAND 15

Staff within the Physical Education Centre (PEC) have created an allotment site at the PEC to provide an outdoor zone for their staff. Since its launch, staff have been busy growing in the 10 raised beds and polytunnel, producing a range of produce – tomatoes, potatoes, corn, beans and cauliflower. Staff share the produce within the PEC and swap healthy, nutritious recipes as part of the project. In the summer of 2025, staff created a 'wildflower corridor', supporting and encouraging insects and bees in their outdoor zone. Plants include lavender, daisy, poppy, pansy and corn marigold.



SUPPORTING STUDENTS THROUGH THE COST OF LIVING CRISES

ZERO HUNGER 2

The Pantry was launched in 2023 to provide vital support to students during the cost-of-living crisis. Since its inception, the Pantry has continued to develop and enrich the assistance it offers, aiming to meet the evolving needs of the student community.

During the academic year 2024–25, the Pantry began offering fresh fruit and vegetables sourced from a local farmer. This initiative was made possible through funding from QUB Alumni Engagement and Philanthropy, enabling students to benefit from improved nutritional options.

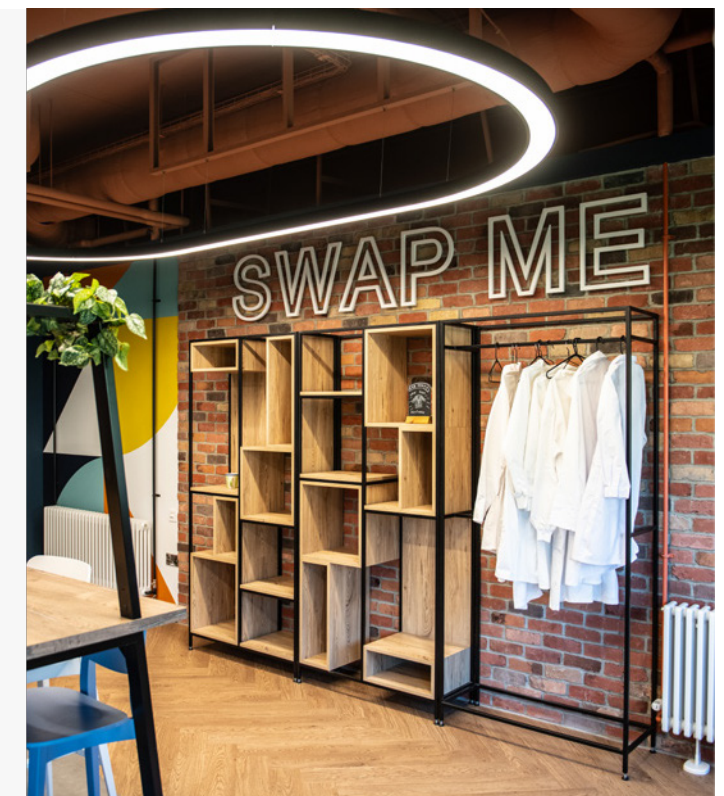
In 2024, the Students' Union Swap Shop was opened adjacent to the Pantry. This new facility provides students with the opportunity to swap clothing, offering a cost-effective solution for updating their wardrobes while addressing the pressing issue of fast fashion.

Throughout the 2024–25 academic year, both the Pantry and the Swap Shop were accessed over 20,000 times, demonstrating the significant impact and value of these initiatives within the student community.

QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY ACCOMMODATION DONATION DRIVE

In 2024 the Accommodation Team focused on launching a new campaign aimed at decreasing the end of term waste produced by students. With funding from Queen's University Annual Fund, they opened a 'reuse container' where items are donated and collected from out-going students, preventing them from going to landfill.

All items are available to incoming students, helping to address the cost-of-living crisis our students are currently facing. In 2024-25, a total of 5,357 items were donated to the campaign and include kitchen utensils, board games, clothing horses and stationery.



KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

We have developed 23 key performance indicators (KPIs) to track our sustainability journey. Our Carbon reporting is in line with the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol Corporate Standard and the Environmental Association Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF). Our 2024-25 carbon emissions data has been externally verified by National Quality Assurance (NQA) to the ISO 14064-1 standard.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	2024-25	2023-24	2018-19 <small>baseline year</small>
Total Scope 1 and 2 Location-based carbon emissions (energy and fuel use) (tCO2e)	18,444	20,781	22,065*
Total Scope 1 and 2 Market-based carbon emissions (energy and fuel use) (tCO2e)	13,112	15,605	22,065*
Carbon emissions from water use (tCO2e)2	31	26	74
Total Scope 1 and 2 Location-based carbon emissions per FTE staff and student (tCO2e/FTE)	0.748	0.836	0.991*
Total Scope 1 and 2 Market-based carbon emissions per FTE staff and student (tCO2e/FTE)	0.531	0.627	0.991*
Total Scope 1 and 2 Location-based carbon emissions per total income (tCO2e/£0000)	37.68	44.00	59.31*
Total Scope 1 and 2 Market-based carbon emissions per total income (tCO2e/£0000)	26.79	33.85	59.31*
Scope 3 emissions (tCO2e)	103,317	74,146*	97,703*
Total water consumption (m3)	163,968	171,939	215,067
Percentage of waste diverted from landfill (%)	100	95.67	92.16
External Awards for Sustainability Initiatives	3	4	1
Percentage model split for commuting staff by single occupancy car journey (%)	38	44	30.6
Percentage model split for commuting staff by sustainable travel (%)	62	55	64.8
Percentage model split for commuting student by single occupancy car journey (%)	16	17	13
Percentage model split for commuting students by sustainable travel (%)	84	82	85
Number of staff and students who have completed Carbon Literacy Training	934	1117	0

ANNEX 1

The data in these tables provide information on Queen's University Belfast Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for August 2024 to July 2025. In keeping with best practice and EAUC guidance, the University is using a dual reporting method, which includes reporting on location-based together with market-based emissions. For reporting purposes, this is referred to as gross emissions and net emissions reporting.

For the purposes of this report, the definitions below are used for location-based and market-based emissions:

Location-based reporting calculates emissions based on the average emission intensity of the power grid the University is physically connected to. It doesn't matter which electricity contract the University holds.

Market-based reporting reflects emissions from the specific electricity contract the University purchases. It takes into account RECs, REGOs, or other energy contracts that have been made.

INTERIM SUSTAINABILITY TARGETS	2024-25	2023-24	2018-19 <small>baseline year</small>
50% reduction in scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 2030 (market based)	41% (13,112 tCO2e)	29% (15,605 tCO2e)	22,065 tCO2e
100% fleet EV by 2030	52%	23%	3%
50% reduction in business travel by 2030 against 2018/19 baseline	38% reduction (5,886 tCO2e)	42% reduction (5,434 tCO2e)	9,450 tCO2e
25% reduction in staff and student commuter travel by 2028	10% reduction (7,481 tCO2e)	12% reduction (7,375 tCO2e)	8,400 tCO2e
90% residential and non-residential waste diverted from landfill	100%	96%	92%
50% residential and non-residential waste recycled (includes compost)	40%	49%	60%
100% of Schools, Centres and Directorates engaged in sustainability programmes by 2030	83%	50%	50%

Carbon emissions data is subject to annual adjustments due to updates to UK government conversion factors. Annual emissions data has been adjusted to reflect these changes back to the base year. The methodology for Scope 3 procurement-related emissions was refined in 2024/25 to remove items with no direct associated carbon. Updated and adjusted data is indicated with an asterisk ().

FTE data for 2024/25 were unavailable at the time of print. For completeness, 2023/24 figures have been used, and any updates will be reflected in future reporting.

Find out more at
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