



St Mary's
University
Twickenham
London

WASTE STRATEGY 2025 - 2028

June 2025

1. Executive summary

This Waste Management Strategy outlines the University's commitment to reducing waste, improving resource efficiency, and minimising the environmental impact of its operations. It supports the broader sustainability goals of the institution and aligns with national and global waste reduction targets.

2. Vision and objectives

Vision

To become a zero waste to landfill university by 2028, leading in sustainable waste practices and environmental stewardship.

Objectives

By the end of 2028 our aim is to:

- reduce total waste generation by 30%;
- achieve a recycling rate of 40%;
- eliminate single-use plastics across campus;
- educate and engage the university community in sustainable waste practices;
- comply with Legal & Regulatory Standards.

3. Current waste profile

Our major waste streams derive from:

- student accommodation;
- catering outlets;
- grounds and gardens.

Data from our HESA Estate Management Record shows the following quantities (in tonnes) of waste mass.

Description	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2020-21
Total recycled	177	184	177	221
Total incineration	0	0	0	0
Total composting	65	0	0	0
Total anaerobic digestion	35	30	17	116
Total landfill	6	7	7	12
Total used to create energy	0	0	0	0
Total other	261	258	234	239
Total	544	479	436	588

We believe there is an overall downward trend in waste mass generated although the picture is distorted by the impacts of the covid pandemic. For the purposes of this strategy, the figures shown for 2023-24 set the baseline.

We also recognise that the figures are not consistent and we commit in the first year of this strategy to clearly establishing our baselines.

4. Key objectives

Set out below are our objectives. Recognising that a phased implementation is realistic, each action step is given a priority rating as follows:

- Priority 1 - complete end 2026
- Priority 2 - complete end 2027
- Priority 3 - complete end 2028

(a) **Waste minimisation** - Significantly reduce the volume of waste produced on campus through strategic planning, sustainable procurement, and behavioural change.

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	Priority level
Sustainable procurement/ (Procurement team)	Develop and implement a comprehensive Green Procurement Policy that mandates the purchase of sustainable products. Examples: • recyclable or compostable packaging. • products with minimal or reusable packaging. • electronics with energy-efficient certifications. • stationery made from recycled materials.	3
Supplier collaboration (Procurement team)	Work closely with suppliers to promote the use of environmentally-friendly packaging and products. Encourage suppliers to offer repair services for durable goods (eg, printers, equipment).	3
Digitalisation and paper reduction (CIO team)	<i>Digital transition:</i> Implement a digital-first approach for all administrative processes, teaching materials, assignments, and communications. Introduce policies to phase out paper-based processes where possible. <i>Paper reduction programs:</i>	1

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	Priority level
	Encourage the use of double-sided printing, online submissions for assignments, and use of digital note-taking apps. Offer incentives or rewards for departments or students who significantly reduce paper usage. <i>Printer optimisation:</i> Reduce the number of printers around campus and encourage shared use of machines with sustainable practices, such as paperless workflows.	
Catering and events (Catering)	<i>Zero-waste Catering:</i> Ensure that all events, conferences, and gatherings organised on campus employ zero-waste catering practices. Use reusable or compostable plates, cups, and utensils. <i>Food waste minimisation:</i> Collaborate with dining services to implement food waste reduction practices, such as ordering food based on predicted consumption and offering smaller portion sizes with the option for second servings. <i>Leftover donations/re-sale:</i> Establish partnerships with local food banks and charities for the donation of unused or leftover food from campus dining services and student events.	2
Monitoring and reporting (Estates)	Develop a tracking system to measure the reduction in waste through paper reduction, procurement policies, and sustainable event practices. Conduct regular audits to monitor procurement and paper usage across departments.	3

- (b) **Recycling & Waste Diversion** - Maximise recycling rates and ensure proper waste segregation across the university campus, contributing to the university's overall waste diversion goals.

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	Priority level
Comprehensive waste segregation system (Estates)	Recycling Stations: Install standardised, color-coded waste bins throughout the campus (in classrooms, cafeterias, halls of residence, offices, and event spaces) for paper, plastics, glass, metals, and organic waste. Each bin should be clearly labelled with visual aids to help people distinguish between recyclables, non-recyclables, and compostable. Remove individual bins from all offices. E-Waste and Specialised Waste: Set up dedicated collection points for hazardous materials, e-waste (computers, phones, batteries), and textiles (old clothing, sheets, etc.). Partner with certified recycling companies for proper disposal and recycling.	1
Engagement and education (Student Services)	<i>Awareness campaigns:</i> Launch comprehensive awareness campaigns for students and staff to educate on proper waste segregation, recycling procedures, and the importance of reducing waste. Utilise posters, social media, email newsletters, and campus events. (Link to UUK compliance). <i>Recycling training:</i> Organise mandatory or optional waste separation and recycling training for university employees, particularly those working in food services, custodial, and administrative departments.	1
Partnerships for recycling (Estates)	Establish formal partnerships with local recycling organisations and waste management companies to ensure that materials are properly processed and meet recycling certifications. Ensure that the university's waste management service includes regular tracking and reporting on recyclables,	2

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	Priority level
	ensuring compliance with recycling goals. Set quarterly performance reviews with waste management companies	
Monitoring & Reporting: (Estates)	Conduct waste audits to measure the university's diversion rate and ensure that recycling bins are being used effectively. Analyse data from waste management vendors on material recovery and tonnage of recycled materials.	1

- (c) **Composting & organic waste management** - Create a closed-loop system for organic waste, turning food scraps and organic material into valuable compost that can be used to enhance campus landscaping and gardens.

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	Priority level
Establishment of composting infrastructure (Estates)	On-Campus composting stations: Set up easily accessible composting stations across campus, especially near dining facilities, student centres, and outdoor eating areas. Bins should be placed alongside waste and recycling bins for easy segregation. Centralised composting Facility: Develop or partner with a local composting facility for processing organic waste. If feasible, build an on-campus composting facility for larger-scale organic waste management. Composting training: Offer educational workshops on composting for students and staff. Create online resources and guides to explain what can and cannot be composted.	2
Food Waste Reduction (Catering)	<i>Tracking food waste:</i> Track food waste, identifying patterns of waste generation (eg, overproduction, food spoilage). Based on this data, adjust	1

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	Priority level
	portion sizes or offer 'second chances' for leftover food. <i>Composting in food outlets:</i> Ensure that food scraps in dining halls are properly sorted into composting bins. Set up visible waste separation stations where students can easily sort their waste. <i>Donations:</i> Establish partnerships with local food banks or non-profits to donate excess edible food.	
Monitoring and reporting: (Estates)	Conduct composting audits to measure the volume of organic waste diverted from landfills. Set a target of diverting at least 30% of campus food waste to compost by the second year. Track the amount of compost generated and its use in campus landscaping projects.	2

- (d) **Electronic waste management** - Ensure that electronic waste is properly handled and disposed of in a way that reduces environmental impact and adheres to sustainability goals.

Action Steps (owner)	Priority level	Priority level
E-waste collection and drop-off (Estates)	<i>E-Waste Collection Points:</i> Set up designated e-waste collection stations across campus, especially in areas where students and staff regularly congregate. This includes old computers, phones, batteries, printers, and chargers. <i>E-waste drives:</i> Organise monthly or quarterly e-waste collection drives to ensure that students, faculty, and staff can safely dispose of outdated electronics.	1

Action Steps (owner)	Priority level	Priority level
Partnerships with certified e-waste recyclers (Estates)	<i>Recycling partnerships:</i> Work with certified e-waste recyclers to ensure that all electronic materials are processed in an environmentally responsible manner. These companies should be able to recover valuable materials such as rare metals, plastics, and glass. <i>Reuse programmes:</i> Set up a platform where used electronics can be donated to students or local charities, repurposing electronics in good condition for further use.	2
E-waste awareness campaign (Student Services)	<i>Educational campaign:</i> Launch awareness campaigns around the impacts of e-waste, and educate students and staff about how to responsibly dispose of electronics. Create digital resources, social media posts, and posters to promote the collection drives.	1
Monitoring and reporting	Track the amount of e-waste collected on a monthly basis and the recycling rates of the materials collected. Report on the environmental benefits (eg, reduction in landfilling, recovery of materials) in annual sustainability reports.	1

- (e) **Hazardous Waste Management** - Ensure proper disposal and management of hazardous waste materials, including chemicals, medical waste, and biological substances generated by labs, workshops, and research activities.

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	
Hazardous waste policies and guidelines (FSTHS)	<i>Establish clear protocols:</i> Develop and distribute clear guidelines for managing hazardous waste across the campus. Include specifics for chemical waste, medical waste, biological waste, and laboratory materials.	1

Action Steps (owner)	Policy Development	
	<i>Training for staff and faculties:</i> Provide mandatory training for all faculty, staff, and students involved in laboratory work or handling hazardous materials. Training should cover proper labelling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials.	
Specialised disposal services (FSHTS)	<i>Third-party contracts:</i> Partner with a licensed hazardous waste disposal company to ensure that all hazardous materials are safely collected and disposed of in compliance with local and national regulations.	1
Safe storage (FSHTS)	<i>Designated storage areas:</i> Establish well-maintained, secure storage areas for hazardous waste materials. Ensure that these areas are easily accessible to the individuals.	1

5. Strategy review and update

This strategy will be reviewed annually by the Sustainability Group to reflect new technologies, regulations, and University needs.

6. Key Performance Indicators

- Waste diversion rate (percentage of waste recycled, composted, or repurposed);
- Reduction in total waste generation (annual waste reduction goals);
- Increase in engagement with our community;
- E-waste recycling rates;
- Composting participation rates.

7. Conclusion

This Strategy provides a comprehensive, actionable framework to reduce the environmental impact of waste at the university while fostering a culture of sustainability. Through waste reduction, recycling, composting, and circular economy initiatives, the university can significantly decrease its ecological footprint and serve as a model for other institutions and communities. By continuously monitoring progress, engaging stakeholders, and exploring innovative solutions, the university will achieve its long-term sustainability goals and contribute to a greener future.

Director of Estates

June 2025

Version control

Document title	Waste and recycling strategy
Version	1
Department responsible	Estates & Campus Services
Author	Gavin Hindley
Document date	June 2025
Last amended	n/a
Effective from	26 th June 2025
Review date	26 th June 2026