



**University of  
Northampton**

**UoN**



# Embedding the SDGs

At the University of Northampton, sustainability is at the heart of our mission to support aspiration, create opportunities, and deliver impact.

We believe that education must lead by example—shaping a future that is environmentally responsible, socially inclusive, and economically resilient.

Our commitment is long-standing. In 2020, we signed the UN SDG Accord, the University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals, and established the University's SDG Working Group. This ensures that our teaching, research, and operations actively contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Our research systems have been organized so that we can easily see how our research supports the SDGs whilst our module approval forms also show how the content of each module aligns to the SDG.

The theme for the 2025 Sustainability Summit was “Building Sustainable Organisations: Strategies and Partnerships for Enhancing Positive Impact” and it was our biggest yet. The summit has grown beyond the region and has inspired the one of our partners, Gulf University, to run the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Sustainable Development in Bahrain, which we are contributing heavily to.





Our Sustainability Strategy 2025–2030, focuses on four pillars:

- Operations – reducing our environmental footprint and achieving Net Zero by 2050, with an ambition to reach this within the next decade.
- Teaching & Learning – integrating sustainability across curricula, including modules on sustainable business practices and social responsibility.
- Research & Innovation – driving real-world impact through initiatives like the Centre for Sustainable Business Practices and collaborative projects such as SLIPAH, which has attracted over £900,000 in external funding for Net Zero and waste management projects.
- Engagement for Change – empowering students and staff through campaigns like Halls H.E.R.O.E.S, Sustainability Weeks, and our annual Sustainability Summit, which brings together over 300 delegates from businesses, charities, and local authorities.

Our progress is tangible:

- Energy & Carbon – Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduced by 39% since 2018/19; electricity consumption down 19%; biomass heat output up 45%, saving over 1,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually.
- Waste – 24% reduction since baseline year; zero waste to landfill.
- Social & Economic Impact – Over £38.5 million in social impact reported over two years, and £366 million in economic gross value added to the region.

From our purpose-built, sustainable campus—designed to promote active travel and biodiversity—to our leadership in social innovation and responsible investment (including a commitment to divest from fossil fuels), we are proud to be shaping a university that delivers measurable impact for people and planet.

This report celebrates our achievements and sets out the next steps in our journey toward a sustainable future. We invite our entire community to join us in making a lasting difference.



**The University of Northampton is committed to reducing poverty and promoting social inclusion through education, research, and community engagement. We directly support low-income or disadvantaged students and citizens in the local community and our research impacts globally. We aim to End poverty in all its forms everywhere, by addressing the root causes of inequality and creating opportunities for individuals and communities to thrive.**

### **Supporting Students Facing Financial Hardship**

The University of Northampton is committed to widening participation and ensuring that students from disadvantaged backgrounds can access and succeed in higher education. Our approach combines targeted outreach, contextual admissions, and tailored financial support to remove barriers and create opportunities. We provide bursaries and scholarships for students from low-income households, alongside hardship funds for those facing unexpected financial challenges and accommodation discounts for eligible students. Recognising that financial hardship can take many forms, we also address period poverty by offering free sanitary products for students and staff, with dispensers located in toilets across campus. These measures reflect our belief that no one should be held back by circumstances beyond their control, and they form part of a wider commitment to equity and inclusion.

### **Working with the Local Community**

Students and staff play an active role in tackling poverty and promoting inclusive growth across Northamptonshire and the wider region.

We are one of the first UK universities to comprehensively measure the social impact of our activities and staff and student volunteering.

Over the past two years, our Institute for Social Innovation and Impact (ISII), have produced reports demonstrating a total impact of £38.5 million to local and regional communities. This includes initiatives that support disadvantaged groups, improve access to education, and strengthen community resilience.

### **Economic Contribution**

An independent report identified the University's wider economic gross value added (GVA) as £366 million, underlining our role in creating jobs, supporting local businesses, and driving inclusive growth.

**More than 250 students, staff and members of the public came to hunt out a bargain and seek valuable financial advice at the University's Cost of Living Fair!**

### **Partnerships**

Through projects such as the Sustainability Local Innovation Partnership Agenda Hub (SLIPAH), we have attracted over £900,000 in external funding to support local businesses and charities in adopting sustainable practices. These projects help organizations pivot to greener models while safeguarding employment and reducing economic vulnerability.

### **Poverty in our curriculum**

Our curriculum integrates principles of responsible leadership and social impact, ensuring graduates are equipped to tackle inequality and contribute to fair and inclusive economic systems.

We also have research projects across the world in countries such as Nigeria and Cambodia which look at creating pathways out of poverty and shaping fairer, more sustainable societies.

## 2 ZERO HUNGER



**The University of Northampton is committed to ending hunger, achieving food security, and promoting sustainable agriculture through education, research, and community engagement. We work locally and globally to ensure access to nutritious food and support systems that reduce food insecurity. This commitment is visible in the practical support we provide and the research that drives long-term solutions.**

### **Supporting Students Facing Food Insecurity**

On campus, we offer free and subsidized meal schemes, including complimentary breakfasts and discounted meal plans for students from low-income households. Pop-up pantries and partnerships with local food banks ensure emergency food support for anyone in need, while hardship funds and food vouchers provide additional assistance during unexpected financial challenges. These initiatives mean that no student should have to choose between learning and eating well.

We also collaborate with local food banks to ensure emergency food support for students and staff in need and have our own pop-up pantries on campus. We also provide hardship support including food vouchers for students experiencing unexpected financial challenges.

### **Working with the Local Community**

Our staff and students volunteer with local charities on local community food initiatives to distribute food parcels and support nutrition programs.

### **Research and Innovation**

Our research extends beyond Northamptonshire, tackling global food security issues in regions such as Sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. Projects focused on reducing post-harvest losses have delivered innovative solutions to improve crop resilience and strengthen sustainable agriculture.

### **Reducing Food Waste**

Closer to home, we have reduced food waste in catering outlets by 25% over two years and contributed to the circular economy through composting and partnerships with local businesses.

**Over two years, UON delivered thousands of meals through community partnerships, reduced campus food waste by 25%, and supported research projects tackling global food insecurity.**

### **Preparing Graduates to Tackle Global Food Challenges**

Education plays a central role in this work. Student-led projects such as community gardens and healthy eating campaigns complement modules that explore the impact of nutrition on health and sustainability. Looking ahead, we aim to expand these initiatives, embedding sustainable food systems into campus life and continuing research that addresses hunger worldwide. By combining practical action with global insight, we are helping to create a future where everyone has access to nutritious food.

## 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



**The University is committed to contributing to Northamptonshire being the leading county in the UK for Health and Wellbeing. Our Faculty of Health, Education and Society is the major training centre for nurses, midwives, paramedics and other allied health professionals in the county and surrounding area. The University has a leadership role and is part of the Integrated Care System across the county. We have strong corporate links in this area and a well established network for Mental Health First Aid training.**

### **Community, Outreach and Collaboration**

We strongly encourage and celebrate outreach programmes amongst our students and staff, both as formal parts of their courses, or through voluntary action. Placements are a key part of most of our health-related courses and across our growing portfolio of courses related to sport and physical activity, e.g. Sports undergraduates complete 120 hours of community placement providing sporting and physical activities for children and the elderly.

We collaborate nationally with a number of NHS trusts and hospitals to deliver programmes (mainly Postgraduate Certificates) that upskill NHS staff and improve patient outcomes. Our Competency Test Centre is one of only three in the UK that provides the Objective Structured Clinical Examination that enables overseas nurses to practice in the UK. Internationally we have long established collaborations for healthcare delivery in Ireland and Sri Lanka and a growing number

of new collaborations across South East Asia, whilst our research and publications in this space influence practice globally.

### **The Activity Quarter and our Active Campus**

The University leads on the Activity Quarter Project. Local partners include Public Health, Northamptonshire Sport, West Northamptonshire Council and Delapré Abbey. This work promotes a physical activity and supports social prescribing in a large geographical area of Northampton town. Our Active Campus project (led by our Sport and Physical Activity Group) promotes physical activity for staff and students. Our Sports Dome and all-weather pitches are used by local groups, seven days a week. Northampton Town FC and Northampton Saints Rugby Club use our outstanding facilities for training purposes.

We worked specifically with Table Tennis England to bring Ping! and table tennis tables to campus for community use. We

## 120 hours

Sports undergraduates complete 120 hours of community placement providing sporting and physical activities for children and the elderly.

### **'Play, don't Pay'**

To encourage free, recreational sport participation.

have since expanded the amount of sport equipment on campus, purchasing table football tables, table tennis tables and badminton equipment as part of "Play, don't Pay" to encourage free, recreational sport participation. Similarly, the Residential Life team have expanded their free sport offer to students to other activities including fitness classes, netball and racket sports.

The Sport and Physical Activity Group have evaluated walking activity and stair use in the post Covid-19 campus, and have had approval to start a Waterside Campus Park Run. We are also opening an open access community Sport Injury Clinic run by students.

Our Student Information Desk provides a range of services for students to support health and wellbeing.

## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



**Our commitment to providing quality education is a strategic objective. We achieve this through the development of new Early Childhood Graduate Competencies, working with the Department of Education to develop new qualification levels in early years, that have international applicability. This work is now embedded across nearly 30 HEIs across England and has been included in the QAA Benchmark Statement for Early Childhood.**

In 2020, 184 of our students graduated with qualifications that entitled them to teach at primary school level. Our International Education (Top-Up) has study pathways in early years, whilst our UniConnect programme has supported 16,553 young people from low participation neighbourhoods to explore studying in higher education. We also provide open-access material that is available to the public e.g. the Skills Hub.

### Current research and policy initiatives

Current developments continue a proud, longstanding history of educational research at the University and its antecedent teacher-training institutions. Sustaining high quality educational research with significant regional, national and international impacts has been a key aim of the University's Strategic Plans for 2015-20 and 2020-2025. Specifically:

- the experiences of children and young people (CYP) with diverse SEN and autistic spectrum conditions in a wide range of institutional, geographical settings
- developing opportunities for evidence-based teacher/practitioner/parent/carer development globally, often where no training/guidance about SEN/autism exists

- retheorising normative societal labels, assumptions and exclusions relating to SEN and autism (Erasmus+ – Equity and Social Inclusion through Positive Parenting)
- UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report on support in relation to SEN/Inclusion.

### Participatory research with CYP

- Participatory and interdisciplinary research with (rather than on or for) CYP has been a major focus for many colleagues at the University. Specifically:
- developing new methods to engage CYP as researchers
- gathering evidence on the experiences of CYP in diverse spaces of education and care
- developing new theorisations of CYP's learning, play and identities.

184

of our students graduated with qualifications that entitled them to teach at primary school level.

These methods have demonstrated the extent to which many CYP in the global south are intimately engaged in everyday work to mitigate water, food and energy crises, the transformative potential of engaging CYP's voices (Young Children Are Researchers) and the three-year, four-country Cyber Safe Generation project supporting primary school children's safe participation in digital media and online spaces.

### Educational innovation and leadership

The University of Northampton's institutional strategic plan has challenged researchers to explore and foster educational 'changemaking' and social impact. Specifically:

- evidencing the potential of new technologies and digital media to affirmatively 'disrupt' traditional forms of pedagogy and educational leadership
- critically theorising established models of learning and teaching through consideration of innovative forms of active blended learning and flexible learning spaces.

## 5 GENDER EQUALITY



**The drive for gender equality globally remains an ongoing battle and is an area that the University of Northampton is fully committed to supporting. Our work in this area encompasses supporting females being taught in compulsory education and in higher education, as well as equity for women in the workplace. We are also committed to preventing violence against women, and other forms of exploitation and harm. We are proud of our work to ensure that we promote gender equality and actively support women in their lives and careers**

### Community & Outreach

The University is committed to supporting charities and third sector organisations working towards gender equality. During the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the University actively supported local charities working with women who are victims of domestic violence, to support them with emergency accommodation and resource requirements. We have also supported our amazing students who are working towards solving a multitude of gender issues, including: female genital mutilation (Hidden Scars); and providing education for women in Malawi (United Amayi). Our UniConnect work, delivered in partnership with the Universities of Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire, also seeks to promote higher education to young girls from disadvantaged areas, as well as promoting careers in STEAM.

### Student Access

The University is committed to widening participation work and ensuring that higher education

has equitable access for all students from all backgrounds. This is embodied through our Access and Participation Plan, which includes financial support packages, outreach work in schools and colleges, support for students throughout their studies and monitoring of the destinations of our students post-graduation. We are proud that over 64% of our students are female (2018/2019 data), with nearly 40% of our STEM students and over 82% of our medical students being women. Further, of the 1,859 first generation students at the University, 1,159 (62.3%) are female.

### Staffing

The University is committed to ensuring gender equality in its staffing structures, with a focus on equality of pay, progression and representation at senior management levels. As part of this work, we have an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan, we produce Equal Pay Audit and Gender Pay Gap Reports, and Staff Equality Reports. The University

**64%**

We are proud that over 64% of our students are female.

**53%**

of our senior managers are women.

**82%**

of our medical students are women.

**61%**

of our staff are female.

also has staff who are Springboard trained to deliver women's development training. We are proud that 61% of our staff are female and that 53% of our senior managers are women.

### Research

The University also conducts a wide-variety of research into issues related to gender equality. These projects include: the Understanding Agency and Resistance Strategies exploring children's experiences of coping with domestic violence; promoting gender equality in public services; and using education to promote gender equality in Turkey.

## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



**The University of Northampton is committed to ensuring access to clean water and sanitation, promoting sustainable water management, and reducing water-related risks through education, research, and community engagement. We work locally and globally to safeguard water resources and improve hygiene standards.**

**Water fountains are located around our Waterside Campus, next to the brightly coloured recycling points.**

### Water and our Campus

We have invested in water-saving technologies, smart metering, and leak detection systems, achieving significant reductions in water consumption. Free drinking water refill stations are available throughout our facilities, reducing reliance on single-use plastics and supporting hygiene standards. We also maintain modern sanitation facilities to ensure accessibility and high levels of hygiene for all students and staff.

The University and Students Union have twinned toilet blocks. Toilet Twinning funds global WASH projects (water, sanitation and hygiene), working with local teams to transform lives through sustainable access to private toilets, safe drinking water and healthy hygiene.

### Water Quality Research

Studies on water quality and contaminants have assessed the impact of pollutants in diverse environments, from upland streams in the UK to Lake Victoria in East Africa. These investigations have highlighted issues such as

excessive nutrient levels and the presence of pathogens like *Cryptosporidium*, informing strategies for safer water systems. In addition, our work on water erosion and pollution examines the degradation of arable land in Britain and develops methods to tackle diffuse water pollution from agriculture, helping to protect ecosystems and food production.

### The Water Food Nexus

The University also contributes to understanding how these interconnected resources can be managed sustainably and integrated into education for sustainability. This research informs curriculum development and equips graduates with the knowledge to address global resource challenges.

### Water & Climate Change

Our publications on water demand and climate change analyze how shifting climates affect water availability and evaluate the effectiveness of water minimisation projects in industry, supporting adaptation strategies for a changing world.

### Water Education

Modules such as Environmental Sustainability and Water Resource Management embed principles of responsible water stewardship, while student-led projects promote water-saving practices and hygiene awareness. Through partnerships like SLIPAH, we have attracted significant external funding to help local businesses adopt sustainable practices, including water efficiency measures.

Looking ahead, the University aims to expand rainwater harvesting and greywater recycling systems, increase student engagement in water conservation projects, and continue research on global water security and sanitation. By combining practical action with cutting-edge research, we are helping to achieve SDG6 and create a more sustainable future.

## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



## 13 CLIMATE ACTION



**The University recognises the effects and implications energy has on the environment and climate change. That is why we are committed, through our Net Zero Carbon target and low carbon energy solutions, to continually develop and manage our estate in a way that is consistent with SDGs 7 and 13.**

### **Towards affordable and clean energy**

In 2017 the University set a target of reducing its scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 30% by 2020 against the baseline year of 2005/06. The action plans set up to achieve this are outlined in our Carbon Management Plan. Following the review of our plan, we have achieved this target with a reduction of 36%, a total of 2,665 tonnes of carbon. Our mission is to continue to reduce our scope 1 and 2 emissions and work towards Net Zero Carbon by 2030 as part of our commitment to the One Planet Pledge. Indeed, of the total 22,676 MWh energy consumed during 2019/20, 54% of this was generated from low carbon sources. This includes energy produced by

our biomass boiler, solar PV panels and renewable electricity from our providers. Our recent Green Award from Investors in Environment highlighted our excellent reductions in electricity, water, waste and carbon, particularly the processes and Action Plans we have in place for measuring and monitoring our impact across a range of sustainability aspects. Further recognition of our commitment to clean energy was highlighted in a recent U Switch study where the University ranked in the top tier of 105 universities tested, demonstrating that the University is doing better than 50% of other UK universities.

## 2030

Our mission is to continue to reduce our scope 1 and 2 emissions and work towards Net Zero Carbon by 2030 as part of our commitment to the One Planet Pledge.

## £2.4m

Invested in excess of £2.4m on carbon management projects and initiatives since 2008.

## 400 tonnes

Installation of our low carbon biomass boiler and heat network, saving over 400 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e during the 2019/20 academic year.



## Our achievements

- Invested in excess of £2.4m on carbon management projects and initiatives since 2008
- Built and refurbished our buildings to our Sustainable Construction Policy. BREEAM 'Very Good' Certification for our academic buildings (Creative Hub, Learning Hub, Senate) and Students' Union
- Move to our new SMART Waterside Campus
- Installation of our low carbon biomass boiler and heat network, saving over 400 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e during the 2019/20 academic year
- As part of delivering on our 100% renewables pledge, we have signed up to 100% Renewable Energy for Business tariff with REGO certificates
- Investors in Environment Green Award
- Sensor LED lighting throughout the campus
- Solar PV Panels at our St John's Halls of Residence
- Installation of submetering software for active and continual monitoring of energy usage and potential wastage
- Working with the Environment Agency and Northampton Council in the development of the University's flood prevention and response plans.

## Our goals

- To become Net Zero Carbon by 2030
- To continue active monitoring and measuring of our energy data

- To increase data and reporting of water consumption to identify water saving opportunities
- To continue working to the principles of ISO50001 standards as part of our Energy Management Plan
- To increase engagement with staff and students about energy and water use and behaviour through campaigns, surveys and initiatives
- To work with students and academic staff on relevant modules to support student engagement and awareness of the University's sustainable strategies and policies
- Investigate feasibility of working with partners on a district heat network initiative in the local community.

## Environment, energy and the community

The University is committed to working with the local and wider community to highlight the importance of sustainability, including energy, low carbon technology and climate impacts. In 2016 the Centre for Sustainable Business Practices (CSBP) was established to support businesses throughout Northampton and South East Midlands in adopting a social responsibility (SR) approach with customers, defining environmental regulations with suppliers or exploring ways to protect shareholders and optimising decision. The University partnered with the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) and the West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC),

with funding via the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), to provide space for start-up businesses with low carbon technology. The iCon building has been developed to enable best practice in environmental innovation.

Through engagement with organisations across the Northamptonshire county as part of the University Sustainability Forum, we offer support to local organisations on a wide range of areas, including energy efficiency, reducing carbon, sharing of best practice, site tours and 121 advice for organisations. We are looking to develop this further in the next year. Northamptonshire Industry Led Forums are powered by the University of Northampton to support Northamptonshire Businesses across all sectors and sizes. All forums are open to those in the field to share best practice and be updated on a wide range of topics and collaborate on issues and find out how the University can support your business.

The Northampton Sustainability Forum was formed in 2019 to enable organisations across the county to share information and collaborate on a wide range of topics in sustainability supporting organisations to reduce carbon and energy reduction targets. A founding member of Circular Economy CEC 3 Counties, this groups aims to bring together individuals and organisations throughout Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire and Northamptonshire to share and encourage circular economy thinking.

## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



**The University of Northampton is committed to promoting sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all, but especially for our staff and students. We aim to produce graduates who are equipped with the skills and values needed for a rapidly changing economy.**

### **An anchor institution**

Our economic contribution to the region is significant. The University's gross value added to Northamptonshire is estimated at £366 million. Through initiatives such as the Sustainability Local Innovation Partnership Agenda Hub (SLIPAH), we have attracted over £900,000 in external funding to help local enterprises adopt sustainable practices, safeguard employment, and innovate for the future.

### **Providing decent work**

We are committed to creating meaningful work for our staff by fostering purpose, professional growth, and wellbeing. We aim to ensure every role contributes to positive impact for students, the community, and society.

### **Preparing our Graduates**

Similarly, we prepare our graduates for the modern workplace by embedding employability and responsible leadership throughout the curriculum. Modules such as Leadership Skills for Social Impact and Business Ethics and Sustainability ensure that students

understand the importance of fair work practices and economic resilience. Our Changemaker ethos encourages students to develop entrepreneurial thinking and social responsibility, qualities that employers increasingly demand.

### **Work Based Learning**

Work-based learning is central to our approach. Every UG course includes opportunities for placements, internships, or live projects with industry partners. These experiences allow students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, develop transferable skills, and build professional networks. Our Student Futures Team provides tailored support, helping students secure meaningful employment and navigate the complexities of the modern world of work.

### **Fostering innovation**

Beyond the classroom, we foster innovation and enterprise through initiatives such as the University's Business Incubation Centre, which supports start-ups and social enterprises. These ventures not only create jobs but also

**For every £1 of income received, UON generates more than £4 in economic impact across the UK.**

Biggar Economics Impact Assessment

contribute to sustainable economic growth in the region. Our commitment to lifelong learning ensures that alumni and local professionals can access upskilling opportunities, supporting career progression and adaptability in a dynamic economy.

Internationally, our research addresses issues of decent work and economic development in emerging economies. Projects in Africa and Asia explore strategies for inclusive growth, fair labour practices, and the reduction of economic inequality. By engaging students in these research activities, we provide insights into global challenges and prepare graduates for careers in international development, policy, and consultancy.

By integrating sustainability, employability, and social impact into everything we do, the University of Northampton ensures that our graduates are ready to thrive in the modern workplace while contributing to a fairer and more resilient economy.

## 9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**We play a pivotal role in Northampton and Northamptonshire by equipping graduates with the skills to think creatively and by partnering with local businesses to strengthen the regional economy.**

### **Supporting Local Industry**

This impact reflects our efforts to create jobs, support local businesses, and provide expertise that helps industries adapt to changing economic and environmental conditions. Through knowledge exchange and collaborative projects, we enable small and medium-sized enterprises across Northamptonshire to innovate and grow, strengthening the region's industrial base.

### **Embedded within the Curriculum**

Innovation is embedded in our teaching and learning. Our curriculum encourages entrepreneurial thinking and problem-solving across disciplines, ensuring graduates are prepared to lead in dynamic industries. As an Ashoka U Changemaker Campus, we empower students to develop solutions to real-world challenges, fostering a culture of creativity and social impact. Specialist modules such as *Innovation and Enterprise* and *Digital Transformation Strategies* give students the tools to thrive in a rapidly evolving economy.

### **Advancing Technology**

Research at UON plays a vital role in advancing technology and supporting sustainable industry. Our academics lead applied research projects in areas such as advanced manufacturing, logistics, and digital technologies, addressing industry challenges and improving efficiency. These projects often involve global collaboration, ensuring that our work contributes to sustainable industrial development worldwide.

### **Waterside Campus, an exemplar for innovation**

Our Waterside Campus exemplifies infrastructure designed for innovation. With state-of-the-art facilities and investment in digital connectivity, we provide an environment that supports collaboration, creativity, and sustainability. These resources enable students and businesses to work together on projects that drive technological advancement and economic growth.

**UON contributes over £366 million in economic gross value added (GVA) annually, supporting local industry and innovation through research, enterprise, and skills development.**

Biggar Economics Impact Assessment

### **Enterprise Start-Ups and Innovation**

Finally, we nurture graduates who think innovatively and act responsibly. Through enterprise support, including our Innovation Centre and Start-Up Incubator, we help students and alumni launch businesses that create jobs and deliver social value. By emphasizing adaptability, creativity, and technological literacy, we ensure our graduates are equipped to shape the future of industry.

## 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



**The University is absolutely committed to reducing inequalities and ensuring no one is left behind. Many of our commitments to our students are detailed in our Access and Participation Plan (APP). This sets out how we will sustain or improve access, student success and progression among people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups. Additionally, the University undertakes research into inequality and engages with partners to attempt to reduce inequalities in wider society.**

### **Our student body and inequality**

Northampton is one of the most diverse universities in the UK. Many of our students are non-traditional and many (46%) are first generation students (the first in their family to start a degree). We actively monitor our student intake and in particular we continue to target white working-class males from disadvantaged backgrounds (the most underrepresented group in higher education in the UK). A high proportion (13%) of our international students are from developing countries and we offer a range of bursaries, scholarships and awards to support these students, as our aim is to prepare graduates who are Changemakers dedicated to creating social impact.

### **Support for those with disabilities**

Our proportion of students with disabilities (13.4%) is similar to the UK HE sector as a whole. The figure for staff is 110 individuals. Disabled students are specifically catered for within our APP, as are students

who are Care Leavers, Carers, those from Service Families or those who are Refugees. Our purpose-built campus facility is modern and our buildings comply with all relevant standards. Our Additional Student Support and Inclusion Services Team (ASSIST) works with students with disabilities to help them achieve their full potential and to promote equal opportunities. The team provides a range of services, including support and guidance for dyslexia, autism, epilepsy and other conditions for all new and current students, staff and parents. We also give priority to students with disability-related accommodation needs when allocating places in our halls of residence and provide ASSIST parking permits for students with disabilities. Staff with disabilities are supported locally by their line managers, with additional consultation with Human Resources. Examples are dyslexia assessments, implementations of reasonable adjustments, provision of specific equipment or software and consideration of different work schedules.

**46%**

of our students are first generation students.

**13.4%**

of our student body experience disabilities.

### **Measures against discrimination**

Our admissions policy is non-discriminatory, however, as part of our commitment to widening access, we also give Contextual Offers for disadvantaged students, a student benefits package and an enhanced offer for low income families. In addition, our Integrated Foundation Year has been designed to provide an access route to our degree programmes for non-traditional students. We have an active Schools Engagement Team, which works with primary and secondary children, within the county of Northamptonshire from the ages of 8–18 years through our targeted Widening Participation and UniConnect programmes. We provide an extensive aspiration and achievement programme of interactive on-campus and in-school opportunities, activities and learning resources. Our aim is to encourage children and young people to consider higher education as an educational opportunity for them.

## 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



**The University is committed to making its estate, Northampton Town, and South-East Midlands inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. We look to achieve this through continued engagement and partnership building at a local and regional level.**

### **Sustainable practices**

Our new Waterside Campus, which is open to the public, is located along the River Nene, a short walk to the town centre, surrounded by green parks and situated in a landscape of natural, cultural and historical significance. Costing over £330m, the campus was built to BREEAM sustainable construction standard and completed in time to receive students in October 2018. Before the Waterside development received planning approval, there were numerous environmental impact assessments in partnership with local authorities, the Environment Agency and stakeholders. Further, as part of our wellbeing activities, we have adapted and expanded the Memorial Garden, which is open to the public.

### **Sustainable travel**

The University's Travel Plan intends to implement and promote specific measures to help staff, students and visitors commute to the University's sites via sustainable measures and aims to reduce single occupancy journeys by 20% in five years. We also run our own bus service, UNO Buses and a Park and Ride facility on the west side of Northampton, which are subsidised by the University.

### **Support of arts and heritage**

As part of the University's commitment to preserving local heritage and arts, our sculpture collections were moved to Waterside Campus and have been placed as specially designed areas. The University contributes to the local arts through a series of annual and ongoing performances which are performed to members of the public and available online. Our wider schools' and community engagement work supports our students in gaining experience in both performing and travel, as well as inspiring young people to consider entering the Arts and Fashion. Home to the Students' Union, the Engine Shed is a Grade-II listed former railway building restored by the University and named the overall winner of the National Railway Heritage Awards 2020.

### **Recording and preserving cultural heritage**

We are committed to recording and preserving heritage at a local, regional and national level. The Searchlight Archive at the University has more than 50 years of heritage relating to Britain's longest running anti-fascist organisation. Expanding on this commitment to preserve cultural heritage, the collection

**£330m**

Costing over £330m, the campus was built to the BREEAM sustainable.

**20%**

Help staff, students and visitors commute to the University's sites via sustainable measures and aims to reduce single occupancy journeys by 20% in five years. construction standard.

has grown from the original one collection to incorporate other collections, including the Heritage Lottery Funded Race Act 40 project, which records experiences of racism in Northamptonshire, particularly Wellingborough. The University, working with the Northamptonshire Rights and Equality Council, also provides free training on extreme-right courses using archive material. More widely, material from the University Archive is used to inform several scholarly works on history, contributions to radio interviews with Canada's Radio 1, and with the British Forces Broadcasting Services radio.

## 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



**The University is committed to promoting and delivering more responsible consumption and production patterns through its operations and supply chains, through sustainable management practices and efficient use of natural resources.**

### **Waste and Resource Management**

Our waste disposal policies are central to demonstrating the way in which we manage all types of waste produced by the University, directly or indirectly. This includes the disposal of Hazardous and Offensive materials, as well as how we minimise the use of plastic and disposable items on site.

Working closely with our waste contractor, we track waste generated across the estate, covering all waste streams created, location, recycling rates and waste sent for energy recovery. Our goals are to increase our recycling rates from 70% to 80%, eliminate single use plastics and to minimise consumable items.

### **Up for The Cup**

As part of our commitment to increase recycling rates and resource management, the University launched its Up for The Cup project. Hubbub launched its national cup recycling campaign, The Cup Fund, the UK's largest grant fund to support ambitious projects that boost paper cup recycling in the UK. The University was awarded a grant of £75,000 to collect and recycle 160,000 cups across Northampton. The Up for The Cup project is a socially

impactful project, with six formal partners, covering the major employers within the town centre and the major transport hub, providing a thorough geographic coverage of Northampton.

The Up for The Cup project is being delivered in collaboration with Hubbub, the project partners with the University's 2nd Year Advertising & Digital Marketing BA (Hons) students playing an integral role in the campaign delivery. The students are tasked with the responsibility to devise a year-long marketing campaign to support the successful delivery of the campaign in Northampton. The project has been shortlisted as a Green Gown Finalist for the Student Engagement category - these awards give recognition to and emphasise the role universities have in enabling and empowering young people to tackle pressing global issues.

### **Sustainable Food**

As a founding member of the West Northampton Sustainable Food Place, we are working with a range of local businesses and charities to improve the quality of how food is produced, sold and used across Northamptonshire.

The University works closely with its catering suppliers to ensure

**Zero**

waste to landfill  
since 2014.

**160,000**

disposable cups  
collected and recycled as  
part of Up for The Cup.

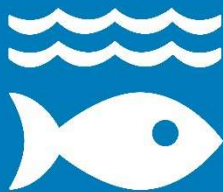
**67%**

of waste recycled  
with the remaining  
incinerated for  
energy recovery.

that locally and ethically sourced meat, fruit and vegetables are used within all our food outlets. This commitment is reflected in the seasonal menus, which contain both vegetarian and vegan options. Our caterers also work closely with the Environment & Sustainability Team in implementing our Single Use Plastics and Disposable Items policy, reducing our food waste and teaming up with Too Good To Go, so any surplus food is eaten instead of going to waste.



## 14 LIFE BELOW WATER



**The University of Northampton is committed to protecting aquatic ecosystems and promote sustainable water management. While we are a landlocked institution, our work addresses global challenges affecting rivers, lakes, and coastal environments, ensuring that our impact extends far beyond Northamptonshire.**

### **Reducing pollution and improving water quality**

Our research focuses on improving water quality and reducing pollution in freshwater and marine systems. Recent studies have assessed the impact of contaminants and pollutants on water quality in Lake Victoria, identifying issues such as excessive nutrient levels and the presence of pathogens like *Cryptosporidium*. These findings inform strategies to safeguard aquatic biodiversity and protect communities that depend on these ecosystems.

### **Coastal protection**

We also lead projects on saltmarsh restoration, exploring sediment delivery and hydrodynamics to enhance coastal resilience. Research into the influence of grazing on restored saltmarshes provides insights into habitat recovery and biodiversity conservation, supporting nature-based solutions to climate adaptation.

### **Building awareness**

Education is central to our approach. Innovative methods

such as game-based learning have been used to increase awareness of water management in Ugandan schools, addressing curriculum gaps and empowering young people to engage with sustainability. These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to combining research with practical education to drive long-term change.

Our work also addresses the Water-Energy-Food Nexus, recognizing the interconnections between resource systems and their impact on aquatic environments. By integrating these concepts into teaching and research, we prepare graduates to tackle complex global challenges and promote sustainable development.

### **Impacts for Students**

Through fieldwork, laboratory analysis, and research projects, students gain hands-on experience in monitoring water quality, assessing ecological impacts, and developing strategies for pollution reduction. These skills prepare graduates for careers in environmental consultancy, conservation, and

**Educational activities often incorporate the River Nene, which flows through our Waterside Campus, as a living laboratory.**

policy-making—roles that directly contribute to protecting life below water.

### **Waterside and the Nene**

Through partnerships with conservation groups and local stakeholders, UON contributes to initiatives aimed at riverbank restoration, erosion control, and biodiversity enhancement. These projects not only improve the resilience of the River Nene ecosystem but also provide opportunities for students to gain hands-on experience in environmental management and sustainability close to our Waterside campus.

Looking ahead, the University aims to expand research on aquatic biodiversity, strengthen partnerships for coastal restoration, and continue embedding sustainability into education. Through global research collaborations and innovative teaching, UON plays a vital role in achieving SDG 14 and protecting life below water.

## 15 LIFE ON LAND



**The ecological needs of our site are at the forefront of all our land management practices; our sustainable methods of management aim to increase and sustain biodiversity and create suitable habitats for an array of flora, fauna and wildlife.**

### **Education, outreach and events**

We are committed to providing our students, staff and local community with the opportunity to learn about our on-campus ecosystems by providing practical experience for our academic courses and outreach activities to support social impact.

University staff are actively involved in managing, monitoring and developing the flora and fauna on the campus. There have been sightings of 78 bird species on or around the University grounds, including the peregrine, kingfisher, robin and little owl.

Other activities and events taking place with a focus on our land use and the biodiversity of our site, are wellbeing walks for staff and students. These take place in conjunction with Project Awesome and are guided walks covering many topics, from bird spotting and ecology, to sustainable land management practices and places of historical interest.

We actively encourage the sustainable use of our land and shared spaces with our local community through various outreach projects. The campus has a few spaces in which land is

shared with the local community, these include Becket's Park, the restored access to Delapré Abbey and New South Bridge Road.

The Memorial Garden at Waterside Campus is a community space and provides a tranquil reflective space for all to use. Any maintenance in this area is completed sympathetically to continue to encourage the natural biodiversity of the space, specifically along the riverbank.

### **Management Plan for Biodiversity**

There are 12 Nature Improvement Areas (NIA) throughout England and our Waterside Campus sits within the Nene Valley Way Nature Improvement Area, making biodiversity of Waterside Campus a fundamental part of the University's sustainability ethos. The generation of our Management Plan for Biodiversity, as part of our planning, has provided the basis for enhancing the natural habitat and the creation of new habitat. This included planting species that attract insects and pollinators, which in turn attracts birds, bats and other wildlife.

We are committed to the aims set out in our Ecology Policy to ensure the continual management, conservation and education of

**5%**

increase in key native species across Waterside Campus over next five years.

**65**

plant species recorded in the Ecology Zone.

**Silver Award**

Hedgehog Friendly Campus 2020/21.

ecology at UON. Our Ecology Zone, created in 2017, used natural soils and substrates to create a varied habitat for wildlife. A recent survey by the Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland recorded a total of 65 plant species in the Ecology Zone. Expect to see otters, heron, kingfisher, wetland birds, bats, dragonflies, butterflies and bees on the campus site.

## 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



**The University of Northampton actively contributes to promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice, and building strong, accountable institutions through research, education, and community engagement. Our work spans local, national, and international contexts, addressing issues of justice, ethical leadership, and institutional resilience.**

### **The IPSCJ**

A key driver of this impact is the Institute for Public Safety, Crime and Justice (IPSCJ), which delivers research and consultancy to improve policing, criminal justice systems, and public safety. IPSCJ projects explore areas such as restorative justice, offender rehabilitation, and community-based approaches to crime reduction. These initiatives inform policy and practice, ensuring justice systems are effective, fair, and responsive to societal needs.

### **Social Impact**

Our research portfolio includes studies on ethical frameworks for social impact measurement, highlighting how data collection and evaluation processes can uphold principles of transparency and accountability. This work, led by the Institute for Social Innovation and Impact, provides guidance for organizations seeking to measure outcomes without compromising ethical standards—an essential component of strong institutions.

### **Research influencing Public Policy**

Other research outputs address policy design and governance, including co-design of government outcomes frameworks, evaluation of social investment programs, and evidence for justice committee reviews on youth custody. These projects influence public policy and strengthen institutional capacity to deliver equitable services.

### **Education for SDG16**

Education underpins our contribution to SDG16. Modules in Law, Criminology, International Relations, and Public Administration equip students with knowledge of human rights, governance, and justice systems. Experiential learning opportunities—such as placements in legal services, policing, and community organizations—enable students to apply theory in real-world contexts, preparing them for careers that advance peace and justice.

**UON's facilities include a dedicated courtroom-style space for law students to practice advocacy and legal proceedings.**

### **Community Engagement**

Our commitment extends to community engagement. Initiatives such as public legal education workshops and collaborations with local authorities promote civic awareness and empower individuals to understand their rights and responsibilities. By combining research, teaching, and outreach, UON helps build stronger institutions and more inclusive societies.

Looking ahead, we aim to expand research on governance and justice, deepen partnerships with organizations working on peacebuilding, and continue embedding ethical leadership into our curriculum. Through these efforts, the University of Northampton plays a vital role in achieving SDG16 locally and globally.

# 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



**The University is committed to partnership work across its research, teaching and community engagement work locally, nationally and internationally. These partnerships are developed through Memorandums of Understanding, shared curricula, joint research projects and community engagement collaborations. The University engages in these partnerships at a local level, nationally, and internationally, supporting partners to create social value.**

## **Relationships with NGOs and govt for SDG policy**

The University's relationships with government and NGOs is embodied in our origins as a Civic University. The University utilises its internationally leading research and networks to leverage impact through policy formulation and creation. In the UK this has been achieved at a national level through work to support: information gathering on Far-Right Extremists, HM Treasury in their State Aid Negotiations with the EU, the Cabinet Office in their work on outcomes-based commissioning and the design of the Government Outcomes Lab, and assessing the social impact of UK Cadet Forces. Internationally, we have also supported partners, particularly in Asia, to inform national and global policy relevant to the SDGs. This has included work in Vietnam with the United Nations Development Programme and strengthening civic and business relationships between the UK and China.

## **Cross sectoral dialogue about the SDGs**

The University is committed to pushing the SDG 2030 agenda across its networks, and using its partnerships and resources to drive impact towards SDG goals. This is embodied internationally through work on the Blockchain Educational Passport for Syrian Refugees in Lebanon in partnership with the United Nations; contributing to the 20th Conference Commonwealth of Education Ministers in Fiji focused on climate change in the Pacific region. At a local level we also seek to push cross-sectoral dialogue and deliver change in relation to the SDGs. The University has developed this through its Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF) submission to Research England centred on Local Growth and Regeneration, our support for Northampton Social Enterprise Town and our work on Educating Northants.

**92,935**

student volunteering hours in support of society over the last three years.

## **Covid-19**

Over 400 health students supported the UK National Health Service through extended clinical placements during the Covid-19 pandemic.

## **International collaboration data gathering for the SDGs**

We are committed to supporting the growth of SDG relevant impact frameworks for data gathering and measurement globally, working with Kings College London, the University of Chicago and the University of Melbourne on their Advancing University Engagement: University Engagement and Global League Tables. From an environmental standpoint, the University is also internationally leading, with partnerships aimed at increasing sustainability, biodiversity and reducing pollution. This includes engagement with the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard,



pioneering work around pollination (Safeguarding Pollination Services in a Changing World), as well as cultural/environmental heritage through the Nenescape project.

### **Collaboration for SDG best practice**

The University views its internationally leading research as a key driver of change in the world, by allowing for knowledge transfer, best practice and the creation of new knowledge to spread globally and support sustainable development. This work includes collaborations with UNICEF (Bhutan) around educational provision for children with disabilities. The University has also led and contributed to work delivered by the United Nations through their various agencies, including: United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime and UNICEF.

### **Collaboration with NGOs for SDGs**

We run an active student volunteering programme, built around our Ashoka Changemaker Certificate programme. This has led to 92,935 student volunteering hours in support of society over the last three years, whilst over 400 health students supported the UK National Health Service through extended clinical placements during the Covid-19 pandemic. Our students and staff also deliver impact aligned with the SDGs across the world, including in Bosnia, Cambodia, Canada, India, Italy, Malawi and Uganda. The University also has numerous research partnerships established locally with NGOs to drive collaboration, with MOUs established with Northampton County Cricket Club, Northamptonshire Football Association, Northamptonshire Sport and Northampton Swimming

Club. We also support, through our Faculty of Health, Education and Society, a variety of initiatives including a partnership with Northampton General Hospital to provide an MSc on Patient Safety and Quality Improvement that was given an Outstanding Practice Rating by the Care Quality Commission, and a partnership with Oxford University Hospitals delivering six PgCerts to upskill staff and improve patient outcomes.

