

GREEN CAPITAL: STUDENT CAPITAL

Review of the contribution of Green Capital: Student Capital to Bristol's year as European Green Capital

Funded by: HEFCE Catalyst Fund G04

In it for good

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Green Capital: Student Capital: Unleashing the power of Bristol Students (*Student Capital*)

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Student Capital

Becoming the European Green Capital offers an opportunity for Higher Education (HE) institutions to support their cities in releasing the full potential of the Green Capital accolade, however HE's involvement in previous Green Capitals has been limited. The Green Capital: Student Capital project has aimed to change this by putting students at the heart of Bristol's European Green Capital 2015 year, encouraging and facilitating student engagement in a wide range of both curricular and extra-curricular placement and volunteering activities with a Green Capital focus.

The University of the West of England, Bristol (UWE) and the University of Bristol – alongside their respective student unions – have been working in partnership with the city and local communities, using HEFCE Catalyst funding to promote student involvement in Green Capital activities across Greater Bristol.

The Green Capital: Student Capital project has three main objectives:

- 1. To create an increase in student engagement in business, community and voluntary sector organisations**
- 2. To undertake dissemination activities to examine the role of HE in Green Capital initiatives, aimed at ensuring wider impacts**
- 3. To conduct a robust evaluation of the project activities to understand the impact and value of student engagement**

Beyond the core objectives listed for the Green Capital year, the Student Capital project has focussed on the legacy of Bristol 2015, with the aim at all times being that the increased student engagement in sustainable issues continues into the future, and that the new systems/platforms which have been created can support this.

In this sense the Student Capital project is not a one-off series of 'flash in the pan' interventions designed to simply end at the close of 2015, rather it is 'raising the bar' for the universities and setting the level at which student engagement in Bristol's developing green economy will continue in years to come.

The following sections of the report move sequentially through the objectives listed on the previous page, presenting the data and evidence related to these and demonstrating the value of student engagement in the Green Capital year.

At-a-glance:

The value of Green Capital: Student Capital

- Students in Bristol have given over 100,000 hours of their time to engaging with local organisations and tackling issues of sustainability in the city and wider region. This equates to 56.3 years' worth of work provided to date, and an economic contribution of £642,061.
- The Student Capital project has been instrumental in engaging over 7,500 students in the Green capital year.
- The Student Capital project has celebrated and rewarded the efforts of students through the new Change Maker award. This award is given to students that have given both their time and effort to tackling the sustainability challenges we face. There is also the Gold Change Maker award, which is given to those students who have made an outstanding contribution.
- In addition to the dissemination activities described above, the Student Capital was also a finalist for the national 2015 Green Gown Awards in the Student Engagement category, based on only the first six months of the project.
- Student Capital has generated significant academic output about student sustainability engagement which demonstrates the value of involving Higher Education institutions in tackling the key challenges we face in society today. This knowledge base will be made available via the Student Capital Repository.
- The Student Capital project has created Skills Bridge as a legacy for the ongoing partnership between students, the Universities, and organisations across the city and the region.

Objective 1: To create an increase in student engagement in business, community and voluntary sector organisations – involving:

- a. 100,000 hours of student engagement in Green Capital activity – volunteering, placements, internships, and much more
- b. Two cohorts of Green Capital “Change Makers” – students formally recognised and awarded for their efforts by their universities
- c. A minimum of 600 students engaged in some form of sustainability engagement – volunteering, placements, internships
- d. A minimum of 180 organisations hosting a student voluntary project

As the figures currently stand, students at the institutions have given over 100,000 hours of their time to sustainability engagement in Bristol and the wider region. **This figure equates to 56.3 years’ worth of work towards sustainability given by students to Green Capital 2015, and a contribution of £642,061 to the region’s green economy¹.** The students have surpassed the Student Capital target figure and this is a testament to the hard work of our students, and the value of student engagement in helping to address issues of sustainability. The figures demonstrate that the project is being more successful than we anticipated and will easily exceed the overall target figures by the end of the HEFCE funding period.

The target involved brokering 5 projects. Below is a sample of the projects brokered, with public, private, and community bodies.

No.	Project brokered
1	<p>Parkhive</p> <p>This project is a partnership with the Bristol Parks Forum.</p> <p>The ParkHive is a project aimed at increasing the accessibility of our parks and Green Spaces in the city, and they do this in a variety of ways, from providing people with information, to collecting a picture repository of all the beautiful spots around the city as a promotional tool.</p>
2	<p>GreenSpace</p> <p>This project is a partnership with the Sims Hill and Splatts Wood Community Woodland groups and working alongside South Gloucestershire Council</p> <p>Greenspace is a new conservation project. Working with local groups looking after green spaces near Frenchay Campus, the project aims to get students involved in conservation to benefit their studies and wellbeing and make a contribution to local groups.</p>

¹ This figure was calculated using the following provisions: students being paid at the current minimum wage of £6.70 p/h, working a 37 hour week across a standard UK working year of 46 weeks.

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No.	Project brokered
3	<p>Way to Grow</p> <p>This project is a partnership with a number of local community groups.</p> <p>Way to Grow is a gardening project that aims to get students involved in conservation and sustainability around Bristol.</p>
4	<p>Green Capital Internships</p> <p>This is a series of student internships at local organisations funded directly by the Student Capital project. A list and overview of these internships is included in the Interim Evidence Report.</p>
5	<p>Creative Club</p> <p>This project is a partnership with Milestones Trust.</p> <p>Creative Club supports adults with learning disabilities to get involved in creative/craft activities, utilising the skills and experience of our arts students and developing their skills in planning, facilitation and communications skills.</p>
6	<p>Windmill Hill Farm</p> <p>Students went down for the afternoon to help the farm with turning their car park into a community garden space.</p> <p>We are also developing a project with the farm to create a cross-curricular group of students to help with updating the education's resources about sustainable farming for the public.</p>
7	<p>Active Bike (Enactus)</p> <p>This project was a part of the Enactus E2B initiative, and was a partnership with Rollquick Bicycles.</p> <p>Active Bike provided consultancy services to a Rollquick Bicycles to provide the company with the skills and knowledge required to transform the struggling enterprise into a successful bicycle business.</p>
8	<p>Schools project</p> <p>This project is a partnership with a number of secondary schools in Bristol</p> <p>Trained students have been visiting secondary schools around the Bristol area to engage students in sustainability. Via a series of interactive workshops and assemblies they have worked with 1369 local school students already, and have many more visits booked in for the remainder of the academic year.</p>

No.	Project brokered
9	<p>NGO Business Plans</p> <p>As part of the MSc International Development in the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, students have the option of choosing a unit where they write a business proposal for an NGO. As part of the Green Capital year students were offered the opportunity to work with a real life organisation offering students the opportunity to work in a live setting and for the NGO to be provided with a useful piece of work that they can use in their business planning.</p>
10	<p>Balloon Bikes</p> <p>This project is a partnership with the Local Sustainable Transport Fund and the Alumni Foundation.</p> <p>Balloon Bikes is a bike hire scheme for students established and run by a team of students.</p>

The 10 projects in the table are just a few examples of the huge range of activities taking place across the two institutions.

Date	Students Engaged		Organisations hosting	
	Target No	Actual No (Nov. 2015)	Target No	Actual No (Nov. 2015)
June 2016	600	7,537	180	172

Of the 7,537 students engaged in sustainability related activities, a set of criteria were defined to select a sub-set of particularly engaged students, and recognise these for the outstanding nature of their contributions to Green Capital year, through the Green Capital Change Maker Awards.

2,250 students were selected for their contributions of time and effort to addressing issues of sustainability across the Green Capital year. These students took part in a vast range of volunteering projects, placements, and internships, and their efforts are a real credit both to the Universities and to the city.

The Student Capital project built on the four-step approach to embedding sustainability into the student experience developed by Bristol SU (see Get Green Report). Supported by education and action-learning theory the approach aims to make sustainability a social norm amongst the Bristol student population.

The first cohort of Green Capital Change Makers were certified in June 2015, at a public ceremony by Dr Andrew Garrad, Chair of Bristol 2015 as part of a wider Green Capital event.

In the first cohort, a total of 92 students were awarded the Green Capital Change Maker and 20 of these were Gold.

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The second cohort of Green Capital Change Makers has been identified and will be awarded their certificates in a ceremony in February 2016, as part of a wider Green Capital event, to maximise the visibility of the Change Maker awards and firmly link them to the ongoing legacy of Green Capital.

The figures in the table above for organisations include only those which hosted students. Beyond this, a far larger number were engaged. In total, 2324 people from 2014 organisations were contacted with the offer of taking part in Student Capital and forming a partnership with the Universities.

Objective 2: To undertake dissemination activities to examine the role of HE in Green Capital initiatives, aimed at ensuring wider impacts – involving:

- a. The organisation and hosting of two international conferences
- b. A minimum of four academic papers generated and published in peer-reviewed journals
- c. The creation of a Green Student Press Team for 2015 to record case-studies of Green Capital activities
- d. The establishment of an online archive of Green Capital: Student Capital material, benefitting universities, organisations, and student volunteers in future Green Capital cities

Date	Number of delegates		Number of events	
	Target	Actual No (Nov. 2015)	Target	Actual No (Nov. 2015)
June 2016	150	285	2	2

- Conference 1: ESD Learning from the Sharp End: Implications for sustainability in Higher Education.
- Conference 2: EUROCITIES Environment Forum meeting and Covenant of Mayors workshop. 7th-9th October 2015. This event was hosted at Bristol University and a number of locations around the city. Delegates from across Europe met and discussed the opportunities for pan-European cooperation by universities in support of Green Capital.

No.	Papers generated	Journal published in	Published date
1	Student sustainability engagement as a locale for developing intercultural competencies	European Network on HE for Sustainable Development	2015
2	Student Capital: Green Capital building university – student- city partnerships	World Environmental Education Congress	2015
3	Action Learning Projects for Sustainability - Lessons from a Higher Education Setting	Sustainable Schools Alliance National Conference	2015
4	Student Capital in green cities - building university – student – city coalitions (book chapter)	Engaging Stakeholders in Education for Sustainable Development at University Level	2016
5	Experiences of ‘reflective Action’: Forging links between student informal activity and curriculum learning for sustainability (book chapter)	Transformative Approaches to Sustainable Development at Universities: World Sustainability Series	2015

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No.	Papers generated	Journal published in	Published date
6	Relational thinking and education for sustainability: Implications for student experience in HE	World Symposium on Sustainability Universities	2015
7	Reflective action: forging links between student informal activity and curriculum learning for sustainability	Education for Sustainability in Higher Education, Achievements and Prospects Conference	2015
8	Exploring the postgraduate ESD experience in UWE's MSc Environmental Management	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
9	Importance of informal curriculum and academic involvement in supporting sustainability engagement	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
10	Green Capital Student Capital: Working across institutions to deliver value to the city	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
11	Creating an online brokerage system for connecting students with opportunities to gain sustainability experience	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
12	Partnership working and the role of universities and students to create a Green Capital	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
13	Growing Greentechies? Inculcating sustainability thinking for IT undergraduates from induction	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
14	Sustainability and the Informal Curriculum: Innovative approaches to supporting student engagement	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015

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No.	Papers generated	Journal published in	Published date
15	Framing the future: The impact of our minds on how we work	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015
16	Learn Act Engage Create: a four-step approach to embedding sustainability into the student experience	'Learning From the Sharp End': Implications for sustainability in Higher Education. International symposium	2015

In general, the table above represents the papers in their development stages. With the exception of those labelled as book chapters, the list is comprised of papers delivered at a wide range of national and international conferences throughout 2015. These papers demonstrate the academic value of the Student Capital project. A number of these papers will be developed and submitted to journals before the end of 2016.

Note: Following consultation with external organisations, the Sustainability Challenge Shop has been rebranded as "Skills Bridge".

No.	Case studies to be disseminated via Skills Bridge	Date disseminated
1	Green Capital Student Capital: Unleashing the power of Bristol's students (www.tinyurl.com/studentcapitalvid)	Early 2016
2	Sam Thomson: The Parkhive Project (in production)	Early 2016
3	Ian Brookes: Engaging SMEs – the Environmental Technologies iNet programme (in production)	Early 2016
4	Ian Holmes: Performing Arts and the Green Capital (in production)	Early 2016
5	SU Tree Party Sustainability Fair (in production)	Early 2016
6	SU sustainability campaign: #saynotoplastic (in production)	Early 2016
7	Bristol on Two Wheels (https://vimeo.com/125175861)	Early 2016
8	UWE Bees (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JEmOI1zxv_A)	Early 2016
9	Community Farm Action Day (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QW-gFEsaYGE)	Early 2016

Six videos are in production for publication via the Skills Bridge website. The launch of the Skills Bridge platform has been moved to the beginning of 2016. This decision was taken to accommodate the change in format and functionality of the web platform which resulted from the consultation with future users, and to ensure that the site provides a high-quality, useful, and future-proofed resource for the institutions, local organisations, and the city.

The videos in production for Skills Bridge will be published at the launch of the site in early 2016.

The videos in the table above are included as examples of the film media being produced from Student Capital. These videos will be included on the Student Capital repository, which is an online repository currently under construction which will contain all of the project outputs, and provide a major long-term resource legacy of the project. Web links for a number of these videos are available now and included above.

The intention at the current time is to use the Student Capital repository to create an additional module for the Bristol Method project – which is a series of documents recording Bristol’s journey to becoming Green Capital for the benefit of future Green Capital cities (see: www.bristol2015.co.uk/method).

In addition to the dissemination activities described above, the Student Capital was also a finalist for the Green Gown Awards in the Student Engagement category, based on only the first six months of the project (the intention is to re-submit for next year’s awards, based on the outcomes of the entire project).

The universities received the following feedback from judges at the Green Gown awards:

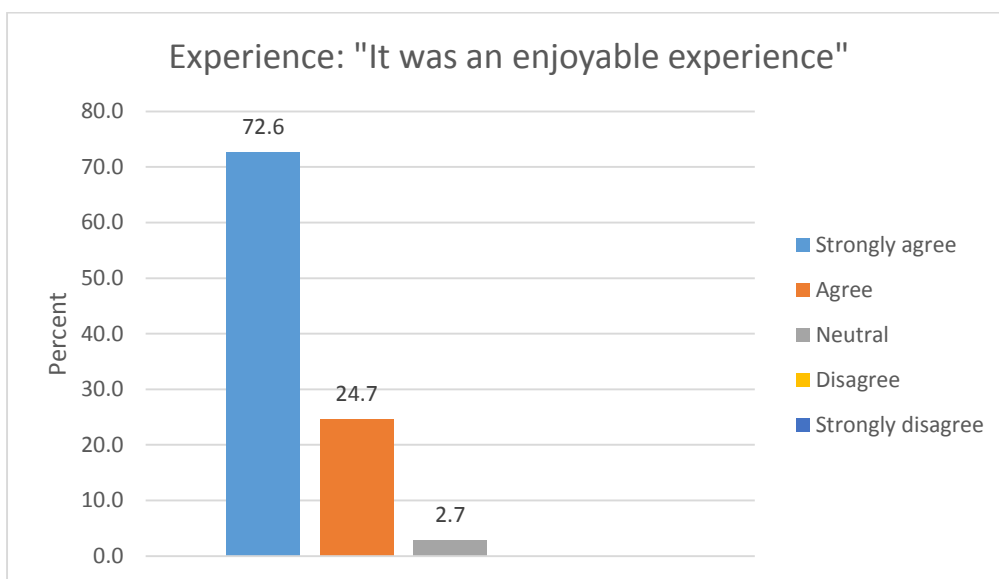
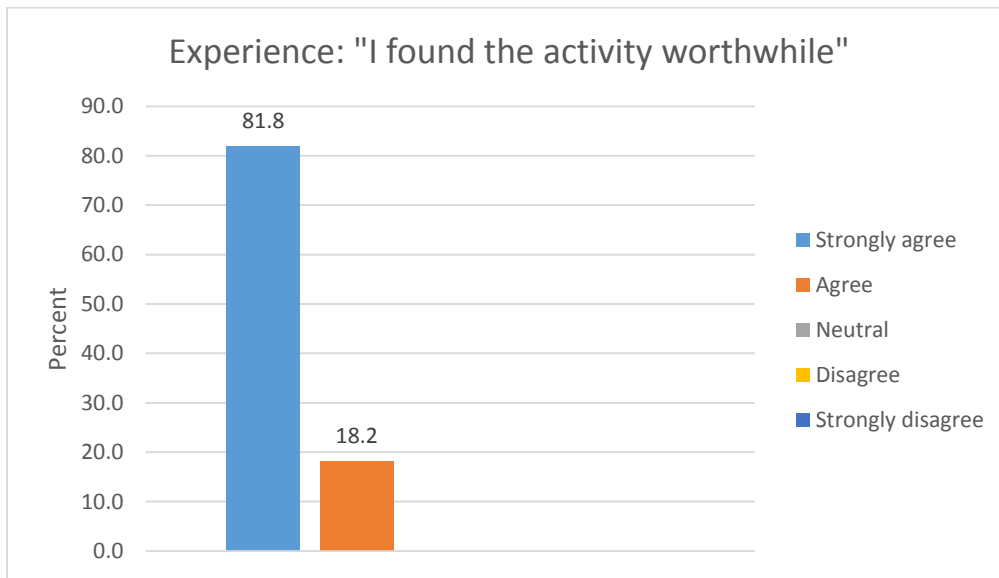
“A well-designed project of impressive scale and addressing vital issues of employability skills and the contribution of students to the city. Suggest re-submitting the application in the future, when there is clear evidence of the value added by the interventions.”

Objective 3: To conduct a robust evaluation of the project activities to understand the impact and value of student engagement – involving:

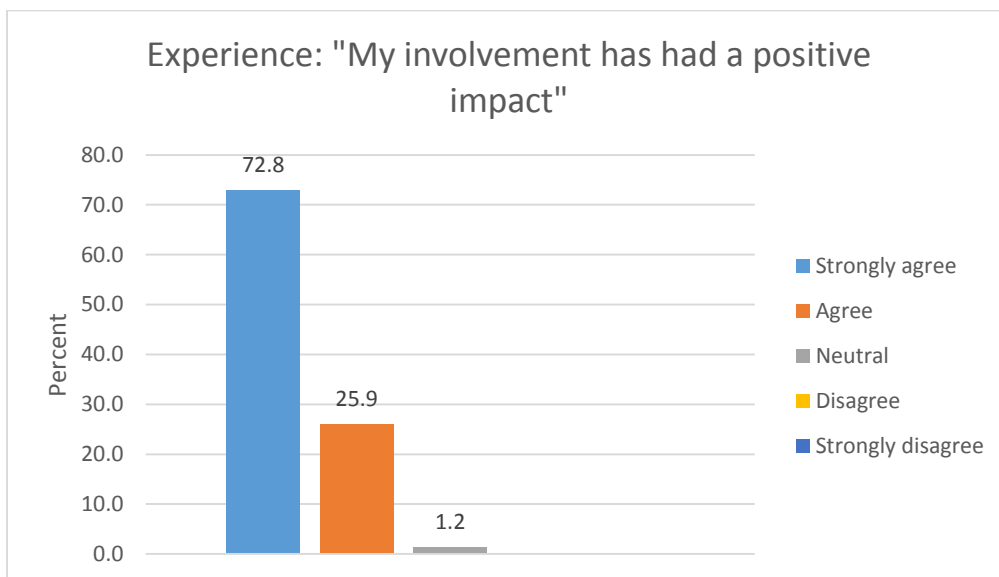
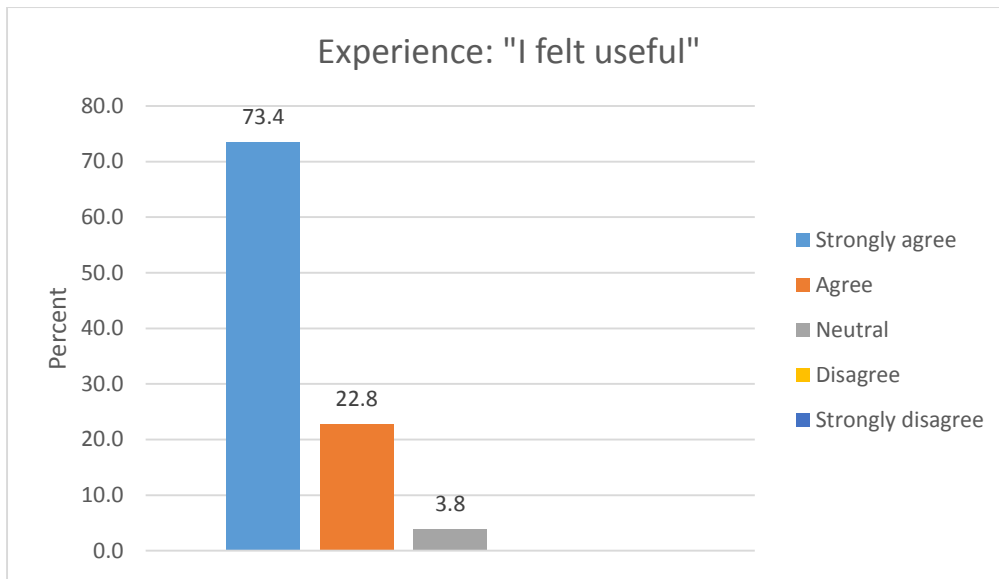
- a. A target of 80% of participants (both students and external organisations) having felt they contributed meaningfully to the project and Bristol Green Capital.

Report on progress - students

Data has been gathered progressively during the year. Evaluation of the data is taking place currently alongside wider Bristol Green Capital evaluation. The preliminary results demonstrate that satisfaction was high, although it should be noted that data for this is still being collected, and the final figures and fuller evaluation will be reported in the final monitoring report in December 2016. Interim figures are shown below.



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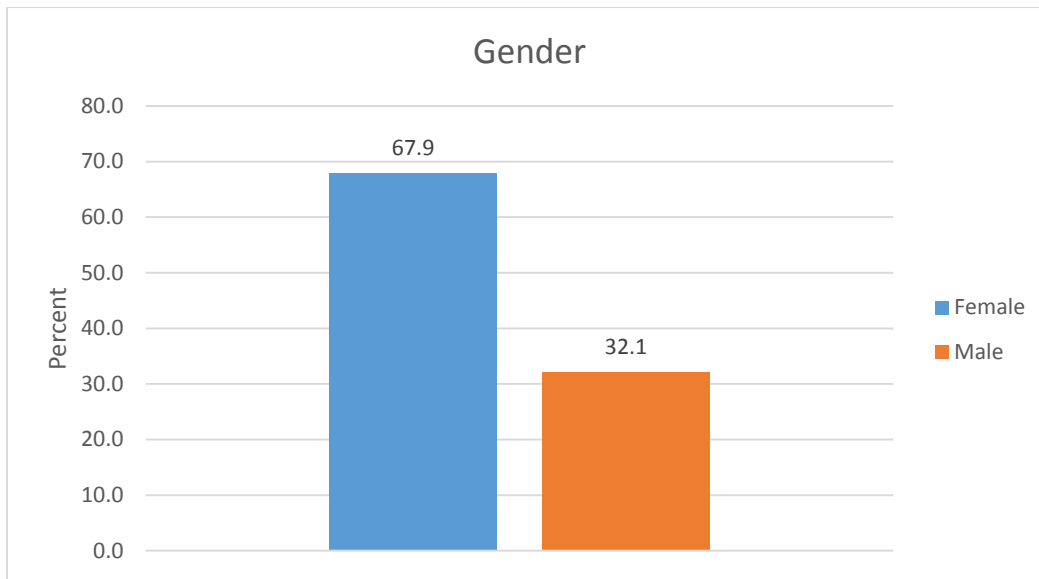


Looking at the charts related to students experiences of sustainability engagement, it is evident that the majority have provided very positive responses:

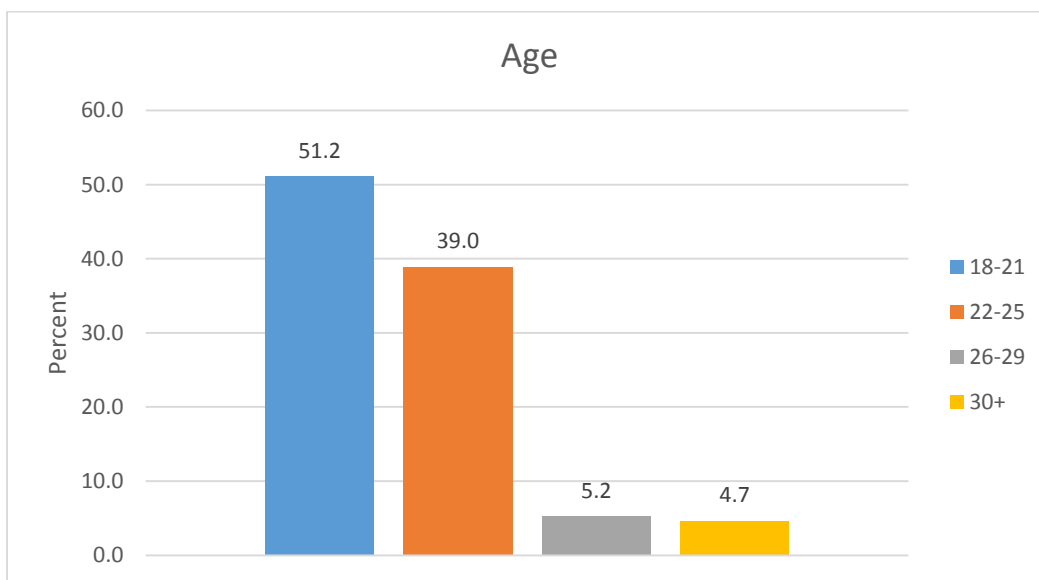
- All students agreed that they found the activity worthwhile, with 81.8% strongly agreeing.
- 97.3% of students found the experience enjoyable, with 72.6% strongly agreeing.
- 96.2% felt useful during the work they were doing, demonstrating the subjective value in the experience for them, with 73.4% strongly agreeing with this statement.
- And perhaps most importantly, 98.8% of all students surveyed felt that their involvement in Green Capital has had a positive impact, with 72.8% strongly agreeing with this statement.

Beyond the experiential questions, the evaluation collected data on a range of demographic characteristics which provide a useful insight into the student that are engaging.

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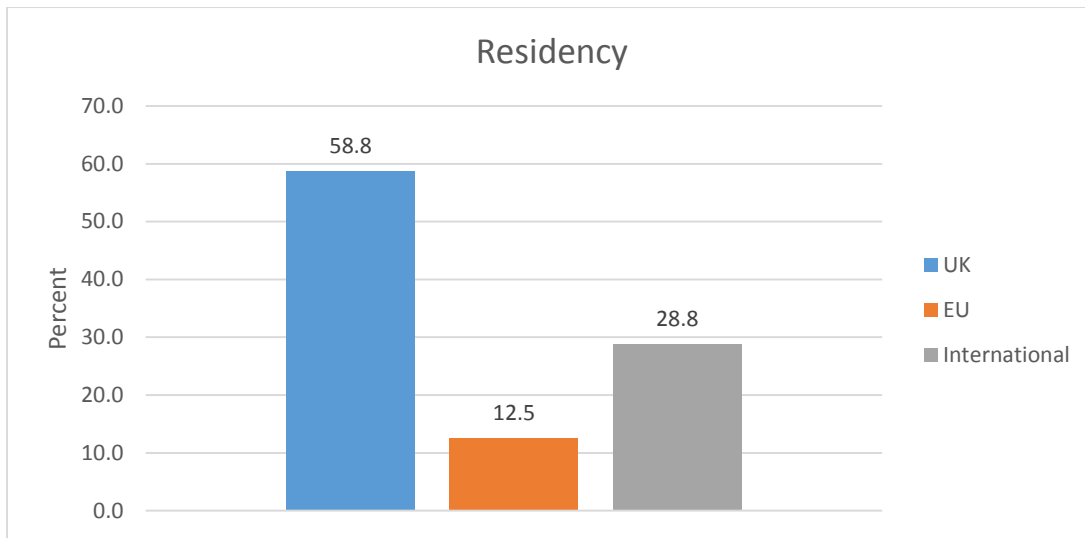


Twice as many female students engaged as their male counterparts. This suggests that greater attention needs to be paid to developing strategies to engage men in sustainability activities.



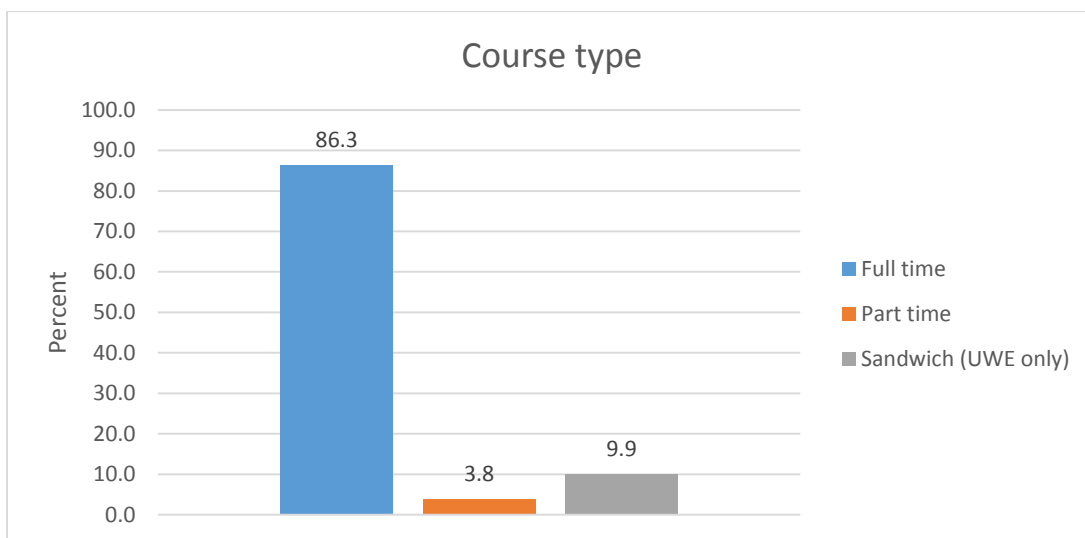
When looking at age, the largest proportion of students were in the 18-21 category, which is perhaps unsurprising considering that the vast majority of students fall within this age range. There was also considerable interest amongst students aged 22-25 however, with 39.0% falling into this category. In the older age categories (26-29, 30+) the proportions are much smaller, perhaps reflecting the relatively low proportion of mature students in comparison to those in the younger categories.

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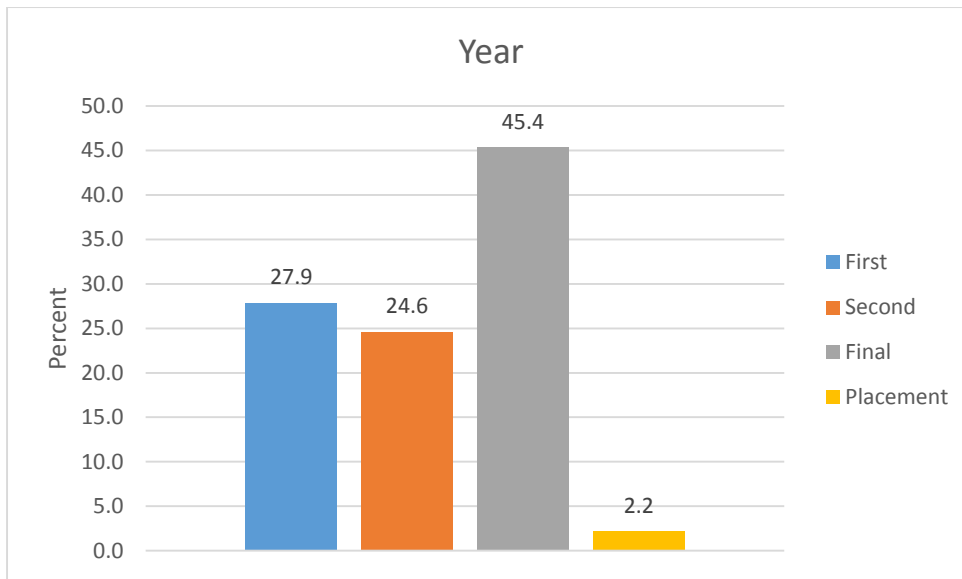
When looking at residency, it is interesting to note that 39.3% of students engaged were not from the UK, suggesting that engagement of this type is particularly attractive to overseas students compared to home students.

Anecdotally, there is the suggestion that getting engaging in volunteering activities etc. is something which has a number of unique benefits for overseas students. It provides a good opportunity for socialising and developing relationships, and it gives people a chance to get out and see some of the country that they are visiting for university.

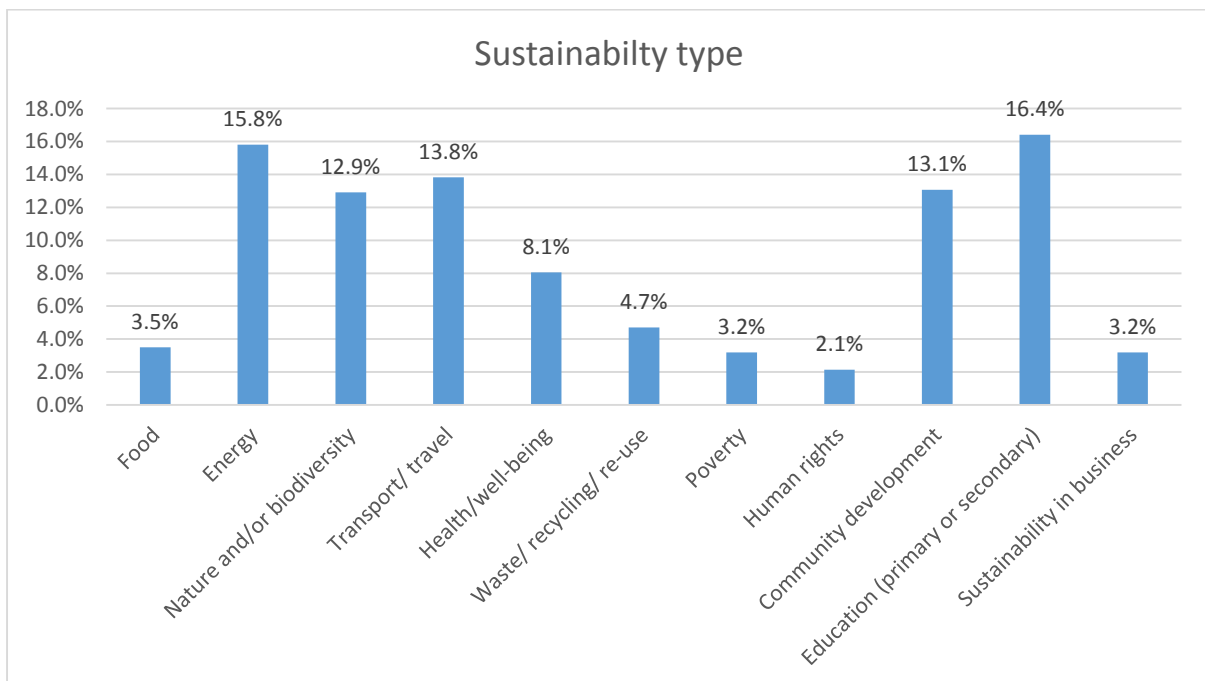


The majority of students that engaged were on full time courses (86.3%). This suggests that sustainability engagement is most attractive to students who have university as their sole occupation, and that it might be more difficult to engage in these activities for students that are only at university part time.

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Final year students were the most likely to engage. 45.4% of respondents were in their final year. Placement students (perhaps understandably) formed a very small proportion of those who engaged (2.2%).



The final table shows the proportion of all projects contained aspects of different types of sustainability. From the data it is evident that the most common types of sustainability project were energy-related, nature/biodiversity-related, transport-related, community development-related, and education-related. These results are useful for the engagement teams at the universities as they can help to identify areas in which engagement is good, and also areas for improvement.

The evaluation also collected qualitative data in which students explained their experiences in greater depth. Again this was predominantly positive, with some examples of this included below:

One of the students who took part in Bristol Hub's Social Innovation Programme described her experience as follows:

"Taking part in the Social Innovation Programme (SIP) was more than just attending some training sessions, it was an opportunity to work with a local charity and to really make a difference. We were given a task that we genuinely felt was contributing to the charity and was not just a CV filler activity. It was an invaluable experience to not only learn practical skills but to also discover more about the injustices that street-based sex workers have experienced. The SIP truly allows you to feel like you have made a genuine difference and taken action in your local area whilst cultivating skills as a student consultant and team member at the same time. I would definitely recommend it."

A number of student provided feedback on different aspects of the experience:

Q: What was the most meaningful or enjoyable thing about your experience?

"Meeting like-minded people and proving to myself I am capable of being useful when given the opportunity. Encouraging others from years below to share my passion or ambitions for change and good cause."

"I was able to combine my creativity with my passion for the environment."

"My most meaningful and enjoyable thing about this whole experience was going into the school to do the first workshop, even though nervous, the children gave a great response and it was fun being able to give the children an hour of my day. Also seeing how intelligent some of the children were about some of the climate change and sustainability issues so far was also very surprising and seeing how much they wanted and were willing to help was amazing."

Q: What did you learn about Bristol?

"I learned that little changes we can all make will, as a whole, make a difference to the country and the world. Examples include recycling and buying FSC products."

"Bristol is a very beautiful city. When I first came to Bristol as an international student, I was surprised to see bicycle lanes, other than just car lanes. Then I came to learn about that Bristol is UK's first cycling city!"

"I am very glad because I have learn what Bristol is doing and mostly, what Bristol have done to achieve the Green Capital 2015 and what techniques and public policies were used to stimulate in creating a culture of being sustainable in the population. I think that's a very difficult thing to do in other cities/countries and Bristol can be an example. It is a step forward to a better world."

Q: What did you learn about sustainability?

“Food wastage creates environmental and ethical issues such as causing climate change and could be converted into useful energy or by products that can be utilised in other trades creating a cycle for managing sustainability and resources.”

“That unless we reduce our consumption and throwaway culture, then our natural world will be destroyed. We are leaving behind a legacy that the next generation would not thank us for.”

“It’s hard! It’s hard to push against the current, and to bring people together to realise the real benefits of changing our behaviour. That the best way is to start small and keep pushing and trying.”

Report on progress - organisations

Evaluation of the experiences of the external organisations is underway, however the results of this have not yet been compiled, and these will be reported in the final monitoring report in December 2016.

However, a number of organisations have already provided verbal feedback on their experiences of working with students:

“Students have been really valuable. We got them involved last year and they added a vibrancy to what we’re doing in the woodland. The problem was stopping them, not starting them, they worked so hard, they were great.”

Dominic Driver – Simms Hill Community Woodland

“Having students involved in our project has been great because they bring a real diversity to what we do. We work with older people and so having younger volunteers is just fantastic for everybody involved.”

Ruth Baker – Growing Support

“The student team helped do some necessary work that we were struggling to find time for in the day-to-day running of the project.” – North Bristol Food Bank

“The SIP volunteer-team came up with really relevant solutions to our problems: that was the best bit about it for me. They asked LOTS of questions and really got to the bottom of the problem, before presenting a really exciting & viable solution to our current problems.” – Avon Club for Young People

“Forest Schools is a unique part of our curriculum at Bannerman Road Community Academy as it enables our children to experience the outdoors when many of our children live in small flats with no access to gardens. Without the dedicated volunteers from Bristol Hub we would not be able to do many of the activities that inspire the children such as den building, fire lighting and sawing. All of these activities have a huge impact on the children such learning how to work as a team, risk analysis, independence and knowledge of the world around them.”
– Samantha Fisher, Assistant Head teacher

100% of teachers in Bristol said that their pupils' interest, confidence, and attainment in the subject improved through our Schools Plus programme where student volunteers deliver weekly tutoring sessions to pupils in local disadvantaged schools:

"I appreciate her hugely! She has been a sensitive, wise and keen volunteer through this period and we have greatly benefited from research she has carried out for her university studies. The quality of her work is first class."

"He [student] translated Bristol's eco-school material for Chinese schools to learn about waste education. He also facilitate the communication between Bristol schools and Chinese school on waste education. The hour he volunteered is more than 15 hours. I am very impressed by his passion and profound skills to transfer Bristol's schools successful waste education to Chinese school."

"The whole experience has been brilliant, and left the group feeling really positive. It has been a two way process and we have shared information and had input all the way through. It has been fantastic to work with the University, lots of people in this area don't go to University or have any connections. We were pleased to establish links to a previously untapped pool of knowledge and expertise."



Green Gown Awards 2015



This is to certify that the panel of judges for the Awards selected:

University of Bristol and University of the West of England

as

Finalist

in the

Student Engagement

Category



Category supporters

Dissemination supporters



Media supporters



Ceremony supporters



The Green Gown Awards are administered by the EAUC