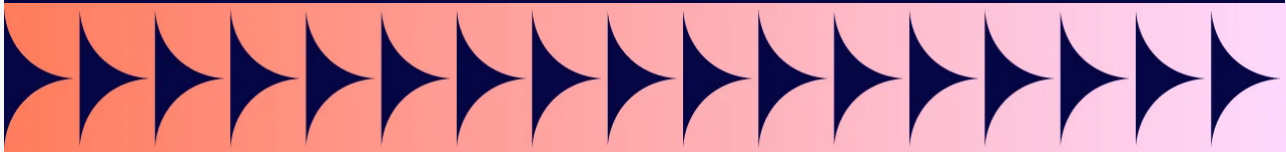




Welcome to this bite-sized edition of the Sustainability Newsletter.

September 2026



We hope it provides an easy-to-read overview of sustainability activities across the OU. If you'd like to dive deeper into any topic, just click the links within each story.

Sustainability Spotlight

How has the summer heatwave affected you? This summer has brought periods of unusually hot weather, and we want to understand how this may have affected colleagues. Your feedback will help identify ways to improve support, comfort and wellbeing during future heatwaves. [The anonymous survey should take less than a minute to complete.](#)

News, resources & engagement opportunities

- In September, The OU hosted a **Climate Ambassadors event**. The session featured Paul Astles from LDS, who shared his experience of becoming a Climate Ambassador, the training and support he received, and how he has worked with a local primary school to support sustainability initiatives and inspire climate action in the community. [Watch the recording and find out more about the Climate Ambassadors programme here.](#)
- **Join the new Climate Fiction Reading Group.** The group will meet every other month to discuss a short piece of speculative fiction engaging with the implications of climate change. Open to all OU colleagues and postgraduate research students, the first session takes place in October. [Sign up for the first session](#)
- **Explore new thinking on trees for hotter cities.** OU research has contributed to a new approach designed to build community support for tree planting. A related public course, Tree Value Visions, is also available. [Read the OU News story.](#)

- **Attend a UN Global Compact Network UK SDG Roadshow.** The autumn roadshow will bring together business, finance, government and civil society to connect global Sustainable Development Goal ambitions with local risks, opportunities and investment decisions. Events take place in Manchester on 23 September, Glasgow on 29 September, Belfast on 2 October and Bristol on 8 October. [Request an invitation](#)

Dates for your green diary

- **Join the MK Cycling Summit on Thursday 15 October 2026**, hosted by the OU and Cycling Citizens MK at the OU's Milton Keynes campus, to explore the future of cycling and help close the gender pedal gap, with tickets now available via [Eventbrite](#).
- **Celebrate one year of climate impact with Ecosia** and the OU by joining our [Go Green webinar on Thursday 22 October, 12.00–1.00pm](#), to discover the difference our searches have made since switching last October.
- **Explore how universities can help create a more just and sustainable future** by joining educators, researchers, learning designers, and sustainability advocates from around the world at the [Teaching and Researching for a Just Transition: Planetary Boundaries and Ethics 2026 symposium on 24–25 September 2026, with registration closing on 21 September 2026](#).
- **20 September: World Cleanup Day.** A global opportunity to reflect on sustainability, waste and the small actions we can all take to look after our environment.
- **29 September, 18.00 to 19.30: People's Emergency Briefing.** OpenSU Environmental Sustainability Society hosts an additional evening screening during Welcome Week. [Staff are welcome to attend](#).
- EAUC and AUDE events are free for OU staff ([you can sign up here](#)).
 - **21 September, 11.00 to 12.00: Shaping Smarter Campuses.** AUDE online event for members will examine strategy, compliance and growth in estates management. [Book your place](#)
 - **29 September 2026, 11am to 12:00: Environmental sustainability concordat community of practice.** EAUC online event relevant for members of the UK's research and innovation sector with an interest in the Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. [Book your place](#).
 - **30 September 2026, 13:30 to 15:00: Education for Sustainable Development community of practice meeting.** EAUC online event exploring developing and assessing student sustainability competencies through theory, practice and stories. [Book your place](#).
 - **15 October, 14.00 to 15.00: From Ambition to Action.** AUDE online event for members will set out a practical roadmap for decarbonising university estates. [Book your place](#)

Help us share your positive news

- **The OU's contribution to Ecosia tree planting has passed 50,000 trees.** See the latest report on the Sustainability intranet. [View the latest Ecosia report](#)
- **ENCASE is a finalist in the 2026 UK and Ireland Green Gown Awards.** The Horizon Europe-funded project brought research institutions, operators, manufacturers, academia and small and medium-sized enterprises together to advance carbon capture and storage research and technology in Europe. The Business School team embedded co-creation and social innovation across five engineering research organisations in the UK, Norway, France, Italy and the Netherlands. ENCASE engaged more than 650 participants in sustainability-focused co-creation activities linked to three UN Sustainable Development Goals. The awards ceremony takes place in Leeds on 16 November.
- **A children's book developed through ENCASE is available online.** Choose It, Use It and Put It Away was co-created with primary school children in East Kilbride and is being distributed free to primary schools across Scotland. [Read the book](#)

Sustainability is Everyone's job

- **Take the commuter travel survey.** Milton Keynes City Council wants to understand how employees travel to and from work and identify opportunities to support more sustainable and accessible options. The survey takes around 10 minutes and closes on 21 September 2026. Participants can opt into a prize draw for a £50 or £25 My-MK City Centre gift card. [Complete the survey](#).
- **Got positive sustainability news to share?** Contact the Sustainability Office at sustainability@open.ac.uk

Get involved



Become an EAUC Member

To access resources and invites to regional meetings

HOW BAD ARE BANANAS? The Carbon Footprint Games

How Bad Are Bananas?

Play this game at your next team away day or event

Carbon Literacy Project



Carbon Literacy Training

Upskill, resell and make a pledge to take workplace action.



LinkedIn

Join The Open University's Sustainability LinkedIn Group.



Go Green

Join our Go Green network and workshops.

Responsible Futures

Responsible Futures

A framework to embed sustainability in the curriculum

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