

Organisation:	Aston University
Sector:	Education
Requirements:	To achieve meaningful carbon emissions while organisation continues to grow
Services provided:	Gaining senior level commitment and engagement to the University team's sustainability and behaviour change programme
Provider:	Mulholland Energy on behalf of The Green Consultancy
Achievements:	30% carbon emissions reduction



IPMVP ★★★★★
level

The University

Founded in 1895 and becoming a University in 1966, Aston is an established research-led University, known for its world-class teaching quality and strong links with industry, government and commerce. Located in Birmingham, the University has strong links with the city and attracts students from all over the world.

Over the last 20 years Aston has been rated as a top University for graduate employability (80 in the world and 12th in the UK).

The mission of the Estates Team is to deliver and maintain a sustainable campus and infrastructure that enhances the student experience and provides high quality accommodation and space that is accessible, efficient, flexible and responds to the needs of a wide range of users.

The Challenge

Aston University is facing the same carbon challenge as many similar institutions: to achieve meaningful carbon emissions while the organisation continues to grow in size.

Graham Faulks, Deputy Director of Estates, Engineering and Sustainability and Andrew Bryers, Energy, Environment and Sustainability Manager, recognised that energy management responsibility had to be more than an estates issue. It required a corporate culture to put sustainability at the heart of all initiatives and for the energy awareness message to be communicated to every corner of the University. A key element was to gain full support from the Vice-Chancellor and the senior management team.

The Solution

The University developed a strategy for engagement and behaviour change and specialist support was provided by **John Mulholland** of MES, working on behalf of The Green Consultancy (TGC). The scope of work included:

- Gaining further support from the Vice-Chancellor, Dame Julia King (now Baroness Brown of Cambridge).
- Gaining senior management buy-in by one-to-one interviews, addressing meetings and speaking at conferences and launch events.
- Reviewing the campaign strategy and materials devised by the Energy and Sustainability Team led by Andrew Bryers.
- Designing a staff energy/environmental survey, analysing the results from 388 respondents and writing a report.
- Reviewing and delivering training for a network of sustainability Champions representing different departments across the University.
- Assisting the Energy and Sustainability Team with energy walkabouts with Champions in their departments and engaging end-users in their workplace.



Launch event

The Results

There has been a step change in staff and student engagement. The Vice-Chancellor helped to set Aston's goal of reducing carbon emissions by 53% by 2020 against a 2006 baseline. By 2014/15 emissions have reduced by 30% and, with continual engagement initiatives combined with capital projects, the University is aiming to achieve the 2020 target.

Go Green Campaign Mascot



Energy Walkabout

The Vice-Chancellor keeps sustainability on the agenda at every opportunity and has created a platform which allows Bryers and his team to introduce initiatives to reduce energy consumption and promote staff and student engagement.

The University has a Departmental Electricity League Table to increase visibility of relative performance and promote accountability. In addition regular Carbon Weeks address the students and a culture shift is underway to make sustainability the norm. Energy awareness and sustainability is growing as it is built into the curricula, courses and daily activities. Research projects at the application stages are subject to a review of predicted electricity consumption over the life of each project.

Good progress has been achieved on embedding a low carbon culture across the University but this is an ongoing process and has to address each new intake of students, researchers and teaching staff.

The Reaction

"It has been a pleasure to work with The Green Consultancy and I am confident that together we have created an awareness of energy management-related issues within a significant and senior group of people, which is what we set out to do."



Graham Faulks, Deputy Director of Estates, Engineering and Sustainability