

Annual Report 2023



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Message from our CEO and Co-Chairs

2023 marked considerable change for EAUC. We saw the departure of some longstanding members of staff and board members, welcomed our new CEO, have grown our overall headcount, and can look back and celebrate some significant achievements, which are highlighted in this annual report. Despite our modest size, we continue to deliver an impressive breadth and volume of work, oft cited as ‘punching above our weight’.

This year, we have focused on extensive listening, deep reflection, and collaborative enquiry about who we are, what we do, and the impact we create. This work has shaped our new strategy set to launch in 2024. Change is afoot, and we are poised to navigate it with confidence and clarity.

Throughout the year, we celebrated the milestones that have become staples in our calendar. The Green Gown Awards, both in the UK and internationally, once again highlighted some of the most innovative and impactful people and initiatives across our sector.

Our annual conference in Bath brought together a diverse group of stakeholders, fostering dialogue and collaboration to drive climate and broader sustainability solutions.

In addition to these established events, we have initiated several new projects and forged closer relationships with policymakers and funders. Our work with the Department for Education, the Scottish Funding Council, and other key partners has been instrumental in affecting change both on the ground and within the systems and frameworks that shape our sector.

We recognise the significant challenges faced across the post-16 education sector. We know that political change is likely in the coming year. EAUC’s biggest asset is our network. We’re a convenor. We know we’re not going to solve the sustainability challenges we face alone but we absolutely have it within our power to navigate the ever-changing landscape in which we work with a deep-rooted commitment to our vision: a post-16 education system that places sustainability at its heart.

Thank you for being a part of this vital work and for joining us in the next chapter of our journey.



Charlotte Bonner
CEO



Laurence Frewin
Co-Chair



Professor Zoe Robinson
Co-Chair

Our Strategy

EAUC is the environmental and sustainability champion within Further and Higher Education in the UK and Ireland. Our passion is to create a world with sustainability at its heart. That's our vision - we exist to lead and empower the post-16 education sector to make sustainability 'just good business'.

EAUC is a not-for-profit, member based charity run by members for members. From starting out as a voluntary organisation in 1996, we have grown to represent over 2 million students and nearly 400,000 staff, with a spending budget of over £25 billion. We help leaders, academics and other professionals to drive sustainability into the heart of their post-16 education institutions.

Our Vision

Our vision is a university, college and learning and skills sector where the principles and values of environmental, economic and social sustainability are embedded.

Our Mission

We will lead, inspire and equip members and stakeholders with a shared vision, knowledge and the tools they need to embed sustainability within curriculum and operations.

Our goals

- **Strategic Alignment:** we embed sustainability within institutions to enhance employability, research, quality teaching, student experience, internationalism, efficiency, social responsibility, retention and growth.
- **Advocacy:** we harness our longevity and reputation alongside that our membership base to provide EAUC members with a credible and knowledgeable voice.
- **Research and Knowledge Exchange:** we facilitate the wealth of experience and knowledge for our members to ensure ongoing creation and dissemination of knowledge of sustainability.
- **Maximised Resources:** We have a strong, transparent business model with diverse income streams. maximised membership potential and strong brand recognition.

- **Stronger Community:** we encourage and enable members to work together and take the lead on projects to create greater synergy and success through collaboration.
- **Expanded Horizons:** we contribute to the wider sustainability agenda through local, national and international awards and alliances.

In 2023, we've also invested time in extensive listening, deep reflection, and collaborative enquiry with our staff, board, fellows, members and partners to inform a new strategy which we plan to launch in mid-2024.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The EAUC is taking proactive steps to improve Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) internally, across our Board and Staff, as well as externally, across HE and FE and in the sustainability sector. The actions the EAUC takes seek to enhance fairness, opportunity and representation that, overall, should inspire, celebrate and advance the critical role of EDI across the sustainability field.

In 2023 we:

- Submitted to the RACE Report
- Created a glossary of terms
- Developed a fair work and pay commitment
- Became a Level 1 Disability Confident Employer
- Increased our reach by widening our advertising of our board vacancies
- Developed a web accessibility statement
- Incorporated virtual closed captioning as default for virtual meetings.

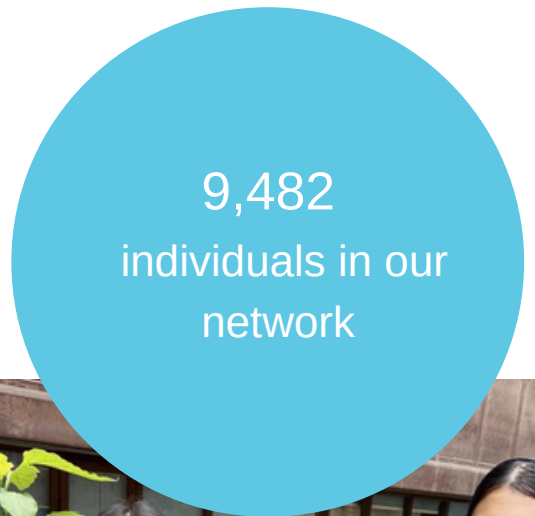


Our Members and Partners

We are proud to convene and support organisations committed to advancing sustainability in and through education, with the majority of our members falling into the educational membership category. Despite a challenging financial landscape for the sector, we were delighted to maintain a 93% educational member renewal rate and welcome 26 new educational institutions to our membership.

We continue to partner with a large number of other sector bodies, networks and both not-for-profit and values led private sector organisations to support our members, create new solutions and to work collaboratively on shared goals. In 2023 we worked with 9 company members and nearly 200 different strategic partners.

Across our members, 9,482 people are accessing and benefitting from their EAUC memberships.



Goal 1

Strategic Alignment

We embed sustainability within institutions to enhance employability, research, quality teaching, student experience, internationalism, efficiency, social responsibility, retention and growth.

University and College Land for Carbon

Over the past year, we have developed and published a new suite of resources in collaboration with MyCarbon to support universities and colleges to create woodlands on their estates, sequester carbon, gain carbon credits and help them reach net-zero.

The resources provide tailored support at each stage in the project lifecycle, including project initiation; environmental site assessment; financial modelling; stakeholder engagement and governance structure. The project was funded by the Environment Agency's Natural Environment Investment Ready Fund (NEIRF).

Association of Colleges partnership

We are delighted to have a partnership with the Association of Colleges (AoC) to provide greater support to many of our FE members. We provide monthly briefings providing the latest news and best practice, provide support to AoC colleagues such as policy and regional directors as well as supporting the sustainability special interest group.

Governance toolkit: a whole college approach to climate action

In partnership with the Education and Training Foundation and the Association of Colleges, we published a toolkit to support college governors to position climate change as a strategic organisational issue, equipping them with skills and knowledge to influence their management boards to take timely, positive and decisive action to drive a sustainability strategy. We also delivered a webinar to introduce the toolkit along with a case study from Solihull College.

Climate Ambassadors

We were proud to work with the University of Reading, STEM Learning, and numerous other partners to secure funding from the Department for Education to support the expansion of the Climate Ambassadors scheme, supporting education settings from early years through to colleges develop and deliver climate action plans. The project will launch with gusto in 2024.

Goal 2

Advocacy

We harness our longevity and reputation alongside that of our membership base to provide EAUC members with a credible and knowledgeable voice.

Policy and advocacy

We continued to support, educate and inform institutional and society leaders about the value of sustainability in the education sector. Key pieces of advocacy and policy work in 2023 included:

- Collating key findings from COP28 and how they relate to the education sector
- Launching the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework
- Publishing the Accelerating Towards Net Zero report alongside the Royal Anniversary Trust

Consultations

We responded to the following consultations:

- UKRI Consultation on the Concordat for Environmental Sustainability of Research & Innovation Practice
- DESNZ Scope 3 emissions in the UK reporting landscape
- Scottish Government Review of National Outcomes: call for evidence
- Wellbeing and Sustainable Development (Scotland) Bill



Celebrating the role of the Green Gown Awards in sharing effective practice across the sector at the All Party Parliamentary Universities Group

Goal 3

Research and Knowledge Exchange

We facilitate the wealth of experience and knowledge for our members to ensure ongoing creation and dissemination of knowledge of sustainability.

EAUC Annual Conference

In 2023, we were delighted to be back in our summer conference slot again, this time at the University of Bath, where we brought members together under the theme of “Conversations on Climate Solutions.”

We welcomed over 250 delegates from over 80 institutions, as well as sponsors and exhibitors. 94% of delegates said the event experience was either “Excellent” or “Good”, and we had positive feedback on all sessions.

With the aim of facilitating more deeper peer-to-peer learning, we introduced longer “Conversation Sessions” where delegates had more time to discuss topics and interact with each other. These sessions were extremely well received and will become a standard feature at future conferences.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone again alongside lots of new faces at the University of Winchester for our 2024 annual conference.



“I found [the conversation sessions] far more valuable than the usual conference structure of a long talk with Q&A session ... it really encouraged good networking and I found I got a lot more out of these sessions.”

Carbon Literacy training

Our Carbon Literacy training (CLT) continues to go from strength to strength. All 10 training courses in 2023 were fully booked, with three bespoke training sessions delivered during the year. Overall, we trained over 200 learners from over 45 institutions in 2023.

In 2024, we intend to expand our Carbon Literacy training offer with dedicated courses for managers and leaders in our network.

We are also proud that we maintained our Platinum Carbon Literate Organisation status.

Green Gown Awards

We continued to recognise, showcase and inspire a wide range of exceptional sustainability initiatives in institutions around the world through the Green Gown Awards.

For the UK & Ireland Awards, we recognised excellence by granting 20 winners and 17 high commended awards. We were grateful to have continued support from UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to deliver these awards.

**Carbon Literate
Organisation**
Platinum



For the International Awards, we granted 12 winners and 14 highly commended awardees. Applications were received from 25 countries. We were grateful to have the continued support of Allianz Global Investors.

Throughout 2023, we also supported learning and further adoption of sustainable practices by sharing case studies and top three learnings from finalists' projects with the wider EAUC network.

Case study

Universidad del Norte in Columbia won the 2023 International Green Gown Award for the Nature Positive category for restoring the university's forest land through field trips and species monitoring. The judges were impressed by the way the university had recognised and used the land to conserve and educate learners.



Image credit: Universidad del Norte

Goal 4

Maximised Resources

We have a strong, transparent business model with diverse income streams, maximised membership potential and strong brand recognition.

Consultancy

We are proud to have launched a new sustainability consulting service for the higher and further education sector through our partnership with SUMS Consulting. Sixteen sustainability knowledge experts from across our membership are providing sector-specific expertise and knowledge. The consultancy offer has started with a focus on net zero and climate which in 2024 we will expand to include curriculum and education for sustainable development.



"It was great working with the SUMS and EAUC team. They really understood our challenge and what we were aiming to achieve. Their approach was very thorough from the outset and gave us confidence that they were focused on what we needed."

Daisy Malt, Sustainability Manager, University of Essex

The Carbon Coalition

We launched the Carbon Coalition, an offsetting initiative for the education sector in 2022. In 2023 we worked in partnership with London Universities Purchasing Consortia (LUPC) and The Energy Consortia (TEC) to create a national framework for the Carbon Coalition. This ensures that institutions can have confidence when purchasing through the Carbon Coalition that it meets all procurement regulations.

In 2024, we will be launching a new portfolio of projects that are aligned to our new scoring criteria which is set by our Advisory Board.

We have also launched a new Community of Practice which provides members a place to discuss and share experiences on offsetting, insetting and carbon taxes.

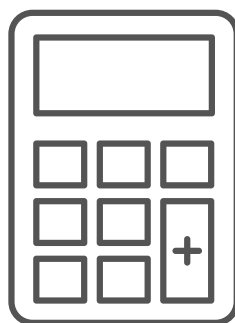


Sustainability Leadership Scorecard

The Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS) is a whole institution self-assessment tool, delivered in partnership by EAUC and AUDE (The Association of University Directors of Estates). Our [2023 SLS annual report](#), launched in the fifth year of the scorecard, highlighted a growth in users to 74 institutions who now actively use the platform. 93% of these active users are within Higher Education.

The tool covers four key thematic areas critical to a whole institution approach: leadership and governance; estates and operations; partnership and engagement; learning, teaching and research. The greatest proportion of users have reported on the leadership framework and the least on the research framework, indicating that there is more we can do to encourage participation in this area.

We will continue to encourage more of our FE members to use the SLS and illustrate how the tool can help with gap analysis of their activities.



Cost of Net Zero Calculator and Report

In 2023, we launched the Cost of Net Zero calculator tool and report, in partnership with AUDE and BUFDG (the British Universities Finance Directors Group).

The new tool give institutions a standardised means of calculating the cost of reducing and negating their carbon emissions, with the aim of helping institutions to unlock funding and enable better long-term sustainability planning.

Analysis in the accompanying report estimates that the overall cost of achieving net zero for the entire sector is £43.8bn. This is made up of £37.1bn for Higher Education and £6.7bn for Further Education. The report built upon and used the methodology from the 'Accelerating towards net zero' report published in early 2023.

The report has been widely picked up across the sector, being referenced in numerous policy spaces and public discussions about the financial and environmental sustainability of our sector.

Goal 5

Stronger Community

We encourage and enable members to work together and take the lead on projects to create greater synergy and success through collaboration.

Member networks

Throughout 2023, we remained committed to providing members with a range of opportunities to exchange ideas, skills and experiences online and in person. In addition to our annual conference, we convened 52 regional, branch and Community of Practice meetings. We also facilitated three roundtables for our key contacts and Fellows.

Popular topics for the meetings included net zero, decarbonisation, reporting travel surveys, EV infrastructure, active travel and student engagement.

In response to member feedback, we also set up a new Sustainable Events Community of Practice.

We also continued to attend and contribute knowledge to forums in the wider sustainability and education sectors. These included:

- London Higher Sustainability Network
- Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE) Sustainability Advisory Group
- National Climate Education Action Plan Group
- Climate Education and Skills Group

- Association of Colleges Sustainability Special Interest Group
- Courtauld 2030 Hospitality & Food Service Working Group
- Sustain FE

52

meetings facilitated

860

attendees



“Really interesting to hear about similar challenges at other institutions and great to get perspectives form others about how to approach our own challenges. Thank you, I learned a lot”.

Goal 6

Expanded Horizons

We contribute to the wider sustainability agenda through local, national and international awards and alliances.

SDG Accord

We presented our annual SDG Accord report to the United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in July 2023. This was part of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI) day.

With 145 institutional signatories contributing, the annual report provides an in-depth review of the international university and college sector's progress on embedding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

As of December 2023, the SDG Accord has been signed by:

- 2033 individuals
- 388 institutions
- 246 support organisations
- 67 students' unions

Race to Zero

We continued to welcome new signatories to the Race to Zero for Universities and Colleges, as a partner to the UNFCCC's Race to Zero campaign for driving progress in meeting net zero ambitions. This shows the impact that the education sector has on a global scale in meeting net zero targets as soon as possible.

As of December 2023,

- 1215 institutions involved across 85 countries
- 554 of these institutions have a published net zero plan and are reporting annually on their carbon emissions
- 11.5 million students represented



Scotland Focus

Delivered by our team in Scotland and funded by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), this programme supports Scottish further and higher education institutions to develop a skilled and informed, holistic approach to sustainability within governance, operations, learning and teaching, and engagement activities.

Key outputs and outcomes

Leadership at all levels

- 687 attendees joined 38 EAUC Scotland events
- 4.8% increase in educational contacts compared to 2022/23
- 90% of Scottish institutions joined at least 1 EAUC Scotland event over the programme
- Delivered Carbon Literacy Training to 27 participants

Skills, Knowledge and Data

- Published 2021/22 FE and HE sector reports for Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Reporting
- Expanded the Public Bodies Reporting Peer Review to 23 institutions
- Published 18 new, freely available sustainability support resources

- 94% of event attendees believed EAUC Scotland is helping them develop their skills and knowledge

Partnerships and Collaborations

- Extension of the Central & South Scotland College Partnership which is a sustainability shared-services staffing with 3 colleges
- Engaged with 108 non-FHE organisations through events or engagement calls
- 166 non-Scottish FHE attendees at EAUC Scotland events
- Directly engaged with 5 partner network steering/working groups

Teaching, Research and Engagement

- Delivered 9 Education for Sustainability events and workshops
- Published two new resources on green careers for both students and career services staff
- Developed Monitoring and Evaluating ESD in HE resources through QAA funded project

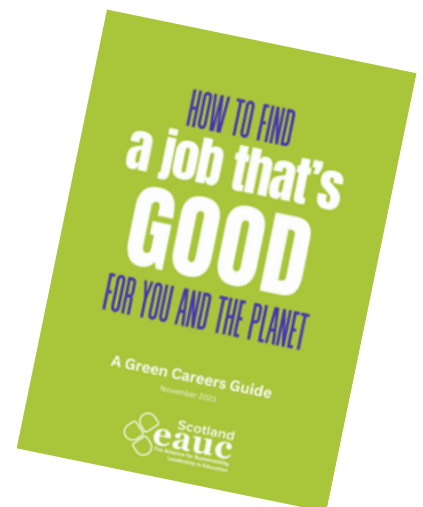
Supporting Wider Stakeholders

- Delivered workshops to SFC staff on sector sustainability benchmarking, aviation in the post-16 education and research sector and the relevance and potential of education for sustainable development
- Supported development of Scottish Government's update to PBCCD statutory guidance
- Submitted 2 responses to Scottish Government consultations

Resource spotlight

Aimed at people who are in, thinking about entering, or finishing tertiary education, this guide helps learners to better understand how to find a job that contributes to a greener future.

Feedback suggests the guide successfully busts myths, showing green jobs are about more than “windfarms and wellies”. It has been accessed over 8,000 times on our webpages since published in November 2023.



Created in collaboration with the [Adaptation Scotland](#) programme, the Climate Risk Register Guide and Tool assists institutions that are at the beginning and intermediate stages of their adaptation journey to take the next right step.

Relevant to institutions across the UK and Ireland, it brings in:

- Best practice examples from universities and colleges preparing their institutions for present and future climate scenarios
- A bespoke Climate Risk Register tool and Borders College case study of the tool in practice that you can complete and modify for your own institution's needs.



Carbon report

In line with our vision, mission and workaims, we aim to minimise our carbon footprint as much as possible.

2023 results

Our carbon footprint has increased by 63% and is 143 tonnes of CO₂ for the 2023 period. The increase is mostly due to methodology changes: we've increased the number of months where we estimate staff are heating their homes to six. We have also increased some of our activities, particularly communication and UK based travel as well as growing our staff team.

As a home-based organisation, we use Sustainable Scotland Network Reporting Guidance to calculate our staff's electricity and heating usage based on hours worked from home. We also included water usage applying 2023 Defra conversion factors. We recognise that water is still being used at people's homes.

We work to minimise our carbon footprint as much as possible, and will continue to do so. As with all organisations, we still have a residual carbon footprint which we offset, using the Carbon Coalition. This year we offset our full footprint, 143 tonnes of CO₂.

Our scopes

- Scope 1: We are a home-based organisation so we do not have any direct scope 1 emissions
- Scope 2: We calculate our staff heating, electricity and lighting use based on home-working calculations
- Scope 3: We calculate our travel (staff and board), our water use (based on home-working calculations) and our supply chain emissions (based on the [Higher Education Supply Chain Emissions Tool \(HESCET\)](#) method)

Figure 1: 2022 vs 2023 overall emissions

	Staff (FTE)	Total carbon emissions (kgCO ₂)	Carbon emissions per FTE (kgCO ₂ /FTE)	Income per annum £	Carbon emissions per unit of income (kgCO ₂ /£)
2023	12.03	143,373	11,913	925,469	0.15
2022	11.18	88,010	7,869	837,426	0.11
% increase/decrease	8%	63%	51%	11%	47%

Figure 2: Breakdown of our carbon

Breakdown of our carbon	KgCO ₂	%
Scope 2 Total	38,847	27%
Scope 3 Total	104,526	73%
Travel	2,409	2%
Supply chain	102,100	98%
Water	17	0.02%
Total	143,373	100%



EAUC

The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges

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