

Sustainability Dissertation Topics

Our Sustainability Strategy is centred on 3 signature campaigns 'Positive Climate', 'The Loop' and 'Wild Bloomsbury'. They provide an initial focus for bringing together our teaching, research and operations to tackle social and environmental challenges.

Positive Climate will use UCL's wealth of climate change expertise and research to reduce carbon emissions. Our goal is to have net zero carbon buildings by 2024 and to be a net zero carbon institution by 2030.

Research topics include:

- Review UCL buildings for climate change resilience and implement adaptation measures
- Research into enhancing video conferencing for large events
- Sourcing renewable energy provider for gas to enable a zero carbon heating supply
- Research on academic travel reduction initiatives
- Research on UCL's new Climate Accountability Scheme (combining a carbon price with behavioural nudges) to incentivise climate action by departments.
- Reducing the climate impact of UCL's hospitality

The Loop will tackle unsustainable consumption by reducing waste and specifying the best products for people and planet. We'll be rethinking our relationship with products. Asking who is making them, where they come from, where they end-up and whether we really need them at all? Our goal is to reduce waste per person by 20% and to become a single-use plastic free campus by 2024.

Research topics include:

- How to eliminate plastic across UCL
- How to increase recycling at UCL (campaign)
- Labels and messaging on food

Sustainability labels and messaging on food

Consumers are becoming more aware of sustainability considerations in food production and consumption. In addition to the traditional dietary and nutritional requirements, consumers are seeking labels and certifications to know where and how food is made, what it is made from, its carbon footprint and sustainability credentials. UCL would like to investigate what information we should supply, how this should be displayed, communicated and marketed, to allow our communities to make informed decisions and promote a flexitarian diet. It is anticipated this would require the following activity:

- Developing questionnaires for opinions on carbon footprinting, carbon pricing and other sustainability information they want to know about, to inform point of sale purchasing choices in outlets.
- Comparing marketing of food as "vegan" or "plant based" and the impacts on consumer's perceptions.
- Investigating notion of "label fatigue" where consumers are overwhelmed by information on packaging, and impact of the project on this.
- Baseline data on food choices.

- Developing a labelling system for packaging/ refectory display boards – using data and survey responses.
- Trialling the labelling system.
- Surveying responses.
- Recording food choices and comparing to baseline, to identify behavioural change.

Wild Bloomsbury will introduce nature-based solutions to Bloomsbury. Our aim is to create 10,000m² of extra biodiverse space by 2024 – equivalent to more than one and half football pitches as well as increasing health and wellbeing for the Bloomsbury community.

- Research on different types of green infrastructure e.g. green walls, roofs, community gardens, and where UCL could implement them.
- Research on biodiversity and wildlife across UCL's estate.
- Research on air pollution levels across UCL's estate.