

University of Galway Sustainability Newsletter

Edition 2 | October | Academic Year 2026/27

Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the University of Galway Sustainability Office Newsletter, highlighting the people, projects and partnerships advancing sustainability and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across our campus and beyond.

This edition celebrates a number of important milestones, including the launch of our new Sustainability Strategy 2026-2030, our continued recognition as Ireland's leading university for sustainability, and the publication of our Annual Sustainability Report. We also reflect on recent events, international collaborations and new opportunities for staff and students to get involved.

These achievements reflect the collective commitment of our staff, students and partners to advancing sustainability across the University and wider community. Guided by our Learn-Live-Lead approach, we continue to embed sustainability across teaching, research, operations, leadership and engagement.



Members of the Community University Sustainability Partnership (CUSP) along with ENLIGHT colleagues celebrate the launch of the University of Galway's third Sustainability Strategy during the ENLIGHT Sustainability Staff Week 2026. Photo Credit: Aengus McMahon

Launch of University of Galway Sustainability Strategy 2026–2030

University of Galway launched its new Sustainability Strategy 2026–2030 in June, setting out an ambitious vision for a carbon-neutral, nature-positive and healthy university. Building on a decade of sustainability leadership, the Strategy outlines how the University will continue to embed sustainability across teaching, research, campus operations and community engagement. Developed through extensive consultation with staff, students and external partners, it is guided by our Learn-Live-Lead approach and reflects our commitment to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Strategy provides a shared direction for the University community to work together towards a more sustainable future.

[Read the Sustainability Strategy 2026–2030](#)

University of Galway Ranked No. 1 in Ireland for Sustainability for Fifth Consecutive Year

University of Galway has retained its position as Ireland's leading university for sustainability for the fifth consecutive year in the 2026 Times Higher Education Sustainability Rankings. The University was ranked 68th globally, 12th in Europe and third in the European Union, recognising its contribution to advancing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The rankings assess universities' impact through research, teaching, stewardship and outreach. This achievement reflects the collective efforts of staff, students and partners across the University and reinforces our commitment to embedding sustainability in all aspects of university life.

[Read more about our 2026 sustainability ranking](#)



Dr Richard Manton, Director of Sustainability, and Professor Becky Whay, Deputy President and Registrar, celebrate the University's success in the THE Sustainability Rankings 2026.

Photo credit: Aengus McMahon.

ENLIGHT Sustainability Staff Week 2026: Strengthening European Collaboration

University of Galway hosted the ENLIGHT Sustainability Staff Week from 17-19 June 2026, welcoming colleagues from across the ENLIGHT European University Alliance. Organised by the Sustainability Office in collaboration with the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT), the three-day programme provided opportunities to share good practice and strengthen international collaboration. Highlights included the launch of the University's Sustainability Strategy 2026-2030, presentations showcasing our Learn-Live-Lead approach, a campus sustainability tour and a field visit to the Burren. The programme concluded with workshops exploring Education for Sustainable Development and opportunities for future collaboration.

[Read more about ENLIGHT Sustainability Staff Week](#)



*Members of the Sustainability Office and CELT, joined by Professor Becky Whay, Deputy President and Registrar, celebrating the launch of ENLIGHT Sustainability Staff Week 2026.
Photo Credit: Aengus McMahon*

Publication of University of Galway Sustainability Report 2025/26

University of Galway has published its Annual Sustainability Report 2025/26, showcasing progress and achievements across all 17 UN SDGs. The report brings together contributions from across the University community, highlighting how sustainability is embedded in teaching and learning, research, campus stewardship and community engagement. It features examples of initiatives, projects and partnerships that are making a positive contribution locally, nationally and internationally. Developed through collaboration with colleagues across the University, the report provides an important record of our collective sustainability efforts and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to advancing the SDGs through our Learn-Live-Lead approach.

[Read the Annual Sustainability Report 2025/26](#)

SDG Week 2026: Sustainability in Action

University of Galway celebrated its fourth SDG Week from 19-25 September 2026, bringing together staff, students and community partners for a diverse programme of events promoting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The week showcased the breadth of sustainability activity taking place across the University and wider community, highlighting the importance of collaboration, engagement and collective action. As one of Ireland's first SDG Ambassadors, University of Galway continues to play an important role in raising awareness of the SDGs and encouraging meaningful action.

Highlights included Run into SDG Week, a water research showcase for secondary school students, biodiversity walks, film screenings, beach cleaning, volunteering opportunities and student-led initiatives. Talks, workshops and discussions explored a wide range of topics, including peace, renewable energy, sustainable laboratory practices, Education for Sustainable Development and community climate action. The programme also provided opportunities to showcase University research, share knowledge and encourage conversations around sustainability challenges and solutions. SDG Week 2026 demonstrated the enthusiasm and commitment of our university community and the many ways we can work together to promote a more sustainable future.

[Explore the SDG Week 2026 programme](#)



A snapshot of highlights from SDG Week 2026: Water Showcase, Run into SDG Week, Who Needs Anemones? film screening, and Discover the Herb Garden

New Sustainability Fund for Student Societies

The University of Galway Sustainability Office has launched a new Sustainability Fund for Student Societies, offering €500 awards to support student-led sustainability events during the 2026/27 academic year. The initiative aims to encourage creativity, collaboration and student participation in sustainability across campus. Societies are invited to propose events exploring topics such as biodiversity, sustainable fashion, food, waste reduction, climate action, health and wellbeing or community engagement. Events could include workshops, talks, demonstrations, challenges or creative activities. Applications open on 22 October and close on 6 November 2026. An information evening will take place on 21 October.

[Find out more and apply for the Societies Sustainability Fund](#)

Celebrating Excellence in Education for Sustainable Development: Curlew Awards 2026

The inaugural Curlew Awards for Excellence in Education for Sustainable Development were presented on 9 July 2026 at the Mary Robinson Climate and Nature Conference in Ballina, Co. Mayo. Delivered through a partnership between the Mary Robinson Centre, Atlantic Technological University and University of Galway, the awards recognise educators demonstrating outstanding commitment to embedding sustainability in higher education. Congratulations to University of Galway recipients Dr Declan Coogan, Dr Mamoon Asghar and Dr Fintan Hegarty, whose work demonstrates the important role of education in advancing sustainable development. The awards celebrate innovative teaching practices that inspire students to engage with sustainability challenges.



Curlew Award recipients Dr Declan Coogan, Dr Mamoon Asghar and Dr Fintan Hegarty in conversation with Dr Elizabeth Hurley at a CELT-hosted event celebrating Education for Sustainable Development during SDG Week 2026.

WATERWAY Project: Exploring Renewable Energy through Galway's Waterways

As part of the EU-funded WATERWAY Project, University of Galway is offering a new short course exploring the potential of small-scale hydropower, community energy and local climate action. Beginning on 20 October 2026, the course combines seven online Tuesday evening sessions with a guided Saturday morning walking tour of Galway's waterways. Participants will learn about renewable energy, Galway's canals and industrial heritage, environmental impacts and opportunities for community-led sustainability. Delivered with contributions from local, national and international experts, the course is open to anyone interested in renewable energy and climate action, with no specialist engineering knowledge required.

Find out more and register for the WATERWAY short course [here](#).

Green Labs Forum: Supporting Sustainable Laboratory Practices

The University of Galway Green Labs Forum continues to bring together staff and researchers interested in making laboratory practices more sustainable. Convened by the Sustainability Office, the forum provides opportunities to exchange ideas, share experiences and explore practical approaches to reducing laboratory waste, energy consumption and resource use. During SDG Week 2026, the forum featured contributions on the My Green Lab programme, examples of sustainable research practices and a tour of the Dalton Laboratory. Staff working in laboratories across the University are encouraged to get involved, share their experiences and connect with colleagues through the Green Labs Microsoft Teams community and regular forum meetings.

Contact the Sustainability Office at sustainability@universityofgalway.ie to find out how to join the Green Labs Forum and Teams community.



Jack O'Grady, Sustainability Programme Manager at My Green Lab, addresses the Green Labs Forum at University of Galway as part of SDG Week 2026.

Introducing Our Sustainability Interns 2026/27

We are delighted to welcome Joseph Curran and Nehasri Sagineedu as recipients of the University of Galway Student Sustainability Leadership Awards 2026. Joseph is studying Geography and Geosystems in the College of Arts, Social Sciences and Celtic Studies, while Nehasri is studying Medicine in the College of Medicine and Health. Each recipient receives a €3,700 scholarship and undertakes an internship with the Sustainability Office during the 2026/27 academic year.

Joseph's areas of interest include expanding vegan and vegetarian food options on campus, promoting Ireland's Re-turn Deposit Return Scheme and engaging with sustainability-focused student societies. Nehasri is interested in supporting the MediBack initiative, raising awareness of menstrual health, advancing Healthy Campus objectives aligned with the Higher Education Authority (HEA) framework, and introducing sustainability initiatives through the Teddy Bear Hospital in collaboration with Sláinte Society.

Together, they will help strengthen student engagement and promote practical sustainability action across the University community.

[Find out more about the Student Sustainability Leadership Awards](#)



University of Galway Student Sustainability Leadership Award recipients 2026/27: Nehasri Sagineedu (left) and Joseph Curran (right).

Want to Find Out More?

Stay connected with the University of Galway Sustainability Office on Instagram (@uniofgalwaysustainability) and LinkedIn (University of Galway Sustainability Office) or visit our [Sustainability Website](#).

If you are interested in sustainability events, initiatives or opportunities to get involved, please email sustainability@universityofgalway.ie.

We look forward to sharing more sustainability news, initiatives and opportunities with you throughout the academic year.