

**Kingston
University**
London

Fairtrade report 2024 – 2026



Summary of progress

1. Introduction

Kingston University has participated in the Fairtrade University & Colleges Award since 2020. In June 2022, Kingston University (KU) was awarded one star Fairtrade University status by the Fairtrade Foundation, making the University one of 25 higher education institutions in the UK to have achieved the award. In 2024 the University was one of just six higher education institutions to achieve two-star status. The award recognises the University's and the Students' Union's achievements in embedding ethical and sustainable practices within the curriculum, procurement, research and campaigning.

In our third Fairtrade Report on Progress, we are pleased to share with you the progress that the University has made since achieving its 2* status and how as an institution we continue to embed Fairtrade and Ethical Trade across five key areas: governance, leadership, and strategy; campaigning and influencing; catering; procurement; and research, curriculum and knowledge exchange.

Students from the University audited and verified evidence from an 18-month period encompassing September 2024 to April 2026. We are particularly grateful to the Kingston University students who volunteered to audit the work undertaken at Kingston University and the other 21 universities involved in the programme.



2. Governance, Leadership and Strategy

The University has an active Fairtrade Award Team which comprises a mix of academic and professional services staff, Kingston Students' Union (KSU) staff and sabbatical officers, Kingston University Service Company Ltd (KUSCO) staff and KU's catering contractor (Aramark). The Fairtrade Award Team includes members of staff from Kingston Business School and the Department for Geography, Geology and Environment, the Strategic Operational Lead for Sustainability, and the Strategic Academic Lead for Sustainability and reports into the University's Estate Committee as required. There is an agreed terms of reference and the group meets regularly in person and online, with the collective objective and responsibility to embed Fairtrade within the curriculum, procurement, research and campaigns. The University has formally committed to achieving and maintaining University Fairtrade status as detailed in KU's five-year Institutional [Sustainability Plan \(2021-2026\)](#). The Sustainability Plan has been approved by the Senior Leadership Team and progress against the Sustainability Plan including Fairtrade progress and accomplishments is reported annually in the separate Annual Sustainability Report. In addition, KU has communicated our Fairtrade commitments on the external website ([Food | Kingston University London](#)) and staff and student Sharepoint sites.

Kingston University has had an Ethical Trade and Fairtrade Policy since 2020. In October 2025, the Fairtrade Award Team reviewed the University [Ethical Trade and Fairtrade Policy](#). The policy is signed by the University Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer and made publicly accessible on the University website. The Policy continues to represent and support ethical and fair trade through the supply chain as required, and recognises Fairtrade and other ethical certifications, such as the Rainforest Alliance, which hold similar values as Fairtrade. Our [Fairtrade Action Plan](#) is also publicly accessible and supports the University in meeting its Fairtrade Policy objectives. The action plan includes SMART targets agreed by the Fairtrade Award Team and progress against the plan is reviewed at every Fairtrade Award team meeting.

3. Campaigning and Influencing

3.1 Fairtrade Fortnight

Fairtrade Fortnight provides an opportunity for the University to campaign for fairer trade, climate justice and a better future. Kingston University's catering contractor Aramark supported Fairtrade Fortnight by creating eye catching displays on Fairtrade products. In 2024, Fairtrade Fortnight moved from February to September which coincides with students returning to University for the new academic year. Therefore, from 2024, Kingston University decided to host its own innovative campaign: the KU Fairtrade Forum.

3.2 Fairtrade Forum

Kingston University's second Fairtrade Forum took place in February 2025. The Fairtrade Forum brought together students, staff, and suppliers to explore the importance of Fairtrade across the University. The event created a shared space to discuss how Fairtrade connects issues of production, consumerism, food security, race, and economic inequality. Speakers included international students Janhavi Sudke and William Madudike; Dr Smirti Kutaula from Kingston Business School; Amanda Baker from Enterprise Education and co-chair of the Race Equality Charter; Dr Baljit Thatti; and a visiting academic from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, US.

"Presenting at the Fairtrade Roundtable on Fairtrade practices and Industry 4.0 sparked rich debates and meaningful dialogue with students, academics, and industry voices alike." Janhavi Sudke, Bachelor of Business Administration student.



Top right: Fairtrade Forum Poster Highly C: Xiaoyu Pu, Media Studies

Right: Vasundhara Poola of Aramark promoting Fairtrade products available at Kingston University catering outlets

Students and staff were invited to sample ethical and Fairtrade products available across the University catering outlets including [Extract tea](#) and [53.3 degrees coffee](#). Attendees could participate in interactive games to win Fairtrade prizes, receive Fairtrade give-aways, and network with one another. Divine chocolate bars were given away as prizes as part of a Fairtrade ring toss game and the Estates and Sustainability Team gave away Fairtrade bananas as part of the 'How Bad Are Bananas?' Game (see section 3.3 for further information).

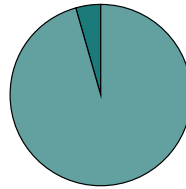


Students and staff were invited to submit a poster on Fairtrade as part of a competition. Posters were displayed at the Forum and judged by the Fairtrade Award Team. The winning submission received a goody bag containing Fairtrade products, Aramark discount vouchers for use at catering outlets across campus, beeswax wraps and a book. A student film was made about the Forum which was then shown at KU events in London Climate Action Week.

3.3 Student Engagement Survey

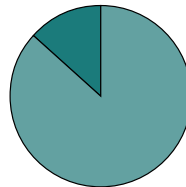
As part of the Fairtrade Forum, we held an engagement survey to understand the attendees experience. Out of 45 responders (11 staff and 34 students) 95% said their knowledge and awareness of fairtrade had increased through attending the Forum with 86% saying they were more likely to buy fairtrade following the event.

Has the event increased your knowledge & awareness of Fairtrade?



Yes: 43
No: 2

As a result of this event are you more likely to buy Fairtrade Products?



Yes: 39
Maybe: 6
No: 0



Top left: Goody bag for Fairtrade Forum poster competition winner

Left: Dr Smirti Kutaula, Kingston Business School, presenting alongside Fairtrade Forum 2025 speakers.



Right: 'How Bad are Bananas' game at Kingston Students' Union Opportunities & Support Fair 2026

3.4 How Bad Are Bananas?

The Estates and Sustainability Team host 'How Bad Are Bananas?' at regular engagement events throughout the academic year. This is a carbon footprint game that engages students and staff on the topic of climate change. A Fairtrade banana is given as a prize for completing the game. This eye-catching game provides the opportunity to not only increase awareness of KU's Fairtrade University Award but also provides the opportunity to discuss the intersections between climate change and Fairtrade.

Over the period September 2024 – March 2026, the team have engaged with over 400 students and staff over eight events (including Freshers Fair 2024 & 2025, Fairtrade Forum 2025, Enrichment Fair 2025, Festival of Learning 2025, World Chocolate Day 2025, Post Graduate Research Conference 2025 and the Opportunities & Support Fair 2026).

3.5 Collaboration with Green Impact Sustainability Champions

Fairtrade actions are included in our Green Impact Sustainability Champion programme, extending the participation and impact of Fairtrade through staff actions. Green Impact is a United Nations award-winning programme designed to support environmentally and socially sustainable practices and behaviours and breaks down the often-complex world of sustainability

into simple, meaningful, and manageable actions.

In the period Sept 2024 – March 2026, KU's Green Impact cohort have so far taken six actions on Fairtrade, which range from making a Fairtrade Pledge to ensuring that all tea and coffee in the office is either Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or organic.

3.6 Peer Review

We undertook a Fairtrade peer review with University of Greenwich in July 2025, attended by sustainability and catering staff from both Universities. The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a peer review on fair trade practices, understand each other's Fairtrade Award programmes and learn from each other's experiences. While there were differences in the approaches and initiatives delivered at both our Universities, we shared similar challenges in engagement with various University stakeholders. Following the formal review, we have continued to meet with Greenwich and proposing to hold shared events in the future.

4. Catering

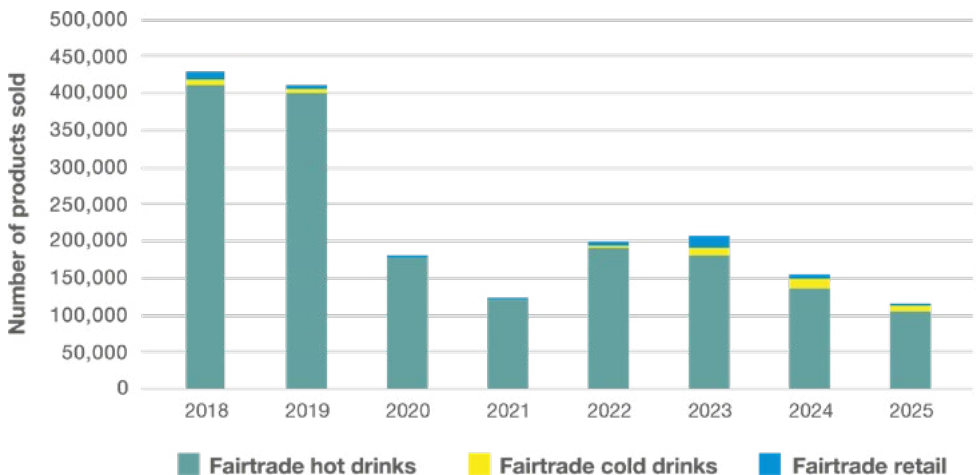
Fairtrade is an integral part of the catering services provided by Aramark across the University. Aramark run various campus outlets including cafes, vending machines, the Kingston Hill shop and event hospitality. Aramark is an active member of the Fairtrade Award Team. Within catering outlets, they offer a wide range of Fairtrade-certified products including coffee, tea, chocolate, and sugar. Aramark's in-house coffee brands, 53.3 degrees and Fairground, boast Fairtrade certification. Aramark also supplies Costa coffee outlets - a high street brand which is built upon ethical sourcing, with their Rainforest Alliance accreditation.

As well as the Fairtrade products stocked in outlets, Aramark offer Fairtrade wine options within the hospitality brochure for University events. Aramark regularly review their products, to proactively extend its ethically sourced range of retail products and has recently added to its

portfolio a variety of vegan and B-Corp certified drinks and snacks, which contribute towards social and community projects. The total number of product lines across hot and cold drinks and snacks, has increased from 89 in 2024 to 91 in 2025. In 2025 we removed Starbucks products from reporting as a result of Starbucks UK no longer participating in Fairtrade and discontinuing their 100% Fairtrade certified coffee.

Figure below outlines the total value of Fairtrade products sold at our catering outlets since 2018. While we have failed to revert to pre-2020 sales (when Covid lockdowns closed the University), it is worth noting that since 2023 there has been a reduction in catering locations and opening hours to align with student behaviours and cost efficiency. The reduction in total opening hours per year will have influenced the reduction in total products sold per year.

Fairtrade Products Sold at KU outlets (2018–2025)



Number of Fairtrade products sold. Data in 2023 combines the previous catering company sales and the current catering company sales, Aramark.

5. Procurement

Since 2024, Kingston University has strengthened its approach to Fairtrade by embedding Fairtrade considerations into procurement processes. Fairtrade is now a standard component of the University's Sustainable Procurement Checklist, which guides all purchasing activity in line with Corporate Procurement Guidelines. The checklist prompts buyers to consider Fairtrade within tender specifications, particularly under Ethical Sourcing, Food, and wider Environmental Opportunities, where Fairtrade certification is listed as a preferred standard for relevant categories such as textiles and food.

This approach aligns to the University's Ethical Trade and Fairtrade Policy, ensuring a consistent approach to procurement across the University, prioritising Fairtrade products where possible and to working with suppliers to improve availability across campuses.

As well as our catering contract, KUSCO and KSU purchase Fairware clothing using fairtrade cotton and KSU continues to purchase organic and Fairtrade cotton tote bags.



Right: Fairtrade Poster Competition Winner 2025 - Suyash Khandelwal, Master's student in Business Administration

6. Curriculum, Research, and Knowledge Exchange

6.1 Curriculum

We complete an annual curriculum-mapping exercise to identify how sustainability issues, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Fairtrade principles are embedded across teaching and learning. The review captures activity at module and programme level, highlighting where ethical and just trade, responsible consumption and wider sustainability themes are already integrated, and where further development may be needed. This report is presented to the Education Committee and published on the University's website to share with wider community and higher education sector interest. This open approach strengthens transparency, supports evidence-informed decision-making and showcases the University's ongoing commitment to embedding sustainability meaningfully across the curriculum.

In 2024-25, the review found that the majority of programmes are addressing UN SDGs and a significant number, 25 courses, are addressing Fairtrade, ethical and just trade topics with their students ([Course UN Sustainability Development Goals and Fairtrade in the curricula Report 24-25](#)).

Some examples of how these issues are addressed in our curricula:

- From 2020-24, under Dr Smriti Kua leadership, an annual campaign invited students and staff to share ethical selfies featuring eco-friendly, Fairtrade or upcycled products, or to participate in sustainability-focused events, fostering a culture of responsible consumption and reflection on individual social and environmental impact across the University.
- Geography students on GG4005 Developing Academic Skills, led by Dr Peter Garside, examined Fairtrade, ethical trade and green advertising through short analytical pieces inspired by Michelle Aguilar's film on Kanopy. They also used AI tools to uncover and question biases in the information they gathered, sharpening their critical thinking, academic writing and understanding of responsible consumption within a sustainability-focused learning activity.
- Students on the MA Sustainable Fashion Business and Practices, led by Dr Sas Brown, place Fairtrade, ethical trade and just trade at the heart of their independent capstone projects, exploring the social, environmental and economic dimensions of global fashion systems. Their work spans circular fashion services, educational tools, films, magazines, digital platforms and material innovation, all aimed at promoting equity, transparency and workers' rights across supply chains. Many projects support artisan communities in the Global South, develop impact-reporting toolkits or experiment with zero-waste and sustainable materials, demonstrating a strong commitment to fairer and more accountable fashion practices. Recent outcomes include a digital archive showcasing disadvantaged artisans, a sustainability toolkit for wool production, and a zero-waste hemp-based fashion brand. For example, one student produced a digital archive to promote and showcase disadvantaged artisans around the world and encourage designers and brands to use cultural inspiration from a respectful perspective. Slow fashion and artisan support, by default, encourage conscious consumerism. The website is no longer active, but this is a link to her Instagram feed: www.instagram.com/world_of_artisans/. Another student produced a wool toolkit and worked with several commercial brands to evaluate their sustainability measures from an environmental as well as a human and animal perspective to encourage more sustainable production and consumption. This is a link to her digital toolkit: www.trueloopcollective.com/. These projects have been publicly showcased, including at Shoreditch Design Week 2025.
- On the Participatory Approaches to Solving Environmental Challenges module, Stephanie Todd, Strategic Operational Lead for Sustainability, delivered a session introducing Fairtrade as a participatory response to global challenges and led students through a live audit of campus catering outlets. The activity strengthened students' understanding of ethical consumption, identified opportunities to improve Fairtrade visibility, and prompted meaningful discussions about workers' rights and lived experiences within global supply chains.

- Through the RISE UP programme (Reimagining Inclusion, Sustainability, and Equity in University Practices) and the Student Equality Collaborators and KU Cares Connectors programme, Dr Tania Dias Fonseca delivered Climate Justice workshops exploring the links between colonisation and climate change, encouraging students to reflect on how small-scale farmers in the Global South are disproportionately affected despite contributing least to the crisis.

In 2025, Kingston Business School has validated the module, Sustainable and Responsible Management (BS5205). This is a 30-credit module offered at level 5 in the BSc Apprenticeship Programme. The module delivers concepts and knowledge in regenerative business and supply chain management,

focusing on managing organisations in a responsible and regenerative way. It does so by examining the shift from traditional development to modern sustainability to restorative and regenerative business strategy, including the ethical issues that arise in interactions between a business and its stakeholders, and the implementation of socially responsible and regenerative programmes and initiatives, such as Fair and ethical trade. Subjects covered include conventional green business practices, UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) applications, environmental, social, and governance (ESG), regenerative principles, organisations as living systems, the triple bottom line – economic, environmental, and social sustainability in supply chains, stakeholder value, and reputation.



Prantia Jampal, Sustainable Fashion: Business and Practices MA student



Anisa Johnny, Sustainable Fashion: Business and Practices MA student

6.2 Research


Work on Fairtrade, ethical trade and just trade at Kingston University spans multiple disciplines and levels of activity, reflecting a broad commitment to understanding how global supply chains, labour rights and sustainability intersect. Research in this area has been shaped by the contributions of Dr Smriti Kutaula, who has been listed on the Fairtrade Directory of Supporting Academics since 2019 and is an active scholar examining Fairtrade in both developing and developed economies. Her publications in leading journals, including the Journal of Business Ethics, explore how organisational practices such as sustainable human resource management can strengthen social, environmental and economic performance. Her 2025 article, *Linking HRM with Sustainability Performance Through Sustainability Practices: Unlocking the Black Box*, provides new insights into how workplace systems can support fair and responsible business behaviour (Kutaula et al., 2025).

Alongside this work, Kingston University's Strategic Academic and Operational Leads for Sustainability have contributed to sector-wide understanding of Fairtrade and ethical trade through their 2025 book chapter, *Kingston University's Holistic Approach to Climate Change Education*. This chapter presents how Fairtrade principles are embedded within higher education practice and forms part of a global collection of perspectives on climate change education that is now influencing approaches across the sector. Together, these research contributions demonstrate the University's multi-layered approach, ranging from organisational behaviour and labour rights to curriculum design and institutional practice, advancing knowledge on Fairtrade, ethical and just trade in ways that support more equitable and sustainable global systems.

Students across disciplines are also encouraged to undertake research on Fairtrade, ethical and just trade, and wider social inequalities. Within the MA Fashion and Business Practices, led by Dr Sas Brown, students explore these themes through coursework, live briefs and dissertations, examining issues such as workers' rights, value distribution and responsible sourcing in global fashion supply chains. Their work has generated a wide range of public-facing outputs, from digital archives promoting disadvantaged artisans, to textile take-back schemes, AI-supported wardrobe reuse tools, and multi-platform campaigns celebrating cultural heritage and conscious consumerism. Several students have gone on to launch brands, secure international contracts and present their work publicly, including at Shoreditch Design Week. Here are some examples to explore: www.instagram.com/world_of_artisans/, @patchup.uk, anisajohnny3.wixsite.com/my-site-1, @EcofashionHub.Podcast

In Film, students guided by Dr Valentina Ippolito produced *Fairtrade at Kingston University*, a short film exploring ethical and just trade, which was showcased at London Climate Action Week 2025. The film was showcased at London Climate Action Week in June 2025, providing students with a platform to share their insights with a wider audience. The film was developed by students:

Jack Nevill - Director, cinematography
Soomin Lee - Producer, cinematography
Noah Austin - Editor, cinematography



For further information,
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