

**FAIR
TRADE
KINGSTON**

Fairtrade report summary of progress
2022–2024

1. Introduction

In June 2022, Kingston University (KU) was awarded one star Fairtrade University status by the Fairtrade Foundation as part of the Fairtrade Universities and Colleges Award, making the University one of 25 higher education institutions in the UK to have achieved the award.

In this second Fairtrade Report, we are pleased to share with you the progress that the University has made since achieving its one star status and how as an institution we have embedded Fairtrade and Ethical Trade across five key areas: governance, leadership, and strategy; campaigning and influencing; catering; procurement; and research, curriculum and knowledge exchange.

2. Governance, Leadership and Strategy

The University has an active Fairtrade Award Team which comprises a mix of academic and professional services staff, students, Union of Kingston Students (UKS) staff and sabbatical officers, Kingston University Service Company Ltd (KUSCO) staff and KU's catering contractor. 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 Fairtrade Award Team includes senior members of staff including the Head of Department for Geography, Geology and Environment, the Strategic Operational Lead for Sustainability, and the Strategic Academic Lead for Sustainability.

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 a separate Sustainability Report. In addition, KU has communicated our Fairtrade commitments on the external and internal website and in our annual financial statements and prospectuses.

In October 2023, the Fairtrade Award Team reviewed the University Ethical Trade and Fairtrade Policy. The policy has been signed by the University Vice-Chancellor and Chief Operating Officer and made publicly accessible on the University website. The key update to this policy was the addition of ethical trade, which was added to encourage the purchase of ethically sourced products and to recognise 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 Elior supported Fairtrade Fortnight by creating eye catching displays on Fairtrade products. During Fairtrade Fortnight in 2022, Elior sold 356 Fairtrade confectionary products and in 2023, during the month of March, which coincided with Fairtrade Fortnight, Elior sold 1,519 Fairtrade products. In August 2023, contractors Aramark took over from Elior and will be supporting the University with Fairtrade Fortnight in 2024. Due to Fairtrade Fortnight moving from February to September in 2024, Kingston University decided to host its own innovative campaign: the KU Fairtrade Forum.

3.2 Fairtrade Forum

The Fairtrade Forum which took place in January 2024, brought together staff, students and suppliers to discuss the importance of Fairtrade and its relationships with the circular economy, food security, and gender inequality.



Fairtrade Foudation supporting the KU Fairtrade Forum.

Students and staff were invited to sample ethical and Fairtrade products available across the University catering outlets including Karma Drinks, Extract tea and 53.3 degrees coffee. Attendees could participate in interactive games to win Fairtrade prizes, receive Fairtrade giveaways, and network with one another. Representatives from UKS were in attendance to raise awareness around opportunities to create student societies for Sustainability and Fairtrade. Members of the Fairtrade Foundation along with the KU Fairtrade Award team engaged with students and staff to share further information about Fairtrade and the University's key achievements and progress to date.

Divine chocolate bars were given away as prizes as part of a Fairtrade ring toss game – an idea which was sparked during a Fairtrade University and Colleges Peer Review with Derby University 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).

Academics, alumni, and the Fairtrade Foundation along with attendees contributed to a well-attended roundtable. In this conversation, presenters discussed the role of initiatives such as how Athena Swan supports

institutional change in intersectional issues in an everchanging HE context, Fairtrade and circular economy, food insecurity and sustainability, climate migration and the role of the film industry in mitigating and raising awareness of climate change impacts worldwide.

"The knowledgeable and engaging speakers were all excellent. I also enjoyed the quiz – it was fun and insightful. I hope there will be more events of this kind" KU student event feedback.

Students and staff were invited to submit a poster on Fairtrade as part of a competition. Posters were on display at the Forum and judged by the Fairtrade Award Team. The winning submissions (one staff poster and one student poster) received a prize of a goody bag complete with a variety of Fairtrade products, Aramark discount vouchers to be used at catering outlets across campus and a Fairtrade cookbook. Notably, the cover of this report was a poster submission designed by Beau Beavan an undergraduate Illustration Animation student.

Due to the success of the Forum and high levels of engagement with students and staff, the University was recognised by the Fairtrade Foundation as 'Campaigner of the Month' for February 2024.



Fairtrade Goody Bag

3.3 How Bad Are Bananas?

The Estates and Sustainability Team purchased the 'How Bad Are Bananas?' carbon footprint game to engage students and staff on the topic of climate change. A Fairtrade banana is given as a prize for engagement with the game, and since September 2023, to date, the team have engaged with 361 students and staff over seven different events (including Freshers Fayre, Enrichment Fayre, the Fairtrade Forum and COP28 KU celebrations). This eye-catching game provides the opportunity to not only increase awareness of KU's one star Fairtrade University status, but also provides the opportunity to discuss the intersections between climate change and Fairtrade.

3.4 Fairtrade Festival Fortnight

To celebrate Fairtrade Fortnight 2023, Kingston Business School (KBS) and Surrey Business School organised a Fairtrade Fest, on 11th March 2023 at Zero Carbon Guildford, an award-winning community space geared towards educating communities around climate action. Through the Fairtrade Fest, the aim was to engage the local community and to spread awareness around Fairtrade and climate justice. The event included various fun-filled and interactive activities where participants took part and won Fairtrade goodies. Over one hundred people attended the event with their friends and families. Dr Smirti Kutaula, Kingston Business School stated: "We are pleased to see such a great turnout for the event, and it was good to see everyone getting involved with Fairtrade and climate issues in a fun way". Further, Dr Alvina Gillani, Surrey Business School mentioned "Such events go a long way in creating awareness and encouraging action regarding sustainability, which is the need of the hour". The event sparked interesting conversations, highlighting the role we can play as individuals and collectively towards these significant issues. The event was commended by Jackie Marshall, Head of Brand & Public Engagement, Fairtrade Foundation.

3.5 Collaboration with Green Impact Sustainability Champions

We have extended the reach of our impact and engagement by including Fairtrade actions within our Green Impact Sustainability Champion programme. Green Impact is a United Nations



Fairtrade and Ethical Trade suppliers supporting the Fairtrade Forum.

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. KU's 2023 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 university offices is either Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance or organic.

4. Catering

In August 2023, Aramark took over from Elior (previous catering contractor) and took on responsibility for running a range of campus outlets and providing event catering. During their contract, Elior played a supporting role in establishing the KU Fairtrade Award Team and leading role in increasing the visibility and availability of Fairtrade products. A summary of such products include: Clipper tea, Starbucks coffee beans, sugar, Cadbury's dairy milk and sun magic orange juice. Fairtrade tea and coffee was served as standard on the events and hospitality ordering portal.

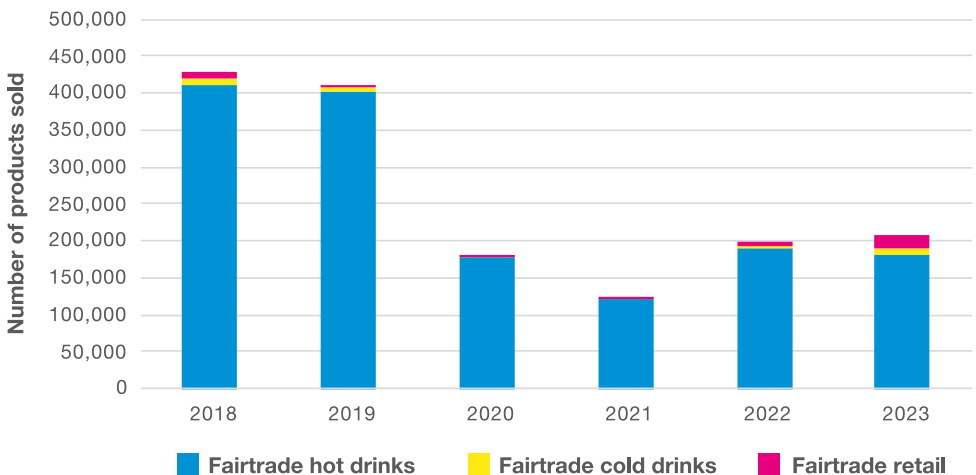
Since joining KU, Aramark have been an active member of the Fairtrade Award Team and offer a wide range of Fairtrade certified products, including coffee, tea, chocolate, and sugar. Aramark's in house coffee brand, 53.3 degrees boasts Fairtrade certification. Aramark also supply Fairground coffee by Extract coffee – a brand which is built upon ethical sourcing. Within the University hospitality brochure, Fairtrade wine options are available for purchase at catered events. Aramark are proactively extending their ethically sourced range and have recently added to their portfolio a variety of B-Corp certified drinks and snacks which contribute towards social and community projects.

5. Procurement

As part of our 2022 and 2023 Green Impact Awards, teams that achieved Bronze or above received a goody bag containing a Pukka Fairtrade tea bag and ethically sourced 'The Cheeky Panda' Bamboo Tissues. The Special Awards winners received locally manufactured Bees Wax Food Wraps.

The Fairtrade Award Team has taken action to increase the awareness and importance of Fairtrade cotton by contacting our suppliers.

Fairtrade Products Sold at KU outlets (2018–2023)



Number of Fairtrade products sold. Data in 2023 combines Elior and Aramark sales. Number of items sold in 2020 and 2021 dropped due to campus closures following the COVID-19 Pandemic



In 2023 KUSCO contacted their uniform and clothing supplier for branded clothes encouraging them to switch to provide Fairtrade Cotton. In addition to this, the University continues to purchase organic and Fairtrade cotton tote bags. Approximately 5,000 tote bags are expected to be ordered each year to welcome freshers.

6. Research, Curriculum and Knowledge Exchange

6.1 Staff Research

Since 2019, Dr Smirti Kutaula has been registered on the Fairtrade Directory of Supporting Academics and has been an active research scholar in the area of Fairtrade, specifically, in context of developing and developed economies. Her work related to Fairtrade has been published in leading journals such as *Journal of Business Ethics*. A summary of her recent research is as follows:

- The Impact of Proximity on Consumer Fair Trade Engagement and Purchasing Behavior: The Moderating Role of Empathic Concern and Hypocrisy, Gillani *et al.* (2019)
- Integrating fair trade with circular economy: Personality traits, consumer engagement, and ethically-minded behavior Kutaula *et al.* (2022)
- Heading Home? Reshoring and Sustainability Connectedness from a Home-Country Consumer Perspective Gillani, Kutaula & Budhwar (2022)

6.2 Student Research

In 2023, Hannah Keene a third year BSc Geography student submitted her dissertation entitled 'Investigating the Contradictions of the Representation and the Reality of Fairtrade – A Marxist Critical Analysis'. Hannah was invited back to the University in 2024 as a panel member of the Fairtrade Forum Roundtable discussion. The Fairtrade Award Team continue to engage with students and are currently working with Vasundhara Poola, an Environmental Management masters student to develop a title for her master's thesis due to be written in 2024.

6.3 Curriculum

Kingston University conducted a baseline curriculum review between October 2022 and February 2023. The data was collected through various sources and in collaboration with teams across the university, which enabled the collection and data analysis.

The aims of the curriculum review were to:

- Understand if Sustainability/UN Sustainable Development Goals are addressed at the course level to devise strategies to meet the Sustainability Plan targets.
- Understand the general challenge of embedding Sustainability in the curriculum.
- Start conversations across the university about these topics. Topics included Fairtrade-related issues, Trade justice, and Ethical consumption.

The results were:

- published on the external Sustainability website
- shared with the senior management team, Heads of Schools, and Heads of Departments in different training sessions,
- shared with the broader community through the Festival of Research and Innovation 2023

The findings helped the University to foster further research and curriculum design to address these topics. The following curriculum review will occur in 2025; the results will be publicly available.

6.4 Knowledge Exchange

We have delivered workshops across the university to engage students in reflecting and gaining awareness about fair trade, trade justice, and ethical consumption issues and to connect these with climate justice. The 'Climate change through an anti-racist lens: from the world to the classroom (and back) workshop', held in celebration of Black History Month in October 2022, was open to all students and delivered by Danielle Chavrimootoo and Dr Tania Dias Fonseca.

The Strategic Academic Lead for Sustainability delivered a workshop titled 'Climate change through an anti-racist lens' at the London Student Sustainability Conference 2023, where students were invited to explore questions of producers and ethical consumption and fair trade was explored as a way to ensure climate justice approaches.

Dr. Smirti Kutaula has been appointed as a National Campaigner Committee member with the Fairtrade Foundation - a national leadership role instrumental in driving Fairtrade campaigns across the UK. Since 2022, Dr Smirti has also been working as a United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) lead for Kingston Business School (KBS). She has been instrumental in organising sustainability related activities for staff and students and prepares the UNPRME report submitted every two years. She is on the judging panel for PRME Research Seed Funding Competition. Every year, as part of the annual PRME initiative, KBS students and staff are invited to take an Elfie (ethical selfie) with ecofriendly, Fairtrade or upcycled products, or attend any sustainability event, with the chance of winning prizes. This initiative engages the KU community around individual responsibility towards the society.



Fairtrade Forum 2024 Roundtable



Front cover designed by **Beau Beavan**,
Illustration Animation BA (Hons) Student

For further information, please contact:

sustainability@kingston.ac.uk