

### Summary report

# Circularity at UA

camberwell college of arts | saint martins

central

chelsea college of arts

london college of communication

of fashion

london college



arts.ac.uk

wimbledon college of arts

Social Purpose Lab | March 2025

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Materials Collection, 2024, London College of Fashion, UAL | Photograph: Ana Blumenkron

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'Dealing with the second life of resources is complicated. It requires care, time and labour. It requires the mental energy to sort through disorder to be able to find value again. We aren't used to valuing this sort of labour.'

**Olivia Aspinall** UAL Alumnus Materials and circular design educator

Sydney Carty, 2023 Level 3 International: Introduction to the Study of Fashion, London College of Fashion, UAL | Photograph: Alys Tomlinson

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# **Purpose of report**

This report is the summary of a Social Purpose Lab research project undertaken from December 2023 to October 2024, examining the state of play around the topics of material reuse and circularity across UAL.

This pilot project was sponsored by Polly Mackenzie in her leadership role as UAL's Chief Social Purpose Officer and delivered in the Social Purpose Lab by the Project Manager for Materials Re-use and Circularity, Ellie Meure.

This summary report was authored by Ellie Meure and Jenny Haigh, Head of Policy for Fashion and Textiles, UAL.

This report sets out:

- The project's background, context, goals and approach.
- Recommendations for next steps that could inform a whole-UAL approach to material circularity.

This report also explores the barriers – structural, behavioural, cultural, and logistical - that are currently inhibiting circular principles and approaches from being incorporated more systemically across the university's teaching and practice.

- The learnings gained during the discovery stage, which provide insight into the current materials
  - landscape at course and College level.



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## Context

In 2022 UAL launched its new 10-year strategy, which sets out the university's explicit intention to build our university around the notion of social purpose, so we can better serve our staff, students and the world.

By committing to becoming purpose-driven, we are saying we will not ignore the bigger picture, and we will not wait for governments or industries to get it right for us. We will lead within our sphere of influence to create a world that is more fair and just. We will change ourselves and educate our students to create a world where everyone can thrive.

How our university uses, thinks about and manages its material flows is an important part of this. Making is at the very essence of UAL's being, and at the heart of our teaching and research: consequently, many of our courses rely on procuring and using physical, tangible resources – such as product design, footwear and jewellery, architecture and interior design, fashion, fine art, theatre, and textiles. Through undertaking this pilot project, UAL is making a commitment to address how we approach materials on our courses with social purpose in mind.

The use of virgin materials on these courses and others is problematic in several ways. It drives up the cost of study for students, making a creative education in these subjects less accessible for those who are not well-off, and potentially puts students who cannot afford to spend money on new materials at an academic disadvantage. It also increases waste and normalises over-consumption, contributing to the university's carbon footprint and global deforestation and pollution. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it normalises a set of extractive behaviours and mindsets – that new is best, and that waste is an acceptable and even necessary cost of creating – that our students may subconsciously carry into their careers in the creative industries and beyond.

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But the world is changing: a new era of green regulation is forcing industry the world over to consider more carefully the materials it uses, and to create with principles like eco-design, longevity, and circularity in mind. What the creative sector now needs above all is an influx of talented graduates with sustainability literacy at the forefront of their creative prowess. For both the good of the planet and the security of our graduates' futures, UAL must mainstream material reuse and circularity principles across its teaching and operations.

Making smarter, more thoughtful, and more strategic use of precious resources – including designing and implementing circular systems is a global challenge. But change must start at home. UAL's commitment to do better, and to lead by example, is what led to this project.

'In our current economy, we take materials from the Earth, make products from them, and eventually throw them away as waste – the process is linear. In a circular economy, by contrast, we stop waste being produced in the first place.

The circular economy is a system where materials never become waste and nature is regenerated. In a circular economy, products and materials are kept in circulation through processes like maintenance, reuse, refurbishment, remanufacture, recycling, and composting."

Ellen MacArthur Foundation<sup>1</sup>

ellenmacarthurfoundation.org/topics/circular-economy-introduction/overview





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# **Project brief and goals**

The Materials Reuse and Circularity Project is at its core inquiring about current processes and examining how material circularity may be more strategically formulated – and more effectively implemented - across the university at course and College level. UAL's ultimate ambition is to transform into a university where all aspects of its activities are driven by its social purpose: reforming how the university handles waste across the entire estate is a key component of the work we need to do to deliver on this.

The Material Reuse and Circularity project centred around conducting the groundwork that would enable UAL to consider the strategic and targeted action needed to meet these institutionwide aims. The project sought to:

Build relationships with key stakeholders across the UAL community to establish an overview of current materials systems and processes across the university. Map these flows through the institution, including the extent to which they follow a linear model with the endpoint being disposal. Understand both where there are current active mechanisms that redirect materials from a waste flow into initiatives that follow circular economic principles and identify where organisational or cultural barriers may be preventing this from happening.

- Identify the key sites within which waste is generated, understand how it is generated and establish the logistical feasibility of obtaining baseline estimates.
- Champion areas of pre-existing good practice.
- Identify opportunities and trial pilot projects that would enable UAL to further redirect materials from waste flows into initiatives that follow circular economy principles.



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# Methodology

The research style for the project consisted of 70+ open ended interviews and site visits with stakeholders who were selected due to their interest and practice in circularity and/or materials, or their relationship to relevant workspaces or processes within the university ecosystem.

Views were sought from a wide cross section of the UAL community including both staff and students, with a particular focus on technical staff who are at the heart of our relationship with materials.



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### Study design

We took a pragmatic approach to this work, employing a combination of observational and interview-based methods to collecting qualitative data to build a rich picture of the materials landscape at UAL, including the flows of materials and waste through the systems, and the relationships and initiatives involved.

### **Data collection**

We collected observational reflections about the way materials and waste were managed across the UAL estate through a combination of planned site visits and the iin the moment' use of other 'ad hoc' opportunities such college tours and events such as the technician's conference and Climate Emergency Network x Citizens UK Assembly.

We also conducted informal in-depth openended interviews with over 70 individuals across the UAL estate. Our sample included individuals across college technical staff, college teaching staff, Estates, Retail and Catering, Student Union, and Student Advocates. Individuals were identified through a combination of researching organisational staff charts, direct and indirect referrals through stakeholders in the project, 'snowballing' where interviewees would suggest further contacts, and interested individuals self-referring into the project. Interviews were recorded on Microsoft Teams or on a mobile recording device and extensive notes were made of these conversations prior to analysis.

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### Limitations to approach

The project took a pragmatic approach to collecting information that would allow us to understand material flows across UAL that considered the capacity of the team and of our colleagues across the UAL community. However, there were some limitations to this approach.

Firstly, we were reliant on individuals that we contacted having both the good will and the capacity to be able to talk with us during the discovery process. Coordinating interviews with busy individuals without being extractive of their time presented some logistical and time considerations. Although we were able to speak to a good range of people from across the UAL community (see roles of interviewees), naturally we were unable to speak to every single person we may have wanted to. This may have resulted in inadvertent and unknown gaps in our knowledge base.

Due primarily to logistical and institutional barriers, we also struggled to access quantitative data in the form of key metrics around the cost and volume of waste that pass through UAL annually, as a whole or segregated into different waste streams. This meant we were unable to apply a data-driven lens to the project, focusing instead on qualitative data and insights.

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# The story so far

The project's initial work to map the material and waste flows across UAL revealed a complex set of systems with numerous avenues through which materials and waste moves into, through and out of the UAL estate.

Numerous individuals, teams, groups, services and ad-hoc arrangements are involved leading to a complex picture that is difficult to untangle, but looks something like this:

### Material flows across UAL



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Our waste expenditure is high and largely unmonitored, without much specificity or accountability. There is a pervasive culture of buy new rather than re-use. The skips are often full of usable materials, which technicians are known to rescue when possible. The cost of disposal is effectively out of mind for the disposer, but the repercussions are large for the estates or college budget holders.

Several points in this system potentially hold useful data around UAL's material usage and waste production. At a bare minimum, it would have been beneficial to obtain metrics on the volumes of material entering and leaving the UAL ecosystem, with some indication of the predominant avenues through with these materials enter and leave. However, various institutional and logistical issues have made it difficult to obtain consistent raw data on how much material our university buys, uses, recycles, or throws away. Donations received from industry or from other staff-initiated sources are an obvious potential data source, but these are not logged in any consistent or central database. As they often enter the UAL ecosystem in an ad-hoc way through individual relationships with external companies looking to donate materials, it would be difficult to ascertain their proportion of UAL's overall materials inflow. The e-store (where students can buy materials sourced by technicians) and the Arts Shops may also hold data on materials, but these are a very small piece of the overall picture. There is also no data available for materials that are purchased independently off-site – mostly by students. Most material leaves the UAL ecosystem via external contractors, the largest being Suez. The waste UAL pays Suez to take away consists of two main streams – general non-hazardous waste, which is sent to a waste-to-energy (WTE) incinerator, and dry mixed recycling. There are additional less frequent collections of mixed WEEE (small electrical items), hazardous waste, and confidential paper waste for shredding. The general non-hazardous waste and dry mixed recycling streams are currently operating as a catch-all for the majority of course generated material waste, affording little visibility into the true picture of what we pay for to be sent away. This could also be a critical point in the system for data collection around UAL's waste volumes. but currently there is no system in place to receive any detailed metrics from Suez.

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# **Our strategic commitments**

UAL has made a number of previous strategic commitments relating to sustainability, waste reduction, and recycling. Examples can be found on the next page. While these high-level commitments have laudable intentions, they lack some of the practical, specific and measurable direction needed to be effective. They are also presently hindered by several barriers and issues, which will be discussed in detail throughout this report.



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### **Environmental Policy Statement, Waste Reduction and Recycling commitments** Feb 2023, V.10

- To continue to send zero waste to landfill and refresh general waste and mixed recycling internal bins.
- To minimise the adverse environmental impacts of the decommissioning and disposal of University assets.
- To increase the rate of recycling of all appropriate materials based on life-cycle principles.
- To implement sustainable resource management practices, based on reduce, reuse and recycle principles.
- Waste generated to be captured via the UAL Carbon Dashboard and on the UAL website.

sustainable food

Recirculating materials and minimising waste are embedded across our operations and within our teaching and learning. For example:

### Climate Action Plan > Change the way we operate > Waste, recycling and

We encourage students to use sustainable materials in their projects.

We champion the use of recycled materials and degree shows should design according to the principle of 'building for deconstruction' so the materials can be reused.

We have been piloting an environmental

assessment framework in our technical

workshops which includes the recirculation

of waste within our workshop spaces.

Students have access to re-use units to

encourage waste reduction and material reuse.

 Materials can be re-used, re-purposed or repaired at the Central Saint Martins

Swap Shop.

Camberwell College of Arts have launched a Repair Café to foster a culture of repair. Sustainability has also been at the heart of our Grayson's Robes competitions.

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# Staff and student generated circular initiatives

Through our interviews we identified multiple staff and student led projects and initiatives across UAL that were already active and passionate about embedding circular principles, and that were effective in redirecting some materials from incineration and into pathways where they could be reused or recycled.

These individuals and projects are great examples of the already existing good practice and innovative thinking that exists within the UAL community which is being applied to the problem of reducing the volume of waste we send to incineration.



Re-use unit, 2022, London College of Fashion, UAL | Photograph: Orlando Callegaro



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There are several material hubs across UAL that collect, manage, and make available a range of materials that students can access for free to use within their coursework. These hubs include the Swap Shop at CSM, the Re-use Exchange at Wilson Road - now in storage at Lime Grove until 25/26 due to a lack of a planned location, and the Material Store at Camberwell. These are staffed initiatives, stocked with donations from staff, students and external industry sources such as fashion brands and theatres with show pack downs. Each has a slightly different set-up:

#### Swap Shop (CSM)

**Material hubs** 

Introduced by the Climate Emergency Network (CEN) and initially run by alumnifounded material hub Renée Materials, the management was brought in-house to be managed by technicians and paid for out of the technical budget. It is staffed by Arts Temps on a part-time basis.

### Reuse Exchange (Wilson Road)

started and run by technical staff, undertaken in addition to their regular workloads, the Exchange was open for 30 mins each day before classes started, and then by request from students. This work was not financially compensated in any way. The Exchange did not survive the relocation to Lime Grove and is currently in storage while the space requirements are assessed, hopefully to be back in place for 2025/2026 academic year.

### Material Store (Camberwell Space)

Material store was a 6-month material experiment and salvage laboratory run by interdisciplinary design studio **RESOLVE** Collective whilst in residence at Camberwell Space. The space was open access - a community focused factory floor for the collection, storage, and reuse of salvaged materials, with the aim of redistributing industry-specific waste to students, staff and the local community. The concept for the collaboration was conceived and implemented by the CCW Public Engagement team.



Central Saint Martins Swap Shop, 2024 | Photograph: UAL



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**Material libraries** 

CSM and LCF share a Materials Librarian, who works part-time at each college managing, curating, teaching and providing specialist materials research support for all UAL students. CSM and LCF libraries have a space for a collection of physical material and object samples relevant to all disciplines. Students and visitors can access information about industry equivalent materials, processes and sustainable or circular alternatives.

The Materials Librarian offers tutorials, tours and object-based learning, materials literacy workshops across the CSM and LCF courses and also with external schools as part of the University Outreach and Insights programme. The tutorials, tours and workshops encourage students to interrogate the origin of materials, and the entire life cycle or story of a material or object and consider what happens to them at their end of life and to consider those involved with the entire process. All to guide students to be material curious, think critically and make more informed and responsible material choices in their work. There are also extensive online resources that are curated by the Librarians hosted on the library subject guide to support their materials research and making literacy.



Sustainable materials in the library, 2019, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: Alys Tomlinson





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### **Fabric stores**

There are several fabric stores across a number of colleges within UAL which provide access to industry-donated rolls of fabric and textiles, mainly to fashion and performance students, at low or no cost. The model of the stores differs for each location, for example at LCF there is a large, dedicated space serving 13 courses that has 2 full-time employees. The students receive a free metreage allowance which differs per course. At CSM there is a small space serving 5 BA Fashion pathways and MA Fashion students which is staffed during limited hours by technicians. The fabric is charged at a flat fee of £3 per metre and there is no allowance or limit for the students.

### Loan initiatives

There are many loan stores across UAL that allow students to borrow items. From fundamentals used within the making spaces such as pattern blocks or electronic components, to equipment and props loaned out through styling cupboards, costume stores, and media stores. These examples are staffed by a combination of technicians and Arts Temps who manage the collections, check and maintain the condition of the items, and support and track the lending and return admin. These initiatives provide a huge cost saving opportunity for students and are very successful.

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### End of year shows

There are successful processes in colleges across UAL that have been implemented by event and operations teams to reuse structures and materials where possible from the end of year shows. In some locations the feasibility to implement this way of working is limited by the storage capacity they have available to them, for example the new LCC building will have a dedicated storage space for furniture and exhibitions but currently this is lacking.

For 2023/24 end of year, the team at CCW made significant reductions in their waste collections. A policy of 1-skip per site was implemented, supported by initiatives such as investing in better quality, reusable equipment (eg brushes, rollers) and creating kits that can be accessed on repeat rather than single use items. The academic services and operations team worked together to introduce a pre-skip stage for all waste, where a designated room was allocated as the waste repository, a deadline was given to staff and students for studios and lockers to be cleared into the waste repository, then students are given access to the repository to claim items for re-use.

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### **Repair cafes**

At CCW student-led repair cafés have been running for 2 years through the Repair Advocates program where funding was received for 6 students to be employed 2 hrs a week. The repair events have been held at all colleges, but in 2024 a permanent home was found in the community via St Luke's Church in Peckham via monthly events alongside the local pantry. The hope is that funding will continue for this initiative, but it is in doubt. A separate student group have set up similar occasional repair events at LCF, and in the past (prior to covid) staff ran maker fairs and repair workshops at LCC.

### Locker clear-outs and material giveaways

The Student Union Sabbatical Officers at CSM In many of the making spaces across the six have been running an annual program of manning colleges technicians have created designated areas where project surplus and salvaged the locker clear-outs after students have finished for the year and left behind an excess of materials materials are available for students to take and and supplies. The waste is collected, sorted, use. These areas are managed by technical stored or disposed of by the SU Sabbs, who then staff, who undertake numerous activities to arrange a material giveaway day for hardship fund maintain them, including the sourcing and and bursary students. procuring materials; teaching students behaviour around re-use, recycling, and the financial and environmental value of what they're now **Re-use units** able to access for free; maintaining required levels of quality and quantity; and creating Material reuse units are high-spec, mobile units that are available to students to both donate storage spaces that can accommodate the material. The areas tend to develop organically excess materials to, and to take materials from to use within their creative work. They are not due to personal motivation on the part of staffed. These are an initiative from the central the technicians and are rarely planned into Retail team and Arts Stores and have been the making spaces and processes from the located as far as possible in central areas in outset. Some examples of scrap material being the colleges, making them accessible across redirected from the general waste streams disciplines. They have been installed at every through this pathway includes fabric, textiles, college apart from CSM (who already had yarn, paper, wood, metal, clay, acrylic, WEEE, makeup, and wigs. However, due to their the Swap Shop which they felt filled the location within the specific course or making same purpose). space, these tend to be less available to or indeed known about by cross-disciplinary students within the wider college.

#### Scrap recycling areas

Staff and student generated circular initiatives

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#### Impact measurement

There have been a number of initiatives in which staff have organised projects that attempt to measure and track their carbon emissions and environmental impacts with a view to understanding the baseline impacts generated by current 'business as usual' practices and tracking the reduction in these impacts efforts to change the system may have.

An example of this is CSM Technical Resources working with UCL to pilot their Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) across 31 workshops. LEAF is one of only a handful of initiatives at UAL that gathers quantitative data on carbon emissions. The funding model has recently changed from being funded annually on a project basis from Climate Action Plan budgets and resourced by Arts Temps, to now being managed in-house at CSM via the Technical Manager Sustainable Practices who will oversee future implementation of the framework. UCL is currently developing a LEAF framework more suited to creative workshops, in collaboration with UAL and other creative institutions.



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'Tool(s) [for impact measurement] can be developed centrally with subject knowledge expertise for consistency of methodology and datasets supported by the necessary enhancement of our purchasing & e-store records. This also applies to student self-evaluation tools.

But these should have a level of flexibility built in, allowing local teams have ownership of them All this will require designing the tools, training to develop local expertise and ongoing support until it is embedded.

Having this expertise within existing course and workshop teams is far preferrable to having umbrella roles introduced that aren't properly integrated or knowledgeable about practices.

The process of introducing developing local expertise is just as important if not more as introducing well informed and robust but flexible tools, in order to gain wide acceptance and have active buy-in where teams can realise the transformative opportunities.

This means technical, academic and / purchasing procurement staff working together. And the bonus is that student will begin to see the values being taught being put into daily practice.'

#### **Jane Penty**

Sustainable Design Leader Central Saint Martins, UAL







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### **Educational or curriculum-based initiatives**

A number of initiatives have been designed with the purpose of educating students about the environmental impact of their creative practices, and about the strategies students can take to reduce these impacts, which includes approaching their initial concepts and applying innovation to design out excessive waste, consider and select materials with full life cycle impact in mind, manage their materials efficiently during the project creation, and take action to minimise the amount of waste they produce and are responsible for overall.

### Student advocates involvement in curriculum

As part of the initiative to embed the Principles of Climate, Social and Racial Justice into the curriculum, one group of students called Climate Advocates has been recruited into paid roles to work with course teams and within the university more widely to support this. Advocates engage in activities that relate to codesigning the principles into the curriculum, but also undertake their own projects. A number of Advocates are involved in initiatives such as the repair cafes and the swap shops, and several have initiated their own projects that explore different approaches to waste reduction within their colleges.

This includes initiating pop-up swap shops where one does not already exist in the college and speaking to their own lived experiences of working as a waste worker within a classroom context. Case Study 4, on page 30, is a good example of the changes to a system wellsupported Climate Advocates can initiate.

### **Climate Emergency Network (CEN)** Assemblies

As part of a collaboration with Citizens UK, CEN held a series of participatory, cross-disciplinary storytelling sessions and citizen's assemblies for staff and students, that were looking to define UAL's priority areas on climate policy to develop into an ask to be put forward to the London Mayor. During the process of the assemblies, waste emerged as a clear and overarching area of concern and became the primary focus. This was then explored as a series of potential interventions, both at UAL and London levels.



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# **Staff concerns**

While we spoke to many members of staff about initiatives they participated in and were passionate about, we also heard concerns that have the potential to limit the extent to which UAL can transform the way it thinks about and manages resources and waste to fully align to social purpose values.



Sophie Brameld, 2021 BA Textile Design, Chelsea College of Arts, UAL | Photograph: Rianna Doran





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### Institutional challenges

Stakeholders feel that circularity is often not prioritised in senior decision-making, and that efforts consequently lack consistency across the university. Stakeholders reported instances of initiatives being blocked or reduced, sometimes without clear justification, alongside a feeling of efforts going unappreciated, unacknowledged and unrewarded. This frequently leads to demotivation, which reduces the likelihood of initiatives being successful over time.

Overall staff feel they lack sufficient training to be able to offer the expertise and authority needed on core circularity concepts and principles that by their nature tend to be constantly changing and evolving. UAL is also lacking a consistent university-wide messaging framework that solidifies its goals, ambitions and policy for behaviours around materials and waste and translates these into action, which could inform and influence behaviours at a basic level.

The lack of time for additional training around circularity and material reuse means staff are struggling to keep up with new requirements, like CSRJ (climate, social and racial justice) and social purpose. Although these concepts are valued and largely seen as vital by staff, the requirements they place on staff time can sometimes feel additive, without adjustments to existing workloads to accommodate. This is particularly challenging for part-time staff, who report increasingly unsustainable workloads.

Workload management is particularly challenging for leaders at UAL. When additional requirements are added into staff members' responsibilities, there is no standard approach to reviewing their impact on staff workloads. There is ongoing work to address this which could take into account considerations around material circularity.



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### **Cultural and behavioural challenges**

Across UAL, long term planning is frequently lacking, which can result in last minute panic buying. A variety of system-wide issues have reduced opportunities to prioritise more considered purchasing behaviours: lack of staff capacity is one reason for this, but budget pressures, space management issues, volatile student recruitment and difficult planning beyond short-term targets are all factors too. Budgets are also dependent on student numbers, meaning money is constricted until student numbers are definite for the upcoming year – which can push staff into making hasty decisions even if they had wanted to plan more long-term.

Additional frustration comes from the behaviours of some teaching staff and students around the free salvaged and donated materials, including a lack of awareness around the time and effort that have gone into their procurement, and a tendency for irresponsible consumption.

Academic research at UAL rarely makes it into the daily practice of teaching staff or finds practical application in the university ecosystem. This disconnect is largely due to organisational silos and conventions, which stakeholders feel can stifle the flow of knowledge and innovation.

### **Barriers to circularity initiatives**

Whilst we observed strong support for existing circularity initiatives, these are often not replicated across all colleges (e.g. the Swap Shop at Central Saint Martins) and run through the goodwill of individual staff and students, which limits the capacity at which they are able to operate. There are many more sources of waste where there is potential for redirection into circular initiatives where limited or no such initiative exists (e.g. materials from the breakdown of the end of year shows).

The problem is that these initiatives are not always improved by being scaled up: in reality, there are trade-offs to be made when evaluating local initiatives versus institution-wide ones. The advantage of local bespoke initiatives is that they are relatively easy to stand up, meet local needs, have local champions, and can find clever loopholes due to intricate institutional knowledge. On the other hand, they are hard to replicate and can feel fragile. UAL-wide initiatives introduced in a clear, consistent way, however, would be slow

to introduce, less bespoke, and less ownedand-loved by college / course team – but would be able to connect more structurally with UAL-wide providers (e.g. Suez) and data management, potentially have efficiency savings, and be more stable.

Stakeholders also expressed feeling held back by insufficient staff capacity and the lack of a suitable physical space for the storage required for salvaged materials. The increase in student numbers adds to the pressure and competition for available space. It is worth noting that UAL is developing a new approach to space management as one of the delivery plan objectives, which could help address this issue.

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### **Collaboration and communication**

One of the primary barriers to successful initiatives or conversations around materials reuse across UAL raised by stakeholders was the lack of effective communication channels to support joined up, collaborative, and crosscollege or cross-discipline resource-sharing. Success currently hinges on the efforts of motivated individuals. This is both extractive and exhausting for those individuals, but it also means that when team changes occur, or individuals key to that activity leave UAL, the momentum and relationships that have been built are frequently lost. This is a good example of why reliance on individual goodwill, and additional labour of selfgenerated waste reduction initiatives on top of an individual's responsibilities within their job role, hurts the long-term goals of UAL. Without a formal structure or strategy to foster collaboration around material reuse and circularity, such initiatives are difficult to sustain.

Stakeholders explained that the absence of regular cross-disciplinary meetings means that valuable circular opportunities within UAL are often overlooked, leading to a lack of awareness and engagement in existing initiatives. This results in missed opportunities for creative collaboration and a fragmented approach to circularity efforts within the university.

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### **Student experience**

Some interviewees perceived a disconnect between the expectations placed on students by course teachers and what students were commonly able to achieve. This disconnect often leads to wasted materials as students plan and buy materials for work of a greater scope than is achievable within the time they have for a given project.

On the other hand, materials that are provided for free for student use often lose their perceived value, with staff reporting that some students view reuse initiatives as last-minute or easy solutions. This mindset can lead to a lack of preparation and undervaluing of resources, particularly among students who arrive to class without the necessary materials. Where this occurs, students may take too much of donated or salvaged materials, and the excess tends to end up in the skip, frustrating circular initiatives and generating excess waste.

The underlying problems could be that where teaching on best practice around sustainability and material reuse is not integrated into assessed content, students may be less likely to engage with it. It therefore becomes harder to integrate these principles as part of collective everyday behaviour and studio etiquette.



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## **Implementing collaborative** mechanisms to reduce waste

### Camberwell, Chelsea and Wimbledon Colleges of Arts

### Context

After the merging of Camberwell, Chelsea, and Wimbledon Colleges into the single administrative entity of CCW, building management processes initially remained decentralised. Project teams often handled material resources being brought on to the site and waste removal logistics independently, leading to excess waste generation. A lack of ability for long-term planning further exacerbated the habitual tendency for departments to engage in reactive behaviour when needing quick solutions - especially around material procurement and space management.

As an evolution of the change program put in place for the CCW merge, a centralised Building Operations team was formed in Spring 2022. Their priority was to interrogate the disparate processes across operations on all sites with the goal of providing greater support for existing teams whilst reducing resource inefficiencies, particularly around key activities like reducing waste generated during end of year shows.

### ual:



2023 BA Fine Art Painting show, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL | Photograph: Kristy Noble



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To establish strong visibility in the community the new team prioritised having a constructive in-person presence at the colleges and taking time to learn the individual requirements of each. Regular, cross-functional team meetings were implemented to help with information sharing and long-term planning for future projects and resource requirements. The central team were able to successfully establish themselves as the main filter for frontline requests for anything involving the estate – from an amendment to a studio to moving furniture, up to bigger strategic building projects and getting rid of waste.

This has been a mutually beneficial approach, giving the team more oversight into the activities on all three sites whilst making it possible to assess requests more holistically. It also allowed them to avoid unnecessary waste by repurposing resources and furniture cross-site, whilst influencing more sustainable procurement options - for example looking at standardised, better quality and easily repairable furniture which extended their life cycle, and reduced the furniture taken away as waste. Embedding new Space Coordinators, a role created in late 2022, within each site and creating a visible liaison role gave staff and students reliable contacts for guidance on resource use and waste management. Having'eyes and ears on the ground' enabled staff to report excess materials, facilitating real-time management of resources and waste prevention.

This approach underscored the need for local knowledge and direct relationships, with the intention to make staff more comfortable with centralised support. The collaboration and communication processes embedded at CCW have proven to be a valuable step toward achieving a more sustainable and efficient approach to resource and waste management at UAL. Stakeholders have emphasised the need for a mutually beneficial approach to any changes implemented: this is regularly discussed at Building User Group level meetings, which help to build trust and strong cross-departmental relationships. CCW's commitment to integrated operations and proactive waste management sets a strong foundation for continuous improvement and reinforces its dedication to responsible resource use across all colleges.



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Suez skip in the courtyard at Chelsea College of Arts, UAL | Photograph: UAL

### Waste management processes

The lack of accountability around waste management stems from ingrained processes and culture, which neither reward positive behaviour nor enforce consequences for poor waste management. This is compounded by a lack of data that obscures the true cost of waste, making it difficult to assess and address the issue comprehensively.

Electrical and electronic equipment waste (WEEE) is perceived as a pressing issue and combined with the cost-of-living crisis, utilising our e-waste to better serve students in the UAL community is viewed as an easy solution. However, the limitations in the UAL insurance policy prevent the donation of electrical goods as well as hesitation around the privacy and security issues of effective data wiping.

There is general widespread cynicism about Suez, UAL's main waste contractor, due to inconsistencies in recycling practices. Low levels of user education about what can and cannot be recycled, and unclear, inconsistent signage lead to confusion. This is worsened by reports of waste from separated bins being combined due to contamination, undermining the recycling process and contributing to scepticism about the institution's commitment to sustainable waste management.

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### **Difficulties around specialist recycling**

Staff reported difficulties around the notion of specialist recycling across UAL. Taking the example of textile waste, which is produced across a wide range of courses across UAL, and accounts for a significant component of the overall waste generated through university activities: there is widespread concern from both staff and students around the sheer quantity of fabric waste being generated across the colleges. Through an extensive period of discovery, we found that outside of any re-use initiatives maintained by technical staff in the studios and workshops, the majority of textile waste generated across the university is collected and disposed of through the 'general waste' stream, collected by our external waste contractor, Suez. Through this stream unsegregated waste is collected and directed through the 'Waste to Energy' (WTE) route, generating electricity via incineration.

For example, it would be better to redirect textile / fabric waste through new specialist recycling and other circular economic routes, but several barriers are currently preventing this:

This makes it difficult for us to understand how different types of fabric, or in what quantities, can be redirected into different types of reuse or recycling routes for waste management, and associated cost / budget requirements to integrate these changes.

We do not have an accurate estimate of the current total weight or volume of fabric/ textile waste that we generate across UAL. We do not understand the different types of textile waste as relative proportions of fabric/ textile waste as a subcategory (e.g. natural, synthetic, blend, or mono-material). Without baseline estimates of the scale of the problem, it is impossible to understand where improvements are being made.

The current landscape for effective UK based textile recycling is also very limited. There are infrastructure challenges with collection and sorting, as systems are not yet equipped to handle large volumes or separate different textile types effectively. The majority of textile waste is still exported or sent to landfill or incineration. While there are a small number of facilities that can take textiles (at a limited capacity), this is usually in the form of post-consumer garments which are generally shredded then downcycled into lower quality materials such as movers' blankets or builders' rags. Currently there is very limited textile-to-textile recycling – which is a global issue.

However, despite these challenges, textiles remain a good candidate for testing alternative strategies for waste management, in particular specialist recycling projects and further exploration of how byproducts of creative activities involving textiles can be utilised within a circular economic system. Through talking with experienced technicians across the university we were able to identify a good candidate for a pilot project in this area: see FibreLab case study.



Staff concerns Case study 02

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## A pilot textile recycling collaboration

### UAL Social Purpose Lab x London College of Fashion x FibreLab

### About

Founded by LCF MA Fashion Futures graduate Kae Katz, <u>FibreLab</u> is a small textile recycling company developing new, hyper-local approaches to recycling textile waste. They collect, sort and shred textile waste from local businesses in their small facility in Hackney, some of which is processed into handmade premium paper stock called PaperTex (via one of the last remaining handmade paper mills in the UK).

As part of the Materials Project, the Social Purpose Lab facilitated a pilot collaboration between FibreLab and a group of Garment and Textiles Technicians at LCF. The pilot had the following aims:

- To test how UAL might manage separate waste stream collections within a busy making environment.
- To scope the appetite and education needed for successful engagement in specialised recycling schemes.
- To understand the logistics and costs around using a specialised external supplier. To identify interventions required to embed specialised recycling in UAL
- processes going forward.



Sheet of PaperTex, FibreLab | Photograph: Mooka Srisurayotin



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Top: Yellow Calico bin, designed by Alexa Hedges and made by Garment Technicians, London College of Fashion, UAL | Photograph: Alexa Hedges Below: Calico sacks, designed by Alexa Hedges and made by Garment Technicians, London College of Fashion, UAL | Photograph: Alexa Hedges

### 'I think the technicians were crucial to making it run so smoothly - they really took the initiative'

### **FibreLab**

The educational needs of staff and students and the logistical aspects of the project (including equipment needed at LCF) were identified through early conversations, following which FibreLab gave LCF Technicians an overview on the process of collecting and sorting fabric. The LCF technical team organised two large, yellow bins on wheels for calico waste with clear instructional signage, positioned in a highly visible and communal space. They also made bespoke large canvas bags for the transportation of calico to and from LCF and FibreLab.





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**Results and learning** 

The pilot ran for 13 weeks and was initially budgeted to cover the collection of 50kg of calico. A total of 89.4kg of calico waste was diverted from incineration.

The technicians played an integral role in the success of this pilot by designing a user-friendly system, which significantly reduced waste in the general bins (with cleaners noting that bins felt much lighter). Technicians managed the manual process of monitoring, sorting, and emptying bins on top of their regular workload. Accurate weight assessment of collected calico proved difficult due to unreliable scales, leading to issues with collection coordination. Students were generally diligent, but FibreLab needed to do some additional sorting as a mix of materials, zips, and pins were found. FibreLab noted that this is typical in initial trials and can be improved with early education and more support from technicians and tutors.

### Next steps

Currently the volume of calico collection required There are currently no comparable data on the by LCF alone exceeds FibreLab's capacity, but waste each discipline is generating at UAL, or they are exploring alternatives to expand their of the cost attached to its disposal. A detailed business model and machinery. As an initial step, cost analysis would be needed to compare the FibreLab could commit to regular collections of expenses of Suez's waste collection services with 100kg per month until they can increase capacity. alternative collections. Specifically, measuring the volume of waste bags or skips and calculating the cost per kilogram for both Suez and FibreLab **Closing the loop** services would help determine the most cost-While there is a huge appetite for the waste effective and sustainable solution. The carbon removal, closing the loop with the purchase of cost of these options would also need to be the paper that is made from the calico waste included into this analysis.

remains a challenge. Even with a discount applied, the cost per sheet is a lot higher than what is feasible for most students.

### Cost analysis and budget reallocation

A reallocation and / or clear delineation of budget responsibilities is also required to ensure the successful implementation of any recycling initiatives. This includes agreeing which departments or group of stakeholders (such as Estates / College / Course) are responsible for which specific aspects of the waste management process, including collection, disposal, and recycling. Effective financial planning and resource allocation are also critical to sustaining these initiatives in the long term.



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### **Excess workload and balance of** responsibilities

Ultimately the pilot's success relied on motivated individuals taking on work above and beyond their regular workload. To embed initiatives like this in UAL's business-as-usual operations, we must move away from relying on individual goodwill of passionate staff.

To begin the process of integrating specialised recycling into UAL's BAU, it will be crucial to balance the responsibilities between technicians, academic staff, support staff, and students. Technicians alone cannot manage the entire process. Cleaners could play a larger role by handling waste removal to the loading bay; students could play a larger part in managing the initial collecting and sorting; and academic staff could help embed a mindset shift and set behavioural expectations for colleagues and students.

### **Opportunities for Expansion**

### **Exploring Formal Partnerships**

A formal partnership with local businesses like FibreLab could unlock additional value beyond waste collection. This partnership could involve educational opportunities such as open days, studio tours, workshops, and talks that educate students on circular economy principles. Such collaborations would not only benefit the institution but also foster stronger ties with local communities and support place making activities.

### **Creating an internal supply chain**

There is potential to expand this project by identifying other start and end points within the institution's own ecosystem across the colleges. For example, mapping out which departments need calico collection, which departments can purchase recycled paper, and which ones could use wadding. These connections could further streamline the circular economy model within the university, contributing to a more sustainable campus-wide system.



Sorting feedstock for recycling, FibreLab | Photograph: Mooka Srisurayotin



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## **Student concerns**

### **Community and collaboration**

Students frequently highlighted limited studio space, an increase in student numbers, and hot-desking policies. It was noted that this lack of a dedicated, cohesive space fostered a sense of disconnection, both from their studio and making environment and from their creative practice. A struggle to establish a personal connection to their surroundings can also impact their relationship with the materials they use: this disconnection may lead to a more detached or disposable approach to the work they produce as they feel less invested in the creative process itself.

These might seem easy fixes, but it's important to acknowledge the increased cost that would come with providing each student with enough dedicated making spaces just for their course groups. In a climate of financial pressures, both for students and for the university, this is a genuine tension that is not easily resolved.



Matt Graysmith in the studio, 2023 BA Fine Art: Painting, Camberwell College of Arts, UAL | Photograph: Alys Tomlinson



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### Community and collaboration cont.

Many students observe a culture of disposability among their peers and would like to foster more pride and ownership in the creative process. They also feel that most sustainability information comes from technicians, rather than tutors, and would appreciate more active involvement from course tutors and leaders. For courses focused on digital media, students suggest incorporating digital waste literacy. Additionally, they are interested in seeing more real-world examples from industry professionals who apply sustainable practices in their work.

Advocates feel course leaders could more actively embrace collaboration with students, particularly by better supporting advocate roles, which enable students to contribute more meaningfully. When collaboration does happen, it was seen to have a positive effect for everyone involved.

### ual:

### Impact of cost on student creative practice

Echoing concerns voiced by staff, interviewees expressed a strong desire for an effective platform that facilitates student-to-student project collaboration. Many feel that the current communication channels available for connecting with peers are either limited or ineffective. A userfriendly platform would aid in building a stronger sense of shared purpose and connection, as well as a practical logistical solution for project collaboration and resource sharing.

The cost of materials has additional impacts on the way students engage in their own creative practices. Their prohibitive cost can have the effect of curtailing the creative freedom to experiment, learn and fail. It has been flagged that frequently course costs are not always accurately reflected in the course handbook before the students begin, leaving them unaware of essential expenses like the technical specifications required for digital courses or the quantity and cost of physical materials for handson, making-based courses.



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### **Circularity initiatives and waste management**

Students expressed scepticism around the effectiveness of provided recycling bins and were vocal advocates for the introduction of waste solutions and recycling programs tailored to specific waste streams or courses, such as electronics, paper, canvas, or textiles.

There was a strong consensus on the need for clearer labelling and communication around waste and re-use systems, particularly for international students unfamiliar with UK-specific rules. Unclear labelling on bins was noted, with requests for more visual cues and clarity on instructional signage, including quite detailed and specific information per course or maker space to establish comprehensive guidance on the appropriate use and disposal of materials.

In most colleges an informal re-use culture tends to emerge with waste being left by students near or in the skips resulting in many students resorting to 'skip diving' for materials. Among the students we spoke to, there was a strong interest in a more formal, university-supported re-use culture across all sites, that consolidates and builds on existing successful initiatives.

In addition to the end of year shows glut of waste, it was flagged that finished project pieces are frequently left in studios throughout the year, leaving the course tutors responsible for managing and disposing of these items.

Students would like more course-specific guidance on sustainable disposal and reuse options for materials. They feel that inductions could include more information on these topics, as awareness around the end-of-life cycle of materials and finished projects is currently lacking.



Student concerns Case study 03

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# **Student-led textile recycling pilot**

### **Central Saint Martins**

### Context

The Climate Advocate program employs students in paid roles to work with staff to embed the principles of Climate, Social and Racial Justice within the curriculum. As part of the Advocates' role, a self-directed personal project is included in their allocated time.

One Climate Advocate for the CSM Fashion Programme had expressed a concern for the lack of education around how to tackle the climate crisis in a tangible way since enrolling in 2020. They identified textile recycling as the focus of their personal project and the vehicle with which they could best support CSM with an appropriately ambitious reaction and solution. Fashion studios at CSM have implemented an informal system in which students are encouraged to donate excess fabric for other students to use via a large, red plastic bin located centrally near the fabric store. This has been quite successful and is frequently used as a source of materials – however the system is frequently overwhelmed, especially around the end of year, and significant quantities of fabric often end up in the general waste stream.



Informal donation point in the Fashion studios, overwhelmed during end of year preparations, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: UAL



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### The pilot

Previous efforts by staff and students to collect textile scraps in a way that would be appropriate for recycling externally were unsuccessful due to contamination by pins, zips and experimental elements such as concrete. This problem spoke to a lack of appropriate education and signage around recycling collection bins.

The Climate Advocate, in collaboration with a Senior Lecturer and the Menswear course Student Rep, initiated a project with the goal of not just recycling more but also reducing the overwhelming amount of waste generated in the fashion studios. Dedicated recycling stations were set up within two of the fashion studios to create a controlled environment in which to support students to prepare and donate their scraps for recycling. During a 10-week trial they implemented signage and individually spoke with students on each of the courses to ensure sufficient knowledge of the pilot and processes.

For the recycling component of the pilot options were pursued with two external waste collection facilities, specialised textile recycler LMB, and FibreLab, and a budget was agreed with the BA Course Leader for this.

### Outcome

Although approximately 500 kilograms of textile waste was collected during the trial, in the end the recycling collection was not successful. This was due to a lack of a timely response from LMB and the pressures mounting to remove the waste from the studios for end of year shows. The associated cost for FibreLab to cover the collection and processing of the entire 500kg could not be met within the existing course budget.

A proportion of the textiles were donated to the CSM Swap Shop, but their storage capacity was limited, so the majority was sent to general waste.

### Learnings

The key learning here was that students are able to sort and prepare textile waste appropriately for recycling if educated and supported to do so. The volume collected through this limited trial shows that there is great potential for reducing our environmental impact and carbon emissions through redirection of textile waste from the general waste stream.

### Challenges

This approach requires time and resources. Technicians working within these spaces voiced concerns that for this approach to be sustained beyond the involvement of the Climate Advocacy programme, staff would need to take on the responsibility of supporting recycling stations, and this would likely involve undertaking associated tasks on top of their current workloads. Education would also be required for both staff and students.



Textiles sorted and bagged, ready for collection, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: UAL



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# Recommendations for change



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'The tangibility of materials and waste creates a highly visible problem with a clear entry point for creative intervention.

The high volume of actions focussed on materials and waste reflect this and demonstrate action that cuts across multiple levels in the system, from niche action that is student-led and precarious in nature through to action that is more stable and supported within the regime at a departmental level."

**UAL Climate Systems Mapping Report** 

Danielle McGahan, 2021 BA Textile Design, Central Saint Martins, UAL | Photograph: UAL



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# A note on the University as a system

UAL is an extraordinary place: a world class creative institution filled with talent, imagination and ambition. We are rightly proud of our staff and student community and the work they do every day to bring creativity to life.

However, UAL also has challenges we need to address, one of which – as this report has highlighted is the way in which university silos, practices and divides sometimes get in the way of being able to do our best work. In our 2024 staff survey only 16% of respondents said we were good at collaboration and communication across the University.

UAL's Climate Systems Mapping research, conducted by UAL design academics (see Wallace, N., Mazé, R., Williams, D., Landin, D., Tuft, N., and Ng, N. (2024) UAL Climate Systems Mapping: Report on the pilot research project. University of the Arts London), has confirmed that division is holding UAL back whether between leaders and front-line staff, professional and academic colleagues, or Colleges and central services. It suggests that a new way of working, with social purpose at its heart, can help build the trust and relationships the University needs to fulfil its ambitions. Their research proposes that we frame our social purpose work using a design methodology known as multi-level systems mapping.

To put it simply we need to ensure we're working for change at four different levels:

- Niche: small scale, experimental innovative or agile actions happening across our community.
- **Regime:** the frameworks, rules and structures that govern everyday life and decision-making at UAL.
- **Culture:** the ideologies, mindset, beliefs and values that prevail within our community.
- **Ecosystem:** the systems and infrastructure – both human and planetary – in which the University operates.



A note on the University as a system

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Only when our ambitions to create social value are embedded at all four levels will we be able to maximise the positive impact UAL has through our teaching, our research and our operations.

The recommendations we propose below are best thought of through this systems approach. 'Whole system' change comes from acting at multiple levels within the system of the university at the same time - not solely because action is needed at each, but also because acting at each level fosters trust between the actors who operate within it. We have therefore developed each recommendation factoring in these four levels, recognising that at this stage in UAL's evolution we are focusing on fostering innovation and experimentation, and improving the systems and processes that will be needed to help these innovations scale. This won't happen overnight: in most cases this process involves phasing out the old, whilst simultaneously phasing in the new (see right).

### Disrupting

Phasing out entrenched, extractive norms

### **Stabilising**

Regenerative norms have been institutionalised and stabilised

### In flux

#### Experimenting

Phasing in new, regenerative norms

### Displacing

Extractive norms have been displaced and phased out



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# **01** Agree university-wide waste and materials aspirations

While there are many initiatives in place to improve UAL's material circularity, many of them overlap in purpose or compete for prioritisation, resourcing, and leadership endorsement. Although each initiative has its own strengths, a unified high-level Materials and Waste Policy is a necessary first step. This would allow the university as a whole to agree a set of aspirations and clear goals to work towards.

To ensure this process is participatory and taps into the wealth of expertise within the UAL eco-system, a good first step would be to put together a cross-College Waste Reduction Action Group, coordinated by the new Estates Sustainability Manager (Waste & Circularity) in conjunction with the Social Purpose Lab, and composed of representatives from across UAL's staff, student and practice communities. This action group could co-design the Materials and Waste Policy, and work to align leadership around its goals.

Working with internal comms, Technicians and the SU, the Action Group could also facilitate development of agreed and consistent Materials and Waste Messaging that builds on and cements the grassroots efforts of individual initiatives. This policy would then need to be endorsed by the relevant people (such as Executive Board and Deans) and properly communicated through Colleges and teams, working with Comms to do this.



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# **02** Establish volume and cost baselines for UAL's material use

To track progress against any agreed goals, a baseline for the volumes and costs of materials that each College buys, recycles, and sends away as waste is required. To achieve this, UAL's new Head of Sustainability Data and Reporting, alongside the new Sustainability Manager (Waste & Circularity), should look to incorporate waste reporting into existing UAL processes such as energy and carbon reporting. Ideally this would incorporate dashboards for each site allowing open access to information on generated waste and recycling. A more efficient back-end system would help with the detailed cost analysis that is needed to compare the expenses of current waste collection services with alternative collections.

There is currently no comparable data on the waste each discipline is generating at UAL. To go beyond the current General Waste single stream catch-all will require (large) system and behaviour change at the point of disposal to separate out and measure the different material streams. To address this, the Sustainability Manager (Waste & Circularity) should pick up the learnings from specialised recycling pilots across UAL and undertake more work with Technicians in making spaces to understand the barriers and enablers around specialised recycling streams.

UAL's Head of Sustainability Data and Reporting in collaboration with the Sustainability Manager (Waste & Circularity) could also consider commissioning an external expert who specialises in helping large organisations understand, manage and improve their waste flows (as <u>Jane Penty highlights</u>). The Head of Sustainability Data and Reporting could consider if improvements to data for calculating scope 3 waste emissions are needed and ensure that data quality aligns with external standards (such as the EAUC's Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework).



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# **03** Develop basic waste literacy training

Any agreed goals around materials and circularity cannot be achieved without first ensuring all of UAL's staff and students have a strong foundation of knowledge in waste literacy principles: from a broad grasp on the climate crisis and its various axes, to the more practical understanding of what goes in which bin.

The roll-out of accredited Carbon Literacy Training, orchestrated by the Organisational Development Consultant (Climate and Net Zero), is playing an important role in training members of the university in carbon principles. This work could be taken further by developing or commissioning a series of training opportunities for staff and students covering all aspects of climate and waste literacy – perhaps taking the form of online modules covering topics around waste and materials and climate and racial justice, including waste colonialism and climate injustice, to complement and enhance the Carbon Literacy Training's goals.

For students, waste literacy principles could also become part of their'welcome' induction on making courses implemented by Programme Directors and course leaders. The practical aspects of this – such as using waste versus recycling bins appropriately - could become part of their building induction.

Any waste literacy training would need to go through the Net Zero and Academic Discourse and Action Learning (ADAL) committees before implementation.



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# 04 Explore behaviour change opportunities across the UAL ecosystem

The Waste Reduction Action Group could explore opportunities to introduce circularity concepts to students in non-traditional ways. This could include engaging with the classes run by the materials librarian at CSM and LCF, or supporting students to learn about the realworld developments (such as policy legislation) around waste and materials reuse that are reshaping the creative industries, particularly in fashion and textiles. This could also include working with the Policy and Advocacy team to co-create student engagement opportunities, such as guest lectures or online resources. This would empower students to proactively engage with industry sustainability requirements before graduating, supporting behaviour change within the university.

The Action Group could also work with course leaders, SU Sabbatical Officers, student Climate Advocates, Repair Advocates and/or Changemakers to implement a student Waste Reduction Champions scheme, supporting interested and passionate students to engage in peer-to-peer learning with others on their courses. Waste Reduction Champions could play a crucial role in empowering and incentivising student behaviour change, including in developing more intuitive or image-based signage for accessibility, and consistent messaging that ties into the wider Materials and Waste Messaging. This would also support students to feel ownership and pride in the physical spaces they occupy whilst at UAL.

The Action Group could also explore with course leaders the possibility of developing UAL awards for students going above and beyond on circularity or material considerations in their workshop etiquette or degree show submissions, for example including the possibility of partnering with Centre for Sustainable Fashion on textiles-specific awards or UAL Showcase for a curated collection.



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# 05 Build material circularity objectives into job descriptions and staff roles

This report has outlined the way in which circularity projects have grown from local initiatives, led by individuals often going above and beyond their formal role. For material circularity to become'business as usual' at UAL, it needs to be mainstreamed into job descriptions, operational planning, departmental objectives and individual workload planning. This is complex work that will take time, as a wide range of roles and job families have different parts to play in our circularity journey: teaching, technical and facilities staff as well as analysts, procurement and purchasing leads, events teams and managers.

The Social Purpose Lab and Estates Sustainability Team should work with courses, teams and job families to pilot, test and embed material circularity into business as usual in this way - exploring whether job description changes, objectives, KPIs or other interventions are most appropriate and effective at mainstreaming this way of working. Starting with high-intensity making courses, the teams should support Colleges to undertake an honest assessment of the staff hours required to implement and run circularity and waste management initiatives, to inform this work. A strategy can then be developed for appropriate and sustainable resourcing models.



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# 06 Support students to exercise greater choice in material procurement

Students need materials for their courses, but these are often costly and bought new. This is both wasteful of resources and extremely expensive for students, many of whom are struggling under growing financial pressures.

To empower students to exercise greater choice in material procurement and incentivise a culture of circularity, the Sustainability Manager (Waste & Circularity) could work with the SU to develop a materials guide to support students in their decision-making. Students could also be given a carbon budget The new Sustainability Manager (Waste & to work to which includes manufacture and Circularity) could also explore possibilities around disposal of materials, led by course leaders and linking up student material needs with industry supported university-wide. The EEC (Educational donations. This could include a university-wide Enhancement Committee) and TLE (Teaching Donations Portal matching materials donations to and Learning Exchange) could also consider student requirements, or other more official and streamlined process for acquiring and distributing imposing a cap on the amount that can be spent on final projects. The Action Group would need material donations – potentially tapping into to take this forward, working with the ADAL existing external networks, such as the Olympic Park (including LCF at East Bank) development, (Academic Discourse and Action Learning) who may be able to support with material banks Committee and the Organisational Development Consultant (Climate and Net Zero) to determine in the area. This would also support better carbon budget and with Course Leaders on data collection around materials entering the relevant making courses to determine appropriate university. materials cost threshold.



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### Introduction

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Recommendations

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Climate Emergency Network members, During the Citizens UK Assembly process



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