IMPERIAL

Sustainable Imperial

Telling Imperial's story of sustainability

Annual sustainability report 2024–25

Dangoor Plaza, South Kensington Campus

Contents

Foreword

The path to a sustainable future is central to Imperial's mission. In our Science for Humanity strategy, we outlined our vision to deliver evidence-based solutions, embrace new technologies, challenge conventional thinking and open new debate in our efforts to solve the growing climate crisis. This annual report details the progress we've made over the last year to address some of these challenges and build a greener future for our institution, our neighbours, our partners and beyond.

Professor Nigel Brandon
OBE FREng FRS
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering, Chair of Sustainability Strategy Committee

Our future goals will be set out in our next sustainability strategy, which is coming soon. It's all part of our ambition to set a global standard for university sustainability and to achieve our target of having a net zero estate by 2040.

Sustainability is being built into new developments such as at our White City Campus.

Developing Sustainable Imperial: a strategic initiative

Where do we go next when the goal is a healthier, more sustainable planet? That's the big question that has driven our work this year with the development of our Sustainable Imperial strategy.

Building on the foundations of Imperial's first Sustainability Strategy 2021–26, we have been working on the Sustainable Imperial strategy 2026–31, which will set out a cross-cutting programme focusing on achieving measurable positive impact on our campuses and on the world. This year, colleagues across the university have been working hard to develop the strategy, its aims and outputs.

We are designing the strategy with genuine curiosity about what matters most to our community. We launched Imperial's Big Sustainability Conversation over the summer into the start of Autumn Term 2025 to encourage those conversations and open the process to all. This allowed us to hear directly from staff and students about their priorities and where they see opportunities. That collective input is now shaping the final blueprint, and we are anticipating the launch of the strategy in spring 2026.

In support of this programme, in May 2025, Professor Anna Korre accepted the appointment of Associate Provost (Sustainability) to act as a champion for sustainability across Imperial and take responsibility for the successful embedding of the university's sustainability objectives.

Tackling our biggest emissions

This year, we've continued to make tangible progress towards our net zero goal for Imperial's estate. We have been updating infrastructure and building management systems, progressing our decarbonisation efforts for improving energy efficiency.

Our Sustainability Strategy for 2021–2026 set a goal of reaching net zero without offsets for scope 1 and 2 emissions (energy and campus transport) by 2040 and minimising scope 3 emissions (goods and services we buy) as far as possible.

Students with a new reusable water bottle at our South Kensington Campus.

We have completed an ambitious retrofit, successfully transforming a 30-year-old building into Imperial's first fossil fuel-free building. Additionally, our new buildings at the White City Campus, delivered by Careys, were recognised for their low-carbon design, and were a finalist in the Climate Action category at the Constructing Excellence SECBE Awards.

Deepening our sustainability efforts across Imperial

This year, the most transformative sustainability breakthroughs didn't just come from high-tech research, but from creative, collective action taken by our community every day. In our labs, researchers and technicians have embraced greener practices through lab efficiency schemes like the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) – 58% of Imperial labs are now accredited, up from 30% last year. Waste initiatives, like the waste composition analysis, saw staff and students working together to understand exactly what is in our bins and how we can improve recycling rates.

Sustainable food and drink continue to resonate with the Imperial community and there has been constructive engagement with our Hospitality team in the refresh of our sustainable food and drink policy this year. Staff and students have started using our new hydration stations for refillable bottles and took part in the 'Cheat on Meat' campaign where participants earned a free meal for trying out our tasty vegan food options.

Meanwhile, biodiversity has become a shared priority, with our community taking part in planting sessions across a range of campuses, the 'grey to green' student climate art prize and the redesign of the Beit Halls' gardens with Imperial College Union (ICU) support. These collective efforts reflect a growing commitment across our community to embed sustainability into everyday actions.

While our community drives immediate change, our academic colleagues continue to tackle the big-picture global challenges. To amplify this impact, we launched the School of Convergence Science – Sustainability. This bold new approach for deep, transdisciplinary collaboration focuses our research efforts on the most complex, large-scale challenges facing society.

Impact beyond Imperial

We are committed to growing the positive impact of our research and education on sustainability and our wider partnerships. To progress these aims, this year, we launched the Imperial Zero Index, our partnership framework for assessing energy industry collaborators' net zero commitments.

Within the Higher Education sector, Imperial are collaborating with colleagues through the Responsible Procurement Initiative, to improve the tools for measuring and reducing supply chain scope 3 emissions. Last year, Imperial applied an internationally established methodology to support the development of clear, credible and realistic decarbonisation pathways for the university. This work resulted in the Transition Pathways Explorer tool, a transparent web tool that allows stakeholders to explore and understand the data behind our journey.

It has been a fantastic year for Imperial's sustainability efforts and our recent ranking of seventh in the world and second in the UK for 'Sustainability' in the QS World University Rankings 2025 is testament to our achievements so far. Thank you to all those who have helped us make huge progress towards a more sustainable Imperial and we look forward to realising more of our ambitions together in the year ahead.

Professor Nigel Brandon OBE FREng FRS
Dean of the Faculty of Engineering,
Chair of Sustainability Strategy Committee

Executive summary of our carbon footprint

We are driven by a bold mission to achieve net zero for our estate by 2040 without the use of offsetting. This ambitious goal encompasses all scope 1 and 2 emissions, and we are committed to reducing scope 3 emissions wherever possible.

For the academic year 2024–25 we have continued to use the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) – wherever data availability permits.

Our total emissions for 2024–25 were **ca. 247,239 tCO_2e**. This is an increase of ca. 14,383 tCO_2e compared to 2023–24.

As expected, our overall scope 1 emissions have increased this year and our scope 2 emissions have decreased, following the completion of works to remove our legacy steam network at the South Kensington Campus, which has resulted in a district heating network ready for decarbonisation. Last year, our Combined Heat and Power (CHP) plant on the South Kensington Campus was temporarily shut down, which led to an increase in grid electricity usage and a decrease in gas usage. This year, the CHP engines returned to use at South Kensington, with an overall benefit from increased CHP efficiency.

Our scope 3 emissions have continued to increase overall. Our procurement emissions account for 62% of these emissions. While the implementation of our sustainable procurement policy is shifting major contracts towards more sustainable suppliers, changes this year in Imperial's pattern of spending and an increase in the UK government's assessment of emissions per pound spent in key categories have increased our estimated scope 3 procurement emissions footprint.

Our travel emissions account for 35% of our scope 3 footprint. Business travel emissions have decreased by 34% this year because of our revised methodology and better supplier data alongside the rollout of our sustainable business travel policy – we have seen a shift to increased use of economy cabin class and rail travel, and lower expenses spend this year.

Environmental impact ranges from carbon emissions to wider sustainability beyond carbon, such as waste and water. Throughout the report, we have broken down the carbon emissions per section to illustrate where our biggest carbon impact lies where applicable.

Figure 1: Imperial's total carbon emissions for 2024–25

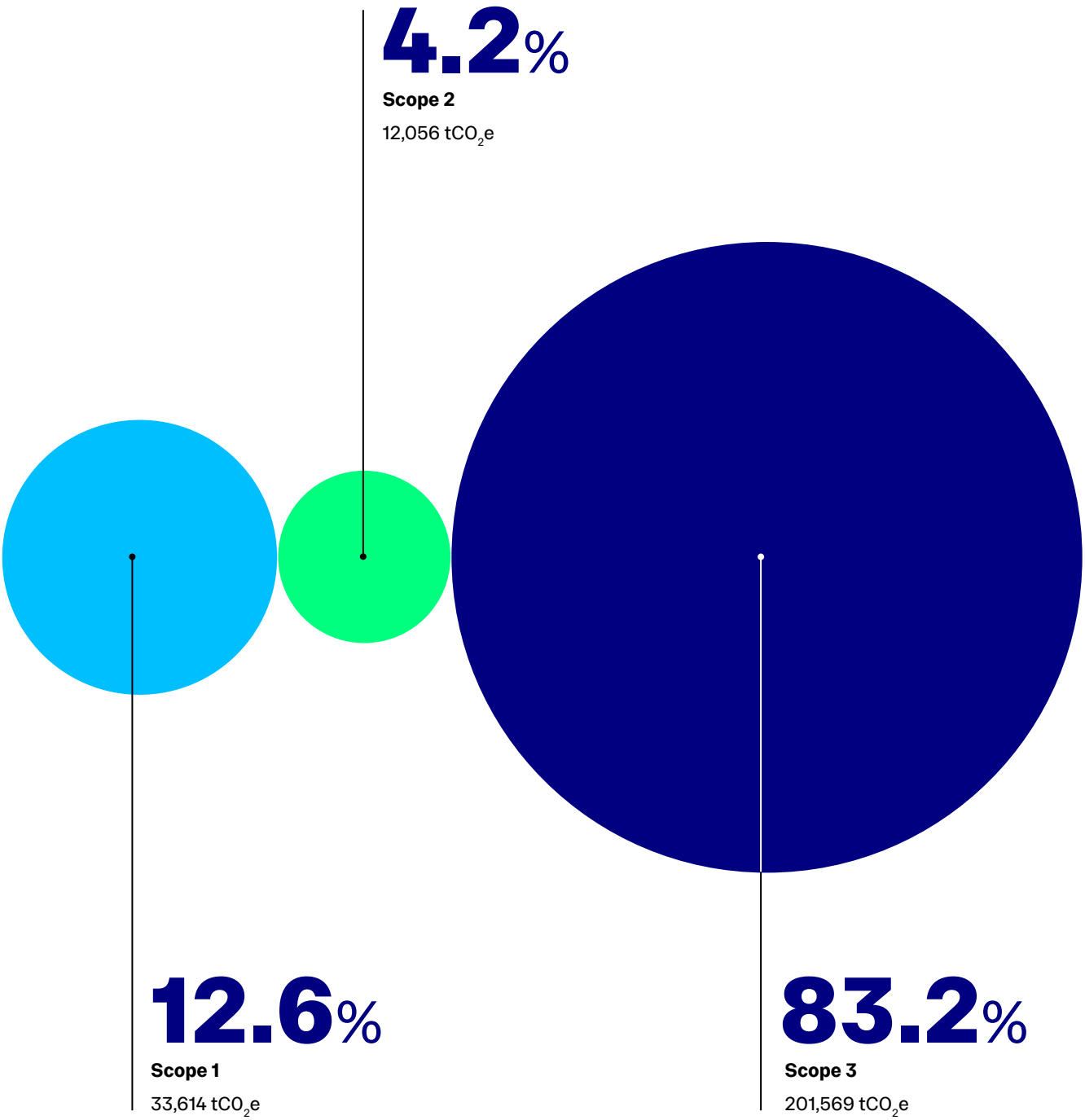


Figure 2: EAUC SCEF categories and their current application to Imperial College London's carbon emissions report

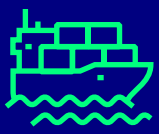
Scope 1 Direct	Scope 2 Indirect	Scope 3 Indirect	Scope 3 Indirect
■ Combustion of fuel in company facilities ■ Company vehicles	■ Purchased electricity for own use	■ Employee and student commuting ■ Employee homeworking ■ Water ■ Business travel ■ Waste ■ Purchased goods and services ■ Fuel and energy related	■ Student accommodation ■ Transport and distribution of goods ■ Investments ■ Franchises
Imperial College London	**Upstream activities**		**Downstream activities**

Data currently unavailable

Land and livestock

Refrigerants and volatile organic compounds

Student residences



Transport and distribution of goods

Leased assets

Investments

Out of scope

Purchased heat and steam for own use

Franchises

End-of-life treatment of sold products

Processing and use of sold products

Imperial's carbon footprint for 2024–25

Scope 1 emissions are our direct emissions from sources we own and control. This is combustion of fuel in owned and controlled premises and emissions from owned land and livestock. Scope 2 emissions are indirect emissions from the generation of grid-derived electricity and heat by utility providers. Imperial does not purchase heat or steam directly, but we do buy electricity from the grid.

Our carbon footprint encompasses our campus emissions and academic buildings. Further details including commercial properties can be found in the appendix of this report.

Scope 3 covers the widest range of emissions and accounts for 82% of Imperial's total carbon emissions – which is similar to the footprint of many other organisations. It includes all indirect emissions from up and down the value chain, ranging from water and waste to business travel and the purchase of goods and services.

Imperial endeavours to report scope 3 as comprehensively as possible, including on areas such as procurement and student travel where responsibility is shared with suppliers and students.

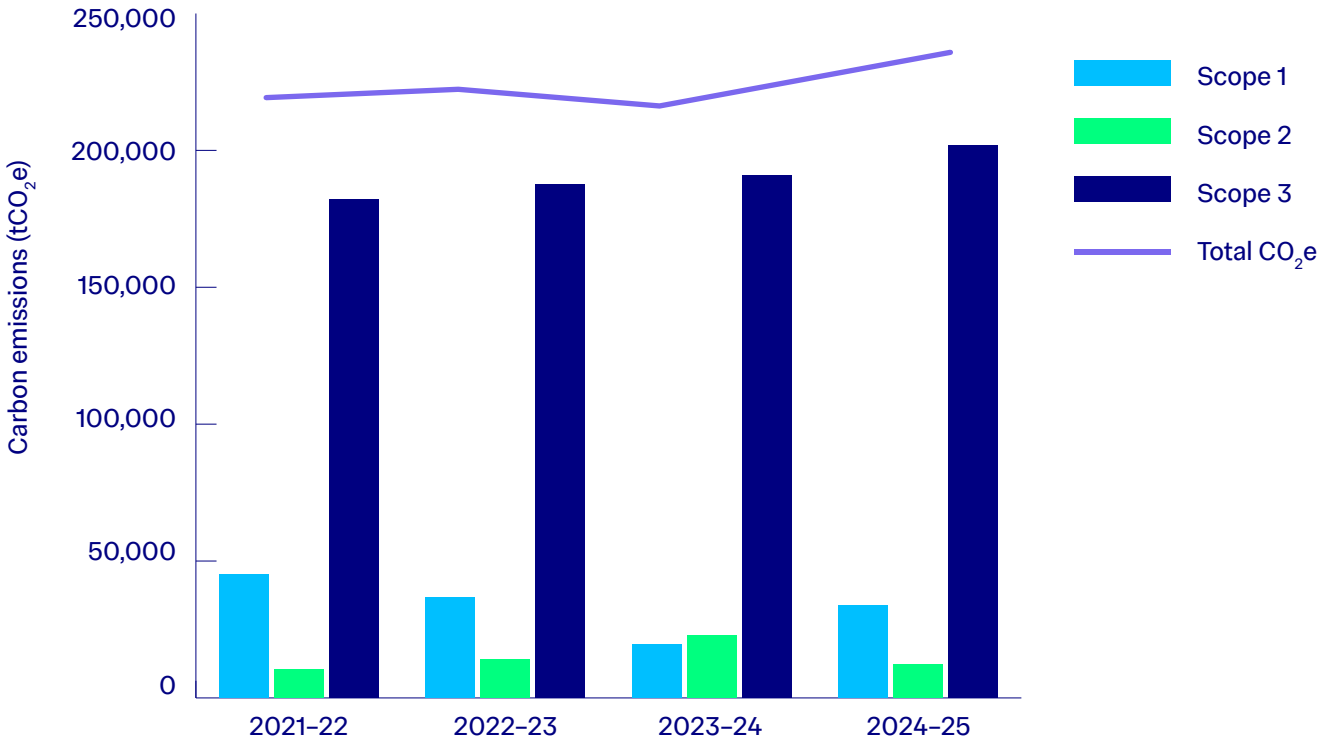
Table 1: Overview of Imperial's scope 1 and 2 campus emissions

Scope	Source	2024–25 emissions (tCO_2e)	Percentage of total emissions (%)	2023–24 emissions (tCO_2e)	Comments
1	Natural gas	33,596	13.6%	19,492	Increase following completed steam removal works last year and CHP back in use
	Vehicle fleet	18	0.01%	17	
	Other fuels	-	0.00%	29	
2	Purchased electricity	12,056	4.9%	22,874	After the South Kensington heat network project was completed, our CHP engines resumed partial operation resulting in lower grid electricity consumption
Total		**45,670**		42,412	

Table 2: Overview of Imperial's scope 3 emissions

Scope	Source	2024–25 emissions (tCO_2e)	Percentage of total emissions (%)	2023–24 emissions (tCO_2e)	Percentage increase / decrease	Comments
3	Procurement and supply chain	125,617	50.8%	99,943	+7.88%	Change in Imperial's pattern of spending and an increase in the UK government's assessment of emissions per pound
	Water	69	0.03%	68		
	Fuel and energy	6,225	2.52%	5,241		
	Waste	69	0.03%	92		
	Business travel	15,680	6.34%	23,741	-3.85%	Decrease in emissions alongside the travel policy and revisions to 2023–24's data
	Staff commuting	1,964	0.79%	1,904		
	Staff homeworking	2,780	1.12%	2,054		
	Student commuting	590	0.24%	584		
	Student travel	48,790	19.73%	57,245	-4.85%	
4	Offsets	-215	-0.09%	-430		Negative emissions for offsets purchased through Profs Who Fly for business travel. It is used where funders require offsetting, such as Wellcome Trust, and from those who offset travel on a voluntary basis
Total		**201,569**		**190,442**		

Figure 3: Imperial's total scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions year on year



Figures 4 and 5: Imperial's scope 1 and 2 emissions per staff and students FTE and per £m total income year on year

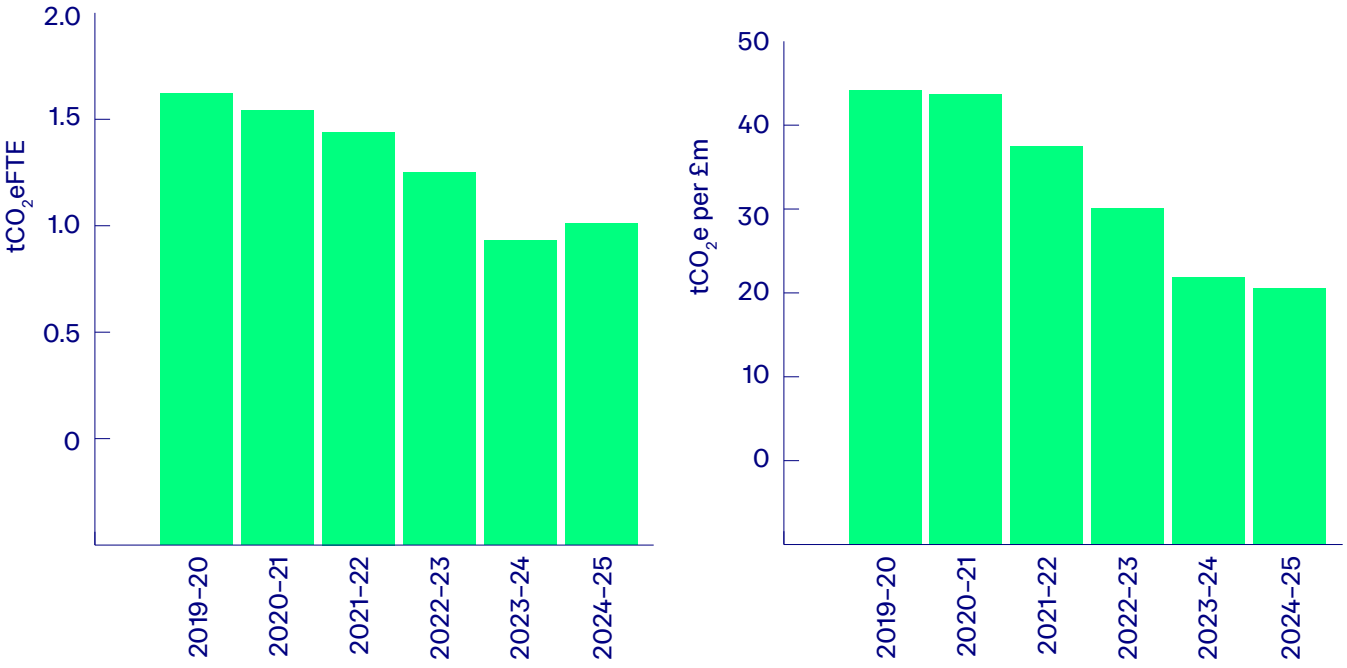
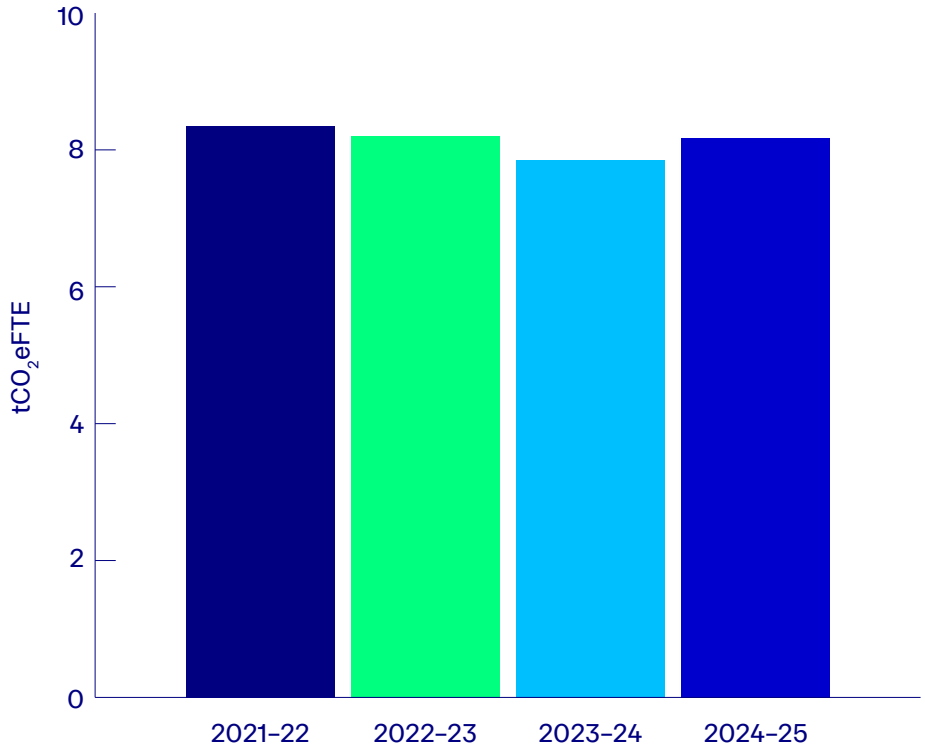


Figure 6: Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions per staff and student FTE year on year



Would you like to find out more? Dive into further analysis of this year's carbon footprint at the end of this report.

Highlights from 2024–25

82 people across 13 departments took part in Green Impact this year

667
actions completed

4
bronze awards

3
silver awards

2
gold awards

4
platinum awards

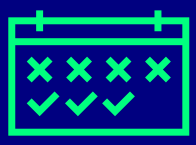
71
LEAF assessments: 221 labs achieved bronze, 238 achieved silver and 100 labs achieved gold status. These awards contribute to savings of 576 tCO_2e annually (as per the UCL calculator).

£110,000
allocated to our Sustainable Lab Kit Fund – to bridge the financial gap between the initial higher cost for more sustainable and efficient equipment, making it easier for groups to choose environmentally friendly options when replacing their laboratory equipment

32,500 kWh
of power per annum projected to be generated by our first standalone solar photovoltaic projects at Silwood Park.

200
members of staff are part of the Sustainability Champions Network

932
students engaged in the SOS-UK Sustainable Halls campaign



34 events
held during Sustainability Fortnight, over 10 days, organised by 21 different teams and societies, including clothing upcycling workshops, gardening sessions and sustainable lab tours

68
of our top suppliers' organisation-specific carbon footprint data has been collected in the Net Zero Positive platform

Carbon and energy

Our journey to net zero

Work is progressing on our net zero programme which has a number of distinct workstreams including delivering energy efficiency initiatives and developing sources of low carbon heat and power. We remain on target for the first two years of our programme and are making good progress on reducing energy use in line with our targets.

We are committed to reducing energy consumption by over 2 million kWh per annum over the first two years and saving over 7,300 tonnes per annum of carbon dioxide. This will also free up electrical capacity for electrifying our heat supply as our decarbonisation programme progresses.

To date we have delivered Building Management System (BMS) optimisation and low energy, LED projects saving 225,000 kWh per annum, with further BMS and LED projects designed with Arup to save approximately 1.8 million kWh per annum due to complete in the coming months.

Energy efficiency

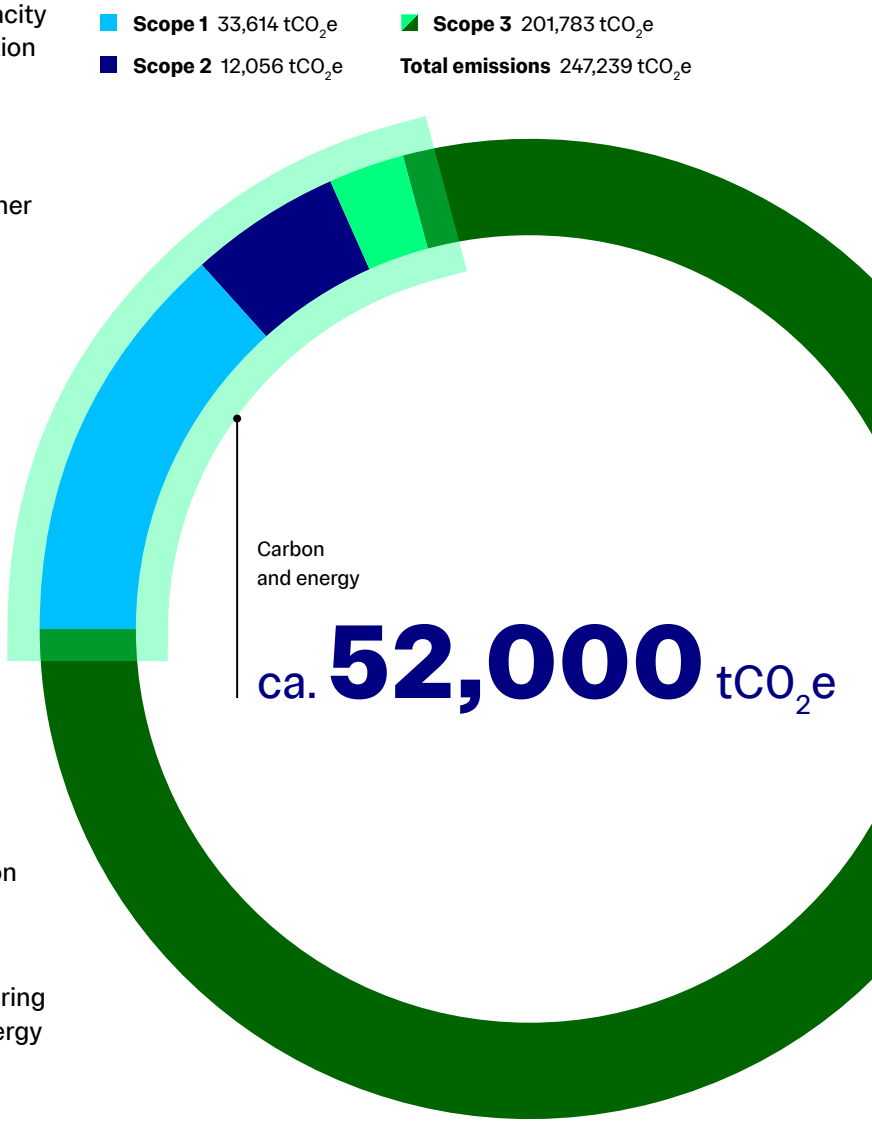
The pilot BMS optimisation project at The Imperial College Healthcare Tissue Bank (ICTEM) has progressed well, working in partnership with Arup and SSE Energy Solutions. It is projected to save approximately 350,000 kWh in the first year. The learnings from these interventions will apply to future projects underway at South Kensington, including City and Guilds, Dyson, Bessmer, Faculty and the Sir Alexander Fleming Building.

LED lighting upgrades

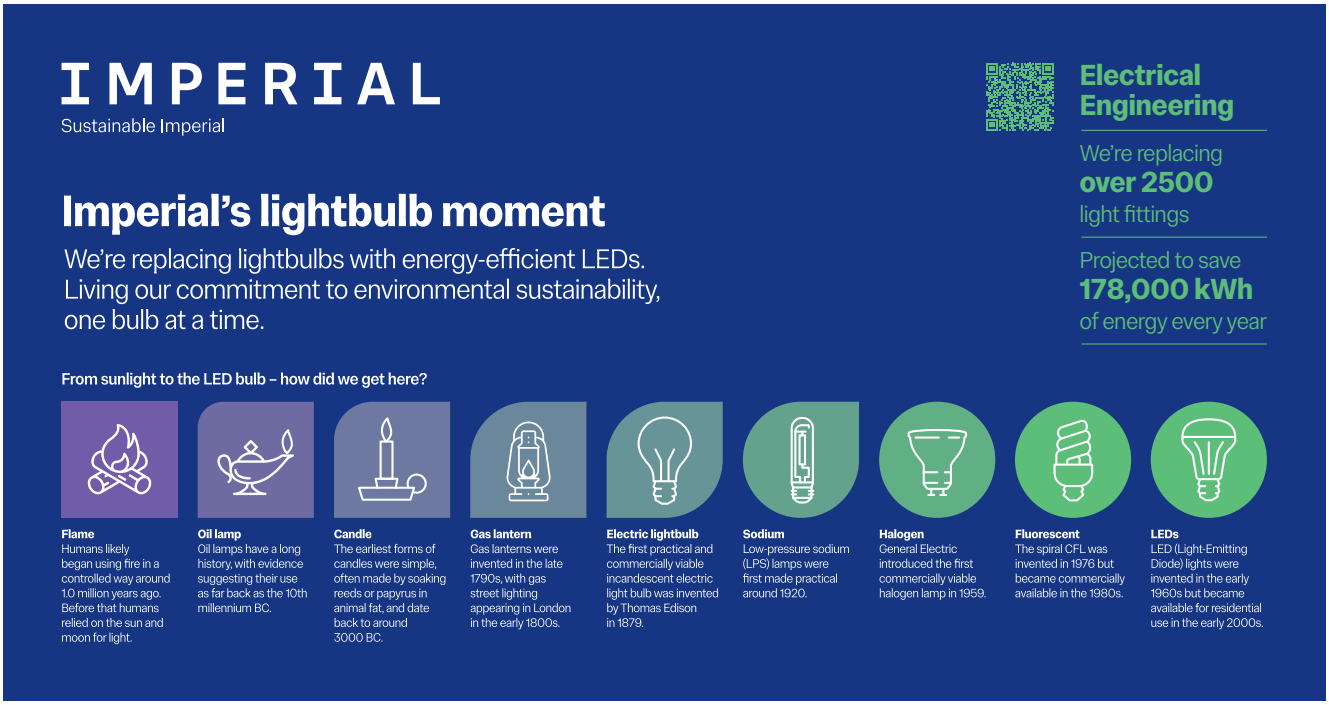
Our priority is to lower demand to reduce our carbon emissions and by switching to low energy, LED technology, we can save power on lighting.

Our LED lighting scheme at Flowers Building is nearing completion with 98% of upgrades with modern energy efficient bulbs, with project savings projected at approximately 310,000 kWh per annum.

Figure 7: Carbon and energy emissions within our 2024–25 carbon footprint



We have undertaken further LED works, including Reynolds, Munroe and Controlled Environment Buildings. While smaller, these projects have improved the environment for staff and students as well as allowing us to upgrade emergency lighting systems.



Low carbon heat and power

Feasibility studies have been completed to RIBA Stage 1 South Kensington and Hammersmith Campuses so that we can understand the programme and cost to electrify heat and ultimately remove gas. They point to a phased shift from gas to full electrification through the installation of heat pumps.

We are further developing these options at South Kensington and are looking at ways to accelerate the decarbonisation of the campus. Our target is to fully electrify heat for up to seven of the buildings within the next five years.

We have installed our first standalone solar photovoltaic (solar PV) projects at Silwood Park. This project which installed 86 solar panels is projected to generate up to 32,500 kWh of power per annum. Our target is to meet over 10% of Silwood Park's power needs from onsite solar PV.

Our commitments

Reduce total Scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions from energy consumption by 15% by 2025–26 (against the baseline year 2018–19).

Currently on target as a result of the work to remove steam from the South Kensington Campus and energy efficiency works including LED installation and solar PV panels at Silwood Park Campus.

Sustainable procurement

2024–25 achievements

This year has been our first full year of embedding our sustainable procurement policy, strategy and guidance into our purchasing practices across all procurement categories.

We have made strong progress in embedding sustainability across our procurement activities and improving the way we measure supply chain emissions. The sustainable procurement policy, launched in May 2024, is now shaping major purchasing decisions through new sustainability weightings. Imperial has also expanded supplier data collection using Net Positive's Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool and re-baselined its procurement emissions with support from the consultancy Eunomia. Together, these steps are helping to define clear decarbonisation pathways while building knowledge and collaboration across staff and sector partners.

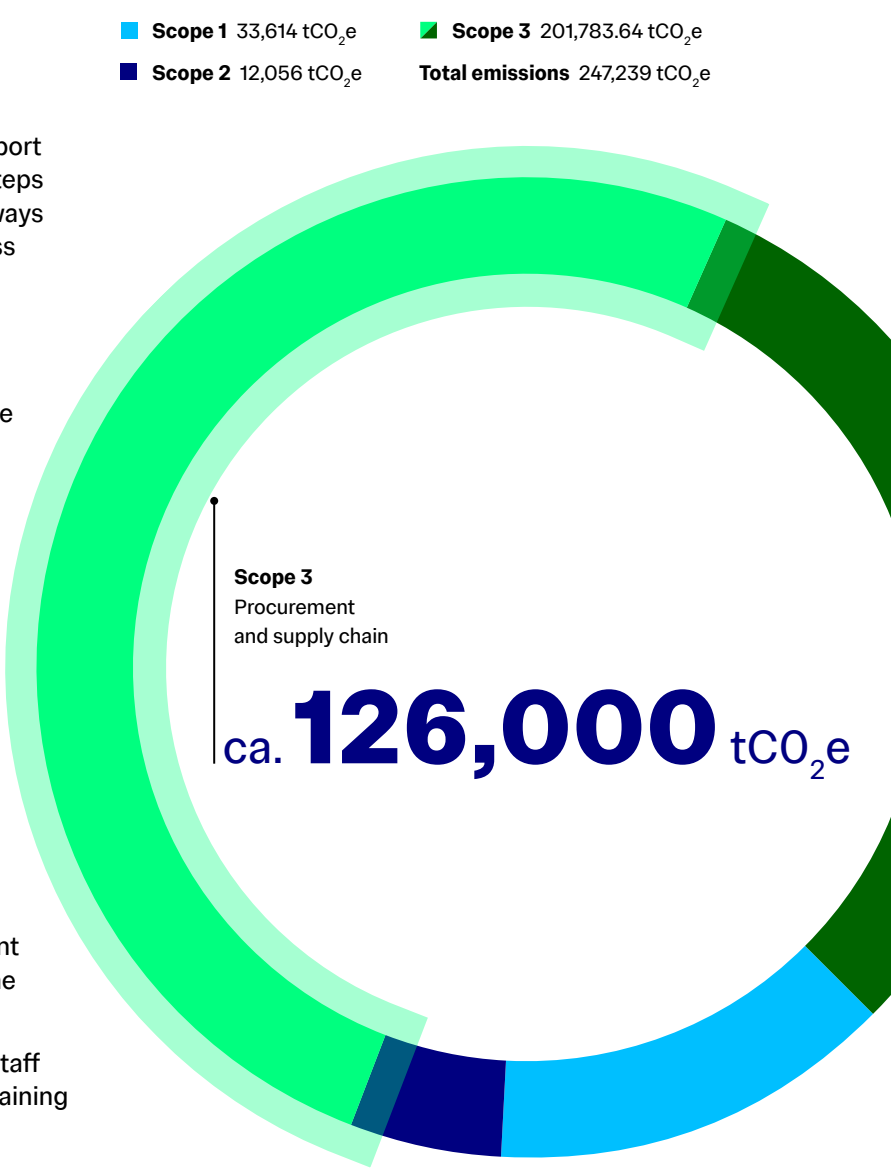
Surveying our suppliers

One of our main goals for 2024–25 was to improve the quality of data used to measure supply chain emissions. Using Net Positive's supplier tool, a platform developed for the higher education sector as a central database for supplier sustainability data, we were able to get data on 68 of our top suppliers by spend, covering scopes 1, 2 and 3 emission data and details of their sustainability frameworks and policies. Over the next year, we plan to use this tool to gather data for our top 250 suppliers, who make up 75% of our total procurement spend.

Training and engagement

- Internal sustainability training to support staff with integrating sustainability into procurement decisions, reinforcing the ongoing rollout of the sustainable procurement policy.
- All procurement category managers and key staff members involved in sustainability received training on the Net Positive's supplier tool.

Figure 8: Procurement and supply chain emissions including ICT, construction and refurbishment and laboratories, within our 2024–25 carbon footprint



- Imperial hosted The Pathways to a Sustainable Laboratory Supply Chain Symposium in October 2024 and a Laboratory Suppliers Forum in February 2025 bringing together a range of public and private institutions across the higher education sector and our supply chain. These events focused on reducing supply chain emissions within the laboratory category and were a success, allowing for a sharing of sustainability effort and explore collaboration opportunities.
- In alignment with the sustainable procurement policy, a 10% and 20% sustainability weighting has been rolled out on tenders handled by the central procurement team, with a similar approach being encouraged for smaller tenders.

Rebaselining our targets

In spring 2025, Imperial worked with the consultancy Eunomia to update its data on emissions from purchasing (procurement). The analysis focused on Imperial's top 250 suppliers, using a mix of Net Positive supplier data, Higher Education Supply Chain Emissions Tool (HESCET) emissions factors, and supplier Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) commitments. The results helped compare three possible decarbonisation pathways, each with different levels of ambition through to 2050. These plans outlined the actions needed to reduce emissions in the supply chain. Based on this, Eunomia helped recommend new sustainable procurement targets for Imperial's next five-year sustainability strategy (2026–2031), aiming for a balance between being realistic and ambitious.

Read our sustainable procurement policy

Imperial's Property Division reached EcoCampus Silver certification in 2025 for the phased implementation of an Environmental Management System.

Construction and refurbishment

White City achievements

This year, Imperial's White City Campus work, led by Careys, was named a finalist in the SECBE Awards under the Climate Action category. The project focused on delivering low-carbon infrastructure by reducing embodied carbon, minimising waste and transportation impacts, improving energy performance, and incorporating lower-carbon materials and circular economy principles.

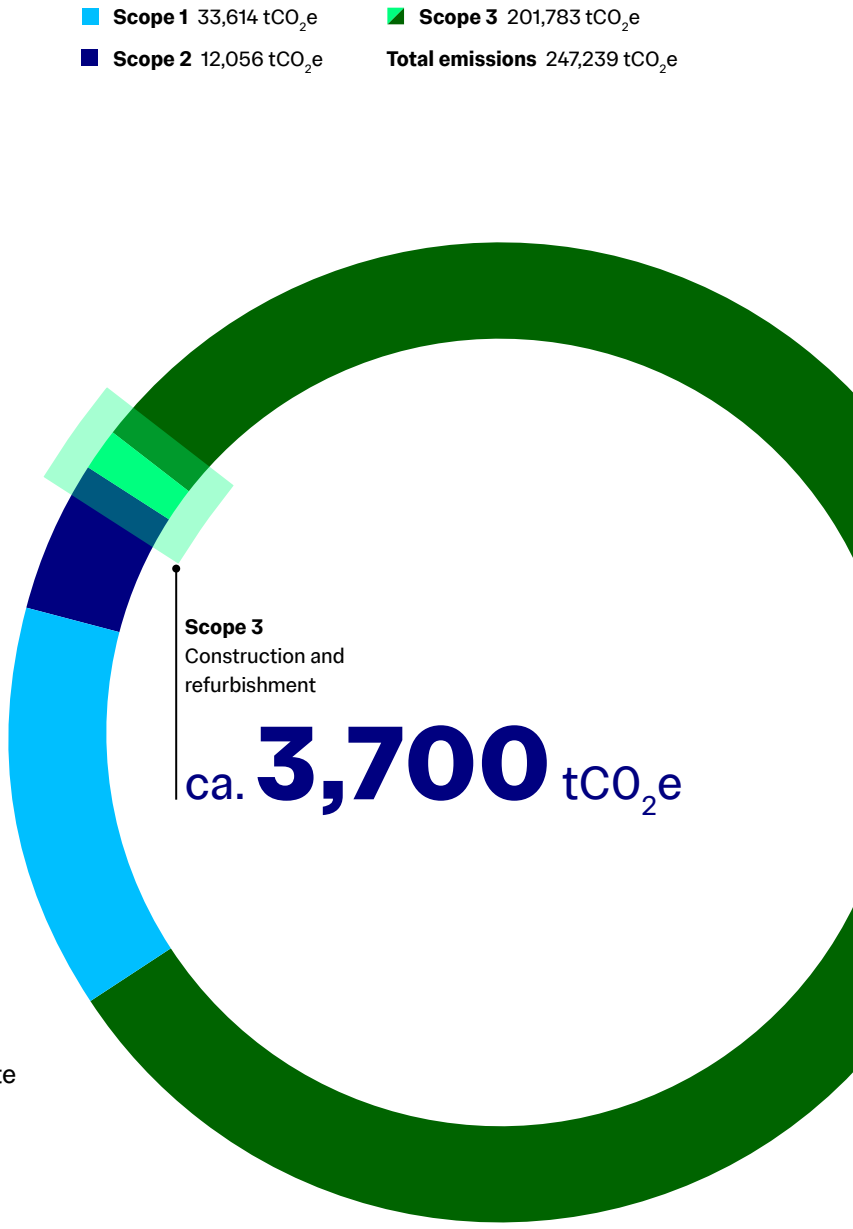
The project focused on low-carbon infrastructure, ensuring future development plots for sustainable growth. The initiative prioritised waste minimisation, carbon reduction and social value by having sustainability targets from design through to construction.

The result? Significant carbon savings and material reuse. Through detailed design improvements and sustainable construction methods, the project achieved a 35% reduction in embodied carbon emissions as of September 2025 (with 100% completion).

The project used British Reinforcement Concrete's UK-made reinforcement steel, market leaders in Environmental Product Declarations. Additionally, 96% of concrete mixes were within the top sustainability bands of the Low Carbon Concrete Group market benchmark, optimising both environmental impact and engineering performance.

The team reused 15,300 tonnes of site-won soil and recycled 8,300 tonnes of hardcore material for on-site applications. Impressively, 79% of aggregates came from recycled and secondary sources, significantly reducing the project's reliance on virgin materials.

Figure 9: Construction and refurbishment procurement emissions within our 2024–25 carbon footprint



Our commitments:

- All properties in Imperial's investment portfolio to have an Energy Performance Certificate rating of B by December 2030.
- All new buildings and major refurbishments (over £5 million) to be Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) rated or other certificates from 2023–24 onwards.

The National Heart and Lung Institute is Imperial's first fossil fuel-free building with heating and cooling delivered through Air Source and Water Source Heat pumps.

Sustainable labs

2024–25 achievements

This year, more laboratories were involved in the LEAF scheme with a total of 58% Imperial labs now accredited, up from 30% last year.

559 labs received a LEAF award compared to 362 accredited last academic year. 221 of those labs achieved bronze, 238 received silver and 100 labs achieved gold status. These awards have contributed to savings of 576 tCO_2e annually, utilising the LEAF tool as set out by UCL.

LEAF is an environmental accreditation scheme designed to improve sustainability within higher education teaching and research. Participating laboratories are given environmental actions to carry out including across waste, energy, and procurement.

Imperial currently has six laboratories certified under My Green Lab (two at Gold Level, two at Platinum and three at Green Level) and 34 more in progress and due to be certified in 2025–26, demonstrating both significant financial benefits and carbon reductions through sustainable laboratory practices.

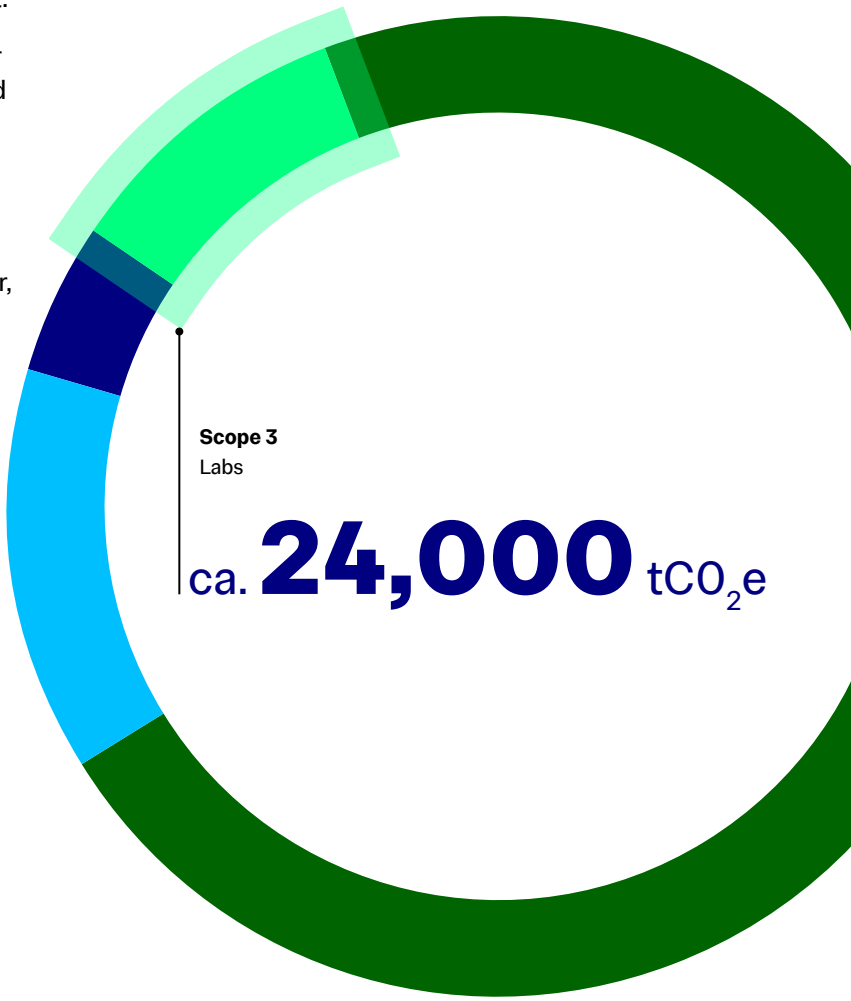
We relaunched our Sustainable Lab Kit Fund this year, to bridge the financial gap towards buying more sustainable and efficient laboratory equipment. Applications were open to any groups looking to purchase, replace or repair equipment. We allocated £110,000 which was distributed to energy, water and waste saving initiatives.

Progress on our targets:

- Increase applicable laboratories engaged in a lab efficiency programme to 50% by summer 2025 and 100% by summer 2026. We are on track to reach these targets, with 75% applicable labs accredited by September 2025

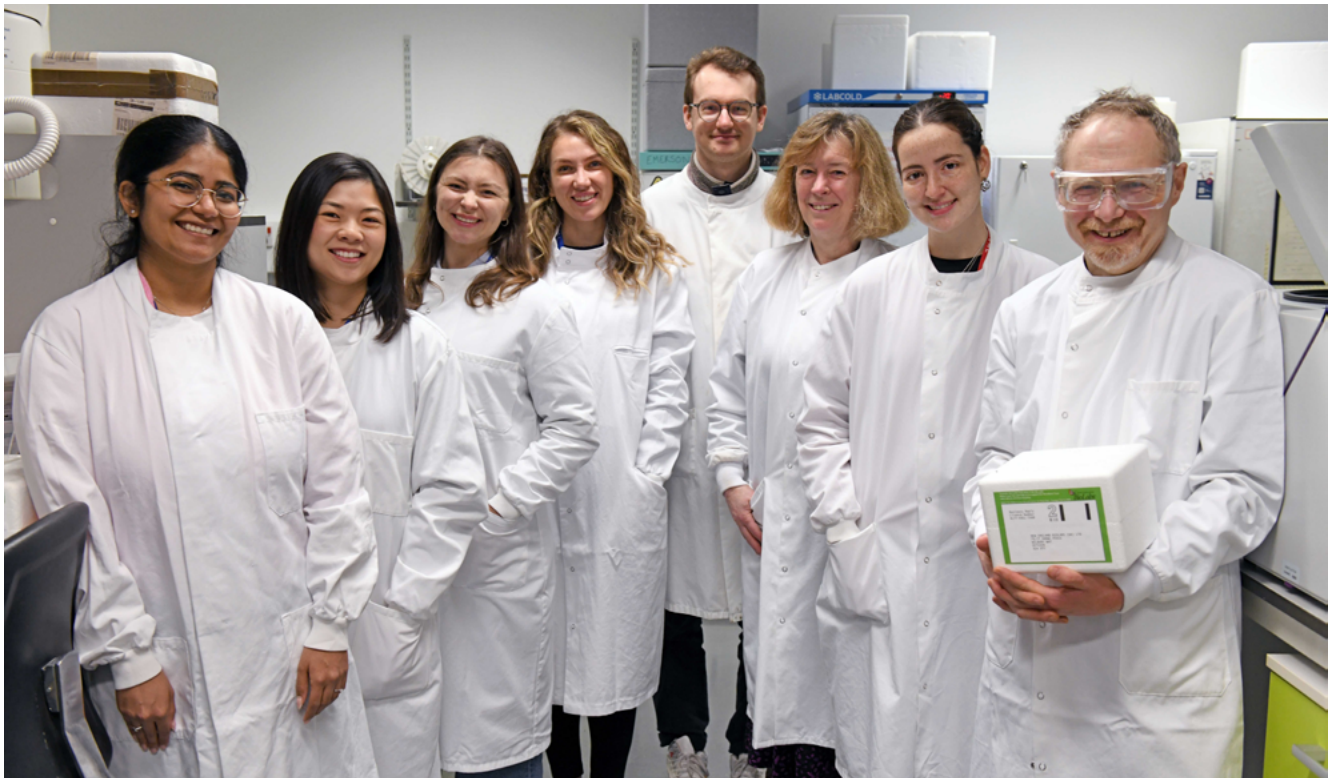
Figure 10: Lab procurement emissions within our 2024–25 carbon footprint

Scope 1 33,614 tCO_2e
Scope 2 12,056 tCO_2e
Scope 3 201,783 tCO_2e
Total emissions 247,239 tCO_2e



Case study: The National Heart and Lung Institute – Uren Labs – Gold LEAF award

The National Heart and Lung Institute (NHLI) have earned a Gold LEAF certification for its strong commitment to lab sustainability. Highlights include prioritising energy-efficient equipment with My Green Lab Accountability, Consistency, and Transparency ecolabels, reviewing project protocols to minimise plastic consumables and reusing items such as autoclaving pipettes, using a UK Biobank proteomics dataset to validate research, and lowering energy use by reducing fume hood flow rates while meeting safety standards. The team also implemented a First Mile soft plastic recycling scheme to support greener research practices.



The team at the NHLI earned a Gold LEAF certification for commitment to lab sustainability.
Credit: Andy Pritchard

Case Study: MBG (Ces/Brooks/Elani/Law/Ying) Group – Silver LEAF Award

Sustainability efforts in the MBG lab recently earned a Silver LEAF award. Their initiatives include tracking chemicals with LabCup and sharing chemicals via a dedicated group chat; reducing single-use plastics such as PMMA chips, a synthetic resin, and microfluidic devices designed for reuse; upgrading to an energy-efficient ultra-low-temperature freezer at -70°C; and applying 12 Principles of Green Chemistry to lab practices. These creative approaches have helped reduce the environmental impact in specialised lab work.

Find out how to get involved in LEAF or My Green Lab on our website.

SPOTLIGHT

Hallett Group

The team recently achieved Silver LEAF certification and is now ambitiously working towards Gold. Beyond their lab sustainability efforts, which includes embedding sustainability into weekly safety reports, the group has created a fantastic sense of community and social impact: from organising a Seven Sisters hike to preparing for a 10K charity race with weekly training sessions.

ICT

2024–25 achievements

This year, the department has set out a sustainability roadmap, including calculating a baseline for Imperial's ICT, extending the life of equipment and starting Green DiSC, a digital sustainability certification for ICT central services.

This year, the team has implemented awareness campaigns such as 'shut the lid to save the grid' and 'think before you print' to help lower ICT equipment energy consumption and reduce print volumes. The new 'seven steps to ICT sustainability' encourages staff and students to act sustainably. These include only buying the equipment that they really need, keeping it for as long as possible, communicating sustainably, using AI only when necessary and learning about green ICT.

ICT are reducing the impact of our High-Performance Computing servers through emerging technologies and partnerships. We are purchasing new Lenovo water cooled servers which have excellent power use efficiency. It uses water in a closed-loop system to cool the servers meaning water is recirculated and not wasted.

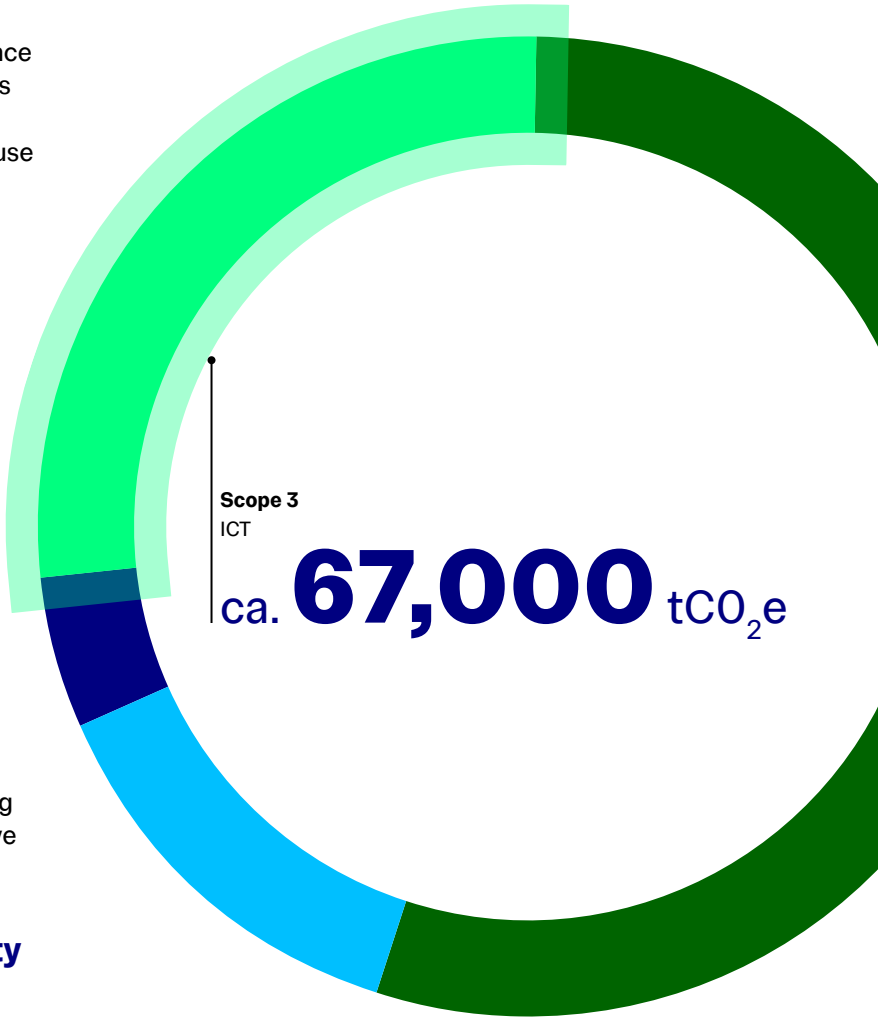
ICT have begun reusing equipment in refurbishment projects to cut costs and reduce emissions. On Faculty Levels 1, 3, and Sherfield Level 4, monitors, docks, and cameras were reused, saving over £80,000 and avoiding 85 tCO_2e in embodied emissions (that would have been created to make new equipment). During the office move to our White City Professional Services Hub, desktops were replaced with laptops, which have a lower carbon footprint.

ICT have contributed to sustainability across the university through a variety of ICT-enabled sustainability projects including assisting the Property division with Wi-Fi data to help optimise space usage and improving the audiovisual offering to support hybrid meetings, providing an alternative to travel.

Find out more about our sustainability campaigns in ICT on our website.

Figure 11: ICT procurement emissions within our 2024–25 carbon footprint

Scope 1 33,614 tCO_2e
Scope 2 12,056 tCO_2e
Scope 3 201,783 tCO_2e
Total emissions 247,239 tCO_2e



Travel

2024–25 achievements

Our sustainable business travel policy has now been in effect for one year and we have begun work on how best to approach our student travel emissions (travel for education, required by the university).

This year, we've seen our business travel (travel for work) emissions drop by 34% compared to last year. We have seen a similar amount of overall ticket purchases but more tickets in economy class flights, fewer in business class flights and an increase in rail tickets. This swap in cabin class and taking lower-carbon travel options is showing an early indication of shifts in travel patterns across the university.

Alongside this, we have started exploring our approach towards student travel (travel for education). We had initial conversations with the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Committee and Early Career Researcher Institute to scope potential opportunities and challenges as well as support to improve data capturing on the student travel footprint through surveys.

In spring 2025, we worked with the consultancy Eunomia on updating our data on procurement and student travel. They supported Imperial with providing benchmarking and options for updates to our methodology and approach to establish a sensible student travel footprint with shared responsibility.

We continued to run our postgraduate sustainable travel fund, which is designed to help postgraduate students make more sustainable travel choices by compensating for the higher costs involved.

Progress on our targets

- Carbon emissions from air travel reduced by 25% per staff FTE by 2025–26, compared to 2017–18 baseline.

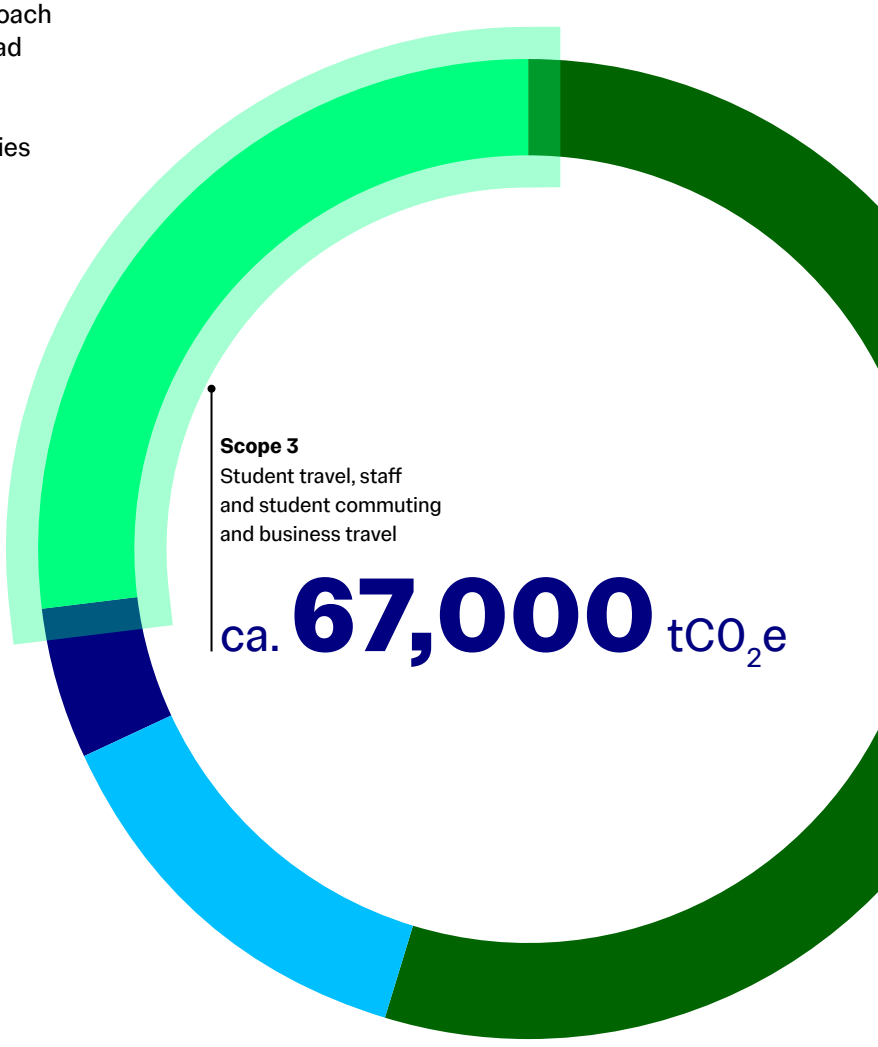
Figure 12: Student travel, business travel and staff and student commuting emissions within our 2024–25 carbon footprint

Scope 1 33,614 tCO_2e

Scope 2 12,056 tCO_2e

Scope 3 201,783 tCO_2e

Total emissions 247,239 tCO_2e



Case study: Hannah's big train adventure

Earlier this year, Dr Hannah Scott, Head of Sustainability for Property and ICT travelled to Budapest for work. Instead of flying, Hannah decided to travel by train to lead by example in choosing the more climate-conscious option and show what is possible by train.

Despite some small issues with Wi-Fi, Hannah was surprised with how much work she was able to get done and would absolutely recommend travelling by train for work in Europe.

> **"At a time when we know about the extreme emissions created from flying, taking the train, going slower but working en route, might just be a great option."**

Read our Sustainable Business Travel policy.

Our sustainable travel policy encourages climate conscious travel approaches, like travelling by train.

Catering

2024–25 achievements

We have been working on updating our Sustainable Food and Drink Policy this year and have consulted with the university community for open feedback over the summer term.

Over the past year, the team have undertaken a wide range of sustainability initiatives and achievements, including:

Menus

- 100% beef removed from our menus by October 2024, well ahead of our original 2026 target.
- Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) certification for the whole of our Senior Common Room outlet in South Kensington, with the aim of certifying other units and products in the future.
- The team are collaborating with My Emissions to introduce carbon labelling on menus, to provide greater customer transparency on the associated carbon footprint of a product, to encourage more sustainable choices. As of October 2025, all in-house hot food menus will be carbon labelled.

Packaging

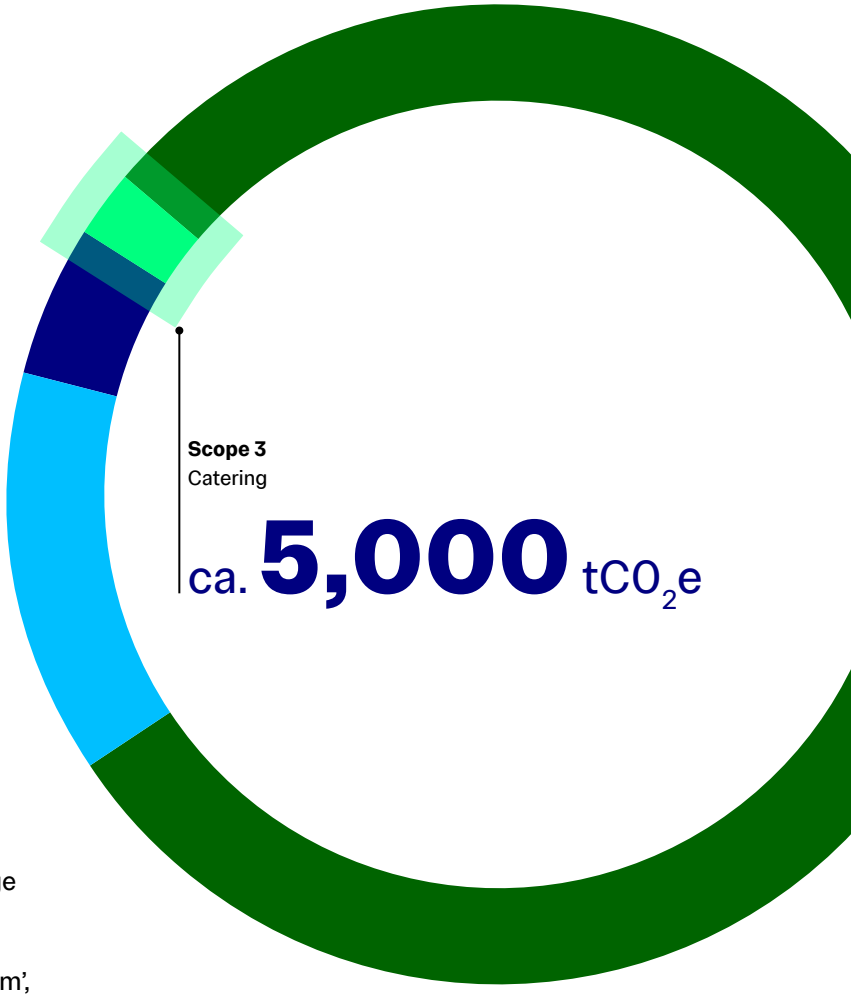
- Working with Imperial start-up, Notpla, specialising in seaweed-based single-use packaging to explore introducing this to our outlets from August 2025 across our campuses to replace all takeaway containers.
- Transitioning from plastic to compostable bagasse (sugarcane) lids for hot drinks. These lids have been rolled out across campus since September 2024.
- We have introduced new bins in the Senior Common Room to increase the recycling of coffee cups.

Campaigns

- This year, the team have run two loyalty card schemes that rewarded a free meal to help engage the community in sustainable practices: 'Cheat on Meat' to encourage the uptake of plant-based options during Veganuary and 'Join the Green Team',

Figure 13: Catering procurement emissions within our 2024–25 carbon footprint

Scope 1 33,614 tCO_2e
Scope 2 12,056 tCO_2e
Scope 3 201,784 tCO_2e
Total emissions 247,239 tCO_2e



encouraging the use of reusable takeaway containers over Sustainability Fortnight.
- We launched 'Forage for Sustainability: Fridge Forage Friday', where one of our chefs created recipes based on left-over food in student fridges, to educate students on food waste. These recipes are on our website for all to access.
- A community engagement campaign to educate on food waste, Ask for Less', was launched in June 2025.

Operations

- The team have been actively working to reduce and consolidate the number of catering deliveries to our Imperial sites, we have already reduced delivery from three of our biggest suppliers which is reducing deliveries to site by approximately 60 per year.
- We hired two PhD student interns to analyse our scope 1 and 2 emissions of all our outlets, this formed baseline data for all our catering assets to set goals moving forward.
- A life cycle assessment analysis of aluminium and plastic was completed by a PhD student to assess whether plastic or aluminium bottles will be the better choice for water in our outlets, for us to make an informed decision moving forwards.
- We began weighing the food waste collected from plates in the Senior Common Room to get baseline data of food waste produced from customers – to aid reduction goals for over the next five years.

Read our Sustainable Food and Drink Policy 2026–31.

Beef has been removed from menus across all Imperial catering sites.

Waste and recycling

2024–25 achievements

This year, the team focused on improving waste management through smarter infrastructure, better quality data and community feedback.

Improving waste management

This year:

- We've introduced external solar-powered compactor Big Belly bins for general waste and dry mixed recycling.
- An additional general waste compactor has been installed in South Kensington, which will improve the accuracy and reliability of our general waste data to support monitoring the effects of interventions.
- Food waste recycling provisions have been expanded to office kitchenettes, in line with the Simpler Recycling regulations.
- We hired a waste strategy consultant to promote sustainable and circular practices in waste management, initially focusing on improving the quality of waste and recycling data to identify opportunities for improvement.
- During a successful Waste and Biodiversity Showcase event, staff and students were given the opportunity to provide feedback on the bins across our campuses. This revealed confusion around the recyclability of different types of plastic, biodegradable/compostable items, and items contaminated with food and drink. These insights have fed into a redesign of bin signage which will make it easier to choose the right bin.

Learn more about Imperial's waste streams on our website.

Imperial's South Kensington campus produces several tonnes of used coffee grounds each year. In 2025, a new coffee composting system was trialled at Weeks Hall.

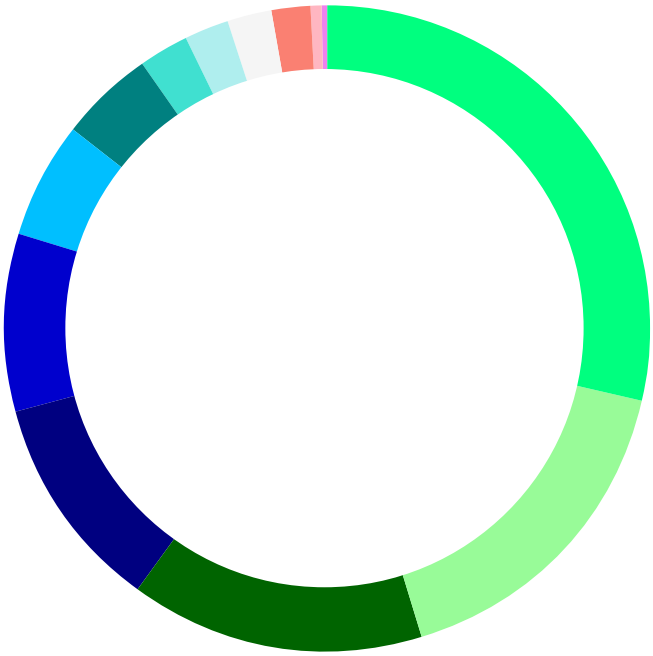
Waste Composition Analysis

During the spring term, we established Imperial's first 'Waste Composition Analysis station' to collect data on what our general waste contains.

We used material data (average % composition of materials by mass) to create a waste profile for the South Kensington Campus and measured how well recyclables are being captured versus how much 'leaks' into general waste. Recycling rates varied, from 98% for electronic waste to 0% for textiles. We found a maximum recycling rate of 62%, higher than our current rate of 43%, but lower than our 75% target. This shows that better sorting alone won't be enough - we need to produce less non-recyclable waste material overall.

Over 300kg of waste samples were analysed over the month of May, with fantastic engagement from students and staff.

Mapping our waste streams



South Kensington's General Waste Composition, May 2025

- Food waste
- Non-recyclable paper
- Single-use catering items
- Plastic films and flexibles
- Recyclable dense plastic
- Cardboard and card
- Recyclable paper
- Metal
- Textiles
- Non-recyclable dense plastic
- Glass
- Tetra pak
- Waste, electrical and electronic equipment

In preparation for the development of a full waste strategy, we have finalised a report of recommendations. Informing this report are the results of a comprehensive research project, which, for the first time, maps our waste streams so that we can better understand where interventions can be made.

We found that food waste represents our largest stream at 20%, with card/cardboard and non-recyclable paper second and third respectively.

SPOTLIGHT

Coffee grounds recycling pilot

Since March, the Centre for Environmental Policy at our South Kensington Campus, has been trialling a coffee waste recycling system using Bokashi fermentation, which allows food waste to be stored in airtight containers to stabilise the waste and is collected only once a month. The fermented waste is then used in the Chaplaincy Garden, directly behind their building, by the Re:Gen student group to grow fruit, vegetables and flowers, diverting around 10 litres of food waste from the bin each month.

Biodiversity

2024–25 achievements

With the arrival of our new Head Gardener this year, we have continued to improve biodiversity and involve staff and students at a range of campuses.

SPOTLIGHT

Beit Quad Redevelopment

A flagship grey to green project, opened in June 2025.

The transformation included:

- 35m^2 of hard surface replaced with soft landscaping
- over 60m^2 planted with trees, shrubs, perennials, and pollinator-friendly plants
- six new tree species (including native varieties)
- increase from six to 33 species of herbaceous, perennial and shrub plants
- four species of low-growing, dense hedging
- year-round flowering and nectar supply for pollinators

Imperial's first in-house gardener, **Lucy Hand**, joined in October 2024 to enhance biodiversity and our green urban environments. Lucy has revitalized outdoor planters, improved soil at White City for biodiverse planting, and designed indoor plant displays, with greening efforts extending to washrooms. She has also contributed to the grey to green projects, the Bezos-funded alternative proteins initiative, and wellbeing activities like gardening masterclasses and community bulb planting.

At the Secret Garden in South Kensington, four memorial trees, six fruit trees and two nut trees have been planted, and areas of wildflower meadows have been prepared.

At White City, nine species of herbaceous plants have been added to the planters to increase species diversity, and 100 autumn bulbs have been planted.

At Charing Cross, 400 seeds were sowed by Imperial and NHS staff and students during mental health week and at Wilton House 150m^2 of grass has been prepared for wildflower seed sowing with the help of students. Furthermore, a 400m^2 wild area has been left unmown to help pollinators.

As of June, we achieved 1,200m^2 of relaxed mowing undertaken, 20 trees planted alongside 80m^2 of wildflowers and 100 species of plants introduced to campus, with a varied range of cover from trees, shrubs and perennial planting.

Planting sessions

We have hosted over 20 community events over the spring term including:

- weekly Secret Garden volunteer sessions
- weekly White City planting
- special Charing Cross seed sowing event

Biodiversity and waste showcase in May; an event that engaged our community in our interlinked efforts across biodiversity, waste and catering. Over 100 staff and students got involved to plant 15 perennial plants, 40 bulbs, 20 wildflower plug plants and sowed 50 wildflower seed trays.

Over 100 staff and students attended Imperial's biodiversity and waste showcase in 2025.

Landscaping brief and researchers

Imperial's Biodiversity Working Group has input from property, sustainability, Imperial Students' Union and expert academics. The group's first output has been a biodiversity brief for the Integrated Transformation Plan Landscape brief for South Kensington led by our new Head of Sustainability, Dr Hannah Scott with support from academics such as Dr Tilly Collins, Dr Will Pearce and Dr Alex Collins. The overarching aim is to design a landscape plan in which biodiversity and usability are both optimised with the following included in the project tenders:

- biodiversity net gain of at least 25%
- measurable improvement in green space satisfaction
- a reduction in sealed surfaces
- incorporation of nature-based solutions to mitigate risks of surface water flooding and excessive temperatures

Case study: 2025 Grantham Climate Art Prize winner transformed into a mural on Dalby Court

Plaifah Chaisen, an undergraduate student at Imperial, had her 'Viridescent Window' design transformed into a full mural and was exhibited at the Great Exhibition Road Festival. The 2025 prize is the first to be hosted on-campus with the theme of 'From Grey to Green', inspired by Imperial's Sustainability Strategy.

Case study: Butterfly counts

This summer we hosted a series of butterfly counts as part of the Big Butterfly Count to encourage our community to take part in wildlife surveys and contribute to conservation science. Counts were held at both South Kensington Campus and Wormwood Scrubs Open Space near Hammersmith Campus. Across the sessions we spotted over 70 butterflies including red admirals, common blues and gatekeepers.

Water

2024–25 achievements

In collaboration with consultants AECOM, we developed Imperial's first comprehensive water strategy and reduction programme.

The review included benchmarking, site visits and consultation with Imperial's academic Sustainability Experts Group to ensure we have evidence-based and achievable targets. This work has defined KPIs and priority actions that will inform the upcoming Sustainable Imperial strategy 2026–31.

Our commitments

- Enhance Imperial's position relative to peer institutions.
- Establish a roadmap of actions with SMART targets for 2026–31.
- Achieve an overall 10% reduction in water use across Imperial-managed buildings.
- Deliver a 5% reduction target for third-party managed buildings.
- Strengthen metering coverage and data management.

Case study: Hydration stations

Our Hospitality team are upgrading and expanding our hydration stations, starting with 11 new stations at South Kensington and moving into Hammersmith over summer 2025.

To celebrate the launch, we hosted an engagement event inviting students to guess where the new stations will be, with over 100 reusable water bottles being won.

Staff and students celebrated the launch of Imperial's new hydration stations at an engagement event.

Engagement

2024–25 achievements

Sustainability fortnight

Imperial's annual celebration of sustainability took place from 24 February to 7 March 2025. Over the two weeks, staff and students had the opportunity to join in exciting workshops and interactive events and found out what Imperial is doing to reduce its own environmental impact and how to get involved.

Organised by the central Sustainability Hub and ICU, this year's Sustainability Fortnight centred on the themes of arts and culture, climate justice, sustainable consumption, and nature and wellbeing. Highlights included clothing upcycling workshops, gardening sessions and sustainable lab tours.

Green Impact

Green Impact is an online toolkit for teams across the university to take part in effective activities to improve their sustainability in the office and at home. This year four teams have achieved Bronze, three achieved Silver and two teams achieved a Gold award. We also introduced the Platinum award level this year which was achieved by four teams. 667 actions were taken, with projects on travel, energy, procurement, waste and more.

Imperial's Beit Quad reopened in 2025 with a space that supports both people and nature.

Staff Sustainability Champions Network

Imperial's Staff Sustainability Champions Network is comprised of nearly 200 academic, research and professional services staff members. This year, the network have developed initiatives such as an awareness raising campaign for air conditioning energy efficiency, feedback on the Sustainable Food and Drink Policy, and sustainable welcome boxes for Silwood Park students. With continued support from Sustainable Imperial, the network is creating positive change across campuses and communities.

Sustainability training programme

The Sustainability Hub and Grantham Institute have launched a programme of climate change educational opportunities for staff and students. At the core of the programme is Imperial's own Climate Literacy Training, a half-day course for staff to learn climate change science, what climate change is doing to our planet, and what we can do about it, as well as interactive, eye-opening and educational Climate Fresk workshops (pictured left).

Sustainable Halls campaign

This year, the Sustainable Halls campaign, run by Students Organising Sustainability-UK (SOS-UK), engaged Imperial students on environmental and social sustainability, introduced life-long sustainable living habits and reduced energy usage in our halls of residence.

The campaign builds students' foundation of sustainability knowledge and carbon literacy, focusing on enhancing their skills and experience, mobilising them to lead on sustainability initiatives.

For 2024–25, Imperial achieved:

- 932 students engaged in the campaign (30% of total residents)
- 125 students entered our climate quizzes
- 309 participated in our online competitions and masterclasses
- 480 engaged in our campus visits

President's Award for Excellence – Sustainability

The Staff Recognition Awards provide an opportunity to recognise and celebrate Imperial's staff and students for their vital contributions to the university's community.

The sustainability award recognises an individual or team who has delivered a specific project or initiative or embedded everyday good practice that significantly contributes to the enhancement of sustainability at the university, whilst demonstrating commitment to Imperial's values and behaviours: Respect, Collaboration, Integrity, Innovation and Excellence.

This year's individual winner was Allison Hunter, Department of Life Sciences (pictured above left), and the team award went to the ICT Sustainability Task Group (made up of: Nelson Cerqueira, Lizzie Eustace, Neil Hanham, Chris Hester, Sanjay Naran, Rob Sherwood, Mark Sinclair, Rajiv Vyas , pictured below left).

You can read more about the resources available to staff and the resources available to students on our website.

Imperial College Students' Union (ICU)

Union Sustainability Strategy

ICU launched their Union Sustainability Strategy 2025–28. This sets out how the Union will contribute to a more sustainable and resilient future, recognising that sustainability is a core enabler underpinning ICU's mission of being a high performing students' union.

The launch of the strategy included a consultation process with staff and students and engagement with Imperial's Director of Sustainability. The implementation of the strategy will be a continuous process over the next three years, and the team have established implementation principles to annually review the strategy and ensure opportunities for revision, critical assessment and action are in place.

The strategy covers three main pillars – the university, the Union and our students. In the long term, these translate to being effective at holding Imperial to account on their commitments to sustainability, ensuring Union services are delivered with sustainability at their core, and empowering our students to engage with sustainability within the Union, Imperial and wider society.

Read ICU's Sustainability Strategy 2025–28 online.

Sustainable SU's charter commitment

ICU have signed up to the Sustainable Student Union (SSU) charter as part of the National Union of Students' national programme, focusing on commercial operations and purchasing to ensure the supply chain to students' unions across the UK reach net zero by 2030. ICU's venues team has conducted internal carbon footprint report as well as introduced Klimato, a tool label our food menus, so our members can make informed decisions on their food choices.

ICU has committed to removing beef from our menus and ensuring there are at least 50% meat free options in outlets by the end of 2025-26 academic year.

Union Awards – Sustainability Award

We held our Union Awards in June 2025, which featured a Sustainability Award to the celebrate student efforts around sustainability at Imperial. There were several notable nominees including:

- Green Careers Fair (student organised event)
- Imperial Climate Action (student campaign group)
- Plant Based Universities (student campaign group)
- Simran Patel (individual contribution, as Felix Environment Editor and Ethics & Environment Campaigns Officer 2023–24)

Environment and sustainability forums

Chaired by Stephanie Yeung (ICU Deputy President Finance and Services), ICU ran three forums with students to facilitate conversations and ensure we can better represent students' views on sustainability. The meetings covered: an introduction to sustainability at the Union, feedback opportunities on the Union's Sustainability Strategy, green careers (including what they are and what skills students need) and Veganuary and discussions led by the student group Plant Based Universities.

Research and education

Launched as part of Imperial's Science for Humanity strategy, the overarching vision for the new School of Convergence Science seeks to connect and deeply integrate research and innovation from across academic disciplines and industrial fields in the service of practical challenges that are too complex to tackle in isolation. Launched this year, the School of Convergence Science is focused on bringing together innovators from Imperial and partner organisations in academia, business, and government, to create and scale joined-up solutions to complex challenges.

The School of Convergence Science – Sustainability has a mission to accelerate solutions for planetary health and human prosperity.

You can read more about our approach to convergence science on our website.

Case study: £1 million grant from the Wolfson Foundation to support Sustainable Futures Lab

The Wolfson Foundation's funding will support the creation of Imperial's new Sustainable Futures Lab, a state-of-the-art research facility focused on accelerating the transition to a net zero future. The lab will serve as a global hub for multidisciplinary research, bringing together experts to develop impactful solutions from molecular to systems scale. Consisting of indoor and outdoor spaces, this new research facility will include lab spaces as well as an outdoor area for solar-driven or environmental exposure research activities.

SPOTLIGHT

This year, a special interest group was formed focused on **Education for Sustainability**. The group comes together with the aim that students graduating from Imperial should understand how they can use their education to tackle societal 'Grand Challenges', including climate change, biodiversity loss and other themes encompassed by the Sustainable Development Goals, in ways that result in meaningful positive impact.

The aim of this special interest group is to create a staff community of practice to explore and develop pedagogical approaches, practical strategies, helpful content and the support needed to embed education for sustainability into teaching and the wider curriculum.

The group adopts an action-based approach where contributions to meetings will provide examples of good practice, and lead to recommendations for how these could be applied more widely.

Partnerships

Imperial Zero Index

Last year Imperial designed a framework, the Imperial Zero Index, to assess annually how its energy industry collaborators are performing in their commitment, strategy and operational efforts towards net zero.

This year, we published our first outcomes of the framework for assessing fossil fuel company net zero commitments.

We have implemented an 'Engagement for Change' approach and pledged to only carry out research with fossil fuel companies where: that research is strongly aligned to the decarbonisation of their business; and only if the company demonstrates a credible strategic commitment to achieving net zero by 2050 for scopes 1 and 2 emissions. The ambition of the Index is to increase accountability and ensure academic engagements at Imperial and beyond are with partners who want to enact a genuine transition, preventing potential 'greenwashing'.

Working with our neighbours in South Kensington

Imperial continues to collaborate with our neighbours in the Exhibition Road Cultural Group through the South Kensington Zero Emissions Nature Positive (South Ken ZEN+) initiative to help all of us move faster and be more effective in our sustainability work.

This year we have collaborated to produce a neighbourhood-level carbon baseline, including sharing Imperial's detailed approach to reporting with those neighbours who have less experience so far with doing this; joined our neighbours in workshops exploring more complex decarbonisation issues such as residual emissions; and collaborated on a project to explore options for decarbonising heat and energy in the area.

In March 2025, Imperial signed the South Ken ZEN+ Supply Chain Charter, which Imperial was instrumental in developing with colleagues. The charter aligns Imperial's work with peer institutions on Exhibition Road, while strengthening the university's sustainable procurement policy and supplier engagement strategy.

Case study: New partnership to improve local air quality

Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust with Hammersmith and Fulham Council and Imperial College London have set up a new three-year partnership to improve local air quality. The partnership, which was launched on our White City Campus in February, has a number of objectives including:

- raising public awareness of air quality issues in the borough, such as different sources of pollution and areas with high pollution levels
- helping residents to reduce their exposure to pollution
- developing evidence-based solutions to improve air quality in the borough
- public engagement (such as educational campaigns and citizen science initiatives), seminars, joint funding bids, and workshops and training sessions for Hammersmith and Fulham council staff, residents and stakeholders.

Get involved

Contributors: Stav Friedman, Zekun Fu, Will Gee, Florence Hale, Lucy Hand, Hari Haren, Andy Hitchman, Anna Korre, James McDonald, Jess Money, Colin Nye, Treeva Pasha, Robert Pegg, Zuzanna Rydz, Rhea Samra, Hannah Scott, Ella Shepherd, Judge Singh, Harriet Wallace, Mark Wilkinson, Stephanie Yeung.

Be part of our Sustainability **Champions Network**.

Join a **Green Impact** team and make real environmental change in your department.

Keep up to date with the latest sustainability news and events across Imperial with our **Sustainability Bulletin newsletter**.

sustainable@imperial.ac.uk
@SustainableImperial
imperial.ac.uk/sustainability

Appendix

The appendix outlines further information on Imperial's 2024–25 carbon footprint, analysis and year-on-year trends. You can read our full methodology and data sources on our website.

Figure 14: Imperial's total scope 1 and 2 emissions per year

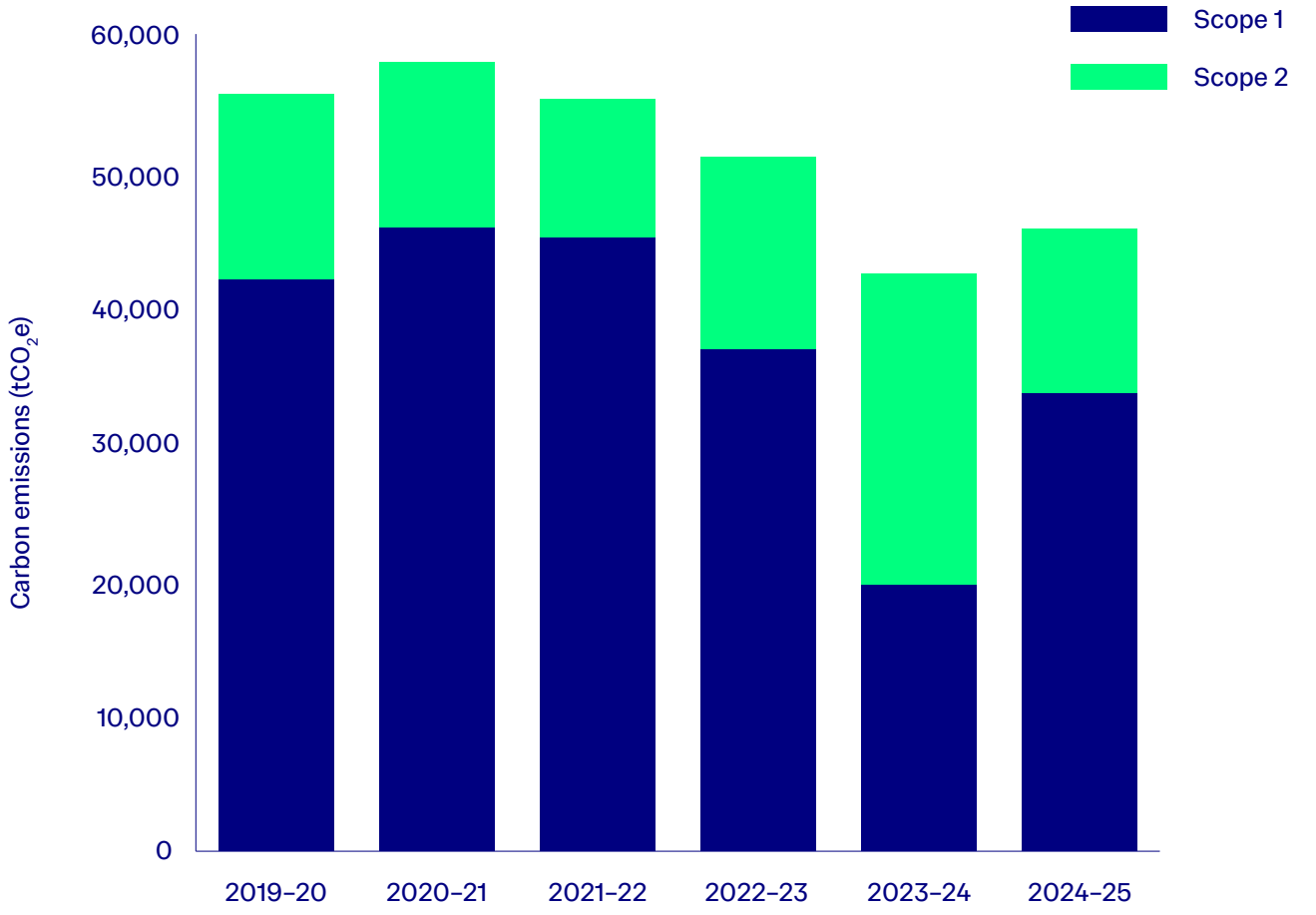


Figure 15: Imperial's total scope 3 emissions per year

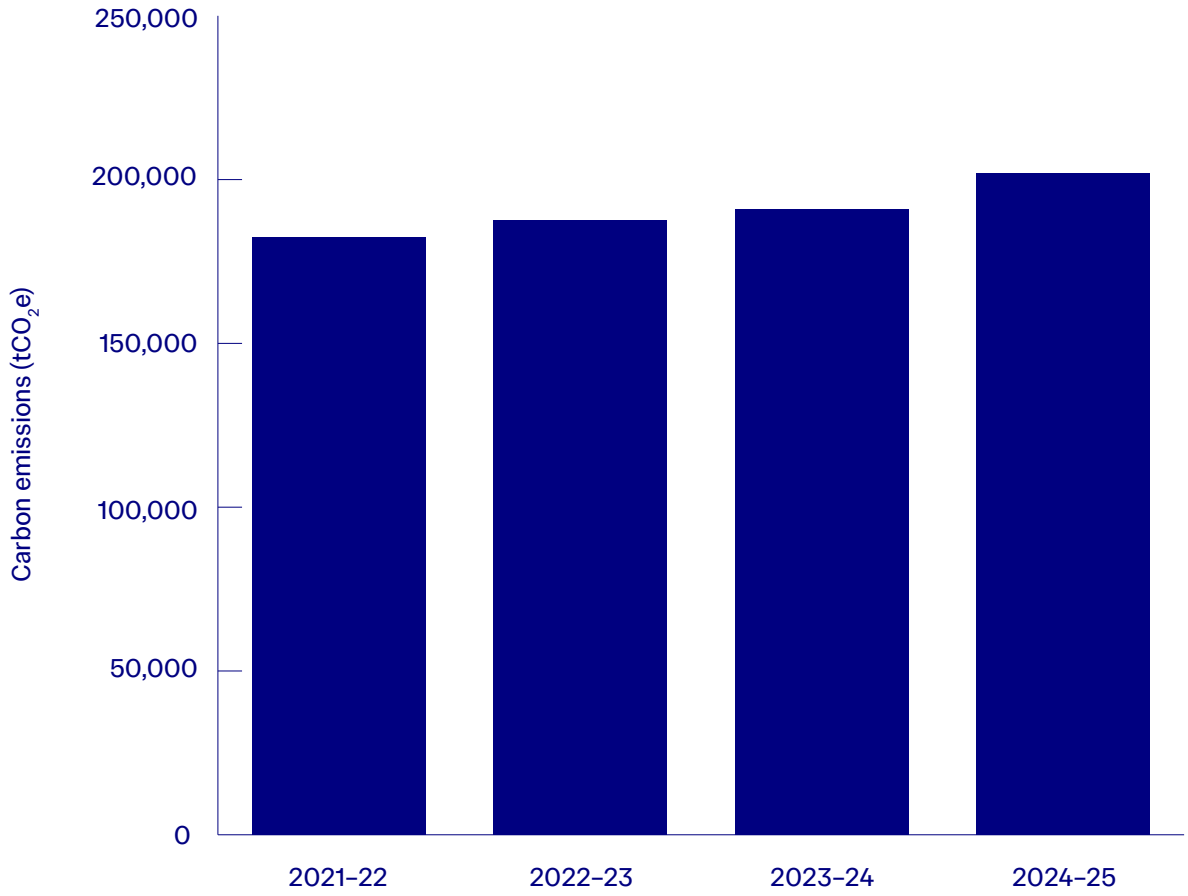


Table 3: Imperial's scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions for commercial properties

Scope	Source	Commercial property emissions	Total 2024–25 emissions including commercial properties (tCO_2e)
1	Natural gas	2,106	35,702
2	Purchased electricity	2,672	14,728
3	Water	29	98
	Waste	24	93
Total overall carbon footprint including commercial property emissions			**252,069**

Scope 3

Procurement and supply chain

Procurement and supply chain includes all upstream emissions as a result of goods and services purchased. This year, we have used both supplier and HESCET data to calculate our procurement and supply chain emissions, which is included in our total emissions.

Table 4: HESCET-based emission breakdown of Imperial's 2024–25 procurement and supply chain categories

Category	Subcategory	Emissions 2024–25 (tCO_2e)	Percentage of total procurement emissions (%)	Emissions 2023–24 (tCO_2e)	Percentage increase / decrease
IT services	Audio visual and multimedia supplies and services	3,634	2.69%	683	432%
	Library services	9,303	6.88%	9,287	0.17%
	Computer supplies and services	53,459	39.52%	32,647	64%
	Printing, reprographics and photocopying	169	0.12%	17	911%
	Telecommunications	177	0.13%	104	71%
	Stationery and office supplies	0	0.00%	0	
Laboratory/ Research	Materials	3,489	2.58%	3,719	-6%
	Equipment	20,607	15.23%	24,596	-16%
	Services	0	0.00%	0	
Business services	Library services	687	0.51%	609	13%
	Technical services	14,282	10.56%	11,915	20%
	Insurance and legal services	544	0.40%	684	-20%
	Financial services	66	0.05%	76	-13%
	Education services	795	0.59%	782	2%
	Miscellaneous services	1,404	1.04%	931	51%
Estates	Health, safety, and security	1,116	0.82%	608	84%
	Estates, and facilities operations	8,619	6.37%	5,947	45%
	Fees	3,004	2.22%	2,825	6%

Continued on next page

Category	Subcategory	Emissions 2024–25 (tCO_2e)	Percentage of total procurement emissions (%)	Emissions 2023–24 (tCO_2e)	Percentage increase / decrease
Food and catering	Food	1,253	0.93%	729	72%
	Beverages	144	0.11%	38	277%
	Equipment and services	3,978	2.94%	1,330	199%
Construction		3,700	2.73%	681	443%
Furniture		633	0.47%	622	2%
Other products		2,158	1.59%	671	222%
Paper products		1,698	1.26%	349	387%
Medical supplies		235	0.17%	40	485%
Capex		131	0.10%	54	142%
Unclassified		0	0.00%	0	
Total		135,286		99,943	35%

A free community day of nature-themed activities at Imperial's Silwood Park Campus.

Business travel

Business travel refers to the upstream emissions as a result of all travel undertaken by staff, students and guests for business purposes. We have revised the 2023–24 business travel numbers from 34,473 tCO_2e to 23,741 tCO_2e following a detailed review of our data. In 2024–25, Imperial's business travel footprint was a total of ca. 15,680 tCO_2e. This is a decrease of 8,061 tCO_2e or a 34% reduction compared to 2023–24. This is because of our revised methodology, better supplier data for taxi/coach and hotels and subsistence, alongside the rollout of our sustainable business travel policy.

Figure 16: 2024–25 business travel emissions per mode of travel

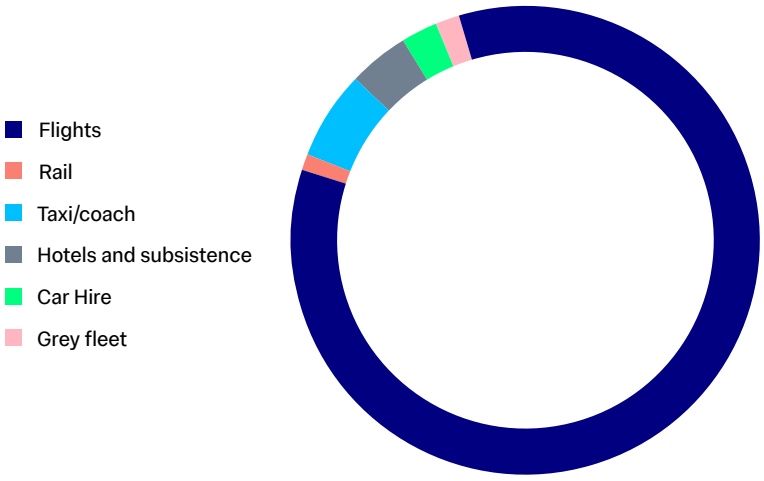


Figure 17: Comparison of 2023–24 and 2024–25 business travel emissions per mode of travel