

Durham University league table performance

League tables provide an assessment of our standing in relation to other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and are used by applicants and the wider community to judge performance.

The presentation of league table results has been revised from the previous year to align with other publications and to reflect that the rankings, while published in one year (e.g.2022), are held by the institution for the following year (e.g. 2023).

League Table	2023	2022	2021
Complete University Guide	6th	6th	7th
The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide	6th	6th	6th
The Guardian	6th	5th	4th
Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings	92nd	82nd	86th
Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings	=198th	=162nd	=149th
Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings	n/a*	101-200	87th
Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU)	n/a*	301-400	301-400

*These rankings will be published during 2023.

Sustainable development goals

The United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) provide a blueprint to achieve a more sustainable future by encouraging organisations and individuals to address global challenges. We have mapped the SDGs onto our research, teaching, wider student experience and global activities. We will use this information to assess our impact, identify gaps and consider where to focus efforts to deliver an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable institution and help to balance social, economic and environmental sustainability for the world. This includes building the SDGs into our education offer, with programmes in climate science, sustainability, energy and development, and environmental geoscience. Throughout this report we highlight examples where our work is contributing towards these goals. Further information is published on the University website.

During 2022/23 we will be developing our Net-Zero and Biodiversity Strategies which will help to improve our performance against SDG13 Climate Action and SDG15 Life on Land. These strategies should promote our position in the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, which last year assessed 1,400 universities worldwide against the SDGs.

United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals





Operational Review

Environmental Impact



Strategic Risk SR3, SR4



We're working to make Durham one of the most environmentally sustainable universities in the UK. Alongside major investments in our built environment and our teaching and research activities, we have introduced strong environmental policies and procedures. We're working to reduce our carbon emissions and to promote increased awareness of environmental issues.

What has been achieved

We are committed to reducing our environmental impact and improving the local environment for our staff, students and wider community. This commitment is reflected in our policies, plans and procedures which seek to make the most effective and efficient use of our resources, encouraging all members of our community to develop an ecologically sound approach to their work and lifestyle.

During 2021/22, we improved our performance in the People and Planet University Green League, from a Third-class result (96) to an Upper Second class (30), which resulted in us winning the Most Improved University award. We have since developed a plan to obtain a First-class result.

We have produced an updated Sustainability Action Plan using the Climate Action Toolkit from EAUC, the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, to improve our performance in a range of strategic areas including: carbon emissions; energy, leadership and governance; research; construction and buildings; travel; waste; and water.

Over 800 users (staff, students and alumni) have signed up to the My Greenspace App, to record and promote sustainable activities. The app has logged 24,021 actions, saved 72,110 kWh of electricity and avoided 38,463kg of CO₂, that's equivalent to ten flights from London to Sydney.

Our second annual Greenspace Festival was held at Collingwood College in June involving a range of student groups, researchers, sustainable businesses and charities. Attendees got the chance to visit over 30 stalls, from sustainable food start-up Sustain Meals, and the Ugly Fruit Group, to Climate Action North-East and Durham County Council's Low Carbon Economy Team. The event began with Grey College collecting the Sustainability Varsity Trophy, and included a range of talks, covering everything from heat pump installations in social housing towers, to how to kickstart a career in sustainability and concluded with a Carbon Management Workshop.