**Sustainability projects for School of Anthropology and Conservation**

In 2019, the School of Anthropology and Conservation declared a climate and environmental emergency. This included a commitment to decarbonise SAC’s operations and, uniquely, empowered students to help the school reduce its footprint through the Sustainability Working Group (SWG). However, making policy requires evidence, so this year we are providing a range of projects designed to help the school – and the wider University of Kent – reach its sustainability objectives. This is a rare opportunity for undergraduate student research to directly inform policy and have an immediate sustainability impact.

These projects are offered across a range of themes which may be suitable for students of Environmental Social Sciences, Wildlife Conservation and Human Geography (depending on the precise topic), and may be supervised by a number of staff within the school. However many may also involve working with non-academic university departments including [Kent Sustainability](https://www.kent.ac.uk/sustainability) and Estates, as well as the SWG and SAC Sustainability Lead. There are 10 main themes:

* ***Emissions reduction*** (field-based/desk-based). SAC has committed to reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 45% by 2025, and to net zero by 2040, and Kent Union is campaigning for a similar commitment from University of Kent. There are numerous possible projects investigating how we can reduce our emissions from our business travel (especially aviation), heating and lighting, commuting (e.g. promotion of active transport), procurement and individual behaviour. Projects can be carried out at the school or university level, and use existing data (e.g. building gas and electricity data), or collect new data.
* ***Campus biodiversity and green spaces*** (field-based/desk-based). UoK has a large, biodiversity-rich campus that is important for conservation and the provision of ecosystem services, particularly the wellbeing of students and staff. The latter may have become increasingly important during the pandemic, but has tended to be undervalued by the university. There are a number of potential projects related to species surveying and monitoring, habitat enhancement, landscape design, understanding/influencing how people value and use the space, and understanding the value of the campus to the university brand. There is also a project available to review existing regional and local biodiversity strategy and what it means for University of Kent.

* ***Curriculum*** (field-based/desk-based). University of Kent has a goal of integrating sustainability across all our curricula, but research is required to help us do so. Potential projects include investigating student attitudes to sustainability in the curriculum, mapping the curriculum against the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and investigating/developing methods for integrating sustainability into the curriculum.
* ***Wellbeing*** (field-based). Projects may investigate how emerging issues such as climate anxiety and ecological grief affect students and staff, and what resources could be provided in support of this.
* **Food sustainability *and procurement*** (field-based/desk-based). Potential projects include investigating university procurement and supply chains related to e.g. Fairtrade produce or sustainable palm oil, and investigating how to influence consumer behaviour related to food choices. The latter may potentially involved working with food outlets at the university.
* ***Waste*** (field-based). Potential projects may focus on reducing the use of single-use plastics across campus or in particular contexts (e.g. labs), or tackling the major issue of the high-quality, largely re-useable ‘waste’ (clothing, furniture, kitchen equipment etc) that is left behind in student accommodation every year.

* ***Water*** (field-based/desk-based). Projects may include investigating water use at Kent and the scope for reductions (buildings, efficiency of equipment, user behaviour, leakage) as well as waste water disposal. In particular, Kent Sustainability are offering a project investigating how to change user behaviour regarding disposal of unflushable wastes (oils, sanitary products, wet wipes).
* ***Supporting students*** (field-based). What information do new students need, and when, in order for them to be fully informed to understand and make pro-environmental choices and to understand their role as individuals and in their future career? What is the ideal ‘road map’ for sustainability intervention for an undergraduate’s 3 years at Kent?
* ***Climate change and higher education*** (field-based/desk-based). Both University of Kent and the wider higher education sector will need to rapidly adapt to the changing world that climate change triggers. But what are the likely impacts on the university, and how prepared are we as an institution? How prepared is our governance, our buildings, our business model and our curriculum?
* ***Construction*** (field-based/desk-based). Two projects available in design and building forensics. 1) How can biophilic/sustainable design principles be used to make the business case for incorporation into future university policy? 2) Investigating differences in actual vs potential building performance.

Students interested in any of these themes will need to find an appropriate supervisor, but may in some cases also work closely with other members of academic or non-academic staff across the university.