Virginia Harvey

Earth and Environmental Sciences

Outstanding teaching and learning innovation in social responsibility

Carbon Literacy for Labs

Initiative

The ‘Carbon Literacy for Labs’ initiative has created the world’s first Carbon Literate laboratories at The University of Manchester. Carbon Literacy for Labs is a low-carbon culture change initiative. It is a certified course that inspires and promotes sustainable laboratory choices and behaviours by delivering relevant climate change knowledge, effects and solutions to laboratory groups.

The one-day workshops engage laboratory users in low carbon thinking, both within their own lives as well as in their workspace. Certified lab spaces are actively reducing their energy use, equipment wear, consumption of materials and chemicals, and therefore their carbon emissions following training. A certified Carbon Literate lab user has an awareness of the everyday choices that can reduce the climate impact of their research, and actively shares their Carbon Literacy with others.

With financial support from the Faculty of Science and Engineering’s Social Responsibility Fund, the project has created bespoke course materials, funded the professional coaching of two University of Manchester PhD students/staff members to become certified Carbon Literacy Trainers, and funded the delivery of 7 workshop days, together certifying over 80 learners as Carbon Literate and creating over 160 low-carbon actions across campus. Collectively, these learners can influence hundreds of undergraduates, postgraduate and graduate teaching assistants.

How Virginia has made a difference

Virginia Harvey is the Project Co-ordinator of the Carbon Literacy for Labs initiative. Virginia is responsible for organising the structure and delegate tasks among the committee, leading on funding applications, creating and managing budgets, recruiting Carbon Literacy experts to design the training materials, recruiting both external and University of Manchester Carbon Literacy trainers, organising the train-the-trainer coaching process, all promotion and marketing, and ensuring the project reaches beyond its targets. Virginia is directly responsible for the low-carbon culture cascade that is developing through this unique initiative and is committed to continuing its growth across The University of Manchester.