






UCC's Green Laboratory Programme

UCC's Green Laboratory program brings together the Lab community at UCC and is made up of Lab managers, technical officers, lab users, suppliers and supported by the operational services and procurement department in an effort to make UCC laboratories more sustainable. The LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework), programme improves the sustainability and efficiency of laboratories.

The program sets out to reduce and minimise the environmental footprint of our lab operations, develop policies and good practice guidance and to bring together the Lab community at UCC to implement a green lab certification program at the University.

Laboratories are awarded either a Bronze, Silver, or Gold level depending on how many sustainability actions they take. To date UCC has been awarded 3 bronze LEAF levels for its laboratories.

LEAF contains actions that lab users can take to save plastics, water, energy and other resources. By taking part in the programme, laboratories reduce their carbon emissions and create an environment that supports research quality.

CATEGORY	Bronze	Silver	Gold
 Waste	Provide recycling bins in the lab	Single-use plastic waste has been reduced (guidance provided)	Recycling rates have been increased, or overall waste produced has been decreased
 People	Samples owned by departing staff are cleared or tracked	The lab has engaged other labs on LEAF and sustainability	One action to reduce travel has been implemented
 Sample & Chemical Management	Labels are legible, and there's a common labeling system in place	Procedures are in place in case cold storage equipment breaks down	At least 80% of all samples and/or chemicals are clearly catalogued
 Equipment	Equipment is turned off when not in use	There is a system in place for communal equipment booking	Excess equipment is repaired, sold, and/or donated
 Ventilation	There is a clear reporting system for building issues	Fume cupboard sashes are kept closed when not in use	Solvent vapours are condensed and disposed and not released into the atmosphere

The LEAF programme comprises the following four elements:

- **The Framework:** An online tool that guides users through sustainability actions for the laboratory.

- **Online calculators:** To help you estimate how sustainable your lab is now and track improvements as you make changes.
- **Toolkit and Resources:** Everything you need to implement the suggested changes in LEAF from guides to sustainable lab equipment and consumables to induction and exit procedures. You can access these [here](#).
- **User Engagement & Training:** To get you started we offer each institution a tailored workshop to engage laboratory staff and students on sustainable science, and to introduce LEAF.

LEAF is supported by the [UKRN](#) (UK reproducibility network). This is in recognition that high-quality research is sustainable research – Ensuring that studies are reproducible and that we make use of the data we generate is a sustainability challenge as well as one for science. UKRN provides an annual review of the actions within LEAF which relate to research quality. LEAF is also supported by the [National Technician Development Centre](#) (NTDC), in recognition that the application of sustainable lab practices improves career development and visibility for technical staff.