

Introduction

This is a progress report on Fairtrade (FT) at Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU). GCU and GCU Students' Association (the Partnership) have a longstanding commitment to FT that predates 2014 (the year for which the earliest records are available).

The commitment to FT has never wavered, but a number of extenuating circumstances out-with the Partnerships' control have impacted its ability to renew certification, with the onset of the corona virus pandemic being the latest.

Catering Operations

Notwithstanding this, during this period the Partnership has continued to celebrate FT by increasing the range of FT products available from catering outlets (e.g. In 2016 Cordia offered a FT range of 42 products at GCU and in 2022 BaxterStorey had increased the FT range to 48), running special offers and hosting FT fortnight (Figure 1). POS/posters are used extensively where FT products are available (Figure 2).



Figure 1 Screenshot of BaxterStorey's 2019 Fairtrade Fortnight promotion at GCU.



Figure 2 Examples of posters used to highlight availability of FT products in catering outlets at GCU.

Non-Catering Operations

The Partnership has also sought to increase use of FT products beyond catering operations, with an evaluation of FT garments for Domestic Assistants' uniforms and mobile phones.

The University employs around 100 Domestic Assistants but of the uniforms they use, FT was only available for t-shirts and polos which are mostly used by male staff. Whilst the then provider (Arco) had a range of FT t-shirts and polos they were quite expensive and not of a particularly high quality. It was therefore decided that switching to FT on this occasion would not represent good value.

On a similar vein, the University's Sustainability Officer started an in-use evaluation of a modular FT mobile phone (a [Fairphone 3](#) - Figure 2). The evaluation is still ongoing and despite the phone not having as many features of established brands, so far it is deemed to be adequate as a work phone. The scope for replacing conventional mobile devices will therefore be considered as part of the natural device replacement cycle.



Figure 3 Sustainability Officer with his Fairphone 3 (purchased summer 2020).

FT in Curriculum

FT is also prominent in GCU's curriculum, with students having an opportunity to learn about FT through lectures, assignments and honours (dissertations) projects. A FT related keyword search¹ indicates that 10% of modules have at three or more keywords associated with FT (Figure 4).

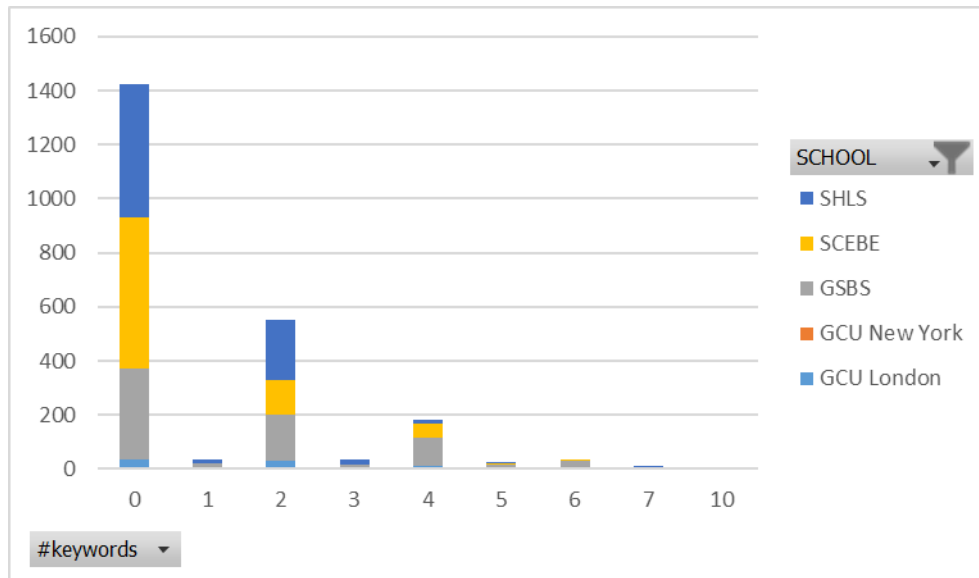


Figure 4 Number of modules (at GCU) with FT associated keywords (by School).

Whilst 10% of modules have FT associated keywords, some specifically cover FT, of which the following examples are highlighted:

- [Marketing design and creativity](#)
- [Corporate sustainability](#)
- [Society, politics and sustainability](#)
- [New perspectives on critical marketing and consumer](#)

Students further have an opportunity to research FT in their thesis/honours project, with the following titles having been proposed by students in GSBS during 2020-21:

- An Investigation into The Relationship Between CSR Activities and Customer Loyalty and Purchasing Behaviour Within the UK (Fairtrade was a key word)
- Examining the impact of ethics and corporate social responsibility (CSR) upon the customers buying decision process (Fairtrade was a key word)
- How the focus on Corporate Social Responsibility has allowed Fortnum & Mason to further establish themselves as the leading luxury retailer within the United Kingdom.
- To critically evaluate if CSR is used as a marketing tool rather than for genuinely helping the wider society, whilst looking at businesses in Scotland and their views on CSR.
- Would graduates prioritise corporate social responsibility (CSR) or a high starting salary?

¹ A keyword search was run using the following terms: safe working conditions; safe work; fair*pay; fairer*pay; agriculture; *product; *production; justice; climate*justice; slave*labour

- Are the benefits of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) upon supermarkets and their stakeholder's activities in the UK retail industry worth it?
- To investigate how CSR has impacted SMEs in comparison to multinational companies and the objectives and motives of performing CSR within the hospitality sector
- Does Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) give companies a competitive advantage?
- To Analyse Marks and Spencer's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Practices through the lens of Carroll's Pyramid
- Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the Mining Industry
- An investigation into the effect of social media influencers on creating awareness of CSR in order to educate their followers and consumer purchasing decisions within the fashion industry.
- The Reasoning and Ethics Behind Non-Profit Organisations being exempt from tax

And the following for 2021-22:

- An investigation into the use of the Fairtrade label and the influence it has on consumer purchase intention.
- How IKEA makes use of business ethics to impact on customer satisfaction
- An evaluation of CSR practice and ethical climate within the Cypriot Coffee Industry
- FreeFrom lies: Should businesses in the UK vegan food industry pursue transparent supply chains?
- How the logistics industry can meet sustainability objectives
- The extent to which companies operating unethically effects consumer loyalty

This highlights that there are significant opportunities for students to learn about FT (and associated issues) at GCU.

Other Fairtrade Activity

In early 2022 the University joined the Scottish Fair Trade Forum and Dr. K. Helwig (SCEBE - Centre for Climate Justice) has been invited to present on "Climate Change, Women, Agriculture and Fairtrade " during Fairtrade Fortnight 2022.



Figure 5 Dr. K. Helwig (SCEBE – Centre for Climate Justice) was invited to present at the Scottish Fair Trade Forum’s Climate Change, Women, Agriculture and Fairtrade during Fairtrade Fortnight 2022.

Next Steps

Whilst FT products are widely available (and featured) in GCU catering outlets and there are plenty of opportunities to learn about FT through the University’s curriculum, we are of the opinion that there is scope to do more. It is therefore proposed that a FT survey be carried out to identify areas for improvement and that its findings are used to refresh the FT Working Plan.

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