The Housekeeping Services Unit of UMD’s Facilities Management organization has achieved Green Seal™ GS-42 Certification, which indicates that its cleaning practices are among the healthiest and most sustainable in the industry. GS-42 is a certification program of Green Seal, an independent non-profit organization that develops life cycle-based sustainability standards for products, services and companies and offers third-party certification for those that meet their rigorous criteria.

The certification means the University has met the Green Seal standard by reducing waste and encouraging the use of products and methods that are safe for humans and the environment. The University of Maryland and Harvard University are the only higher education institutions to date that have received certification. Carlo Colella, Associate Vice President, Facilities Management, remarks, “Green Seal Certification is a truly world class accomplishment that was achieved through a significant team effort led by Mr. Harry Teabout, Director of our Building and Landscape Services Department.”

Among the measures that were implemented in order for the University to meet the Green Seal requirements were the replacement of floor burnishers that did not meet emissions and noise limits; the replacement of disposable materials (such as cleaning cloths) with washable, reusable alternatives; and the installation of additional matting at building entrances to keep dirt outside. Employees have also been trained in cleaning techniques and the use of new equipment and products.

These efforts have been made to protect the health and safety of everyone in the UMD community, and will lead to improved indoor air quality and a safer and healthier campus. According to Scott Lupin, Director of the UMD Office of Sustainability, “This achievement was the result of great teamwork that will lead to healthier building environments and safer operations for our employees. It is an excellent example of merging the goals of campus sustainability with those of environmental health and safety.”

The University was awarded Green Seal GS-42 certification on October 8, 2012.

For more information about the university’s Green Seal certification, please contact Anthony Stewart, Coordinator, Housekeeping Services, at astewar1@fm.umd.edu.