UC Santa Cruz has more than 9,300 residents on campus; however, the campus accounts for only 6% of the total Santa Cruz Department of Water usage.

Despite growth, the campus has significantly decreased its water usage since 2005.

In 2016, the main campus water use was below 160 million gallons, which was less than 2004 usage.

The entire campus water supply system is a complex network consisting of four connections to the City of Santa Cruz system and eight separate pressure zones.

The campus stormwater collection system focuses on capturing runoff, infiltrating stormwater runoff on site, and minimizing erosion potential.

UC Santa Cruz has one of the lowest per-capita water-use rates in California, at just 8,479 gallons in fiscal year 2014–15.