

Environmental and Sustainability Policy

Purpose and Context

University of Huddersfield is committed to the principles of environmental protection and sustainable development, including achieving the targets of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

University of Huddersfield recognises that humanity is in an ongoing climate emergency and that we must take steps to mitigate and minimise our contribution to human-caused global climate change. The university's Climate Emergency Steering Group holds ownership of key targets and actions in relation to combating climate change, and this policy document supports the delivery of its aims.

This policy document supports the delivery of the aims and key performance indicators of University of Huddersfield's 2018-2025 Strategic Plan and all underlying organisational strategic plans and policies.

University of Huddersfield recognises that its activities have a significant impact on local and global communities and environments. It acknowledges its responsibility for the social and environmental health of the local and global communities in which it operates. This policy document provides a structure to prevent and mitigate negative impacts and seek the opportunities for betterment through our teaching, research, enterprise, and operational activities.

Scope

This policy covers all operations of the University of Huddersfield. The policy applies, but is not limited to, all staff, students, visitors, affiliated individuals and organisations, contractors and suppliers operating on behalf of the University of Huddersfield.

Policy framework

1. Resource management

- 1.1. Recognise waste as a valuable resource in line with the principles of Circular Economy and develop efficient and effective waste management procedures to implement the waste hierarchy: prevent, reduce, reuse, recycle, and responsibly dispose. We will prevent our waste from reaching landfill at all feasible opportunities.
- 1.2. Implement practices and policies to reduce the environmental impact of the goods and services we procure to achieve our Scope 3 carbon neutral targets.
- 1.3. Continually improve our energy and water efficiency in our direct operations, reducing our direct and indirect emissions to achieve our Scopes 1&2 carbon neutral targets.
- 1.4. Reduce our reliance on fossil fuels to heat, cool and operate our campus operations, reducing our carbon emissions and improving our air quality emissions.
- 1.5. Implement practices to reduce our demand on the national electricity grid, improving efficiency, generating low carbon energy on campus, and encouraging the increase of renewable energy sources generating into the grid through our procurement contracts.
- 1.6. Commit to the prevention of pollution by ensuring compliance with all relevant legislation regarding emissions and discharges.

- 1.7. Reduce the use of harmful chemicals in our activities where a practical alternative methodology is available.
- 1.8. Ethically source and conscientiously purchase food and materials for provision on campus. We will certify to welfare and sourcing standards and actively encourage local food production where possible.

2. Sustainable buildings

- 2.1. Close the performance gap between design and operation to ensure new and refurbished buildings have a lower carbon footprint throughout their operating lives.
- 2.2. Design our new buildings and refurbish our existing campus buildings to enhance the wellbeing of its users. This includes accounting for access to natural light, thermal comfort, biophilic design principles, improving air quality, access to nature both internally and externally, and sourcing of sustainable construction materials and textiles.
- 2.3. Efficiently and intelligently operate our buildings utilising the spaces we have available through effective space planning and allocation and timetabling of teaching and events. We will move towards the principle of operating based upon need rather than assumption.
- 2.4. Measure the embodied carbon emissions resulting from major construction projects and put steps in place to minimise and mitigate their impact.
- 2.5. Implement measurable and reportable sustainability standards and benchmarks in the design and construction of new buildings and major refurbishments, including, but not limited to, BREEAM and the WELL Building Standard. The minimum standards to achieve will be agreed by University Council when approving the undertaking of a project.
- 2.6. Design in adaptability and resilience to account for the impacts of the changing climate.

3. Engagement

- 3.1. Report annually on our progress in meeting our agreed targets, key performance indicators and implementation of the policy statements in this framework.
- 3.2. Enable research, foster innovation, and where practical implement new technologies, utilising the campus and our operations as a 'living laboratory' for advancement of sustainable development.
- 3.3. Build and maintain partnerships with local, national, and international organisations to reciprocally reduce our environmental impacts and participate in activities to enhance sustainable development and social responsibility.
- 3.4. Use our global reach to support achieving the targets of the UN Sustainable Development Goals through our research, teaching, and operational activities.
- 3.5. Foster a culture of change in the university to improve our environmental performance, supporting environmental and sustainability champions to implement improvements in working practices and practical actions throughout our schools, support services and affiliated organisations.
- 3.6. Engage and collaborate with the Huddersfield Students Union executive board, their affiliated student societies, and the wider student body in their actions to increase

sustainable development and improve environmental performance at University of Huddersfield.

4. Biodiversity

- 4.1. Respect wildlife that resides on our campus and actively work to create, maintain, and enhance habitats with a rich variety of native plant species.
- 4.2. Create cohesive links to habitats outside the estate to create biodiverse Green Corridors.
- 4.3. Undertake landscaping works on campus that provide a biodiversity net benefit while also creating a connection to nature for users to enhance their wellbeing.
- 4.4. Ensure that activities to offset the university's carbon emissions, including habitat restoration or development, will result in a measurable net benefit to biodiversity, the environment, and the community local to the scheme being undertaken.

5. Travel

- 5.1. Enable students, staff and visitors to campus to utilise active or sustainable travel methods in their journey. This includes enabling the adoption of electric vehicles through campus infrastructure and collaboration with partner organisations, e.g., Kirklees Council.
- 5.2. Reduce the emissions from operating the university's fleet of owned and leased vehicles and increase the adoption of electric vehicles in campus operations.
- 5.3. Encourage the use of active and sustainable travel methods for journeys undertaken by staff and students in our operational activities, utilising technological solutions and avoiding air travel where possible.

6. Legislation

The university will ensure that, as a minimum, all its operations meet legislative and regulatory requirements, implement environmental good practice, and continually improve sustainability performance.

7. Governance

- 7.1. This policy framework is subject to approval by the university's Senior Leadership Team
- 7.2. Progress in the implementation of this policy framework may be reported to:
 - 7.2.1. Estates and Finance Committee
 - 7.2.2. University Council
 - 7.2.3. University Senior Leadership Group
 - 7.2.4. Climate Emergency Steering Group
 - 7.2.5. Any other relevant committee, steering group, or leadership team
- 7.3. This policy will be reported on annually to the University's Senior Leadership team as part of the University's annual sustainability reporting.

POLICY SIGN-OFF AND OWNERSHIP DETAILS	
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Author:	Sustainability Manager
Owner (if different from above):	Subject to final approval on September 18 2025
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Compliance Checks:	Policy reported on annually as part of the University's financial reporting, which includes a section on the University's sustainability performance. Latest report for 2023/24 at Financial Statements - University of Huddersfield
Related Policies/Procedures:	

REVISION HISTORY			
Version	Date	Revision description/summary of changes	Author
V2.2	Jun 2025	Minor editing	Ben Onyido
V2.1	Mar 2023	Minor editing for grammar and clarity	Patrick Flavin
V2.0	Mar 2021	Major redraft	Patrick Flavin
V1.0	Oct 2017	First draft of new policy	Patrick Flavin