

‘A More Sustainable University’ - Environmental Sustainability Enabling Strategy 2018-2023 (Recast 2020)

Our ambition

Cardiff University is committed to leadership in sustainability and improving our environmental performance. Our vision is towards building an inclusive, sustainable, and resilient future for our community and to bring about environmental benefits not only to Cardiff and Wales but to the wider world. It is crucial to develop environmental sustainability as an integral part of our values and to embed the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals into all aspects of our academic and operational activities.

We will promote sustainability through education, dissemination, and direct participation, enabling students and staff to make positive changes to our environmental impact, in particular our declaration of a Climate Emergency and our aim to become carbon net zero (Scopes 1 and 2) by 2030. We will empower our students, graduates, and staff to become sustainable citizens who make a positive contribution to society and are active within their communities. We will ensure sustainable development is a key consideration in all major decision making, promote sustainability issues and principles with all staff, students and stakeholders and enable the application of our innovative research to improve global sustainability.

Underpinning goals

Our underpinning goals are adapted from the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the Welsh Government’s Well-being of Future Generations Act, Well-being Goals. These are as follows:

A prosperous University.	An innovative, productive, and low carbon community which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately including acting on climate change
A resilient University.	A University which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic, and ecological resilience, embedding the capacity to adapt to change
A healthier University.	A University which provides facilities for and encourages staff and students to make healthier food, lifestyle, and travel choices which in turn help to improve wellbeing and reduce pollution both locally and globally.
A globally responsible University.	A University which will take account of the impact of its’ activities on global sustainable development and global well-being. We will purchase clean energy and adopt responsible consumption practices for all goods and services we procure and use. We will also actively enable our innovative research to improve global sustainability.

All University sub strategies are recommended to note their relationship to the SDG’s. This strategy supports SDG 3; 4; 6; 7; 11; 12; 13; 14; 15 and 17.

Building on previous work

Building on the University's Value of Environmental and Social Sustainability work, we will ensure continual improvement across the University. We have drawn on our academic expertise and taken advice from leading academics in the development of our strategy.

By signing the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Accord Global Climate letter, we have declared a climate emergency and have committed to being carbon net zero (Scopes 1 and 2) by 2030. We must firmly embed sustainability into everything we do. This will include taking measures to make major reductions in our carbon emissions over the next decade, changing and rationalising our use of energy, water, finite resources and plastic, minimising pollution, and waste by repairing, reducing, re-using, and recycling. We will maintain certification to ISO 14001, and achieve the Platinum Corporate Health Standard which focuses on sustainable development.

Making this happen

Our key priorities for the lifetime of the strategy will be:

A Prosperous University:

- **To be a carbon net zero institution by 2030.**

This indicator relates to actions that we have direct control over and can measure. Carbon emissions can be broken down into Scopes 1, 2 and 3. Scope 1 emissions encompass the direct burning of fossil fuels within buildings and vehicles owned or operated by the University. Scope 2 emissions encompass the indirect burning of fossil fuels to supply electricity and water to University buildings. Scope 3 emissions encompass all other indirect emissions from activities, including business travel, procured works, goods and service and their supply chain, waste, and water; currently there are fewer sector or industry agreed standards by which to measure and quantify Scope 3 emissions.

We aim to be carbon net zero for Scopes 1 and 2 by 2030 and will make significant progress towards this aim by 2023. By 2023 we will also consider standards and model more detailed baselines for our Scope 3 emissions, will confirm and embark on interim steps towards Scope 3 carbon mitigation, and will confirm our target deadline for Scope 3 carbon net zero by – or preferably before – 2050.

A Resilient University:

- **To enhance the biodiversity of our campus by promoting pollinator planting across our green spaces.**

Building on the work of the award winning Pharmabees project, we will increase the area of university estate covered by wildflower meadow. This effort will increase local biodiversity, provide additional forage by including pollinator friendly plants identified by university research and increase carbon sequestration.

A Healthier University:

- **To reduce carbon emissions from travel by using less polluting modes and promoting technological alternative**

In addition to the indicator detailed above, we recognise the impact of travel and will endeavour to reduce carbon emissions from travel by using less polluting modes and promoting technological

alternatives. We will also consider carbon offset models, in keeping with sector and industry best practice.

- **To provide a staff, student and stakeholder behaviour change programme that promotes sustainability issues and principles.**

This indicator builds on the established behavioural change programmes run. A sustainability induction is available to all and a sustainability week is run annually. Themed Campaigns will be identified over the life of the Strategy.

A Globally responsible University:

- **We will promote sustainability education and dissemination and enable students and staff to make positive changes to our environmental impact**
- **We will prioritise and phase out the use of single-use plastic such as plastic water bottles to the fullest extent possible and will improve recycling facilities of all kinds throughout the University.**

We have chosen an action in which everybody throughout the University and beyond can participate. Plastic is a durable material, yet a third of it is used once and then discarded. We will start work on a campaign around this immediately to reduce the use of single-use plastic and identify where improvements can be introduced to our recycling scheme.

- **We will reduce our demand for non-sustainable goods and services, whilst minimising waste production.**

We will embed opportunities for sustainable procurement practices into University wide processes and management procedures. This will enable the University to consider sustainable alternatives during the planning and tender process.

- **To source and procure goods and services responsibly, taking into account their sustainability impact and being ethical in our business practices when dealing with our supply chain.**

To assist schools and departments in embedding sustainability considerations, including lifecycle analysis, into decision making, summaries have been prepared for common categories of goods and services, of the likely impacts of making the purchase and opportunity areas for mitigating negative impacts or taking positive action.

- **To ensure environmental sustainability is embedded into all academic and business processes including internal and external events**

We will audit academic and business process to ensure environmental sustainability is considered. We will use the principles contained within ISO 20121-Sustainable events, for internal and external events.

Environmental Sustainability Key performance indicators

- We will reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions by at least 15% by 2023.
- We will rank within the top 50 of the THE Impact Rankings by 2023.
- As signatories of the EAUC Accord, we will continue to submit an annual report on embedding of the SDG's into all University activities.
- By 2023, we will reduce our domestic waste sent to Energy Recovery Facility/Refuse Derived Fuel to no more than 30% in line with Welsh Government targets (does not include hazardous and construction waste).
- By following the waste hierarchy, we will work towards achieving the Welsh Government recycling target of 70% by 2024/25.
- Through the University's Biodiversity Action Plan, we will enhance the University's green infrastructure by ameliorating the environmental conditions of 30% of the green estate by 2023.

Environmental Sustainability success factors

- We will baseline our procurement of single use plastics, identifying waste streams and working to eliminate single use plastics across our catering facilities where appropriate.
- All new and renewed contracts over £25,000 will be assessed using a Sustainability Risk Assessment and/or Impact Assessment. The results will be used to form the decision-making process.
- Carbon modelling will be initiated to establish lifecycle costings for all new buildings and assets based on the realistic life expectancy of each asset.
- We will baseline the environmental impact of the University's travel mileage by managing the University's vehicle use through a smarter sustainable Travel Policy, resulting in setting appropriate targets to reduce our CO₂ Emissions and Duty of Care Risks.
- Refurbishment projects over £25,000 will show a net reduction in carbon emission of 30% compared to the original installation and will follow the Standard Building Electrical and Mechanical Requirements (SBEMR) as reviewed annually.
- All operational University buildings to take part in environmental sustainability behavioural change programme.
- We will immediately, and actively, seek ways to mitigate the carbon emissions of staff and student overseas flights. This will include reduction/replacement of flights where possible and agreeing additional mitigation (such as carbon offset with strong academic credentials). These will contribute directly to the Universities Critical Success Factors 1) Health and Wellbeing 2) Financial sustainability and 5) Civic Mission.

An accompanying action plan(s) will detail milestones.

Reporting our performance.

Achievements will be reported through the Governance structure and to our external stakeholders through the University Annual review. In addition, we will hold themed Sustainability Forums, promoting the values of the University, which will report and recognize environmental sustainability performance and seek feedback from staff, students, and stakeholders.

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