

sustainability 



1. WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

Sustainability is a difficult concept to define. Arguably the best starting point is to identify and acknowledge current practices that are unsustainable. These include the continued extraction and combustion of fossil fuels, the exploitation and destruction of ecosystems, uncontrolled population growth, inequality and injustice.

In 1987 the UN World Commission on Environment and Development published 'Our Common Future'. It contained what is now an established definition of sustainable development:

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

The definition contains within it two key concepts:

- the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and
- the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs."

Although nearly 30 years old and not without controversy, it is now an established way of understanding how sustainability might be put into practice.

2. WHY IS SUSTAINABILITY RELEVANT TO HIGHER EDUCATION?

"HEFCE's vision is that universities and colleges are widely recognised as leaders in society's efforts to achieve sustainability – through the understanding, skills and attitudes that students gain and put into practice, through research and knowledge exchange, and through community involvement, as well as through their strategies and operations that bring all these together." (HEFCE 2014/30)

Unsustainability is one of the central challenges facing the world in the twenty first century. We believe that universities are in a key position to develop a principled response to current issues and create a hopeful future in uncertain times. The University strategic framework places sustainability at its heart through its mission and values and as a cross cutting theme. This Framework for Sustainability sets out a whole-of-institution response and shows how we can connect to the environment, to each other and to ourselves at a range of scales from the local to the global.

3. SUSTAINABILITY POLICY STATEMENT

Our University

As a large organisation with strong links to the public and private sector we have a broad sphere of influence. As such, we have the potential to generate significant positive impacts on the fabric of society locally and more widely. We can do this by recognising our responsibility to prepare and equip our students and staff to tackle the urgent societal and environmental challenges that lie ahead, as well as by maintaining our commitment to minimise our ecological footprint.

Our vision

Our vision for sustainability is to develop environments in which people can explore more sustainable ways of living in the 21st Century. In line with sector guidance we recognise four components to sustainability; global citizenship, environmental stewardship; social justice, ethics and well-being and futures thinking. We aspire that these should be integrated across all operational areas, curriculum and research; and that they should be embedded in the culture, practices and physical environment of the University. We see this as a long-term process which is essential to the health of the University, its community and to wider society.

Our commitment

This policy statement operates within the wider context of the strategic framework 2015-2020, in which *"building a sustainable future"* forms part of the University mission statement; and *"preparing individuals to contribute to a just and sustainable future"* is embedded within our organisational values.

Our approach

We recognise the contribution that the whole university community can make to the theme of sustainability. We will ensure that it is integrated throughout existing structures and processes whilst facilitating individual responses. This is led by the Sustainability Department, in partnership with Schools, Departments and the Students' Union, whose work is overseen by the Sustainability Strategic Management Group (SSMG), and reports to the Senior Management Team.

The University will manage and enhance sustainability through business planning, annual and periodic review, quality management and through the Academic Board and its sub-committees. These will be supported by an ISO14001 accredited Environmental Management System (EMS), QAA Education for Sustainability (ESD) Guidance and a Sustainability Maturity Assessment (SMA) methodology.

Our approach is underpinned by:

- Integrity: A principled response to sustainability and sustainable development
- Optimism: A focus on positive responses to current contexts which acknowledges the potential for engagement and action
- Rigour: A commitment to challenging bias through critical, creative and futures thinking
- Inclusion: An inclusive approach, which embraces the rights and responsibilities of others locally, globally, now and in the future.

Our responsibilities

Senior Managers, Heads of Schools, Departments and Centres are responsible for ensuring their teams work within the context of this Policy, and with assistance from the Sustainability team, support the delivery of the Framework for Sustainability. Whilst the Senior Management Team accepts the main responsibility for implementation of this policy, individual staff and students have a very important role in taking forward its spirit in to their work, study and actions.

Our reputation

We aspire to demonstrate leadership for sustainability and will be guided by sector and corporate best practice, nationally and internationally, with reference to the international guidance standard for Social Responsibility (ISO26000). Internationally recognised reporting frameworks (GRI¹ G4 & <IR>²) will be used to ensure transparency of sustainability reporting, which: is inclusive of stakeholder view; is within the wider context of sustainability; reflects the significance of organisational impact; and provides a complete assessment of the organisation's performance.

In recognition of the strategic importance, a top level Key Performance Indicator (KPI) for sustainability has been created, which is to *"maintain recognised international standard for environmental management (ISO14001) and report on all University activity following the internationally recognised framework (GRI) G4."*

Our resources

The University is committed to the ongoing operation of the Sustainability Department, which is resourced with an annual budget that includes 4.6 FTE established posts, and a non-pay budget to support sustainability related projects, subscriptions and disbursements; along with the employment of student interns operating the Student Green Office. In addition there are full-time staff employed within the Estates & Facilities Department with responsibility for energy & water, waste management, environmental auditing, and travel. Changes to the annual budget are reported through the annual sustainability report.

4. FRAMEWORK FOR SUSTAINABILITY

To support the delivery of the top level KPI, a framework for sustainability is provided. It draws on the University Strategic Framework, and interprets its 4 key themes through the lens of sustainability. Specifically, this brings **Staff and Student Experience** together in a new first theme and focuses on **Our Environment** rather than Resources in the last theme.

University Strategic Framework themes	Framework for Sustainability themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student experience 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student and Staff Experience
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education for Sustainable Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Knowledge Exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and Knowledge Exchange
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our Environment

The framework aims to provide aspiration and direction for the University, its key underpinning strategies and other cross cutting themes. Each area provides a policy statement and target, a strategic aim and objectives, as well as a more detailed action plan. These are intended to support Schools and Departments in the business planning process as well as guiding system and process improvement.

¹ Global Reporting Initiative, version 4

² International Integrated Reporting Council Integrated Reporting Framework

4.1. STUDENT AND STAFF EXPERIENCE

Policy statement:

The University recognises the importance of the interrelationship between student and staff experience, and that a sustainable community is one in which everyone feels able to engage and contribute. Concepts of inclusion and accessibility are central to this principle, as well as developing a sense of belonging, to ensure enhancement of the breadth and depth of community experience.

Aim: To develop culture and practices based on our vision for sustainability and university values

Objectives:

- Enhance the level of engagement and participation in sustainability related initiatives
- Encourage the development of student initiated and led sustainability-related activity
- Foster connections between individuals, communities and their environment
- Create spaces to support health and wellbeing

Organisational target:

By 2020 the University will have significantly improved levels of awareness of and engagement with sustainability, and established appropriate ways of measuring and evaluating this.

Link to underpinning strategies and policies:

Learning and Teaching Strategy

People Strategy

University Alumni Strategy

Actions to support the achievement of the organisational target

What?	How?	When?	Measure of progress
1. Provide opportunities that develop knowledge, skills & experience for sustainability	Yearly projects and activities; e.g. 50 things to try; Save More	Annually	Maintain a coherent portfolio of initiatives that are reviewed and developed every year
2. Provide opportunities for students and staff to develop leadership skills for sustainability	Futures Leaders	Annually	Monitor take-up
3. Develop opportunities to support engagement with a sense of place within the natural and cultural environment	Bioersity and Edible Campus; e.g. Allotments; Beer, Bread & Honey.	On-going	Maintain a suite of opportunities
4. Increase capacity for student initiated and led activities	In partnership with the Students' Union and Student Green Office; work experience & internships	Annually	Monitor and evaluate take-up
5. Develop networking opportunities for sharing ideas, knowledge and experience	Futures Forum; In partnership with the Students' Union	Termly	Monitor evaluate levels of attendance and participation
6. Develop methods of evaluating engagement in sustainability	Staff and Student engagement working groups	2015-2017	Methods trialled, evaluated and regularly in use
7. Raise the profile of sustainability activities to support enhanced participation	Integrated suite of publicity materials and case studies	Annually	Enhanced levels of participation

4.2. EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy statement:

The University recognises that it has a duty to educate its students for the complex futures they will encounter and to prepare them as sustainability literate, responsible citizens. It sees Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as integral to the distinctive curriculum experience offered at CCCU, providing particular opportunities for developing critical and creative thinking.

The University recognises a range of external drivers which support the development of ESD in Higher Education. Specific ESD guidance is available through the QAA to support “themes that cross subject boundaries” in Chapter B3 (Learning and teaching) of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education. This is supported by validation processes managed by the Quality and Standards Office.

Aim: To support curriculum innovation so that all students have the opportunity to engage with sustainability related issues relevant to their discipline and chosen field of work

Objectives:

- Embedding sustainability in the development of new modules and the enrichment of existing formal and informal curriculum.
- Ensure that academic infrastructure aligns with internal and external quality frameworks for sustainability.
- Maximise opportunities for student involvement in the development of formal, informal and campus curriculum.

Organisational target:

By 2020 all Schools and Faculties will have developed a response to ESD such that every student will have had the opportunity to learn about sustainability in the context of their chosen discipline and field of work.

Link to underpinning strategies and policies:

Learning & Teaching Strategy
Social Media and Corporate Communications Policies

Actions to support the achievement of the organisational target

What?	How?	When?	Measure of progress
1. Embed the use of the ESD curriculum mapping tool within academic programmes	Through the Periodic Programme Review Process, Programme Directors Forum and other facilitated interactions	In line with Periodic Programme Review Process	Annual review of academic programmes with a baseline established and objectives for programme enrichment identified
2. Support the development of ESD Leadership within Schools and Faculties	Through development activities supported by <i>Futures Initiative</i> funds	On-going	Established network of leaders for ESD
3. Develop induction materials which explore ways of connecting to sustainability	Work with leaders for ESD to identify relevant opportunities	As leaders for ESD are identified	Opportunities are embedded with academic induction programmes
4. Continue to offer funding opportunities for curriculum innovation	Through the <i>Futures Initiative</i>	On-going	Approve 10 new projects per year
5. Develop resources to support learning & teaching	Through <i>Futures Initiative</i> funding and available on-line	On-going	Resources developed and used
6. Encourage opportunities for student led curriculum development	In partnership with the Students' Union, Student Green Office, Future Leaders programme, Whole Earth?	On-going	Fund 3 student led projects per year

4.3. RESEARCH AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Policy statement:

Sustainability is an emerging area for HE research, which is creating new opportunities for innovation within disciplines, associated research informed teaching, sustainable teaching practice and eco pedagogy. The University recognises the wealth of research and knowledge exchange activity that is already being undertaken in related areas, and is committed to raising its profile. The Research Excellence Framework provides opportunities for excellent interdisciplinary research, which the University is keen to exploit in order to enhance it, and will create an environment in which interdisciplinary sustainability research can flourish.

Aim: To encourage the development of sustainability research through on-going interdisciplinary dialogue, exploration and dissemination locally, nationally and internationally.

Objectives:

- Demonstrate leadership through sharing knowledge and experience, such that the University becomes known for excellent practice within the HE sector.
- Facilitate the development of inter and trans-disciplinary research with a sustainability focus.
- Collaborate across sectors to develop new thinking for sustainability.

Organisational Target:

By 2020 the University will have an established sustainability Research and Knowledge Exchange profile that is recognised across the University and beyond

Link to underpinning strategies and policies:

Research and Knowledge Exchange Strategy
Learning and Teaching Strategy

Actions to support the achievement of the organisational target

What?	How?	When?	Measure of progress
1. Provide opportunities for staff and students to share and develop research in sustainability	Through the Futures Forum and sustainability Reading Group	Termly Monthly	Maintain and activities and monitor levels of participation
2. Establish and develop strategic connections with other universities to horizons and influence	Run conferences and Undertake knowledge exchanges	Annually As feasible	Established partnerships and collaborations in place and active
3. Create opportunities for collation and dissemination of sustainability research within CCCU	Use of CReaTE. Internal journal publication.	Annually	Publication regularly produced and disseminated internally and externally
4. Develop a Strategic Research Network for sustainability	RKE Forum, Futures Forum and Conference	Annually Termly Annually	Network in place, active and productive
5. Raise university profile of sustainability research nationally and internationally	Conference presentations and published journal articles	On-going	Successful annual conference
6. Offer a range of adult education short courses to the local community	Through the adult education programme	2015-16	Successful take-up with recognition of value creation being part of the business case
7. Develop sustainability related MA and PhD opportunities	Through Strategic Research Network	As opportunities created	Opportunities established and operating

4.4. OUR ENVIRONMENT

Policy Statement:

The University recognises the important role the built and natural environment has on the wellbeing of its community, and in the achievement of its key strategic aims. As such, the University has developed a Master Plan for the next 20 years that takes an integrated approach to the development of a sustainable university estate, which shows how Education for Sustainable Development principles can be applied in practice.

The University also recognises that it has an impact upon the local and global environment and is committed to minimising, within the constraints imposed by financial sustainability, any negative effects the delivery of its activities might have. As such, it is committed to environmental best practice and will maintain an ISO14001 accredited Environmental Management System to ensure continual improvement, minimisation of waste and compliance with all appropriate environmental legislation and other requirements.

Aim: To develop campus environments that demonstrate excellent sustainability practice, which are open, accessible and inclusive, and provide explicit examples of our distinctive education and research profile

Objectives:

- Develop the University estate, in a way that maximises educational, research and community benefit and enhances positive environmental impact.
- Develop our campus environments, recognising our sense of place within unique heritage locations.
- Integrate our built and natural environments in ways that embody our values.
- Maintain progress in reducing environmental impact, maintaining a focus on reducing our carbon emissions in support of sector and national targets.

Organisational Target:

By 2020 the principles and pedagogies of sustainability will be central to the development of the built and natural environment

Link to underpinning strategies and policies:

University Master Plan
Estates & Finance strategies

Actions to support the achievement of the organisational target

What?	How?	When?	Measure of progress
1. Refresh Carbon reduction targets to match the phasing of the Master Plan	Carbon Oversight Group & SSMG	2015-16	Monitor achievement of targets
2. Develop and implement a new sustainable travel plan, which influences business planning	Transport & Sustainable Business Working Group	2015-16 On-going	A range of sustainable travel options are in place. Policy impacting on business development
3. Develop and maintain the University Grounds and Gardens to enhance biodiversity	Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	On-going	Use of established new methods of measuring enhancement of biodiversity
4. Promote environmental awareness and good practice within the University community	Initiatives and activities provided by the themes of ESD and Student and Staff Experience	Annually	Opportunities are in place and publicised regularly
5. Implement the University Master Plan to deliver sustainable, accessible & inclusive environments	Through SSMG and the project process	Appropriate to the schedule of works	Developments in line with the principles laid out in the plan. Buildings delivered to BREEAM Outstanding
6. Enhance procurement efficiency and sustainability	Flexible Framework	Phased by impact area	Using Flexible Framework assessment process