

Sustainability Policy



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University has a strategic objective to embed a consideration of our contribution to the UN Sustainable Development Goals into all aspects of our research, learning, teaching and operations by 2025.
- 1.2 This policy defines the overarching framework and approach the University has adopted to pursue its ambition. The framework is centred on the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, a tool developed by The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, of which we are a member, and which has been widely adopted across the sector.
- 1.3 The University's ambition is driven by the UN's SDGs, which resonate with the University's vision, mission, values and ethical framework. Our approach is also guided by sector-wide recommended practice.
- 1.4 Universities are not, as yet, bound by individual, legally binding emissions reductions targets. This policy reflects an ambition for the University to achieve net zero carbon by 2040.

2. Scope

- 2.1 The Policy applies in the first instance to staff involved in the workstreams of the University's Sustainability Project. The workstreams may cover all aspects of the University's teaching, research and operations.
- 2.2 Insofar as the Project implements changes that could affect all staff, students, suppliers and partners, this Policy has wide-ranging potential application. In practice, such changes are likely to give rise to more detailed policies and procedures to support this overarching policy.

3. Glossary

- 3.1 Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education: the sector's sustainability network interest group, allied to the Association of University Directors of Estates (AUDE).
- 3.2 Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS): a self-assessment methodology to structure and score a University's progress to becoming a sustainable entity.

- 3.3 Emissions: related to the emissions of Greenhouse gases.
- 3.4 Net zero: achieving an operating model which reduces carbon or other harmful greenhouse gas emissions and/or ensures that any ongoing emissions are balanced by removals.
- 3.5 Sustainability Project and Workstreams: The University's Sustainability Project is one of the approved projects operating under its project management protocol. It comprises 18 workstreams, as defined in the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard.
- 3.6 UN Sustainable Development Goals: 17 globally recognised aims to secure a sustainable, just, and peaceful world. They are No Poverty; Zero Hunger; Good Health and Wellbeing; Quality Education; Gender Equality; Clean Water and Sanitation; Affordable and Clean Energy; Decent Work and Economic Growth; Industry Innovation and Infrastructure; Reduced Inequalities; Sustainable Cities and Communities; Responsible Consumption and Production; Climate Action; Life Below Water; Life on Land; Peace Justice and Strong Institutions; Partnerships for the Goals (see <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>).

4. Responsibilities

The primary day-to-day responsibility for making this policy a reality lies with the Sustainability Project team, supported by others as described below:

Council

- 4.1 The Council approves the University's strategy and holds the Executive to account to deliver it and approves budget to pursue it. This Policy is one element in the delivery of the Strategic Objective to contribute to the UN SDGs

Senate

- 4.2 The Senate has oversight of any curriculum and research aspects of the implementation of this policy.

Executive Board

- 4.3 The Executive Boards supports the Director of Infrastructure to steer and implement the Policy. It receives reports on the progress of the Sustainability Project.

Vice Chancellor

- 4.4 The Vice Chancellor's role is to support and challenge the Director of Infrastructure in pursuit of the policy.

Director of Infrastructure

- 4.5 The Director of Infrastructure is the named executive lead for Sustainability.

Sustainability Project Team and Workstream Leads

- 4.6 The Sustainability Project Team is responsible on a day-to-day basis for putting this policy into practice. It supports project workstream leads to do the same. Workstream leads undertake work to improve continuously the self-assessed scores as defined by the methodology of the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard.
- 4.7 The ambition of the Project is to mainstream Sustainability into a permanent feature of the University's activities. The expectation is that the University will have a permanent Sustainability core team to champion, co-ordinate, measure and report relevant KPIs, and hold others to account in pursuit of the strategic objective.

Employees

- 4.8 Employees are responsible for adhering to supporting policies and procedures implemented through the Sustainability Project.
- 4.9 Staff are encouraged to respond to consultation on proposed changes affecting them, including through their representatives.

Students

- 4.10 Students are responsible for adhering to supporting policies and procedures implemented through the Sustainability Project.
- 4.11 Students encouraged to respond to consultation on proposed changes affecting them, including through their representatives.

5. Policy Intent and Approach

- 5.1 The intent of this policy is to enable the University to achieve its strategic ambition to embed a consideration of our contribution to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals into all aspects of our research, learning, teaching and operations by 2025.

- 5.2 The Sustainable Development Goals are wide-ranging and interrelated. Accordingly, our sustainability ambition is not only about stewardship of limited natural resources, and tackling climate change, and even though these are in themselves central to long-run wellbeing. We also act to bring about more sustainable society.
- 5.3 Becoming a sustainable university is complex and will involve myriad changes to process, behaviour, habit and operation compared to the model in place in 2022.
- 5.4 Our strategy is to pursue sustainability by working on 5 fronts:
 - 5.4.1. We teach our students about climate change and more broadly sustainability as defined in the SDGs
 - 5.4.2. We carry out research in the SDGs spheres
 - 5.4.3. We act locally with state, civil and private sector partners to make the Bradford district more sustainable
 - 5.4.4. We act globally through our academic and other networks in pursuit of the SDGs
 - 5.4.5. We are changing how we operate to reduce our carbon footprint.
- 5.5 In developing our theory of change and our plan for action, we have adopted the Sustainability Leadership Scorecard of The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, of which we are a member.
- 5.6 At its core, this policy is therefore about the use of Scorecard as the methodology to guide our work.
- 5.7 The Scorecard defines 4 groups of in total 18 workstreams. They are:
 - 5.7.1. Leadership and Governance (staff engagement and human resources; leadership; health and wellbeing; risk)
 - 5.7.2. Partnership and Engagement (community and public engagement; business and industry interface; procurement and supplier engagement; food and drink)
 - 5.7.3. Learning, Teaching and Research (research; learning and teaching; student engagement)

- 5.7.4. Estates and Operations (resource efficiency and waste; biodiversity; construction and renovation; water; travel and transport; climate change adaptation; energy).
- 5.8 For each workstream, a self-assessed score can be derived. The aim is to increase scores across workstream, to maximise the aggregate score and achieve “Gold” status. The status (Bronze/Silver/Gold) is reported on the University-level KPI dashboard.
- 5.9 The Scorecard has been selected because it allows comparison with other HEIs, which can inform our own development.
- 5.10 As with similar methodologies, the Scorecard does not prescribe what action needs to be taken, nor their sequencing or priority. The choice of action is therefore to be taken in the context of risk, resource, opportunity and impact, proposed periodically by the Sustainability Project Board and approved by Executive Board. This choice is shaped by how the action supports the University’s core sub-strategies of Learning, Teaching and Student Experience; Research and Innovation; Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; and Business and Community Engagement.
- 5.11 The Sustainability Project will therefore define from time to time the focus of its activity.
- 5.12 The Project adopt the University’s standard Project Management methodology, which complements the Scorecard’s approach.
- 5.13 The use of the Scorecard is supported by other important aspects of sustainability management, in particular: emissions reporting; ESG reporting as part of annual financial reports and accounts, which includes information on the University’s impact on the physical, human resource, societal and economic environments; and submission/publication of material to inform sustainability league tables.

6. Implementation

- 6.1 The policy will be implemented by the Sustainability Project Team, who will support workstream leads to structure their work to enable self-assessed scores to be derived. This approach has already been in use since 2020, when the University’s Strategic Plan to 2025, and the accompanying performance scorecard, were adopted.

7. Monitoring and review

- 7.1 The application, utility and value of the Scorecard will be periodically reviewed by the Sustainability Project Team, at least annually.

8. Related policies and standards / documentation

- 8.1 This overarching, principally methodological policy is related to many other strategies and policies. These include in particular:
- 8.1.1. The University's four sub-strategies.
 - 8.1.2. The Estates and Infrastructure enabling strategy and development plans (because of their importance for physical resource consumption and emissions).
 - 8.1.3. Supporting policies and procedures relating to the 18 workstreams in the Scorecard.

9. Appendices

None.