



University for the Common Good

Sustainability Plan

Glasgow **Caledonian** Strategy **2030**



Introduction

In 2019 the University committed to Climate Neutrality by 2050, when it declared Climate & Ecological Emergencies by signing the SDG Accord. Strategy 2030 brought this commitment forward to 2040 and added interim targets for 2030. Strategy 2030 also crystallised a broader ambition to contribute to tackling societal challenges, including climate change, through its education and research and the underlying operations.

The Sustainability Enabling Plan (SEP) draws on the University's values of Confidence, Creativity, Integrity and Responsibility to embed more sustainable practices across its operations; foster good environmental stewardship; empower students and staff to make more sustainable choices at the University and beyond; and deliver the University's Carbon Neutrality commitment. It will also help realise the University's Vision "To transform lives through excellent education and research that is accessible and impactful for the people of Glasgow and our communities locally, nationally and internationally" by supporting the delivery of the Education and Research Strategic Plans.

Although the University's focus on sustainability includes the environmental, economic and social dimensions, because mature structures and governance are well established for the latter two, the focus of this SEP is on the environment and operational elements that could impact it. Equally, what the University teaches and researches are covered by the Learning and Research Strategic Plans (respectively) with activity from the SEP contributing to elements of those Strategic Plans.

Key Objectives

To deliver the University's sustainability ambitions, the SEP will focus on the following four objectives:

- Deliver GHG emission reductions to achieve climate neutrality commitments.
- Enhance the student experience by embedding sustainable practices across our operations to enable more sustainable choices.
- Develop opportunities for student projects and academic collaboration.
- Position the University amongst the HE Sector's sustainability leaders.

Initiatives, Actions & Interdependencies

To deliver its sustainability ambitions, the University will develop and enhance its portfolio of activity and initiatives across the SEP's four key objectives, as listed below.

1. Reduction in Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Where are we now?	Where do we want to be												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions: <table border="1" data-bbox="302 424 981 561"> <thead> <tr> <th>Scope¹</th> <th>2014-15 (baseline)</th> <th>2023-24 (current)</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>4,598 tCO₂e</td> <td>4,428 tCO₂e</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>2,785 tCO₂e</td> <td>1,205 tCO₂e</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>32,232 tCO₂e</td> <td>45,371 tCO₂e</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Current emission reduction in relation to the 2014-15 GHG emissions baseline: Scope 1 decreased by 4%, Scope 2 decreased by 58%, Scope 3 increased by 41% (driven mainly by an increase in the number of students and changes in the country of origin of our international students). Our GHG emissions reports highlight key emission categories. Thematic action plans (currently 7) to deliver climate action across key GHG emission categories and operational areas. 	Scope ¹	2014-15 (baseline)	2023-24 (current)	1	4,598 tCO ₂ e	4,428 tCO ₂ e	2	2,785 tCO ₂ e	1,205 tCO ₂ e	3	32,232 tCO ₂ e	45,371 tCO ₂ e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scope 1 (mainly gas) 3,531 tCO₂e (-22% from the baseline). Scope 2 (purchased electricity) 57 tCO₂e (-98% from the baseline). Scope 3 (everything else) delivering reductions in emissions from activities (within our direct operational control - e.g. business travel) in support of Scotland's climate neutrality ambition Rolling pipeline of funded energy efficiency projects (through the Estates Carbon Neutrality Roadmap and Campus Master Plan).
Scope ¹	2014-15 (baseline)	2023-24 (current)											
1	4,598 tCO ₂ e	4,428 tCO ₂ e											
2	2,785 tCO ₂ e	1,205 tCO ₂ e											
3	32,232 tCO ₂ e	45,371 tCO ₂ e											
How do we get there (short- to mid-term)	Links to dependencies on other strategies/plans												
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop new action plans (e.g. Estates Carbon Neutrality Roadmap) and implement through emerging Campus Master Plan and Estates Asset Management Strategy. Refresh existing thematic action plans and address potential gaps. Align with new/existing operational frameworks². Consider signing the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice and align research with sustainable practices. Align suppliers with our commitment to carbon neutrality. Reporting GHG emissions and progress annually. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research – Enhance research culture and environment through more sustainable practices. Digital, estate and infrastructure - Link to Maintenance Programme, Estates Asset Management Strategy and emerging Campus Master Plan. There are also links to digital infrastructure. Finance, Governance and compliance - Climate neutrality commitment will require a significant capital investment (partially through Campus Master Plan). 												

¹ The University uses the Greenhouse Gas Protocol [Corporate Standard](#) and [Corporate Value Chain \(Scope 3\) Standard](#) to report its carbon footprint. Scope 1 refers to direct emissions, Scope 2 refers to purchased electricity and Scope 3 refers to everything else (e.g. waste and recycling, travel and purchased goods and services).

² Thematic sustainability frameworks: Food for Life Served Here (for food/catering); Cycle Friendly Campus (cycling); Fairtrade University (food/garments); Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework; Green Disc (sustainable IT – not currently used); Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (whole Institution approach).

2. Enhance the Student Experience by Enabling More Sustainable Choices

Where are we now?	Where do we want to be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Induction highlighting sustainability initiatives for student and staff ready for piloting. • Carbon Literacy Training (CLT) for staff/students brought in-house and delivered in partnership with GSBS. • Thematic action plans identify opportunities for the Institution/individuals to make more sustainable choices. • The Sustainability Forum offers a mechanism for students and staff to engage with sustainability more directly and foster collaboration around new initiatives. Modest financial support for staff and students to explore sustainability projects (in partnership with the Students Association for student projects). • Externally certified (ISO14001/EcoCampus Platinum) Environmental Management System (EMS) as a framework for improving performance, managing risks, ensuring legal compliance and delivering training. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable options are the easy, default option at the University. • Thematic plans (or Sector-wide frameworks/initiatives) in place for all key emission categories and operational areas. • Wider catalogue of sustainability interventions (as identified through the development and review of thematic plans/frameworks). • Students and staff know where to access information about the University’s sustainability initiatives.
How do we get there (short- to mid-term)	Links to dependencies on other strategies/plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a materiality assessment of sustainability priorities for students and staff (desk-based, followed by surveys and focus groups). • Broaden the targeted use of thematic action plans/frameworks to enhance sustainability at the University. • School and directorate-level sustainability guides highlighting relevant elements from the thematic action plans/frameworks and with dedicated performance indicators. • Increasing awareness of sustainability initiatives through inductions and training for students and staff. • Understand mechanism for developing student carbon literacy. • Continue using EMS as a training resource and a driver of continuous improvement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education – The University's sustainability initiatives have practical links to module content and are developed with input from student projects. • Destination of choice for students: Environmental initiatives contribute to the University's position in a number of university guides (e.g. The Sunday Times Good University Guide) through People & Planet's University League. • Reputation: Day-to-day operational practice visibly aligned with the University's mission for the Common Good. • A great place to work: Sustainability initiatives address common hygiene factors for staff (and students). • Catering contract ‘designs’ sustainable choices into the catering offer.

3. Opportunities for Student Projects & Academic Collaboration

Where are we now?	Where do we want to be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing collaboration between the Sustainability Team and Module Leaders (informally) across the three Schools to develop sustainability Living Labs projects that address "real-world" challenges³. • The University's sustainability initiatives provide opportunities for students to gain practical experience through casual work and volunteering opportunities. • Small-scale pilot of the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) helps research groups embed sustainable practices into their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formalised opportunities for student projects within specific programmes/modules. • Formal (annual) sustainability 'placement' programme within Estates for University students. • Additional opportunities for students to gain practical experience through sustainability projects/initiatives.
How do we get there (short- to mid-term)	Links to dependencies on other strategies/plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with faculty to identify new project/research opportunities. • Review thematic action plans/frameworks to identify further opportunities for student projects and academic collaboration. • Require suppliers delivering sustainability solutions to provide opportunities for student placements, projects and lectures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and Employability - Real-world experience/projects complement programme/module offering. • Research - Sustainability initiatives contribute to research at the University (e.g. through data and Living Labs). • Estates Carbon Neutrality Roadmap - will include projects that can support students' learning journey and foster academic collaboration.

³ Examples include: Annual waste composition analysis (with SCEBE); Development of environmental games (SCEBE); Masters dissertations (SCEBE); Market research and operational insights (GSBS); Food research (SHLS).

4. Sustainability Leadership

Where are we now?	Where do we want to be
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The University is amongst the most sustainable in Scotland (People & Planet University League - PPUL) and we're one of the few universities to operate an externally verified EMS in Scotland (which demonstrates our structured approach to identifying and managing environmental risks and opportunities). • Notwithstanding this, a series of gaps analysis highlight there are opportunities for improvement (e.g. Scottish Government's climate change reporting letter and checklist; early Sustainability Leadership Scorecard (SLS) evaluation (informal); PPUL ranking; internal sustainability audit by PwC). • UPRG recently approved the creation of a strategic Sustainability Steering Group (SSG) to address these gaps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate Adaption Plan in place for key functions across the Institution. • Signatory to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. • Platinum in the SLS. • Regularly rank amongst the top 25 universities in the UK in the People & Planet University League.
How do we get there (short- to mid-term)	Links to dependencies on other strategies/plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benchmarking exercise to ascertain comprehensiveness of sustainability practices across the Institution (e.g. SLS) with follow-up improvement plan. • Investigate scope and implications of signing the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice and align research practice at the University. • Developing cross-institutional understanding of climate risks to the organisations' operations. • Highlight examples of good practice within the Institution. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destination of choice for students and Reputation: Environmental initiatives contribute to the University's position in a number of university guides (e.g. The Sunday Times Good University Guide) through People & Planet's University League. • Research - contribute to enhancing research culture and environment through more sustainable practices. • A great place to work: Leadership will drive sustainability initiatives that address issues considered to be hygiene factors by staff (and students).

Performance Metrics

1. GHG emissions (tCO₂e by emission category) - Scope 1 & 2 - This metric feeds into Strategy 2030 KPI 9 and is also reported to a number of other stakeholders, such as to Scottish Government under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Climate Change Duties and HESA.
2. GHG emissions (tCO₂e by emission category) - Scope 3 (for categories within our direct operational control - e.g. business travel). This metric is reported to external stakeholders, such as the Scottish Government and HESA.
3. Electricity and gas kWh.m² Gross Internal Area.yr - This metric will be used to understand the energy intensity of the Estate and will provide a mechanism for cascading KPI 9 to Schools and Directorates through local action plans/guides.
4. EMS certified EcoCampus Platinum/ISO14001 - This metric is an example of good practice in terms of managing environmental impacts.
5. Position on the People & Planet University League - This metric provides a holistic mechanism for quantifying the University's strategic approach to embedding sustainability across all elements of its operations.

Review and monitoring

- Sustainability Steering Group (quarterly meeting).
- Annual GHG reporting (with tracking progress on the delivery of the Carbon Neutrality commitment).
- Biennial sustainability report.