



University of Essex



Sustainability Sub-Strategy Bitesize

Priority 3: Education

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Introduction

Our Sustainability Sub-Strategy outlines our commitment to acting in response to the climate and ecological emergency, while supporting the University's mission of excellence in education and research, for the benefit of individuals and communities.

Priority 3: Education

Education for sustainability is a defining and ethical pillar of excellence in how we respond, with urgency, to the environmental threats our planet faces. We are committed to Sustainable Development Goal 4, Quality Education, and to our responsibility as an international University in educating future citizens, leaders, scientists, engineers and other professionals with the advanced knowledge and skills needed for global sustainable development.

The University of Essex will expand its sustainability education offer in ways that enable our staff and students to acquire the knowledge, understanding and skills to respond to climate threats and actively contribute to solutions. True to our values, what and how we teach will be transformational, ensuring that all of our students will have the opportunity to develop the knowledge and skills needed to look after our planet and inspire others to follow.

As a University with a community drawn from every corner of the globe, our education will have reach and impact by empowering our staff and students to fulfil their potential as sustainability change-makers. We will also make adjustments to reduce the environmental impact of our learning and teaching activities.

Objective: To equip our staff and students with the sustainability knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to play an active role in building a more equitable and sustainable future; and to ensure our education is delivered and supported in a sustainable way.

- We will expand curricular and extra-curricular opportunities for sustainability learning and professional development, recognising and recording student learning on sustainability. Sustainability will be embedded into the curriculum where appropriate.
- We will improve the availability and understanding of the environmental and carbon impact of educational activities for staff and students.
- Smart timetabling will create greater opportunities to maximise the use of space and resources to ensure that the maximum benefit of travel to our campuses for study and work are realised.
- Through our use of technology and encouraging behavioural change, enhancements will be made allowing the use of paper to be minimised in the creation of prospectuses, module contents and assignments.

Key Performance Indicators

KPI 5: Sustainability in Education is embedded in appropriate policy and strategies by 2026

KPI 6: Sustainability integrated into all course approvals, ARCs and periodic reviews by 2026

KPI 7: Sustainability training available to all new starters (students and staff)

KPI 8: 100% of current students and staff to have received carbon literacy training by 2028. Completion of carbon literacy training will be recorded on the HEAR for students and recorded as part of staff essential training

KPI 9: All prospectuses, module content and assignments to be paperless by 2028

Action Plan

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Priority 3		Education for Sustainability		
Aim			To ensure our education to be delivered and supported in a sustainable way. For our education to have a transformational effect on our students and staff such that they can go on and have a positive influence on global sustainable development. For our commitment to sustainable education to transform people, knowledge and communities	
Objective		SSS08	Embedding sustainability into the curriculum	
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS08.1	Include content from a 'Think Sustainable' campaign in the new 'Ready for Success' resources including the Pre-Arrival Undergraduate Portal. This will raise awareness of the University declaration of a climate and ecological emergency and build a shared commitment from the outset.	Head of Student Development, Head of TEL, Head of Outreach
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS08.2	Introduce review of sustainability in education into existing annual course review and periodic curriculum review every 5 years drawing on the existing expertise and good practice of staff already addressing sustainability in their modules. Adjust design, delivery and organisation of courses and modules as required, and reporting progress routinely through Faculty Education Committees.	Deputy Deans Education, QUAD
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS08.3	Capture how modules and courses embed sustainability in the curriculum through our existing quality assurance and enhancement processes (e.g. New course approval stages, Annual Review of Courses and Periodic Review) seeking specialist expertise where needed.	QUAD, DDEs, DDPGRES, DoEs
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS08.4	Nominate a sustainable education lead in every department either as a bespoke role or integrated into an existing role such as the Director of Education.	Executive Deans
Objective		SSS09	Expand extra-curricular opportunities for sustainability learning and professional development	

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS09.1	Develop student inductions to include university sustainability policy and strategy and other student engagement opportunities.	Director of Student Life, VP Education, Students' Union
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS09.2	Together with the SU and vTeam, expand and raise the awareness of extra-curricular opportunities to develop knowledge and experience in sustainable practice	Director of Student Life, Students' Union
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS09.3	Provide information on our commitment to sustainability and a declaration of a climate emergency to applicants	Head of Resourcing
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS09.4	Incorporate sustainability, carbon literacy and the environment into our essential training suite, and provide further optional role specific training.	Assistant Director People & Culture (OD), Sustainability Manager
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS09.5	Provide information to new staff on the University's sustainability policy, strategy and areas for staff to engage	Assistant Director People & Culture (OD), Sustainability Manager
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS09.6	Include content on sustainable education in the Educator Development Framework and Researcher Development Framework. This will include the formats of workshop, resources, or network as required.	Assistant Director P&C (OD)
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS09.7	Incorporate information on sustainable education in CADENZA pathways to Fellowship (e.g. CADENZA direct application process, and content in module 1 and 2 of the Post Graduate Certificate in Higher Education Practice (PGCHEP)	Head of Academic and Professional Practice
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS09.8	Develop a new webinar series on climate and ecological emergency that provides examples of student and staff achievements and activities in support of sustainability	Assistant Director P&C (OD)
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS09.9	Include reference to our commitment to sustainability in all education role descriptions and adverts including information about the steps each of us is asked to take to deliver this commitment	Head of Resourcing
Objective		SSS10	Recognise, record and reward student and staff learning on sustainability	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS10.1	Introduce Carbon Literacy training and other achievements linked to sustainability on every graduate transcript and HEAR	Director of Student Life

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS10.2	Introduce carbon literacy training for staff and record completion through HR Organiser	Assistant Director People & Culture (ERR)
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS10.3	Recognise leadership in education sustainability in the supporting guidance for permanency and promotion criteria. Include evidence of education for sustainability achievements as examples in the supporting information for the annual performance review of all staff	Director of People & Culture
Deliverable	2025/26	SSS10.4	Identify and include how sustainability can deliver our agreed HR Excellence in Research Award Action Plan (Vitae). The plan sets out how we sustain an enabling environment for researchers and help to build our national and international profile for the support we provide to early career researchers	Director of OD
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS10.5	Ensure sustainability impact is considered and reflected in the University protocols for SMART working, recognising, appreciating and capturing the strength of different working environments and the impact they have on the University community. This will include supporting guidance for reporting managers	Director of ERR
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS10.7	Include sustainability in education in the mentoring categories and support for peer review in the Peer Mentoring Database.	Assistant Director P&C (OD)
Deliverable	2021/22	SSS10.8	Develop question prompts and coaching questions for Module Leads to reflect on current practice and identify quick changes	Assistant Director P&C (OD)
Objective		SSS11	Redefine learner engagement to support sustainability	
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS11.1	Review and revise all relevant University policies that mandates physical attendance, with its associated carbon cost, as the primary yardstick of learner engagement	Dean of Undergraduate Education
Objective		SSS12	Improve availability and understanding of the environmental and carbon impact of educational activities for staff and students	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS12.1	Develop and implement staff and student carbon impact calculator/metering feedback system	Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction

Type	Year	ID	Objectives and deliverables	Objective Owner
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS12.2	Develop environmental and carbon impact metrics by course, department and faculty for consideration as standing items by Education Committee, AQSC and FECs	Head of Energy and Carbon Reduction, Sustainability Manager
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS12.3	Include environment and carbon footprint data of our education activities in the University Annual Report	Registrar
Deliverable	2024/25	SSS12.4	Make environment and carbon footprint data of our education activities available for prospective students and other external stakeholders	Director of CER
Objective		SSS13	Smart timetabling to maximise the use of space and resource to ensure maximum benefit from travel to our campuses	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS13.1	Review current timetabling provision and create and implement a plan to integrate carbon impact of scenarios	Academic Registrar
Objective		SSS14	Paperless education	
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS14.1	Evolve the design and delivery of prospectuses to be paperless	Director of CER
Deliverable	2022/23	SSS14.2	Develop and implement a plan to make module handbooks, documentation, content and assignments paperless	Academic Registrar
Deliverable	2026/27	SSS14.3	Provide sustainable alternatives to printing and photocopying for staff and students in order to eventually achieve paperless education at Essex	Director of ITS
Deliverable	2023/24	SSS14.5	Documentation for all education-related committees, exam boards, ARC's, periodic reviews, new course approvals, academic offence committees and other administrative support activities to be paperless	Academic Registrar, Director of ITS