

School of Environmental Sciences: Sustainability Policy –

Introduction

The School of Environmental Sciences is a world-class research institution working at the forefront of our developing understanding of environmental processes and their relationship to the human part of the ecosystem. It is therefore appropriate for the School to seek to deliver its academic mission with the smallest environmental footprint.

The School Sustainability Policy will guide our activities going forward. We are all committed to the School being not only a source of professional expertise and knowledge in the area of environmental issues but also a champion and showcase of how the challenge of sustainable living might be addressed.

The School Management Team are pleased to be able to formally adopt the aim to maintain and improve the School's position as a world-class centre of excellence for environmental sciences whilst achieving zero net GHG emissions from both buildings and operations by 2030.

This will not be a simple task but the achievement is, we believe, worth the effort. The School Sustainability Group is working to develop a series of interim targets that will allow us to gauge progress towards our aim.

Prof C.L.J.Frid
Head of School
School of Environmental Sciences

The sustainability agenda

The School will seek to marry environmental concerns with operational realities, including liaison with external bodies. This process will involve rapid adoption or planned progress towards the following broad themes:

Energy:

- Best practice energy performance in operation and construction.

Materials utilisation and waste:

- Efficient and thoughtful use of materials, and minimisation of waste volumes.
- Encouragement of environmentally sensitive behaviour and working practices among staff and students.
- Purchases will be made after proper consideration of environmental impacts in manufacture, use and disposal.
- Sensitive handling and treatment of waste arisings.

Travel:

- Active participation in the University Travel Plan.
- Carbon offsetting as the norm in essential travel.

Relationships:

- The School will promote environment awareness.
- The School will be a good neighbour, working with others to improve environmental performance.
- The School will seek to provide a positive contribution to the local environment.

Specific objectives

Maintain a School sustainability review panel with direct links to the management team;

Conduct and publish annual audits of environmental performance for all sectors within the School;

Agree general and specific, time-bound environmental and energy targets;

Publish the performance of each sector against these targets every year as part of the School Plan;

Seek to improve infrastructure and facilities not under School control by working with other University departments and suppliers.

Sectors

Energy and buildings

Promote refurbishment over new-build where appropriate for intended use;

Work with Facilities Management (FM) to establish a rolling programme to audit and retrofit all School

buildings with best environmental practice lighting and heating, electronic controls, and infrastructure (e.g. double or triple glazing, smart technology, PIR, low-voltage lighting and IT wires, renewable energy (solar thermal and PV), rainwater harvesting, low

water use toilets and taps; green roofs; green space for staff and students);

Where possible, equipment, e.g. photocopiers, printers, computer screens, projectors, white boards, will feature low energy technology (e.g. low wattage, automatic stand-by/hibernate mode, double-sided printing, recycled paper);

Monitor and report energy and resource use, and use of toxic materials in all School buildings;

Liaise with FM to install frequent and effective recycling facilities at every building exit, and relevant publicity material for their use.

Materials utilisation and waste

University procurement adheres to basic level sustainability and ethical criteria which applies to items purchased by the School through normal ordering procedures. The School will seek to apply these criteria 'local' purchases, including food, tea, coffee, milk etc. bought by individuals on behalf of all tea rooms in the School;

Essential information regarding ethical and Fair-Trade considerations, embodied energy in food items, consumption patterns, and types and volumes of waste generated will be provided in kitchens and tea rooms;

The School will make efforts to procure recycled paper for general use, and seek sustainable alternatives throughout, including accredited sources that assess environmental footprints;

The School will seek to establish agreed minimum ethical and environmental standards for bought-in catering. These will include mostly vegetarian, local, seasonal food and drink, which is organic where possible, including MSC-certified fish products and free-range eggs. Minimisation of packaging will include provision of crockery and cups, and tap water will replace bottled water;

The School will aim to reduce unrecyclable waste arisings by 90% by 2030. This will be done through procurement policy and strict adherence to recycling criteria;

An 'unrecyclable waste reduction plan' will be developed by the School Sustainability Committee, to achieve year-on-year reductions in waste volume compared to a baseline figure.

Travel

Provision for carbon offsetting will be a requirement for all funding applications where the practice is acceptable to the funding body;

Staff and students will be encouraged to consider the environmental implications of their travel plans; Wherever practical, School staff will be required to travel by rail rather than air for all mainland UK journeys;

Use of the University's video-conferencing facilities will be encouraged where practicable, e.g. for project meetings;

Staff and students will be encouraged to accord with the University Travel Plan for local travel.

Awareness

As part of the continual and rolling programme of curriculum review, all teaching modules in the School will be reviewed for their environmental, social and economic sustainability content;

Though the use of visual materials and training, the School will increase awareness of environmental, including energy, implications of staff and student activities and behaviour;

In accordance with the University's research theme on Living With Environmental Change (LWEC), the School will encourage interdisciplinary research and collaborations on sustainable development themes, which have international applications. This will be done in conjunction with L-GrEco, the University's Green Economy Incubation Network, who will support collaborative, pump-priming and proof-of-concept activities;

The School seeks to build partnerships within local community groups to jointly pursue sustainability measures such as low-impact travel, local food, and science in the community.

Local environment

Liaison with FM will advocate maintenance of the grounds around School buildings in environmentally-friendly ways, avoiding the use of peat, invasive species, toxins and plants from susceptible environments;

The School will seek to facilitate enhanced use of gardens and greenhouses for staff and students during lunch or other breaks;

For reasons of biodiversity, the School will seek to establish a presumption in favour of native plants where practicable, and for tree crops (apples, plums, nuts etc.), fruit bushes and vegetables to be incorporated into planting for the use of staff and students;

Cafeterias in the School locality will be encouraged to provide locally-grown and processed food, preferably in *al fresco* eating areas in green areas.

Public relations

The School will publicise environmental progress internally and externally, and seek funding to quantify social, environmental and economic benefits arising from this policy, which are likely to be applicable elsewhere.