



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH Social Responsibility & Sustainability

We enable the University to understand, explain and deliver on its vision to make the world a better place by offering the most successful social responsibility and sustainability service in higher education.



Sustainability Strategies

University of Edinburgh



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Social Responsibility & Sustainability



Social Responsibility & Sustainability



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Learning outcomes

By the end of the presentation you will gain an:

- Introduction to the University of Edinburgh
- Understanding of current and future sustainability strategies
- Insight through honest reflections on developing strategy at the University of Edinburgh.





Introduction to the University of Edinburgh



Established in 1583 by the town council...



“4th in the UK for research power in the Research Excellence Framework”

49,740 students with 46% of students from outside the UK

Annual **turnover of more than £1.385 billion**

£300 million Procurement expenditure



“...associated with 20 Nobel Prize winners”

More than **2 million MOOC** learners

10,642 staff (FTE)

Over 500 Buildings

£498M endowment fund



Value and Impact



Strategy 2030



Our vision

Our graduates, and the knowledge we discover with our partners, make the world a better place.



Our purpose

As a world-leading research-intensive University, we are here to address tomorrow's greatest challenges. Between now and 2030 we will do that with a values-led approach to teaching, research and innovation, and through the strength of our relationships, both locally and globally.



Strategy 2030: Social and Civic Responsibility



Our vision is to make the world a better place, so we will ensure that our actions and activities deliver positive change locally, regionally and globally.



Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Our purpose is to support the University to make outstanding positive impacts for society, nature and the wider economy.

We provide leadership, advice, deliver major projects and support the embedding of practical action across the University community.



Workstreams

Methods and tools

- Departmental processes ★
- Thought leadership ★
- Strategic communications ★
- Horizon scanning
- Governance →
- Engagement
- Major projects
- Standards and auditing

- ★ Key methods, tools and workstreams
- Sustainability (key theme)
- Both Sustainability and Social Impact
- Social Impact (key theme)



Vision

Our departmental vision is to enable the University to make positive environmental and social change proportionate to the scale of the global challenges currently faced by society.

We will do this by driving a step change in impact within the University through our actions, partnerships and thought leadership. This impact will be multiplied by the University's scale and influence in the wider ecosystem of higher education, business, government and community.

In doing so, our department will be a globally leading sustainability and social responsibility service in the Further and Higher Education sector.



THE UNIVERSITY of EDINBURGH
Social Responsibility & Sustainability

We support the University to make outstanding positive impacts for society, nature and the wider economy.

We provide leadership, advice, deliver major projects and support the embedding of practical action across the University community.

Purpose

The University of Edinburgh
Social Responsibility and Sustainability
operating model 2023



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Understanding of current and future sustainability strategies



Social and Civic Responsibility Plan

- 1 We will become a zero carbon and zero waste university.
- 2 We will widen participation in higher education and support inclusion.
- 3 We will work together with local communities

Aligning with the following SDGs



Contributing to additional SDGs



Cross cutting theme: In our operations, research and teaching we will engage critically with, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals



Social and Civic Responsibility Plan Reporting

Our strategy (continued)

Performance framework

In Strategy 2030 we highlight that our vision to continue delivering excellence to 2030 and beyond is rooted in our values, with a focus on our four key areas. We have structured our Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) around these four key areas (people, research, teaching and learning and social and civic responsibility), to reflect the University's ambitions outlined in Strategy 2030 and to demonstrate how well we are performing against them.

The information below shows our performance in each of these focus areas. Unless indicated otherwise, data shown reflects 2021/22 performance.

Strategy 2030 Focus Area: People

Our students, staff, alumni and friends are our lifeblood.



In development: **4. Efficient systems and user-friendly processes¹** and **5. Staff engagement²**

Contributing to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals, part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, were adopted by the United Nations and world leaders in 2015.

United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP26



The United Nations Climate Change Conference took place in Glasgow in November 2021. Commonly known as COP26.

Supporting students and scholars at risk



In 2021, the University was recognised for its work in supporting persecuted scholars and defending academic freedom as a Sustaining Member of the Scholars at Risk (SAR) network.



Strategies, policies and plans

Policy	Date	More information
Forest and Peatlands Learning, Teaching and Research Strategy	2023	This strategy will embed the Forests and Peatland Project within the University's curriculum, research and experiential learning offer.
Biodiversity Plan	2022	We are committed to actively enhancing conditions for and promoting biodiversity on our grounds. We support biodiversity in our local neighbourhoods and region, to improve the health and well-being of staff, students and the wider community.
Anti-Slavery Policy	2021	The purpose of this document is to set out our commitments and responsibilities in relation to modern slavery.
Community Plan	2020	Our Community Plan 2020-2025 sets out 32 practical commitments the University of Edinburgh is making to our local communities. This plan supersedes the Community Engagement Strategy published in 2017. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2017 strategy
Sustainable IT: Personal Computing Devices	2020	The purpose of this policy is to reduce the number of unnecessary personal computing devices. This will contribute positively to the University's Zero by 2040 carbon ambition and reduce damage to the environment caused by the mining, manufacturing, transport and energy cost of additional devices; and minimise the disposal impact of old devices that cannot be recycled
Palm Oil Policy	2019	The University of Edinburgh is working to ensure it buys products that contain certified sustainable palm oil.

Social Enterprise and Social Investment Strategy: Investing for Good	2019	This strategy sets out the University's vision to be recognised as the leading UK university for social enterprise and investments by academic year 2023-24. The University will do this by taking a rigorous approach to investments that deliver an acceptable return, whilst also delivering multiple benefits for society, the economy and the environment.
Adaptation Framework	2019	Our vision: The University will become more climate-resilient, creating a sense of place on campuses and promoting well-being and biodiversity, as an integral part of the wider context of the city of Edinburgh.
Waste Strategy	2018	The Strategy sets out how The University of Edinburgh will achieve its vision to becoming a zero waste University by embedding Circular Economy thinking, and putting waste prevention, reuse and recycling at the forefront of our relationship with resources. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read more
Cold storage policy and guidance	2018	This paper includes design principles for new ultra cold storage facilities and proposes best practice guidance in cold storage facility management.
Lab ventilation policy and guidance	2018	This paper set outs a standardised design and management principles for lab ventilation management.
Transport and Travel Planning	2017	This Plan sets out how the University of Edinburgh will achieve its vision that by 2021 our students, staff and visitors will be able to access our Estate by the mode of transport best suited to their needs
Modern Slavery statement	2016 (updated annually)	The University is committed to protecting and respecting human rights and have a zero tolerance approach to slavery and human trafficking in all its forms. This statement is made pursuant to Section 54, Part 6 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 and sets out the steps the University has taken and will take in relation to slavery and human trafficking.
Climate Strategy	2016	The University of Edinburgh has committed to become zero carbon by 2040. The University's Climate Strategy 2016 lays out a comprehensive whole institution approach to climate change mitigation and adaptation in order to achieve its ambitious targets.



Climate Strategy Successor

- Crisis is urgent and accelerating.
- Next 5 to 10 years are crucial – tipping points
- Our staff and students, stakeholders expect action
- Proposed strategy seeks to rebalance, widen the focus and introduce science aligned interim targets
- Proposed strategy going to University Executive.



Honest reflections on developing strategy



Developing strategy



“A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go but ought to be”

Rosalynn Carter, is an American writer and activist who served as First Lady of the United States from 1977 to 1981

“To have hope, we must have **credible plans to change**, requiring strong leadership. In the quote above, Rosalynn Carter points out that great leaders take us where we don't necessarily want to go but ought to be. For us, that doesn't mean a model of a top-down, all-seeing single leader- rather the recognition that **sustainability leadership is needed everywhere**- in our academics, our students, our professional services groups, our alumni and our communities and partners”

Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability



Considerations

- Extensive stakeholder engagement
- Importance of senior leaders
- Complex governance
- Competing priorities
- Multiple drivers
- Institutional wide reviews
- Collective agreement without diluting ambitions?
- Terminology and words matter
- Significant resource required
- Change can take time (and needs to be repeated, things don't stand still).



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Questions?

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