

## Environmental Sustainability Policy

<b>Brief Description &amp; Purpose:</b>	<p>This Policy sets out the University's commitments to sustainability, including our Environmental Management System (EMS) and support for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through research, teaching, campus and operations.</p> <p>Our Environmental Sustainability Policy is overseen by the University Sustainability Management Group. It is reviewed on an annual basis and reported on via the Sustainability Annual Report.</p>		
<b>Applicable to (list cohorts):</b>	<b>Staff:</b> All staff	<b>Students:</b> All students	<b>Third Parties:</b> Not applicable
<b>Effective From:</b>	June 2025	<b>Last Review Date:</b>	June 2025
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	University Sustainability Management Group (USMG)	<b>Approved:</b>	June 2025
<b>Executive Owner:</b>	Prof John Woodward Pro Vice-Chancellor for International and Chairs of the USMG	<b>Business Owner:</b>	Dr Paul Steadman Sustainability Manager
<b>Next Review Date:</b>	June 2026	<b>Publication External Y/N</b>	Yes

### 1. Introduction

Our University Strategy commits to enhancing our reputation for sustainability and to supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through our research, teaching, campus and operations.

We are a signatory of the SDG Accord and the United Nations Academic Impact in recognition of the positive impact we can make. Many of the SDGs directly relate to environmental challenges such as Climate Action, Responsible Consumption, Sustainable Cities and Life on Land.



The University acknowledges that its operations and wider influence have environmental impacts. Through the implementation of its policies and Environmental Management System, the University is committed to mitigating these impacts and ensuring that future growth and development are achieved in a sustainable manner. We recognise the urgency associated with environmental challenges such as climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss.

In addition to this Policy, the SDGs are supported by additional University Policies and Reports including:

- [Equality & Diversity](#) – supporting SDGs including Gender Equality and Reduced Inequalities
- [Access & Participation Plan](#) – supporting SDGs including Quality Education and Reduced Inequalities

## 2. Policy Detail

### 2.1 Commitments

We are committed to:

- supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals through our research, educational activity, campus and operations;
- the protection of the environment, including the prevention of pollution;
- meeting, and where possible exceeding, all relevant legislation, industry standards and other environmental requirements to which the University subscribes;
- demonstrating continual improvement of the Environmental Management System (EMS) in order to enhance environmental performance.

### 2.2 Environmental Management System

The development of our Environmental Management System (EMS) provides a framework for achieving our environmental commitments.

The scope of the EMS is defined as: services and operations in the provision of higher education, research and training including administration, and support services.

### 2.3 Policies and Plans

The following policies and plans set out our commitment to supporting the UN Sustainability Goals:

Area	Aim	SDG
<b>Environmental Management System</b>	Continual improvement of the <a href="#">Environmental Management System</a> .	11, 12, 13, 14, 15
<b>Energy &amp; Carbon</b>	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3* emissions, as supported by our <a href="#">Carbon Management Strategy 2020-2030</a> .	7, 11, 13
<b>Waste &amp; Resource Management</b>	Support circular economy principles. Reduce the volume of waste we produce and maximise recovery and recycling of waste, as supported by	12

	our <a href="#">Waste Management Policy</a> and <a href="#">Single Use Plastics Policy</a> . Northumbria operate a 'No Landfill Policy'. All of our residual waste is diverted from landfill and sent for recovery via energy-from-waste.	
<b>Water Management</b>	Minimise our use of water, as supported by the <a href="#">Sustainable Water Policy</a> .	6
<b>Travel</b>	Minimise the environmental impact of organisational travel and commuter travel, as supported by our <a href="#">Sustainable Travel Plan Strategy</a> .	11
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University as set out in our <a href="#">Biodiversity Action Plan</a> .	11, 15
<b>Careers</b>	Northumbria's Graduate Futures Team supports our students to achieve their ambitions and make the most of their experiences, develop skills and manage their future. Our Careers Policy describes our approach to working with partners that aim to recruit our students	8, 17
<b>Procurement</b>	Minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, environmental, economic and social impacts of the goods and services we buy, as supported by our <a href="#">Sustainable Procurement Policy</a> and <a href="#">Sustainable Food Policy</a> .	1, 8, 12, 16
<b>Community Involvement</b>	To increase community engagement in campus sustainability projects. Supported by our <a href="#">Sustainability Engagement Plan</a> .	11, 17
<b>Ethical Investment</b>	The University acknowledges the climate emergency as a significant challenge for society and future students. Consequently, the University aims to align with the Paris Agreement on climate change. Northumbria's <a href="#">Treasury Management and Ethical Investment Policy</a> supports our Carbon Management Strategy 2020- 2030 (pg9).	1, 3, 8, 13, 16
<b>Ethical Banking</b>	The University acknowledges the importance of aligning its banking relationships with its broader social responsibilities. The University's approach to Ethical Banking is set out in <a href="#">Treasury Management and Ethical Investment Policy (pg10)</a> .	1, 3, 8, 13, 16
<b>Sustainable Buildings</b>	Minimise the environmental impacts of our buildings – from design to occupation, supported	11

	by our <a href="#"><u>Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and Guidelines.</u></a>	
<b>Emissions &amp; Discharges</b>	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water.	11, 14, 15
<b>Education for Sustainable Development</b>	Raise awareness of sustainability among staff, students and the communities in which we work, and develop their skills and knowledge to support sustainability.	4
<b>Research &amp; Living Lab</b>	Undertake research that directly supports the Sustainable Development Goals. Utilise a Living Lab approach to bring together our research, teaching, campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	All
<b>Climate Change Resilience</b>	To be resilient to risks from weather and climate change.	13
<b>Reputation for sustainability</b>	To enhance the University's reputation for sustainability.	4

## 2.4 Monitoring

KPIs relating to these commitments are listed below. Our Sustainability Policy is overseen by the University Sustainability Management Group. It is reviewed on an annual basis and reported on via the Sustainability Annual Report published on the University website.

## 3. Roles and Responsibilities

<b>Role</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>
University Sustainability Management Group	Oversees the Policy, annual review and reporting.
Sustainability Manager	Leads operational delivery of the Policy, manages the EMS, reports on KPIs, and ensures policy review and staff/student engagement.
Staff and Students	Expected to contribute to and support sustainability commitments.

## 4. Definitions

- **Environmental Management System (EMS)** – structured framework to achieve environmental commitments.
- **SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals)** – 17 goals adopted by the UN addressing global challenges.

## 5. Related Policies, Procedures and Other Resources

- [Equality & Diversity Policy](#)
- [Access & Participation Plan](#)
- [Carbon Management Strategy 2020–2030](#)
- [Waste Management Policy](#)
- [Single Use Plastics Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Water Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Travel Plan Strategy](#)
- [Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
- [Careers Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Food Policy](#)
- [Treasury Management & Ethical Investment Policy](#)
- [Sustainable Construction & Refurbishment Policy](#)
- [Sustainability Engagement Plan](#)

## 6. Version

Version No.	Reviewer	Date	Changes
1.1	Dr Paul Steadman	16.09.25	Policy format



Policy KPIs

Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
<b>Environmental Management System</b>	Continual improvement of the EMS.	Environmental Management System certification.	Maintain ISO14001:2015 certification.	2025/26
<b>Energy and Carbon</b>	To reduce scope 1, 2 and 3 carbon emissions.	Report Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions in accordance with the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) in our Annual Carbon Management Report.	80% reduction from 2014/15	2030
			Net Zero carbon	2040
			Maximum annual emissions of 7823 tCO <sub>2e</sub> (based on 2020-2030 carbon reduction target trajectory)	2025/26
		Minimum DEC rating for campus buildings.	D	2030
<b>Waste and Resource Management</b>	Support circular economy principles. Reduce the volume of waste we produce and maximise recovery and recycling of waste.	Total waste produced (tonnes).	15% reduction from 2018/19	2030
			Tonnage does not exceed 1303 tonnes. (Based on 1.5% reduction per year from 2018/19).	2025/26
		Total waste sent for reuse, composting, anaerobic digestion or recycling (%).	65%	2030
			42%	2025/26
		Scope 3 emissions reduction target, 2014/15 baseline 26 tCO <sub>2e</sub> .	19 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2030
			23 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2025/26
<b>Water Management</b>	Minimise the volume of water we use.	Total mains water consumption (m <sup>3</sup> ).	10% reduction from 2018/19 Volume does not exceed 160,717m <sup>3</sup> . (Based on 1% reduction per year from 2018/19)	2030
		Scope 3 emissions reduction target, 2014/15 baseline 213 tCO <sub>2e</sub> .	40 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2030
			54 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2025/26



Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
<b>Travel</b>	Minimise the environmental impact of organisational travel and the travel undertaken by staff, students and visitors to and from the University.	Emissions from Organisational/Business Travel.	To meet future emissions targets, flights must remain at least 50% lower than pre COVID levels.	2030
		Single Occupancy vehicle rate for commuter travel.	City Campus: Staff 24%, Students 7% Coach Lane Campus: Staff 59%, Students 29%	2025/26
	Scope 3 emissions reduction targets.	Business Travel. 2014/15 Baseline 5014 tCO <sub>2e</sub> .	Business Travel 1036 tCO <sub>2e</sub> 3025 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2030 2025/26
		Staff & Student Commuting. 2018 Baseline 0.336 tCO <sub>2e</sub> /head.	Staff & Student Commuting 0.235 tCO <sub>2e</sub> /head 0.280 tCO <sub>2e</sub> /head	2030 2025/26
		UK and International Student start/end of term travel. 2018 baseline 1427 tCO <sub>2e</sub> .	UK student and international student travel 1% reduction per annum CO <sub>2</sub>	2030
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Protect and enhance biodiversity across the University.	Metres of space considered medium or high value for biodiversity (m <sup>2</sup> ).	2% increase in moderate / high value from 2017/18	2025/26
		Hedgehog Friendly Campus certification.	Maintain Gold certification	2025/26
<b>Accommodation</b>	Reduce emissions from university owned accommodation (including externally managed).	Scope 3 emissions reported for externally managed accommodation include waste and water use.	Annual 9.1% reduction in Scope 3 carbon emissions from 2018-19 baseline Net Zero by 2040.	2025/26



Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
<b>Procurement</b>	To minimise the negative, and maximise the positive, environmental, economic and social impacts of the goods and services we buy.	Report emissions arising from procurement activities in Annual Carbon Management Report using NEUPC HESCET.	Use NEUPC HESCET Tool to report Scope 3 emissions deriving from items and services procured in Annual Carbon Management Report.	2025/26
		Scope 3 emissions reduction target 2023/24 Baseline 44,366 tCO <sub>2e</sub> .	41,770 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2030
			43,922 tCO <sub>2e</sub>	2025/26
<b>Emissions &amp; Discharges</b>	Prevent pollution by minimising local discharges to air, land and water.	Completion rates of new 'Pollution Prevention & Spill Response' spill training course.	85%	2025/26
		Pollution incidents.	0	2025/26
<b>Education for Sustainable Development</b>	To raise awareness of sustainability among staff, students and the communities in which we work, and develop their skills and knowledge to support sustainable development.	Number of programmes embedding learning about one or more SDGs.	Significant increase from 2024/25 (Research and Teaching for the SDGs Group purpose).	2025/26
		Number of students who complete Sustainability Ambassadors Programme – Bronze Level.	20 students	2025/26
<b>Research &amp; Living Lab</b>	Undertake research that directly supports the UN SDGs. Utilise the Living Lab approach to bring together our research, teaching, campus and operations to maximise sustainable output.	United Nations Academic Impact membership.	Maintain membership.	2025/26
		Map research output against SDGs.	All research output.	2025/26





Area	Aim	KPI	Target	Deadline
<b>Construction &amp; Refurbishment</b>	Ensure that all construction and refurbishment projects work towards reducing our negative impacts, and where possible enhance the environment.	KPIs relating to Key Themes are included within <b>Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and Guidelines</b> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Towards Zero Carbon Buildings</li><li>• Smart Buildings</li><li>• Living Labs</li><li>• Enhancing Biodiversity and Wellbeing</li><li>• Maximise the use of recycled products.</li><li>• Climate Change Adaptation</li></ul>	Individual targets for each Key Theme are included within Sustainable Construction and Refurbishment Policy and Guidelines.	2025/26
<b>Community Involvement</b>	To learn from and contribute to sustainable practices within the communities of which we are a part.	Increase community engagement in campus sustainability projects. Supported by the Sustainability Engagement Plan.	10% increase in hosting and participation in a schedule of activities with the local community and other stakeholders, to discuss and deliver improvements in sustainability at the University and beyond.	2025/26

Notes: • \*Scope 3 emissions include: organisational travel, waste, water supply, wastewater treatment and electricity transmission losses.