

Sustainable Water Policy

Brief Description & Purpose:	<p>The university's sustainable water policy is designed to reduce consumption, prevent waste and safeguard the environment. Measures include the installation of low-flow fixtures, the use of drought-tolerant landscaping, improvements in irrigation efficiency and enhanced stormwater management. The policy also promotes awareness across the campus community and ensures compliance with regulatory requirements, thereby reducing the university's overall water footprint.</p> <p>The Policy is overseen by the University Sustainability Management Group. Progress is reported via the Annual Sustainability Report.</p>		
Applicable to (list cohorts):	Staff: All staff	Students: All students	Third Parties: Suppliers
Date Created:	16 June 2021	Last Review Date:	01 June 2026
Approval Authority:	University Sustainability Management Group	Approved:	15 June 2026
Executive Owner:	Prof John Woodward	Business Owner:	Dr Paul Steadman
Next Review Date:	15 June 2028	Publication External Y/N	Yes

1.0 Introduction

Minimising the volume of mains fed water that we use across the University is essential to minimising our environmental impacts and improving sustainability as specified in the Environmental Sustainability Policy. Careful management of water also results in financial savings and supports the achievement of our carbon reduction targets detailed in our Carbon Management Strategy 2020-2030. In addition, sharing best practice and innovative solutions also contributes to learning and awareness amongst our staff, students and stakeholders.

The implementation of this Policy shall be monitored and reviewed annually by the University Sustainability Management Group.

In order to maintain compliance of our surface water and wastewater discharges, all University members must ensure that any discharge is in accordance with our Environment Agency and Northumbrian Water discharge consents, as described in EP10 Discharge to Water Procedure of the University's environmental management system.

2.0 Policy Detail

To reduce the volume of mains fed water and the associated carbon emissions used in University operations.

2.1 Objectives

- to ensure water is managed in accordance with our legal obligations.
- to reduce the amount of mains-fed water used at the University, and its associated emissions.
- to educate and inform water users of the needs to reduce mains water use.

2.2 Targets

- reduce mains-fed water usage by 1% per year based on litres per student by May 2028 (2018 baseline).
- increase the proportion of water used that is grey water by May 2028.

2.3 Water Saving Strategies

The following water saving strategies have been adopted across the campus:

- installation of leak detection devices in Trinity Square accommodation.
- installation of colour changing shower timers in Trinity Square accommodation.
- refurbishment of WCs, or replacement of broken toilets, to use dual flush or low flush toilets as default.
- monitoring and targeting software installed on key meters to accurately measure and report on the volume of mains-fed water.
- low-water technologies installed on urinals.
- increased use of rainwater harvesting systems on all new builds.
- increased use of sustainable drainage systems on all new builds.
- signage installed to inform water-saving behaviours on campus e.g. how to use a dual flush, the 5 minute shower challenge, and how to report a dripping tap.
- ongoing work with the Students' Union to inform water-saving behaviours for all students e.g. shorter showers, turning off the tap when brushing teeth etc.
- new software to monitor mains fed water consumption to identify leaks and out of hours use on key meters.
- tap flow rate restrictors to taps installed where suitable.
- catering practices reviewed to assess if water-reducing measures could be implemented.
- engineering solutions to capture and reuse greywater in the university installed where practicable.
- research and teaching activities reviewed to assess where water-reducing measures can be implemented.

3.0 Key Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
University Sustainability Management Group	Policy oversight, review and approval
Commercial Operations (Finance)	Embedding commitments in events, procurement and campus operations
Chartwells and Other Service Providers	Implementation of plastic reduction measures in catering and retail operations
Event Organisers	Ensuring events held on University land are free from single-use plastics
Staff, Students, Visitors	Supporting plastic reduction through choices, correct disposal, and participation in initiatives

4.0 Related Policies, Procedures and Other Resources

- Environmental Sustainability Policy
- Waste Management Policy
- UK Refill App (water fountain locations)

5.0 Document Control

Version No.	Reviewer	Date	Changes
1.0		16.06.21	Created
1.1	Dr Paul Steadman	15.06.24	Target update
1.1	Dr Paul Steadman	24.06.25	Strategies, Policy format
1.2	Dr Paul Steadman	01.06.26	Target Update