

Board of Governors
Declaration of a Climate and Ecological Emergency
January 2020

The Board of Governors note:

1. That average global temperatures have now increased by 1°C above pre-industrial levels.
2. That, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report published in January 2019, the world is now on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement’s 1.5°C limit before 2050 – the consequences of which would be dire and irreversible.
3. That, consequently, it is no longer adequate to think of climate change as a potential future threat, but rather, it must now be treated as a real and present danger to the lives and life-chances of people now living as well as to those yet born, and to the natural world.
4. That the IPCC report tells us that limiting global warming to 1.5°C may still be possible – but only with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, and local communities.
5. That earlier this year, the Committee on Climate Change has said that the UK can reach Net Zero by 2050 and set out the required steps to achieve this.
6. That Net Zero means that the carbon management hierarchy is used to reduce emissions of carbon and only after such actions have been undertaken will verified offsetting be undertaken to account for any residual carbon.
7. That in Great Britain, the 2019 State of Nature report warned that 41% of species have decreased in abundance since 1970, with 2% of species already extinct and 15% more at risk.
8. Governments, Councils and universities are declaring a ‘Climate and Ecological Emergency’ across the world and are taking action to address this emergency.
9. That local authorities in the West of England have set ambitious carbon reduction targets which in the case of South Gloucestershire and Bristol is to achieve net zero by 2030 and that university staff are actively engaged in supporting these institutions in their journey to net zero.
10. That the concern of students and staff has been expressed in a petition to the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors further note that:

1. The University’s Strategy 2030 states that UWE Bristol recognises the climate and ecological emergency and has been actively addressing these challenges for many years. The Strategy commits the University to address the urgency of the challenges presented and to strive to fulfil the University’s role in the achievement of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, whilst at the same time ensuring the University’s continuing financial sustainability and its ability to conduct its business in a timely and efficient manner.
2. The University’s Strategy 2030 commits to:
 - a) Be carbon neutral as an organisation, with net-zero emissions of green-house gases by 2030.

- b) Work through the ISO 14001 standard to set clear targets and plans to reduce water and energy use, cut waste generation including food-waste, and support biodiversity.
 - c) As signatories to the UK Plastic Pact, eliminate all but essential single-use plastic and meet the 2025 targets for recycling and reuse.
 - d) Establish all our campuses as clean air and smoke-free zones.
 - e) Invest in and secure year-on-year improvement in travel sustainability for staff, students and visitors.
 - f) Work with our students to explicitly address climate change and environmental challenges through our teaching, learning and curriculum.
 - g) Support research that addresses issues relating to climate change, environmental challenges and biodiversity.
2. Through existing actions set out in the current Sustainability Plan the University is addressing the climate and environmental emergency within the resources available to the university. These include:
- a) 100% guaranteed renewable electricity supply.
 - b) On site PV generation.
 - c) Direct purchase of renewably generated electricity from wind farms in Wales and Scotland.
 - d) New Combined Heat and Power station and heat network that will provide low-carbon heating and electricity to site, saving 650 tonnes carbon dioxide per year.
 - e) EV and hybrid vehicles making up over one third of the UWE's vehicle fleet.
 - f) Enhancing biodiversity on the estate through meadow-scaping and initiatives such as the Beeline.
 - g) Mapping the contribution of our programmes of study to the Sustainable Development Goals.
 - h) Cross university Knowledge Exchange for Sustainability Education group.
 - i) Sustainability research across many disciplines.
3. Key sustainability documents are published on the University's website including the Sustainability Plan, Environmental Sustainability Policy, Sustainability Annual Report and various Sustainability Policy Statements which can be viewed at <https://www1.uwe.ac.uk/about/corporateinformation/sustainability/policiesplansandtargets.asp> [x](#)
4. The new Transforming Futures Climate Action and Sustainability Strategy (CASS) will be adopted by the University in 2020 as part of the suite of Thematic Strategies guiding the implementation of Strategy 2030.
5. The CASS and its supporting action plans further develops the key ambitions of Strategy 2030 explicitly linking urgent sustainability and climate action with the purpose, the place and the people of the university.

The Board of Governors resolve to:

1. Declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency.
2. Redouble our efforts to address the urgency of the mitigation and adaptation measures required.

3. Pledge to provide the leadership and commitment to enable UWE Bristol to:
 - a. become carbon neutral by 2030.
 - b. enhance actions addressing biodiversity loss.
 - c. support staff and students to become climate resilient.
 - d. and to achieve the commitments set out in Strategy 2030.

These commitments are given in the context of the Board of Governors' overall responsibility to ensure the University's continuing financial sustainability, approval of annual budgets and the university's ability to conduct its activities in a responsible and efficient manner.

4. Work with local authorities, communities and businesses on the collective journey to net zero and enhanced ecosystem health.