

# UWE Bristol

## Sustainability engagement strategy and plan



This document describes the strategy and plan for the communication and engagement activity that support the university's environmental and sustainability commitments. The university is committed to some challenging environmental sustainability goals, as set out in Strategy 2030 and Transforming Futures: Climate Action & Sustainability Strategy (CASS). Achievement of these goals will not be possible without effective communications and engagement.

## Rationale for effective communications and engagement

The prime sustainability impact of UWE Bristol is the degree to which our graduates acquire the sustainability "literacy" that underpins social, economic and environmental responsibility now and in their futures.

There are strong *operational* rationales for communicating and engaging to promote pro-environmental behaviors, and there are equally strong rationales around engendering positive *student outcomes and attributes* as outlined in the Graduate Attribute framework, that our graduates be "globally responsible and future-facing". This framework aims to capture both.

This framework aligns to the following strategies and drivers:

- UWE Bristol's core business strategies including Strategy 2030
- UWE Bristol's values: ambitious, inclusive, innovative, collaborative and enterprising
- Making sustainability progress more visible thereby increasing overall awareness and contributing to the education of our students
- To promote civic engagement and a sense of community within our student body
- Consideration of the most effective timings in the staff and student "lifecycle"

## Aims and objectives

Our key aim is to embed sustainability into UWE Bristol's ways of working across all faculties and services. Through the application of this framework we aim to:

- provide and facilitate wide-ranging opportunities for all students and staff to engage in sustainability as a key part of their university experience
- raise awareness and where possible showcase best sustainable practice to inspire staff, students and partners to make sustainable and pro-environmental choices
- develop the skills and knowledge of staff and students to actively contribute to sustainability both at the university and in the wider world
- ensure that UWE managers are fully aware of the university's environmental sustainability commitments and their responsibility to deliver against these
- ensure managers are informed and able to engage their staff on the topic of sustainability
- ensure that key stakeholders are engaged in the development of new sustainability policy and strategy

The aim of this document is to describe the approach to communications and engagement that will most effectively deliver against the above aims, and to map the likely interest and influence of key target audiences / stakeholders.

- to consider the messages and desired behaviours of such stakeholders
- to consider the level of information to be communicated and its timing
- to consider the appropriate method of engagement/communication

## Over-arching principles

Certain principles will govern communications and engagement activity around sustainability, as follows:

- to be evidence-based
- to be solutions focused
- to offer and promote positive action
- to link to wider “big picture” challenges and opportunities
- to ensure compliance with external requirements
- to use the United Nations SDGs to unify communication activity
- to provide opportunities for students and staff to help set the sustainability agenda
- to encourage students and staff to engage in improving the University’s environmental sustainability performance
- to provide opportunities for students and staff to engage in the study of sustainability within the curriculum

## Supporting sustainability action plans

TF:CASS (UWE sustainability strategy) is supported by a series of Action Plans providing the shorter term engagement with the ambitions of the CASS. These plans include:

- Biodiversity
- Carbon and Energy Management
- Circular Economy
- Clean Air
- Education for Sustainable Development
- Hospitality and Sustainable Food
- Travel
- Water Management
- Partnerships for Climate Action

Many of these plans will require effective communications and engagement activity to promote the behaviour change that contributes to meeting the stated objectives.

The sustainability engagement coordinator assists in facilitating engagement activities throughout the academic year, using the framework timetable shown below.

## Responsibilities and Resources

The sustainability engagement coordinator is responsible for maintaining a programme of events and engagement opportunities that contribute to the aims set out in this framework, and for promoting these engagement opportunities to staff, students and external partners.

The UWE Students' Union is a key partner in this approach, and ongoing joint working is vital to the success of this framework. In particular the sustainability engagement coordinator will liaise closely with the relevant elected presidents, student reps and the Green Team.

Thematic lead professionals are responsible for developing of other relevant content for the detailed engagement and communications activities relevant to their areas; supported by the engagement coordinator and working with other appropriate university teams (including UWE strategic communications & marketing, The Student Union marketing team, Accommodation Services and others as appropriate).

The sustainability engagement coordinator shall ensure that opportunities are available in support of the theme areas. The approximate split of this will be as follows:

- Resource efficiency (Energy and carbon reduction, water reduction, waste and resources management/circular economy) 20%
- Sustainable/active travel 20%
- Wellbeing/biodiversity via the university /surrounding environment 20%
- Wellbeing/sustainability via the food system 20%
- Other related ongoing emerging key issues such as inequality, a just transition, climate justice, climate anxiety 20%

Education and Sustainable Development (ESD) and practice-based opportunities cross-cut the above themes and all theme professionals will find opportunities for student involvement and learning within their services, with the assistance and support of the sustainability engagement coordinator. ESD spans all the thematic areas and is led by Professor Georgie Gough. All thematic leads have a responsibility to promote opportunities for student involvement that contribute to the university's core purpose of being an educator i.e. in this context being sustainably literate.

The engagement coordinator will promote such opportunities to all relevant parties as appropriate.

ESD is embedded within the university curricula and is promoted at various levels throughout the academic community. This includes the annual ESD conference, the teaching and learning conference, and via the Knowledge Exchange for Sustainable Education (KESE) network.

Specific roles and responsibilities will from time to time be required to fulfil campaigns or work programmes. These will be arranged in such a way to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. One such programme will be UWE Bristol climate action programme, outlined in the following section.

Resource requirements to support such programmes have also been considered and while a significant proportion of resource will be drawn from the Sustainability and Energy teams currently working on leading these campaigns, a university wide approach will require additional support. Key teams for this will include:

- Internal Communications
- Information Technology Services
- Learning and Development Team

- Human Resources

The input of expertise and time from these teams will be essential to ensure that the campaigns can be effectively delivered and a University-wide approach taken.

## Overarching campaigns – climate action programme

Climate change mitigation is the overarching theme year-to-year with clear links to individual behaviours students and staff can take while at UWE and at home, to contribute to reduced environmental impacts.

The **Climate Action Programme** describes the programme of works to support the changes that are necessary in pursuit of UWE Bristol's net zero carbon commitment. Particularly relevant action plans are:

- Carbon and energy reduction,
- Travel plan,
- Circular economy and waste prevention, including plastics
- Water management
- Food and drink consumption.

The CAP will be a key strand of the university's sustainability work for the next two years, at which point it will be reviewed alongside reviews of the relevant action plans.

Focus areas will be agreed and planned for each academic year going forward. The outline plan for the CAP for 2022/23 and 2022/24 along with roles & responsibilities are shown in Appendix B.

### Note on external partners

Some communication and engagement is more appropriately delivered by external parties and service providers. Where information is subject to change it is more effective to link directly to the information source rather than attempt to replicate it and then have to maintain accuracy.

Where possible and appropriate we will engage external partners to deliver face-to-face engagement activities on our campuses, both by way of external speakers for lectures as well as stalls and pop-up activities.

## Appendix A: Annual engagement timetable and SMART objectives

This section details the engagement and communications activities and where they fit into the student and staff lifecycle and/or to the academic year, and the communication/engagement methods or channels which are most appropriate for each stakeholder group

Engagement - timing critical activity	September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
Training of student ambassadors												
Student welcome and induction <i>Newly enrolling / Students</i>					Glenside intake							
Accommodation induction talks <i>New resident students</i>												
Freshers' Fair and Starting Block <i>Newly enrolling students</i>		To mid October										
Staff welcome fair <i>New staff</i>												
Christmas and Easter shut down messaging <i>All staff</i>												
Sustainability fortnight <i>All staff and students</i>			First two weeks Nov.									
Targeted stalls/pop-up shops/campaign <i>All staff and students</i>												
Welcome week for International students <i>International students</i>												
Feel Good February <i>All staff and students</i>												
Fairtrade fortnight <i>All staff and students</i>												
City Challenge / Festival of Nature <i>Students / Staff/ Public</i>												
UWE Teaching and Learning conference <i>Academic staff</i>												
UWE staff awards - stall and activities <i>All staff</i>												
UWE Education for Sustainable Development conference <i>Academic staff</i>												
Big Give campaign <i>Residential students (off and on site)</i>												
Climate action programme and climate action cafes with staff ongoing throughout the year												
Carbon literacy training ongoing												

## SMART objectives and targets – Baselines and progress in 2022/2023 and 2023/24

**Our approach:** In terms of setting realisable baselines and ongoing targets, the years 2020/2021 and 2021/22 were strongly affected by Covid 19 restrictions and practices – both reducing our engagement activities and forcing much of it on-line rather than face to face. As such we made the decision to use for the academic year 2022/2023 and beyond as baseline figures for engagement targets for different areas of work going forward.

In terms of engagement we rely on face to face contact with people and collect statistics for this. We do not collate social media statistics for two reasons – so often these mean very little and do not reflect true engagement, and secondly, we have so many different channels here that collation would be time consuming if not impossible and would not reflect the true extent of activity. However by way of example of social media we do have effective channels eg [https://www.instagram.com/su\\_uwegreenteam/](https://www.instagram.com/su_uwegreenteam/) and <https://www.facebook.com/TheSUatUWE/>

### Table of activity and SMART targets.

Please see our Climate and Sustainability plan 2024 – 26 page 21 <https://www.uwe.ac.uk/-/media/uwe/documents/about/sustainability/climate-and-sustainability-plan-2024-26.pdf> for commitments updated here.

Activity	Date	Number of events	Number of attendees	Target increase for 2024/25
Green Fortnight	30/10/22 – 13/11/22	70	969	30%
	30/10/23 – 12/11/24	63	1400	30%
Student induction film	Sept 2022 – March 2023	Approx. 40	956 plus 851 views on youtube	20%
	Sept – Mar 24 2024/25	50	840 plus 2300 on you tube	100% All new students at UWE
Staff induction	Sept and March Oct, Jan May	2 training plus 2 lunchtime drop in 3 training plus 3 drop in	122 to training and 18 to drop in Mandatory session 189, drop in 45	100% to drop in session 50% increase to drop in
Staff online training	All year	Ongoing access to web	244	50%
Student engagement within curriculum	Autumn and Spring term	17	471	40%
Student projects and placement with sustainability team	All year	9 projects/[placements]	64	25%



## Additional notes:

### 1 Student induction film delivery

#### 2023/24

Every year UWE Bristol and The Student Union at Bristol produce a short sustainability induction film which sets out the University's policy and strategy, plus opportunities for students to get involved and take action in the curriculum, at the Student Union and across campus. The film is distributed to our on-line Starting Block programme for all students, to all course leaders as an essential component of induction and in addition face to face sessions are delivered for specific courses by the sustainability team

Film 2023/24: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ewqq5jyc6KM>

**Our target for 2024/25** is to embed the film in all student Blackboard sites and we have permission to do this, so that all students see it; and to increase of face to face delivery by sustainability team by 20% year on year so in 2024/25 to 1200 students

### 2 Staff online training

We provide two optional online training courses: a general sustainability one and our 'Climate action series: carbon and you'. In 2022/2023 a total of 244 staff from across the university did the training.

**Our target for the next two years** is a 50% increase pa so for 2023/24 366 staff and for 2024/25 524.

## Appendix B:

### Note on free climate education module for all –2023/24

In 2022/23, there was an exciting development championed by the Student Union elected representatives - they supported the proposal by two students that there should be mandatory climate education for all students at UWE Bristol. As a result, our Vice Chancellor agreed to the proposal and provided funding for a separate module with 10 credits. A trial module went out in 2023/24 and is being refined for the next academic year.

### Climate Action Programme – 2<sup>nd</sup> year of 2-year plan

Type	Action	Resources	Measure / target	Responsibility	Notes (with role/responsibility)
Year one					
Information	Update website content including actions that people can take to achieve change	Time and data, technical support	All intranet and website content updated	Energy and Sustainability teams ITS / webeditors and Marketing for support	Completed and to be reviewed on annual basis. VH working with SU and academics to coordinate New photographic and video content used each year

Information	Launch of climate action programme online or otherwise	Time, technical support	General launch of programme	Energy and Sustainability teams Abbie Basketter to lead	Abbie Basketter to lead 2 modules launched 1st module on carbon literacy launched in 2021/22, 2 <sup>nd</sup> in 2022/23
Information	Creation of carbon metrics database	Time and data, tech support	Database built and data sourced from relevant UWE teams	E&F technologies team with data sourced from Energy, Sustainability, Finance & Travel	E&F Technologies Team
Information	Production of intranet page outlining what is available through the climate action programme	Time and web team support	Produce page to align with launch of first carbon literacy training module	Energy and Sustainability teams, Abbie Basketter to lead	Abbie Basketter to lead
Performance feedback	Launch of carbon performance data by faculty/building (as data allows)	Time, data availability	Quarterly updates	As above, and internal comms (intranet hosting)	Abbie Basketter Energy Team
Performance feedback	Sharing of carbon performance data by faculty/building (as data allows)	Time, data availability	Provided to teams as data available	Energy team	Abbie Basketter Energy Team
Performance feedback	Preparing data for potential use in carbon budget/cap scheme. Identifying gaps in data and filling/estimating these as possible	Time, budget for installation of sub meters	Provided to teams as data is available	Energy Team	Abbie Basketter Energy Team
Training	Carbon literacy training for all staff and students	Time, technical support	Production of e-module available to all staff and students –	Energy and Sustainability teams Students Union sustainability team Learning & Development	Training launched in 2021/22 to all staff – optional at present – is being reviewed on an ongoing and annual basis Abbie Basketter to lead with Tom Finn our Scope 3 emissions officer
Social norms	Creation of a language and branding to adopt across all communications that fits with Transforming Futures and	Time		Energy and Sustainability teams Comms HR	VH: Coordination of comms via range of internal comms channels working with Anthony Poploski Internal Communications manager and Marketing  KN/PR - develop set of slides with cohesive content

	sustainable culture shift				SDGs to be more widely used – making use of the Good Life Goals as an accessible option  Climate justice to be emphasised  PR/JL – via ISO14001 sustainability exchanges with faculties and services.
Community development	Creation and launch of a central bank of sustainability actions and ideas already implemented by individual teams or groups for others to access.	Time	Completed and launched by end of year one.	Energy and Sustainability teams	CAC teams group set up but not being accessed  Keeping track of all the ideas being implemented would be challenging but possible for the key ones and can be included in the crib sheet. Vicki Harris and Louise Hart to lead  Identify mechanism to encourage and capture student ideas in addition to ad hoc approach at present
Community development	Rolling out series of Climate Action cafés for groups across UWE	Time	Minimum 1 per month	Energy & Sustainability Teams Comms	Doable initially in Teams or Zoom. Tie in with #buildbackbetter VH to coordinate.
Year two					
Training	Focused training for managers and team leaders in key areas Focused training for academic programme leaders		Development and trial of tailored training sessions for specific groups or teams – with at least one academic and one professional service.	Energy & Sustainability teams Students Union sustainability team	AB and PR responsible for coordinating in liaison with LDC and relevant stakeholders
Training	Ongoing promotion of general e-module training to increase carbon literacy across UWE	Time, technical support	Training of 100% of staff and 100% of new intake students (Undergraduates).	Energy & Sustainability teams Students Union sustainability team Learning & Development ITS	AB responsible for coordinating in liaison with LDC and relevant academic and other stakeholders

Information	Roll out of control information for buildings where users have primary control – equipment, heating controls, how to use buildings most efficiently etc.	Time			Abbie Basketter Energy team
Social norms	Case studies released in a variety of forms e.g. blogs, vlogs, pops ups, internal newsletters etc. giving personal stories of change.	Time	Minimum 1 per month	Energy & Sustainability Teams Comms	All . Using Green Gown submissions possible.  KN TF PR and VH in liaison with internal comms.
Community development	Rolling out series of Climate Action cafés for groups across UWE	Time	Minimum 1 per month	Energy & Sustainability Teams Comms	VH to coordinate, and including members of Sustainability Energy Travel and other teams as appropriate,

## Appendix C: Audiences and methods for engagement and communication

Key stakeholder groupings have been identified as such:

### Internal stakeholders

- Students' Union Staff including particular key groupings e.g. community section staff
- UWE staff, including key people e.g. service champions and academic subject area staff
- Elected Student Representatives, including key people e.g. sustainability officer and green team elected representatives
- Green team student supporters
- Staff sustainability supporters network
- Undergraduate and postgraduate students
- Resident students i.e. that are living in UWE halls of residence
- University senior management team
- Wider staff and students

## External stakeholders

- Visitors and customers (i.e. conference organisers, attendees, CPD attendees etc)
- Regional communities of interest such as Bristol Green Capital Partnership, Bristol Sustainable Food city, Bristol Natural History Consortium
- Neighbouring local authorities
- Suppliers and contractors in our supply chain
- EAUC, HESA
- Our partners
- Other HEIs
- Prospective and future students
- Parents/carers of students
- Prospective employers and industry bodies
- NUS People and Planet
- Neighbouring residential communities

## Appendix D: Methods of communication and engagement – internal stakeholders

This list describes the channels of communication and engagement with our internal stakeholders (students and staff).

- The sustainability webpages (Link)
- Internal communications: pop-ups, weekly internal news emails, intranet and Bower Ashton blog
- Social media: Green Uwe Facebook, Travel Twitter, SU twitter and Facebook accounts
- E and physical posters and signage
- Internal Audit cycle
- Meetings and working groups
- Student Newsletter, Accommodation emails and Accommodation handbook
- Through events and activities such as the staff welcome fair, Students Fresher's fair and Green Fortnight1
- Written case studies and evidence
- Teaching and learning within the curriculum
- Online learning platforms for presentations and training - Blackboard Collaborate, Microsoft Teams
- Online discussions apps – Microsoft Teams, Yammer

## Methods of communication and engagement – external stakeholders

- Prospectuses
- Press releases
- Website
- University tenders
- Pre-event information (e.g. ECC customers, CPD events)
- External speaking engagements
- Door-knocking activity (e.g. Love where you live campaign, Big Give)
- Email
- Written case-studies

## Annual Reporting

UWE Bristol will produce an Annual Sustainability Report, which will be a means of communicating progress towards the targets set out in the CASS and supporting action plans. This builds on the regular internal reporting framework within the UWE Bristol sustainability governance structure (i.e. Sustainability Board and its supporting sub-groups).

We aim to also report on a series of environmental performance metrics via a dashboard of environmental indices, to include quarterly updates on: energy consumption, water consumption, waste and recycling tonnage and recycling performance, paper usage.

## Appendix E: Strategy and policy development

From time to time it is necessary to refresh our sustainability strategy and develop new policy on emerging sustainability risks. Engagement and consultation will be conducted using the following framework.

Stakeholder group:	Authorise	Inform	Take early direction from	Consult via strategy workshop	Consult via event	Consult/inform via team meeting attendance	Aspects/impacts workshop	Curriculum
Board of governors								
Sustainability Board	*							
Senior management team (Directorate)	*							
Academic board								
Staff								
Academic staff								
Professional services staff								
Faculty management								
Unions								
Student Union								
Relevant student cohorts								
Students								

- Action/implementation plans under the Climate Action & Sustainability Strategy will be approved by Directorate via Sustainability Board.

Document: Sustainability engagement Strategy and Plan

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