Introduction

Mission
We transform lives through the power of education. A leading international university, we undertake ground breaking research and deliver a world class student experience in a campus environment of outstanding natural beauty. Our vision is to be a top 10 university in the UK and one of the top 100 universities in the world.

Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy seeks to support this mission by building on our research expertise in sustainability and delivering a more resource efficient institution, where staff and students are aware of their role and the actions they can take in making a positive impact on the local, national and international environment.

Vision
The aim is to shape an organisation that will excel and be recognised for environmental and sustainability achievements in local, national and international arenas. This will be achieved through the skills and knowledge that our graduates learn and put into practice (as future leaders and global citizens); our research and exchange of knowledge through business and community engagement; and through our own strategies and operations.

The University has made excellent progress in driving forward the Environmental Sustainability Agenda over the last five years. This strategy sets out the vision and key objectives for the next five years. It builds on our progress to date and brings together the University’s existing policies, commitments, sustainability themed strategies and associated delivery plans.

Values
Through education and research we are aware of the ecological limits of the planet and promote the careful use of resources.

Strategic Aims
The University of Exeter is committed to understanding and managing its impact on the environment. This document sets out the strategic aims and objectives for sustainability at the University for the years 2010-2015.

Our seven strategic aims cover:
1. Student experience
2. Employability and Graduate Development
3. Education for sustainability
4. Research
5. Partnership and engagement
6. Estate management
7. Quality assurance

Priority
Education for sustainability underpins all of the strategic aims and is fundamental to delivering cultural change, across the University community, and subsequent improvements in environmental performance. Education for sustainability is therefore the priority strategic aim within this strategy.
Aim 1: To enhance the student experience by providing a physical environment that fosters informal learning for sustainability (supporting sustainable lifestyles and offering sustainability-related volunteering and study opportunities), taking advantage of our ecologically rich and aesthetically beautiful physical environment.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to integrate our campus, curriculum and research activities so that campuses will become ‘living laboratories’ with students routinely informing operational sustainability strategy and learning from the experience;
- to recognise that a curriculum with high relevance to current Global Issues, such as climate change, energy, food and water demand, health and biological diversity, will support our internationalisation strategy, attracting students with an interest in leadership, sustainable business practices and environmental issues;
- to promote engagement opportunities with sustainability practice to foster an authentic ‘feel good’ culture incorporating sense of place, positive impact and health and wellbeing;
- to develop a ‘living laboratory’ on all three campuses, enabling students to link theory to practice in their own community.

How will we do this?

- We will develop a ‘living laboratory’ practitioner’s network comprising academic representation from all Colleges, the student community, professional services and relevant stakeholders. This will be supported by appropriate communication interfaces.
- We will foster a culture of global citizenship via the Students as Change Agents initiatives and the provision of extracurricular activities.
- We will identify and actively promote sustainability volunteering opportunities through the sustainability web pages.

CASE STUDY

**Birds and Bees Campaign**

Broadcaster and naturalist Nick Baker led a group of over 150 volunteering students, academics, members of the public and Devon Wildlife Trust experts for the first ever Bioblitz at the University of Exeter, Streatham Campus.

The Bioblitz, a quick census of species at the University, marked the launch of the Birds and Bees Campaign. It aims to make the campus more wildlife friendly; enhance biological diversity; create wildlife corridors, to enable animals to permeate through the city; and make staff and students aware of the richness and variety of the natural environment.

The project will be delivered in partnership with Devon Wildlife Trust and Exeter Wild City, and will offer opportunities to students to learn practical surveying skills and enhance their employability.

“I am thrilled about the Birds and Bees Campaign. It will give students extra opportunities to learn about the importance of biodiversity and develop new skills through surveying and volunteering. I hope it will give them a sense of place and pride in their local environment and community.”

Jonnie Beddall, Students’ Guild President

“We place an increasing emphasis on public engagement activities undertaken by NERC-funded researchers and so are keen to support any activities that are ready-made for people to get involved in – Bioblitzes are just that kind of event. We are very pleased that the University of Exeter is taking a lead.”

Poppy Leeder, NERC (Natural Environment Research Council)

“Normally you just turn up and do things on your own. This [Bioblitz] involved an entire community of people who live on campus and in the area. It definitely had a community spirit.”

Hannah and Laura, student volunteers
To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to raise awareness across the University of the relevance and opportunity associated with the regional and international green economy;

• to provide opportunities for students to identify, acknowledge, develop and enhance their skills for sustainability.

How will we do this?

• We will engage with the Employability and Graduate Development team to promote green economy opportunities.

• We will include opportunities to learn about skills for sustainability in the Exeter Award and Exeter Leaders programmes.

• We will publish case studies showcasing good practice.

• We will create and develop partnerships with regional stakeholders, and identify opportunities for student placements within those organisations, to further enhance employability.

• We will identify and actively promote sustainability placements and internship opportunities through the sustainability web pages.

• We will work with the Colleges to define and develop learning for transferable and discipline specific sustainability literacy skills so that students are prepared for the emerging futures jobs market.

**Aim 2:** To enhance graduate employability in relation to the skills that businesses, organisations and individuals need in order to respond to the global sustainability challenges, and to take advantage of the emerging international green economy.

**CASE STUDY**

**The Exeter Award**

Students from the Business School approached the Students as Change Agents project to explore the integration of sustainability within the curriculum. They argued that sustainability issues are becoming an important aspect of business. The students wanted this recognised within and beyond the curriculum. After consultation with the students a pilot workshop was designed and trialled with the view that, if successful, it would be offered as an Exeter Award workshop. The students also suggested the use of different terminology because they preferred titles such as ‘Skills for the Green Economy’ or ‘Skills for the Future Jobs Market’ over ‘Sustainability Skills’. The workshop was very well received by the focus group and ‘Skills for the Future Job Market – Systems Thinking’ is now on offer through the Exeter Award and is oversubscribed.

“This [Exeter Award sustainability workshop] was a good opportunity to think through the effects of one particular industry. Something not often done in business/economics courses.”

Exeter Award participant

“It really got me thinking.”

Exeter Award participant

**Student Internships**

“The Student Re-use project gave me a real insight into the hard work that so many members of staff put into the University. I was responsible for taking more than three tons of unwanted items, left by students leaving their accommodation, and finding a sustainable pathway to dispose of them. The experience of managing something with so many logistical challenges will help my future career.”

Callum Brown, University of Exeter student
3 Education for sustainability

Aim 3: To provide all students with access to education for and about sustainability.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to embed elements of education for sustainability in the curriculum across all Colleges;
• to develop the interdisciplinary approach of the science strategy in relation to education for sustainability;
• to position Exeter as a UK leader of best practice in education for environmental sustainability;
• to foster a community of practice for Education for Sustainability and provide professional development opportunities for newly appointed lecturers and existing academic staff.

How will we do this?

• Through the publication and implementation of the University’s Education for Sustainability Strategy.
• We will integrate quality enhancement and quality assurance indicators for Education for Sustainability into existing frameworks.
• We will support the development of new modules and programmes with relevance to sustainability.
• We will showcase good practice through a variety of communications.
• We will develop and promote high profile sustainability-facing disciplinary and interdisciplinary initiatives.
• We will collaborate with the Students as Change Agents project as a bottom up approach and partnership with the student body.
• We will develop ‘SUSTAIN:ability’ modular pathways alongside existing programmes utilising the enhanced modularity and Flexible Combined Honours structure.

• We will provide professional development opportunities for newly appointed lecturers and existing academic staff in order to foster discussion, facilitate the implementation of initiatives, promote cross-departmental working and to ensure all are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address environmental sustainability in the subject delivery.

CASE STUDY

One Planet MBA

The One Planet MBA launches at the University of Exeter Business School in September 2011. The School is working in partnership with WWF, the global conservation organisation, and it is the world’s first sustainability-based MBA working in partnership with an NGO. The Exeter MBA went under complete review and, whilst all the key elements of existing MBAs such as Finance and Accounting are embedded in the programme, the vision is completely different aiming for a new type of MBA producing unique planet-minded business leaders. Our innovation cohort are now working alongside the Exeter faculty and WWF to develop the full programme.

The initial innovation cohort for this year’s One Planet MBA class has 40 students from 22 nationalities coming from different professional backgrounds and industries. All five continents are represented and there is an equal gender balance showing full diversity.

“With our high-calibre lecturers, state-of-the-art IT equipment and the supportive network of classmates, I’m confident I’ll succeed in my studies. The Exeter One Planet MBA will ultimately enhance my ability to call into action NGOs, businesses, public institutions, academics and donor agencies to rise to the challenge to achieve lasting performance in the development sector through strategic partnerships.”

Yacouba Ouedrago, One Planet MBA student, 2010/11

Yacouba Ouedrago – Burkina Faso, West Africa.
4 Research

Aim 4: To raise awareness and communicate research which is related to environmental sustainability and to ensure that our operations are informed by this research where possible.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to capture and communicate current research activity in environmental sustainability to the University and the wider sector;
- to expose our students to world leading research in climate change and sustainable futures;
- to integrate research activity into campus as a ‘living laboratory’.

How will we do this?

- We will signpost key research activity on the sustainability web pages.
- We will identify opportunities to conduct sustainability-related research on the University estates.
- Ensure the research community has access to information about current operational activities through annual sustainability reports, publication of case studies, briefing sessions and training opportunities.
- Incorporate research activity into high profile disciplinary and interdisciplinary sustainability initiatives.

CASE STUDY

Big Dilemmas Project

The Big Dilemmas project is an exciting new interdisciplinary initiative that works collaboratively towards solving ‘wicked’ sustainability problems e.g. How can we meet our energy and resource needs without jeopardising the natural environment and future needs? By investigating and tackling big dilemmas in relation to energy demand, food and water security, health, biodiversity, poverty and population, the project aims to come to a better understanding of sustainable futures and potential ways forward.

The Big Dilemmas project builds on interdisciplinary research excellence in Climate Change and Sustainable Futures and Systems Biology, and will promote the same interdisciplinary approach in the Taught programmes.

Each year, twenty students from across the University will be selected to form a prestigious Think Tank that will aim to come to an understanding of complex sustainability dilemmas and publish a report of recommendations. The group will work with lead academics, external experts and stakeholders.

“This looks like a ground-breaking and innovative project – I am looking forward to it already.” Professor Patrick Devine-Wright, University of Exeter

“I really support this – clearly the links between energy and climate policy, and the rate of mitigation, open up all sorts of big inter-disciplinary questions around individuals’ rights; food; water; the role of governments and markets; the type of (global) society we want for the future; security; how to stimulate innovation (and the role of universities); IP/skills transfer, etc, etc.”

Professor Catherine Mitchell, University of Exeter

Students visit Steart in Somerset as part of a Big Dilemmas field trip.
Aim 5: We shall create opportunities where students, staff and alumni can develop and share their knowledge, skills and experience to engage with and contribute effectively to tackling global challenges.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to create a framework whereby staff and students can get involved in practical sustainability;
- to communicate current environmental sustainability activities and achievements to staff, students and alumni.

How will we do this?

- We will participate in national engagement initiatives such as the Degrees Cooler programme.
- We will maintain and develop active networks of staff and students to enable involvement in sustainability e.g. Sustainability Coordinators, user groups, etc.
- We will engage with our Development and Alumni Relations team to promote our sustainability achievements to our alumni network.
- We will consult with staff, students, the Students’ Guild and other relevant stakeholders through the development of new operational sustainability policies and strategies.
- We will ensure that relevant sustainability is easily accessible to all stakeholders.
- We will actively seek formal and informal partnerships with strategic regional, national and international stakeholders and identify opportunities to exchange knowledge and best practice.
- We will provide opportunities for community engagement in sustainability activities on the University estate.
- We will collaborate with the student community, particularly with the Students’ Guild, Students as Change Agents, societies and student representatives.

CASE STUDY

Green Impact Project

The University has taken part in an exciting two year project called Green Impact. Twenty five teams of staff took part in the environmental accreditation scheme, to ‘green’ their work practices. Green Impact is run locally by the University but managed across several HEIs by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC).

Staff were given a Workbook (an excel document) with Bronze, Silver and Bonus criteria to complete. Each criteria is a clear, easy to implement action. Teams can work at their own pace and focus on areas of interest to them. Bronze is essential while Silver and Gold are optional. Only one team can achieve Gold and does so by achieving the Silver accreditation level and earning the highest amount of points overall.

Top image (left to right): Geoff Pringle (Director Campus Services, University of Exeter), Bruce Thompson (Transport Co-ordination Service Manager, Devon County Council), Graham Bailey (Commercial Manager, Stagecoach South West), Julia Jack (Travel Plan Coordinator, University of Exeter), Karen Gallagher (Sustainability Manager, University of Exeter), Jonnie Bedall (2010/11 Students’ Guild President).
CASE STUDY

**Students on the Move Project**
The Students on the Move project has helped to clear around 100 tonnes of waste across the city with many household items recycled in partnership with the University’s award winning Student Re-use scheme.

Students on the Move was a collaboration between the University, Students’ Guild and City Council. The aim of the scheme was to provide focused refuse collections and a series of ‘Community Clear-up’ days for students leaving their city residences during the Summer.

Students were encouraged to use special bin stickers which allowed bagged rubbish to be quickly identified and picked up by city refuse staff.

Students were also encouraged to recycle as many household items as possible. A special storage unit was sited on-campus to store recyclable goods as part of the Student Re-use scheme. A special event entitled ‘Freestuff’ distributed the remaining items to new students who arrived in the Autumn – so really, nothing was wasted!

“This project has really made a difference to local residents. Culverland Road is almost unrecognisable compared to previous years! It’s encouraging to see the University and City Council working together and promoting these issues amongst students.”  
*Culverland Road Resident*

**Big Dilemmas Project**
“We welcome the collaboration and partnership with the University of Exeter. It is a great opportunity for us to learn about the latest research in relation to ecosystem services, carbon capture and water management in Devon. Equally we will be able to offer students volunteering opportunities and work experience in practical conservation work.”

*Paul Gompertz, Director of Devon Wildlife Trust*

**Sustainable Travel Planning**
“The University of Exeter’s travel plan is an excellent example of partnership working with Devon County Council. The University of Exeter is a leading organisation in Devon for travel planning, demonstrating best practice and providing staff and students with improved, sustainable travel choices.”

*Gina Small, Travel Plan Officer, Devon County Council*
**Aim 6:** To reduce the environmental impact of our operational activities and make a positive contribution to the local environment, through the management of our estate.

**a) Environmental Management Systems**

**Aim 6a:** To establish a formal system for managing the University’s significant environmental aspects and impacts.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to comply with all applicable legal requirements and other requirements to which the University subscribes;
- to set and communicate clear quantifiable environmental objectives and targets;
- to put in place appropriate controls to prevent pollution;
- to ensure that the Environmental Sustainability Policy is reviewed annually, documented, implemented and maintained to ensure continual improvement in environmental performance.

**Targets:**

- to implement Phase 5 of the Acorn (BS8555) scheme within a service by 2012;
- to extend the scope of registration to include 40% (by staff numbers) of the University Services by 2013;
- to extend the scope of registration to include 100% (by staff numbers) of the University Services by 2015.

**Action Plan:**

Acorn (BS8555) Implementation Plan.

**b) Carbon Management**

**Aim 6b:** To use energy more efficiently to progressively reduce dependency on fossil fuels and contribute to achieving the UK target of 80% reduction in Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) emissions by 2050.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to reduce energy use in buildings, including residential buildings.

**Targets:**

- to reduce CO₂ emissions by 28% by 2020 relative to the 2005/06 baseline. This is equivalent to a 2% reduction every year;
- to maintain the Carbon Trust Standard Accreditation.

**Action Plan:**

Carbon Management Plan and Carbon Descent Plan.
c) Waste Management

**Aim 6c: Adopt a sustainable approach to waste management through the application of the sustainable waste hierarchy of reduce, reuse and recycle.**

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to reduce the total amount of waste generated each year;
- to divert waste from landfill through reuse and recycling initiatives;
- to consider waste a resource and realise its value wherever possible;
- to reduce the cost of waste disposal;
- to encourage and influence staff, students and visitors to follow the waste hierarchy principles.

**Targets:**

- to reduce waste arisings by 1% year-on-year;
- to recycle/compost 45% of waste by the end of 2014/15;
- to compost 95% of biodegradable waste by the end of 2014/15.

**Action Plan:**


---

d) Sustainable Travel

**Aim 6d: Reduce the local, national and global environmental impact of the University’s travel demands.**

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

- to improve the choice of sustainable transport options and facilities available to staff and students travelling to and from the University, and between its sites;
- to encourage more sustainable means of transport;
- to encourage more sustainable ways of working.

**Targets:**

- **Staff commuting** – to reduce the percentage of staff travelling by car alone to work from 35% (2010) to 30% by end 2015;
- **Student term time commuting** – to reduce the percentage of students travelling by car alone to University from 7% (2010) to 3% by 2015;
- **Business travel** – to annually calculate and publish CO2 emissions arising from all forms of business travel;
- **Visitors, goods deliveries and contractors** – to conduct a review of third party travel by April 2012.

**Action Plan:**


---

**CASE STUDY**

**Recycling Zone Scheme**

In 2010, the University launched a new Recycle Zone scheme which saw 200 recycling collection points strategically placed around the Exeter campuses with the aim of increasing the quality and quantity of recycling at the University. Collection points were established for plastic, cans, paper and card which will help the University meet its recycling target of 45% of waste recycled/composted by the end of 2015.

Launch of the Recycle Zone scheme.
e) Biodiversity

Aim 6e: To protect, preserve and enhance biodiversity on sites that the University manages or owns.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to take positive action to conserve and enhance biodiversity on sites that the University manages or owns, where local conditions allow;

• to ensure that biodiversity is considered in all major redevelopments and is addressed through the master plan process;

• to identify opportunities to raise the awareness of biodiversity and sustainable practices outlined in the Guiding Operational Principles;

• to identify opportunities to support curricular/extracurricular, community and staff volunteering activities relating to biodiversity enhancement.

Targets:

• to offer a biodiversity internship by March 2011;

• to develop the Birds and Bees campaign and publish habitat enhancement plans by July 2011;

• to continue to develop the partnership with Devon Wildlife Trust and the Exeter Wild City Campaign (via the Birds and Bees campaign);

• to develop short and medium term biodiversity targets by July 2011 and implement a delivery programme by 2015.

Action Plan:


f) Natural Resources

Aim 6f: To conserve natural resources through efficient use and management.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to reduce water consumption across the University estate.

Targets:

• to reduce water consumption in academic buildings below 7.5 cubic metres per FTE student and staff member by the end of 2012 and to maintain consumption below that level in future years;

• to reduce water consumption in residential buildings below 40 cubic metres per bed space by 2012.

Action Plan:


g) Construction and Refurbishment

Aim 6g: To reduce the environmental impact of our construction and refurbishment projects.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to ensure new building and refurbishments take into account sustainable construction principles and address: emission to air, land and water; waste generation; travel by contractors and suppliers; conversation of natural resources; energy use; and protection and enhancement of biodiversity on site;

• to encourage suppliers to adopt sustainable construction principles, thus improving their own environmental performance.

Targets:

• to ensure that all new facilities exceed current building regulations requirements for energy efficiency by 10%;

• to achieve BREEAM rating of at least “excellent” for all new buildings.

• The key performance indicators for construction waste are m$^3$ waste per 100m$^2$ floor area and m$^3$ waste per £100k project value. The University will aim to make a target reduction against these benchmarks of 5% by 2012 and 10% by 2015.

Action Plan:

BREEAM, Green Accord and Considerate Construction Frameworks.
h) Procurement

**Aim 6h:** To positively influence the environmental performance of suppliers, goods and services.

To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to develop plans for each high risk commodity area;
• to ensure that each sustainable impact area will be reviewed quarterly and specific plans will be updated by the respective commodity champion/procurement services;
• to apply whole life costing.

**Targets:**

• to achieve level 3 of the Flexible Framework for high risk commodities (procurement, food, construction, travel, utilities, paper and IT equipment by 2013);
• to attain level 5 for two areas within the Flexible Framework by 2015 for each high risk commodity area.

**Action Plan:**


---

**CASE STUDY**

**Sustainable Fresh Ideas**

Fresh Ideas, the University’s internal catering and function team, have recently introduced several sustainability inspired initiatives to reduce their environmental impact:

• A new Sustainable Food Policy has now been developed which aims to increase our range of free range eggs and organic products available for customers on our campuses; to provide guidance and relevant product information to staff members to allow them to select sustainable products and services; and to ensure menus are seasonal wherever possible.

• A water filtration and purification system has been installed so chilled water can now be provided in refillable stopper bottles, which is a cost effective and environmentally sound alternative to plastic bottled mineral water.

• A Pergol system has been purchased which enables the team to deliver milk in chilled, lidded jugs rather than individual plastic milk bottles. This has significantly reduced milk and packaging waste.

• A Green Impact finger buffet has been included in their new menus where all produce offered is locally sourced and 50% of the buffet comprises vegetarian options.

• Wherever possible Fresh Ideas also use local products and suppliers and try to arrange consolidated deliveries to reduce transport emissions.

• Waste catering oil is collected, converted into biodiesel and used in catering supplier’s delivery vehicles.

**Biodiversity**

“I am really pleased that the University is committed to the protection of biodiversity on campus as well as through its research. When I was a student here, there was not the same kind of interest for the protection of the natural environment as nowadays. I am delighted to see that so many students have shown their support today [at the Bioblitz].”

Nick Baker, TV Presenter and Naturalist, Alumnus
To achieve this aim our objectives are:

• to ensure that we comply with environmental legislation;
• to regularly review quality enhancement and quality assurance indicators for Education for Sustainability;
• to achieve a critical mass of competent staff to deliver our vision and targets;
• to provide effective communications to ensure that all staff are aware of internal and external drivers for sustainability practice in relation to their role, and that they are aware of their own personal responsibilities.

How will we do this?

• We will continue to report on environmental sustainability via the University Risk Register.
• We will seek dialogue with external quality assurance and quality enhancement bodies such as QAA and HEA, and make sure we are leading on the latest developments in this field.
• We will have dialogue with managers to develop an appropriate framework to include awareness and skills for environmental sustainability in job descriptions as appropriate and relevant to specific roles.
• We will ensure all new staff receive information about sustainability and that practice for sustainability is integrated into staff induction programmes.

• Environmental Sustainability training will be made available to all University staff.
• We will produce an annual sustainability report outlining current performance and achievements.
• We will report on performance to the Sustainability Advisory Group and Dual Assurance team on a quarterly basis
• We will monitor performance in sustainability-related external league tables.
• We will seek third party endorsement of achievements where appropriate, e.g. Carbon Trust Standard and Acorn Certification.

**Aim 7: To ensure that the aims, objectives and targets contained within this strategy are delivered to the highest standards and in a transparent and verifiable manner.**

**CASE STUDY**

**Environmental Management System Certification**

Campus Services has successfully achieved certification to Phase 3 of the Acorn (BS8555) Environmental Management System (EMS). An EMS is a formal system which enables organisations to control and improve their environmental performance. In particular, an EMS will enable an organisation to manage its environmental impacts and ensure compliance with environmental legislation. The Acorn Scheme is an officially recognised EMS standard, recommended by the government, which offers recognition for organisations evaluating and improving their environmental performance through the phased implementation of an environmental management system (EMS).

“There is a clear commitment within the organisation to achieve high standards and this has greatly benefited the [environmental management] systems development...there are a lot of “visible” positive initiatives in place and the Green Impact project appears to be of particular benefit.”

James Gibb, Acorn Auditor, AJA Registrars

**Carbon Trust Standard Award**

Staff and students at the University of Exeter have been rewarded for going green by achieving Carbon Trust Standard certification in 2009. The University had measured and then reduced its carbon footprint by 11% over a two year period (currently we have reduced emissions by 15% compared with our baseline year). The Carbon Trust Standard is the world’s first carbon award that requires an organisation to measure, manage and reduce its carbon footprint and to make real reductions year-on-year.

“Being certified with the Carbon Trust Standard is proof that an organisation has taken genuine action to reduce their direct impact on climate change by cutting carbon emissions. We congratulate the University of Exeter on this achievement and their steps to become a more sustainable organisation.”

Harry Morrison, General Manager of the Carbon Trust Standard