Your voice matters.

Draft Climate Strategy

2025 - 2030

University of Exeter

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The University of Exeter acknowledges that climate change is a critical global challenge. We are committed to taking meaningful action to address the climate emergency and leveraging our academic expertise to build a sustainable, healthy and socially just future.

We have developed this draft Climate Strategy in collaboration with the University's Advocate Climate Taskforce and Climate and Environmental Crisis Board.

We are now seeking your feedback to support the next steps.

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Survey

How you can use your voice

Your opinions on this draft strategy are important to our progress and this is an opportunity to engage in the consultation process. Your support is essential to our success, both in the development stage and its delivery.

We are initially inviting you to respond in three ways:

1. Review the **Draft Strategy** and/or these summary slides
2. Complete the **survey** with your feedback
3. Join one of two online **Teams Live** panel events and present your questions. See **website** for further details

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What have we achieved?

It's always good to look back before proceeding. Since 2019, we have achieved a great deal. You can see some highlights in our Annual Sustainability Report and in the Draft Strategy on pages 7-10.

- We've achieved this together. The University is the sum of all its members, that's you - that's all of us. We can be proud, but we have much left to do.
- We can only make progress if we each do our part, and we continue to work collectively, collaboratively and purposefully.

We have captured a few highlights...

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We have recently published several strategies which support our efforts to tackle the ecological and climate crises

- Sustainable Transport Strategy
- Responsible Procurement Strategy
- Circular Economy and Sustainable Resource Management Strategy
- Nature Positive Strategy

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Progress by numbers
HIGHLIGHTS

Carbon Reduction & Energy Efficiency

- Reduced our scope 1 and 2 emissions by **7%** since 2018/19
- **94%** reduction in carbon emissions associated with Geography field trips between 2019 and 2025
- Over **3.2 MWh** generational capacity per year from PVs on our campuses
- 6 air source heat pumps installed across our campuses

160
tonnes of CO_2
saved following installation of air source heat pumps in Cornwall House and the swimming pool

An annual saving of
289
tCO_2e
following completion of phase one of our LED lighting programme

Waste Reduction & Circular Economy

- **1,300** items have been successfully rehomed through swap shops in Cornwall, saving at least **411kg** of resources and nearly **2.5** tonnes of carbon emissions
- Community fridge on the Streatham campus redistributed over **1 tonne** of food

8,500
items reused via **Gift it, Reuse it** on our Exeter campuses

Travel and Transport

46% increase in passenger numbers following introduction of an enhanced bus service connecting St David's station and the Exeter campuses

Introduction of Liftshare app has reduced single-passenger journeys by
70,536
miles

Water management

1,166
water leaks repaired on the Streatham and St Luke's campuses following a SWW survey

Biodiversity

2,320
wildflowers planted across the Penryn campus

Food & Drink

- On the Penryn campus, **37%** of our supply chain and **87%** of catering and retail suppliers are based in Cornwall and Devon
- **32%** of meals served on Exeter campuses were vegan and vegetarian

Research, Rankings & Education

- UK's top **five** most influential climate scientists
- Over **1,500** research and education specialists working on a green future
- Environmental Science ranked **36th** in the World

100%
of lab spaces with **green accreditations**

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Our Impact

THE Impact Rankings 2024

- 10th Globally (2,000+ universities)
- 2nd in Russell Group
- 1st in the World (2nd year running) – SDG6: Clean Water & Sanitation
- 6th Globally – SDG14: Life Below Water

QS Sustainability Rankings 2025

- 32nd Globally (almost 1,800 universities)
- 19th in Europe

Times Higher Education
Impact Rankings
2024 TOP 10

QS WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS

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What do we want to achieve?

The University of Exeter is dedicated to tackling the climate emergency and driving a sustainable, just future through academic excellence.

The objectives of our Climate Strategy are to:

- Achieve net zero by reducing our scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions at source, using insetting to deal with residual emissions (maximum 10%)
- Lead in regional, national and global decarbonisation efforts
- Embed a whole-institution approach, leveraging our community's expertise
- Advance progress through strong partnerships and collaboration

Our whole institutional approach

Culture and behavioural change	Embedding sustainability into University culture as everyone's decisions (individual and organisational) move our collective action towards or away from our strategic goals.
Research and innovation	Harnessing the power of our research to make a difference across the world and working to reduce the negative impact that our research activity has on the environment.
Formal and informal education	Challenging and inspiring our community of learners to thrive, develop the skills they will need for the future and lead the change the world needs.
Reducing our operational emissions	Ambitious plans to reduce our emissions across all scopes, including in the areas of decarbonising our campuses, bought goods and services, business travel, student and staff commuting, sustainable resource management and food.
Adapting to the impacts of climate change	Being ready to adapt to a world affected by climate change to avoid disruptions to our operations/service.
Nature positivity	Our commitment to nature positivity, which aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss, is essential for achieving our climate goals.
Progress through partnerships	Our response to the climate crisis will be stronger through working in partnership.

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Why are we changing our target?

Our original 2030 net zero target relied heavily on offsetting.
Our Offsetting Task and Finish Group, chaired by Professor Peter Cox, concluded that offsetting would not make a meaningful contribution to our efforts to get to net zero and is a dangerous distraction from the vital challenge of reducing our actual emissions. Without offsetting, our 2030 net zero target is unachievable, so we have reassessed our goals.
We have removed offsetting from our targets and shifted to a science-based decarbonisation approach.

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Aligning our targets with science

Science-based targets are recognised internationally as they are grounded in the latest climate science and support the goals of the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels.

We have developed a set of science-based targets to guide our journey to net zero using the principles of the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi).
Higher education sits outside of the scope of SBTi validation but by following their criteria and recommendations, we have set targets that are robust and in line with current scientific thinking.

In setting these targets we are:

- Focusing on decarbonisation first and committing to achieve at least 90% absolute emission reductions across all scopes by 2050.
- Not using offsetting and are developing an approach to insetting.

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Our proposed targets

Near-term target: To reduce emissions by 26% by 2030 for all scope 1, 2 and 3 categories, with the exception of international student out-of-term travel.

Long-term target: To reduce absolute emissions across all scopes, including international student out-of-term travel by at least 90% by 2050 and use insetting to achieve the balance to net zero.

We also want to commit to:

- 100% of electricity consumption from renewable sources by 2030
- No new fossil fuel equipment in buildings after 2035. This covers space heating, cooking, power generation and hot water. Backup emergency plant and research equipment are exempt from this requirement.

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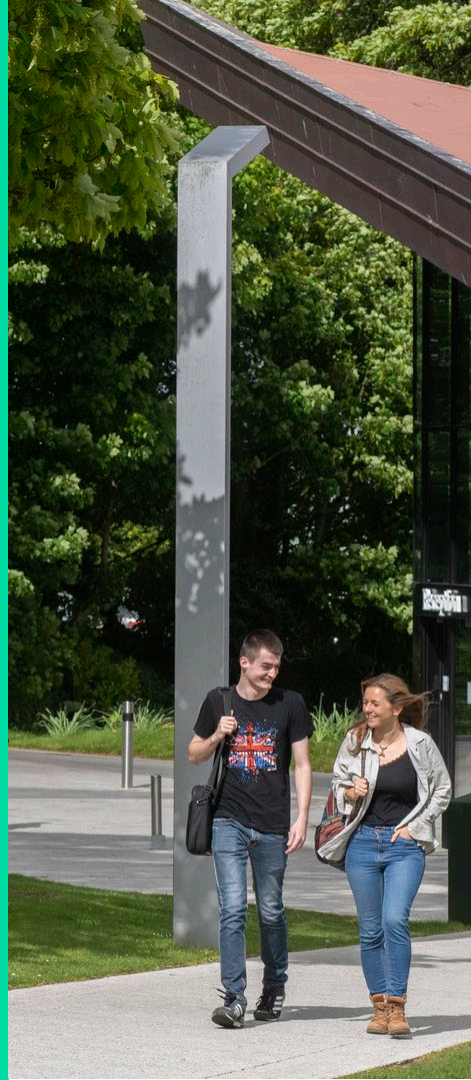
Moving forward together

There is already significant passion and commitment amongst staff and students to reducing carbon emissions. However, ‘leading meaningful action against the climate emergency and ecological crisis’ involves a shift in the actions and behaviours of all members of the University.

Although we have set an institutional response, our ambitious goals can only be achieved through individual participation and collective action. Together we have made a great start, and together we can continue to build a healthier, fairer and greener future.

We all need to consider carbon emissions in our day-to-day decision making (e.g. how we travel; what we buy; how we work; what we eat).

All of us can do something - we're keen to find out what you'd be prepared to do to help support the University's goals.



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Let’s hear your thoughts

- Do you support the revised targets?
  To what extent do you agree with the reasons for moving away from offsetting in reaching our climate targets?
- Do you think the delivery plan (pages 18–31) will effectively deliver our ambitions?
- How much are you already engaging in activities that support our climate ambitions?
  Could we be doing more, and if so, what?
- What would help you make further changes in your own actions to support our revised strategy?

These are the kinds of questions we're asking in our survey. What you think matters because without your help, we can't achieve the ambitious, but vital goals.

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What now?

- Please read through the Draft Strategy
- Complete the **survey**
- Your questions will be compiled and will be put to our expert Panel for discussion at one of the panel events
- The results of the survey will be analysed by our Insights team
- These findings will be used to inform the Draft Strategy and considered by the Climate and Environmental Crisis Board and Advocate Climate Taskforce
- The final Climate Strategy will be presented to Council for approval
- We will continue to take action to reduce our emissions
- We will regularly report on progress via University Governance processes and in our Annual Sustainability Report

Definitions: Insetting

Area-based Insetting

- Focuses on supporting carbon reduction projects within a specific geographic region that is linked to the organisation's sphere of influence, such as the local community or ecosystems surrounding its operations. For example, investing in reforestation, renewable energy infrastructure, or regenerative agriculture projects within the local area. These initiatives not only reduce emissions, but can also deliver broader environmental and social co-benefits, including improved community resilience and local biodiversity enhancements.

Value Chain Insetting

- Involves implementing emissions reduction initiatives within an organisation’s direct supply chain or operations that are accounted for as part of its carbon inventory. For example, working with suppliers to adopt to reduce their scope 1 and 2 emissions, enhancing energy efficiency in manufacturing processes, or reducing transportation emissions.

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