

Sustainability Action Plan 2026-2033

Pillars	Objectives	Outcomes by 2032/33	Targets	KPIs	Responsibility
Empower	Integrate sustainability into teaching, curricula and assessment across disciplines, including Degree Apprenticeships.	By 2033, sustainability-related principles are woven through curricula and assessment. Students encounter sustainability-related concepts and understand environmental and social impact, and have access to elective sustainability modules.	Embed student sustainability outcomes and their associated indicators into curriculum approval and enhancement processes.	By end July 2027, at least three sustainability indicators are embedded within the Continuous Assurance for Quality Enhancement process, with sustainability clearly assessed in programme approval and reapproval documentation.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Identify and pilot modules for focused sustainability curriculum enhancement activity.	By end July 2029, identify four modules, one per Faculty, and demonstrate improvement based on student sustainability outcomes data.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Develop and pilot elective sustainability modules.	By end July 2031, identify and implement four modules, one per Faculty, and evaluate using Continuous Assurance for Quality Enhancement process data and agreed student sustainability outcomes.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Embed sustainability across teaching by empowering colleagues and students to collaborate, share best practice, and demonstrate impact.	By 2033, colleagues and students are actively engaged in sustainability across teaching and learning, sharing best practice, co-creating projects, and showcasing impact through professional development, festivals, publications and panels, with Ulster University maintaining Responsible Futures accreditation as a measure of ongoing commitment.	Enable Ulster educators to develop, share and gain recognition for sustainability best knowledge exchange through accredited programmes and recognition routes.	Offer colleagues opportunities to engage with the Sustainability Quality of the Principles and Qualities of Learning, Teaching, and Student Experience through professional development pathways i.e. Higher Education Academy Fellowship Scheme and flagship events.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Further integrate Sustainability into Annual Learning Matters Festival by exploring opportunities for specific Community Hub sessions and Potential Student Led ESD/Live Projects student and colleagues panel.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Learning Matters Blog – Explore opportunities for colleagues to share sustainability case studies via the Learning Matters Blog.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Learning Matters Spotlight - Explore opportunities for colleagues to publish sustainability themed Chapters.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Maintain SOS-UK Responsible Futures Accreditation.	Dean Learning Enhancement and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Foster student-led sustainability innovation through initiatives like the Sustainable Innovation Challenge, enabling collaborative solutions to real-world environmental and social issues.	By 2033, the annual Sustainable Innovation Challenge is delivered in partnership with other Higher Education Institutes (HEIs), fostering collaboration, strengthening external partnerships and enhancing opportunities for students to develop skills in sustainable innovation and employability.	Design and deliver in partnership with other HEIs the annual Sustainable Innovation Challenge.	20-25 students each year contributing to the Sustainable Innovation Challenge.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Develop partnerships for sustainable innovation and employability.	Five new partnerships developed leading to meaningful engagement for Ulster students and/or colleagues.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Establish and promote sustainability-focused pathways and activities within the Ulster Graduate Award, providing students with opportunities for participation, engagement, and recognition.	Sustainability activities are visible and approved within the Ulster Graduate Award. A minimum of five sustainability activities within the framework.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.

	Graduate Award, so students develop knowledge, skills, and recognition for applying sustainable practices.	sustainability principles in practical projects, and are encouraged to integrate sustainable thinking and innovation into their enterprise and applied learning activities.		A minimum of one campaign per year to increase student engagement with sustainability activities	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Embed sustainability into workshop content across all cohorts, ensuring students apply sustainability principles in their learning and practical activities.	One session per programme series focuses on relevant sustainability themes, with expert-led delivery.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Partnership with external organisations to bring learning to life through case studies and examples.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Integrate sustainability into the Enterprise Placement Year workshop series and establish an annual Sustainability Prize at the Pitching Event to recognise student innovation and engagement.	One workshop delivered annually on Sustainability to Enterprise Placement Year students.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				One Sustainability prize issued annually at the Enterprise Placement Year pitching event.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Connect students with sustainable career pathways by linking them to work-based and related learning opportunities with employers offering green and sustainable jobs.	By 2033, a clear system is in place to identify and tag green and sustainable career opportunities and employers, enabling targeted promotion and communication to students and increasing awareness and engagement with sustainability-related career pathways.	Establish a tagging system where opportunities and/or employers can be identified for green/sustainable career opportunities.	Tags developed on University CRM/ student vacancy handling system and/or recruit.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Promote and communicate opportunities to students.	A minimum of one campaign per year to increase student engagement with green career opportunities.	Director Student & Graduate Success and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Embed sustainability across Library Services, by promoting best practice and sector engagement in low-impact and responsible resource management.	By 2033, sustainable practices are embedded across Library Services, through low-impact policies, and sustainability engagement initiatives.	Embed sustainable practices in Library Services through engagement with the Green Libraries Manifesto, sustainability guidance, low-impact policies, and sector leadership.	Sign up to the CILIP Green Libraries Manifesto.	Director Library Service and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Create and maintain a Sustainability LibGuide.	Director Library Service and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Promote the eFirst Book Acquisition Policy.	Director Library Service and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Influence positive impact through Chair of the SCONUL Sustainability Task and Finish Group.	Director Library Service and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Embed an inclusive, culturally competent and fair sustainability culture across Ulster by integrating Equality, Diversity and Inclusion principles, promoting health and wellbeing, strengthening student and colleague development processes, ensuring clear sustainability expectations for applicants, and maintaining fair	By 2033, Ulster University will foster an inclusive, culturally competent and fair sustainability culture, where colleagues, students and applicants are supported through equitable practices, diverse learning environments, a focus on health and wellbeing and strengthened development processes that empower everyone to contribute confidently to sustainability.	Embed equality, diversity and inclusion, including anti-racism and age-friendly principles, within Ulster's sustainability education, student experience and community engagement.	Create a QUB, Ulster, and PSNI working group to guide support for those experiencing racism and inform social justice-driven, challenge-led learning projects.	Dean Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Secure Age-Friendly University membership, deliver a three-year Age-Friendly action plan, collaborate with stakeholders (i.e. U3A, Age NI, BITC NI), and provide students with real-world learning through Age-Friendly Month activities.	Dean Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Ensure student-led sustainability initiatives and societies, are inclusive and celebrate diversity, supported by a Cultural Competency Framework.	Co-develop and embed a Cultural Competency Framework to support inclusive, diverse, and socially just student-led sustainability activities, with resources to guide programmes and initiatives.	Dean Equality, Diversity and Inclusion and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Ensure sustainability culture and expectations are clearly communicated to all applicants through the Applicant and Recruitment Platform and Candidate Briefing Documents.	Embed sustainability information within new Applicant and Recruitment Platform.	Chief People Officer and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Within Candidate Briefing Documents include a commitment around sustainability culture as an Ulster University employee.	Chief People Officer and Dean Sustainability and CSR.

	employment standards.		Enhance the Development Approval Review (DAR) process with a pilot to embed sustainability practices and performance.	Deliver pilots within the existing DAR process to test and define approaches for identifying development activities that support Health and Safety, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and Environmental Sustainability.	Chief People Officer and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Deliver annual programmes of wellbeing initiatives, maintain a network of Wellbeing Champions and provide targeted training for staff.	Maintain Living Wage Employer Accreditation.	Chief People Officer and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
Engage	Establish a strong sustainability research presence and visible hub at Ulster University.	By 2033, Ulster University has a strong, visible and connected sustainability research community. The Sustainability Reseracher Network brings together expertise from across the University, making it easier for colleagues, students and partners to engage with and contribute to sustainability research.	Strengthen Ulster University's position as a leader in sustainability by centralising access to sustainability-related research outputs, expertise, partnerships and impact case studies.	Establish a Sustainability Researcher Network and digital platform by AY 2027/28	Director Research and Impact, Research Directors and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Strengthen engagement, impact and recognition of Ulster's sustainability research.	By 2033, Ulster's sustainability research engages wide audiences and delivers positive policy and practice impact. Embedded recognition of excellence, alongside strong REF performance, events and communications, positions Ulster as a leader in sustainability research.	Enhance the visibility and impact of Ulster's sustainability-related funded research and PhD activity by integrating sustainability recognition, promotion and celebration into Research and Impact and Doctoral College programmes.	Minimum of 8 sustainability-focused research or PhD features (e.g., case studies, spotlights, interviews) published each year by Research & Impact and the Doctoral College.	Dean Doctoral College and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Annual PhD Research Festival to increase year-on-year representation of sustainability-themed outputs.	Dean Doctoral College and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Annual tracking and reporting of sustainability-related research outputs (publications, policy briefs, impact case studies) published from 2028.	Dean Doctoral College and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				At least two external partnership case studies involving sustainability-related research or PhD projects published annually.	Dean Doctoral College and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Deliver a two-year pilot to develop and implement a Social Responsibility Framework in one faculty, including the rollout of shared language and agreed methods for measuring social value.	All Schools in the pilot Faculty fully implement the Social Responsibility Framework, including use of the shared language and completion of required social-value reporting.	All Faculties.
				All participating Schools update key communications (e.g., webpages, plans, reports) to reflect the agreed social-responsibility terminology within three months of pilot launch.	All Faculties.
				All Schools submit a complete set of agreed social-value metrics using the pilot measurement approach for the annual reporting period.	All Faculties.
				Collect post-pilot colleagues feedback on the clarity, usability, and relevance of the Framework through a short survey at the end of each pilot year.	All Faculties.
				The pilot Faculty to provide at least five case studies demonstrating social value or community contribution for inclusion in the annual sustainability report.	All Faculties.

	Embed a consistent, measurable and institution-wide approach to social responsibility that strengthens social value, deepens community engagement and empowers colleagues to contribute to positive societal impact.	By 2033, Ulster University will be recognised for its approach to social value creation and measurement of positive impact. Social value and social responsibility will be embedded across community engagement at each campus and across each faculty.	Strengthen UUBS's leadership in responsible management education by embedding PRME principles and demonstrating continuous improvement through annual Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) reporting.	Annual PRME Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) report submitted, evidencing year-on-year growth in PRME-aligned teaching, research and engagement activities.	Pro Vice Chancellor & Executive Dean of The Ulster Business School.
			Deliver community engagement across all campuses through learning events and partnership meetings that advance widening-access priorities, showcase the non-build social value of the Derry~Londonderry campus expansion, and generate insights to inform annual sustainability reporting.	Each campus will deliver at least four community-engagement learning events annually, delivered online and in person, supporting widening-access priorities and highlighting the non-build social value of the Derry~Londonderry campus expansion.	Provost, Dean Widening Access & Participation and Sustainability & CSR.
				Each campus will deliver at least eight community partnership meetings per year, embedding widening-access objectives and incorporating the non-build social-value outcomes of the Derry~Londonderry campus expansion.	Provost, Dean Widening Access & Participation and Sustainability & CSR.
				All community-engagement learning events and partnership meetings to generate documented insights including widening-access impact and the non-build social-value outcomes of the Derry~Londonderry campus expansion, for incorporation into both the Annual Sustainability Report.	Provost, Dean Widening Access & Participation and Sustainability & CSR.
			Strengthen colleague engagement in social value and sustainability through an active University wide staff network.	Record the number of colleagues recognised each year for their social value and sustainability contributions through Ulster University's internal awards.	Chief People Officer & Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				A University-wide colleagues Social Value and Sustainability Network is established and actively engaged across all campuses, supported by annual Carbon Literacy training, sustainability committees, colleagues induction, and participation in initiatives such as the Net Zero Challenge.	Chief People Officer & Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Enhance		
Deliver at minimum 100% of all new buildings with low-carbon (electric) heating systems as part of the campus expansion programme.					
Pursue a 1 MW solar generation scheme at the Coleraine campus.					

	Decarbonise our campuses and infrastructure, supporting government targets of Net Zero by 2050.	By 2033, Ulster is delivering a coordinated programme of estate rationalisation, fossil-fuel-free new builds, major refurbishments and energy performance improvement that establishes a credible pathway to net zero estate emissions. Capital and operational decisions are informed by whole-life carbon, cost and climate risk, with delivery enabled through partnerships and external investment.	Deliver on emissions reductions for Scope 1 and 2 direct emissions by 51.1%.	100% of fossil fuel-heated buildings assigned a heat decarbonisation pathway within the heat decarbonisation plan.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Ensure all new and major refurbishment building projects meet high environmental performance standards.	Achieve BREEAM Excellent for 100% of new build capital projects. Achieve BREEAM Very Good for 100% of retrofit projects over £1M capital cost.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR
			Decarbonise our most material and influenceable Scope 3 emissions by improving data, procurement practices, and travel behaviours, aligned with wider sector and global decarbonisation pathways.	By 2033, material Scope 3 emissions from goods, services, capital projects, travel, and commuting will be measured and managed through better data, supplier engagement, and carbon-informed decisions, aligned with the University's sphere of influence.	Deliver on emissions reductions for Scope 3 indirect emissions by 45.7% (Purchased Goods and Services, Commuting and Business Travel).
	Engagement pathway mapped out for suppliers incorporating 55% of supply chain emissions.	Director Finance and Dean Sustainability and CSR			
	100% of top 50 suppliers providing credible actual annual carbon emissions data by 2032.	Director Finance and Dean Sustainability and CSR			
	By 2032, suppliers covering 55% of PG&S emissions have set reduction targets.	Director Finance and Dean Sustainability and CSR			
	New suppliers onboarded by 2029 are set minimal standards that include the setting of targets decarbonisation requirements dependant on size.	Director Finance and Dean Sustainability and CSR			
	Establish Cloud Computing carbon footprint.	Establish methodology to establish a carbon emissions baseline for Cloud Computing.			Chief Digital and Information Officer and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Establish International Student Commuting carbon footprint.	Establish methodology to establish a carbon emissions baseline for International student commuting.			Pro-Vice Chancellor and Executive Dean for Global Partnerships and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Create nature-rich, climate-resilient campuses.	By 2033, Ulster's campuses are visibly greener, more biodiverse and more resilient to climate risks. A Natural Capital Implementation Plan guides investment in habitats, green spaces and infrastructure.	Complete natural capital assessments, accounts and enhancement plans for Coleraine, Derry~Londonderry and Ulster University Sports Village (Jordanstown).	Natural capital assessments, accounts and enhancement plans.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Implement biodiversity net gain policy commitment within the Sustainable Design Procedure.	10% biodiversity net gain implemented for all new capital development projects.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Complete climate change risk assessments and action plans for Belfast, Coleraine, Derry~Londonderry and Jordanstown.	Completed climate change risk assessments, accounts and action plans.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
			Become a member of BITC NI's Business & Biodiversity Charter.	Business & Biodiversity Charter award.	Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR.

	Embed sustainable resource management and low carbon travel practices across University operations to support a more circular, efficient, and environmentally responsible campus.	By 2033, Ulster University demonstrates leadership in operational sustainability through responsible resource use, reduced waste and travel impacts, increased circularity, and sustained progress towards low carbon campus operations.	Deliver a co-ordinated programme of sustainable resource management and low-carbon travel initiatives that embed responsible operational practices across the University, reducing waste, advancing circularity, improving water efficiency, and supporting a shift towards lower-carbon business and commuter travel through effective policy, engagement and performance monitoring.	Annual sustainability reporting evidences full implementation of key institutional policies, including Responsible Investment, Sustainable Food, Business Travel, and Social Value in Procurement.	Director Finance and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Reduce tonnes of commercial and routine office waste output per m2 by 3%.	All Faculties & Departments.
				Improve staff engagement with furniture redistribution platform, Warp-it and expand to include local charities and NGOs.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Continue annual engagement with external Reuse Networks to promote circularity of resources and reduce waste.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR
				Maintain water consumption per m2 at 0.24 m3 (including the 27% decrease from 2018/19 levels).	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR
				Annual and Biennial monitoring demonstrates increased low-carbon travel uptake and progress on Travel Plan actions, including active travel, public transport use, and reduced single-occupancy vehicle trips.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR
				In alignment with the travel plan reduce single-use occupancy car travel by staff and students to campus by 10% at Belfast and Derry~Londonderry.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR
				In alignment with the travel plan reduce single-use occupancy car travel by staff and students to campus by 7% at Coleraine.	Director Estates Services and Dean Sustainability and CSR
	Embed responsible sustainability research standards across Ulster University.	By 2033, environmental sustainability is embedded across Ulster University's research ecosystem, supported by implementation of the Concordat principles and continued growth in Sustainable Labs accreditations.	Strengthen the environmental sustainability of Ulster University's research ecosystem through adoption of the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice, achieving supporter status by 2027, progressing to signatory status subject to institutional readiness, and increasing Sustainable Labs accreditations year on year.	Achieve supporter status of the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice by 2027 and progress to signatory status subject to institutional readiness.	Director Research and Impact, Research Directors and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Year on year increase in the number of Sustainable Labs accreditations.	Director Research and Impact, Research Directors and Dean Sustainability and CSR.
	Enhance Ulster University's transparency and sustainability performance by delivering robust annual reporting and completing all statutory and sector benchmarking submissions that demonstrate compliance and drive continuous improvement.	By 2033, Ulster University enhances its transparency, accountability, and performance by delivering high-quality, timely, and comprehensive sustainability reporting that meets all statutory obligations, strengthens sector benchmarking, and informs continuous improvement across environmental, social, and governance priorities.	Ensure delivery of complete, timely annual reporting and benchmarking submissions that demonstrate compliance, transparency and measurable progress across key sustainability performance areas.	Publish an annual sustainability report with externally verified carbon data and achieve full compliance with all statutory climate reporting requirements, including the NI Climate Change Reporting Regulations.	Dean Sustainability and CSR.
				Complete all required annual sustainability benchmarking and ranking submissions, including BiTC NI Environmental Benchmarking and BiTC CORE Standard, THE Impact Rankings, QS Sustainability Rankings, People & Planet University League, HESA Estates Return, EAUC Sustainability Leadership Scorecard, SDG Accord Report and Green Key Certification.	Director Estates Services, Director of Business Intelligence & Planning, Pro Vice Chancellor & Executive Dean of The Ulster Business School and Dean Sustainability and CSR.