

THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING

SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY **STRATEGY**



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow



Foreword

Ensuring we deliver a sustainable future for all is a moral and social imperative.



At the University of Strathclyde, we are committed to leading by example and acting as an enabler of positive change, in Glasgow and beyond. We are proud of our strong track record of partnering across sectors to create equitable solutions that deliver real-world impact and support the **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).

I am proud to introduce our new Social and Environmental Sustainability Strategy, which represents a whole institution approach to creating a fair, resilient and sustainable University. It builds on and expands the work carried out as part of our strategic Vision 2025, and supports our new institutional strategy, **Strathclyde 2030**, which places social and environmental sustainability as a key priority.

The publication of this strategy comes at a pivotal time for UK higher education institutions. For example, we are already experiencing the impacts of climate change locally and globally, and our Net Zero targets are no longer far away. The recent cost-of-living and energy security crises only serve to underline how important it is that no one is left behind through the transition to a more sustainable world. Now more than ever, Universities must demonstrate their relevance through serving as anchors for communities and turning academic thinking into action.

The next five years will see a step change in our overarching ambitions to embed social and environmental sustainability into the way we live, work, study and play. Everyone has a role to play in safeguarding our planet for future generations, as made clear through the breadth and depth of ambition in this strategy. Thank you to all our staff, students and community who have contributed to our progress to date. I am confident that by continuing to work together, we can go further, faster to achieve our goals.

Lucy Noble
CFO/Chair;
Sustainability Strategic Steering Group

Introduction

The University of Strathclyde recognises that as a socially progressive and leading international technological institution, all staff and students have an integral role to play in addressing the significant and urgent environmental and societal challenges we face.

It is our ambition that we lead by example and ensure our actions contribute to the necessary changes for promoting the long-term well-being of people and planet. We will do this by placing sustainability at the heart of all the University’s activities. We will set ambitious targets to decarbonise our operations, and drive innovation in our teaching and research to support the skills and competencies needed for rapid and just social, economic and environmental transitions.

Significant change must be achieved through targeted, measurable and verifiable steps. To keep us on track, we will be developing a Strategy Implementation Plan. This will provide a more detailed breakdown of our deliverables and metrics across all four themes from 2025-2030, ensuring accountability and progress measurement.

As a signatory to the SDG Accord (The University and College Sector’s Collective Response to the Global Goals), we have a responsibility to demonstrate our world-leading ambitions and ensure our actions contribute to the necessary changes for promoting the long-term well-being of people and planet.

Scope

This strategy outlines the responsibilities of all staff and students, and our duty of care to our community, in Glasgow and beyond.



Our Vision

To foster a sustainable future for all.

Our Mission

To lead and collaborate in advancing environmental, social, and economic sustainability.

Our Commitment

Social and environmental sustainability sits at the heart of our institutional strategy. It is a key priority that supports the achievement of the Strathclyde 2030 goals for delivering:

- Outstanding education and student experience
- World leading research
- Transformative innovation and impact
- Global engagement
- Operational excellence

Within Strathclyde 2030, our Institutional Strategy, we have specific sustainability Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that will support and drive these ambitions. We recognise that sustainability is integral to all institutional KPIs and this strategy seeks to pave the way towards a whole institution approach where it is considered in everything we do.

Key Performance Indicators



KPI 15:

All education programmes will have programme level learning outcomes related to education for sustainable development by 2027, which encompass the integration of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development skills and competencies, the UN Sustainable Development Goals and appropriate pedagogical methods.

Increase our research and innovation related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) year on year.

KPI 16:

80% reduction from 2018/19 baseline for Scope 1, 2 and Scope 3 (where this is quantifiable) by 2030, with the remainder of Scope 3 and 4 to be routinely reviewed and played in as appropriate over the planning period, achieving Net Zero by 2040 at the latest.

This strategy and its KPIs have been shaped through extensive engagement with students and staff across the University. We are committed to regularly review our ambitions and progress to ensure the strategy remains effective and continues to reflect the evolving perspectives of our community and the context in which we operate. The activities set out in this strategy will also contribute to the achievement of [several other University KPIs](#).

Our Approach to Sustainability

We will achieve impact and transformation by embedding sustainability in all we do. At the heart of the strategy are four interconnected themes:



Theme 1:

Active
Citizenship
for All



Theme 2:

Education for
Sustainability



Theme 3:

Research and
Innovation for
a Better World



Theme 4:

Operational
Sustainability

These themes are built on a core belief: we can only make a real difference for our environment and society if we work together. That means fair and effective partnerships with people from different disciplines, industries, communities, and across different countries and cultures.



Delivery Principles

Our five principles underpin the delivery of our strategy, and are aligned with our institutional values.

1 Inclusive & Purposeful Leadership:

We will anticipate future challenges and set ambitious yet realistic goals, sharing our progress openly.

2 Empowering Communities:

We will nurture a culture where everyone feels valued and heard. We will motivate people to act by embracing diversity, uplifting underrepresented voices, and responding to the needs of both our local community and the wider world.

3 Environmental Stewardship:

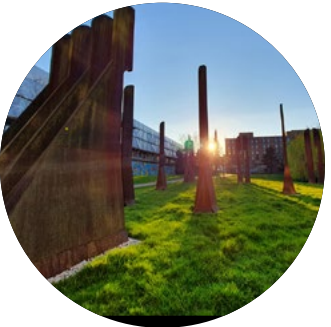
We will work to reduce impacts of unsustainable development, restoring our environment and enhancing long-term human well-being.

4 Ethical Partnerships:

We will support a just transition by collaborating across disciplines, sectors and communities to co-create innovative solutions to complex challenges.

5 Whole Systems Approach:

We will embed sustainability into governance, operations and strategy – ensuring ethical, evidence-based decisions across all areas of University life.



SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY




THEME 1



Active Citizenship for All

Our ambition: Everyone has a role to play in addressing environmental and social challenges. Being an active citizen means taking informed, intentional and sustained actions to help address these challenges. We want our staff and students to understand and fulfil their potential to make a positive impact on the world. We will support them to make changes in their life and work and provide wide ranging opportunities to share their expertise, wins and know-how.



Active Citizenship: Motivating and inspiring people to make a positive difference. Active citizens draw on knowledge and understanding to participate effectively in public life, advocate for change and take informed action on the issues they care about, often with a social or environmental focus.

We will provide staff and students with the knowledge and opportunity to make informed, impactful change. We will achieve this by:

- Providing staff and students with the training, tools, opportunities and support they need to become active citizens both within and outside the University.

1.2 Mainstreaming active citizenship for all

We will support staff and students to identify and use their expertise to influence, empower and accelerate the changes needed for a better world for all.

We will achieve this by:

- Leveraging our high-impact policy centres to embed inclusive development and socially progressive approaches into Government policy.
- Providing our knowledge, skills and capacity to partners and communities worldwide to help drive innovation and deliver transformational societal change.
- Delivering innovative and socially progressive public engagement programmes that reflect the diverse needs, identities and experiences of people in Glasgow and globally.
- Enhancing our collaboration between operational and academic expertise to drive innovation within our own institution.
- Involving the University community in the review, design and evaluation of policies and plans relating to sustainable development.

THEME 1: Active Citizenship for All

CASE STUDY:
Giving Items a Second Life: Reuse Student and Staff Collaborations

In 2024, the University launched a student move-out reuse programme to collect unwanted but usable items from students leaving university accommodation. Initially delivered in partnership with Hazaar, the project collected 1,517 items, diverting 2,146 kg of waste from landfill. Of this, 1,195 kg was donated to local charities, and 112 entering students accessed affordable essentials through pop-up sales. The project also created paid opportunities for four student interns.

Building on this success, the University took over the project in 2025, expanding its reach. In Summer 2025, over 2,500 items were collected, sorted by student interns, and redistributed to new students during Freshers Week, in partnership with Accommodation Services and the Strathclyde Students' Union (USSA). The initiative remains student-led, with six interns supporting its delivery. It continues to reduce waste, cut costs, and help ease the cost of living for incoming students.

Alongside this, the Hazaar app remains available to Strathclyde students and staff. The platform allows users to buy and sell items locally using designated campus drop-off points.



This commitment to reuse is also demonstrated by the University Library's partnership with Better World Books (BWB). Withdrawn library stock such as superseded editions, out of date texts or damaged books are donated to BWB, who resell books online. A portion of the profits supports global library and literacy initiatives, helping improve educational access worldwide. Books that cannot be resold are

either donated to communities in need or recycled responsibly, ensuring that as few materials as possible end up in landfill.

SDG ALIGNMENT:



THEME 1: Active Citizenship for All

Highlights

Harnessing Strathclyde’s Sustainability Expertise

The University’s comprehensive 2025 staff sustainability survey revealed the remarkable depth of environmental engagement across our community, uncovering extensive networks of advocacy and action that extend far beyond campus boundaries. The survey demonstrated that our staff are not passive observers but active environmental advocates, with many belonging to multiple sustainability organisations simultaneously and channelling their expertise into both local and global environmental movements.

The findings revealed strong connections to leading environmental organisations including

WWF, Greenpeace, RSPB, The Woodland Trust, and Wildlife Trust, alongside professional sustainability engagement through bodies like the Royal Society of Chemistry and IEEE Planet 2030. Particularly striking was the local-global approach evident in our community, with staff actively supporting Scottish initiatives like Trees for Life in the Highlands and Friends of the Earth Glasgow, while also engaging with international environmental movements. This dual engagement shows how our people are connecting global environmental challenges with regional conservation needs and local active travel campaigns.



Centre for Sustainable Development

In 2020, the University of Strathclyde created the Centre for Sustainable Development. It brings together all parts of the institution to help share innovative ideas, and coordinates efforts across the University. The Centre works on four main areas: transforming how sustainability is taught, supporting research that drives real change, encouraging students and staff to ‘take action’, and providing University-wide support for sustainability projects.



Social Innovation

At Strathclyde, we know that the world needs bold social innovation now more than ever. The gap between today’s complex challenges and the solutions we have is growing — from climate change and homelessness to social and economic inequality, digital poverty, and wellbeing.

That’s why we’re leading from the front. Strathclyde is home to a powerful network of centres shaping real-world impact, policy, and investment across Scotland, the UK and beyond — including CELCIS, the Institute for Inspiring Children’s Futures, the Centre for Energy Policy, the Fraser of Allander Institute, the Strathclyde Institute for Sustainable Communities, the European Policy Research Centre, the Global Renewables Centre, the Centre for Health Policy, and the Anti-Racism Observatory for Scotland.

Together, they demonstrate how a socially progressive, technologically bold university can help build fairer, greener, more equitable and resilient futures.

Local Zero Podcast

The Local Zero Podcast is a collaboration between researchers based in Strathclyde’s Institute for Sustainable Communities, Regen and a wide range of external guests. The podcast has been running since 2020 and celebrated its 100th episode in 2024! It provides an entertaining and accessible way to engage with the challenges and opportunities in achieving a just transition to Net Zero, breaking down often complex academic topics into more bitesize chunks for listeners. Past topics covered include biodiversity net gain, enhancing the impact of Community Benefit Funds, and carbon offsetting for communities.



THEME 2



Education for Sustainability

Our ambition: Sustainability skills are increasingly critical for both current and future generations. To achieve our goals, it is important that all Strathclyders understand the fundamentals of sustainability, no matter their background or discipline. We will ensure that all the education we provide is equipping students, staff and stakeholders with the knowledge and skills needed to actively prioritise and deliver a sustainable future for all.



This theme specifically supports the **UNIVERSITY KPI 15:** All education programmes will have programme level learning outcomes related to education for sustainable development by 2027, which encompass the integration of the UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development skills and competencies, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, and appropriate pedagogical methods.

2.1 Understanding and communicating sustainability

To empower informed discussions, debate and decision-making processes, we are, and will continue to equip all our students and staff with the knowledge and understanding of key challenges surrounding sustainability.

We will achieve this by:

- Ensuring all staff and students have a clear, shared understanding of what sustainability means.
- Providing continual and consistent access to appropriate learning opportunities for all staff.
- Delivering sustainability training to all students throughout their learner journey.

2.2 Building skills and competencies for a better world

To support delivery we will ensure that sustainability and active citizenship are embedded across curricula at all levels.

We will achieve this by:

- Mainstreaming Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)(UNESCO) across our formal curricula.
- Aligning ESD skills and competencies with relevant disciplinary standards and accreditations.
- Supporting students to assess their growth and development in terms of skills and competencies to tackle sustainability challenges.
- Partnering with external organisations to give our students real-life experience and skill-building opportunities through secondments, placements and graduate opportunities.



THEME 2: Education for Sustainability

CASE STUDY: Vertically Integrated Projects for Sustainable Development (VIP4SD)

The University of Strathclyde pioneered the first **Vertically Integrated Projects for Sustainable Development (VIP4SD)** programme in UK Higher Education, creating an innovative research-based education model that engages undergraduate students in real-world SDG-focused research. This groundbreaking approach allows students from different disciplines and year groups to collaborate on credit-bearing research projects, with the unique opportunity to remain involved throughout their university career. The programme's impact was recognised internationally, winning the **2020 International Green Gown Award** for Student Engagement and the **AASHE Campus Sustainability Research Award**.

Building from successful pilot projects, VIP4SD has grown significantly and is now being introduced across all four University faculties. The programme currently engages **approximately 200 students working across 20 interdisciplinary research projects**, each addressing critical sustainability challenges. A standout example is the **Apps4Good** project, where Electronic and Electrical Engineering students developed a mobile app to support Homeless Project Scotland's operations in Glasgow. The student team—who are volunteers with the charity—created GPS-enabled technology that allows the public to report rough sleepers' locations and needs, enabling volunteers to deliver aid more efficiently. The project demonstrates how students

transition from knowledge consumers to knowledge producers, developing technical skills alongside real-world competencies in ethics, GDPR compliance, and community co-design. The programme has also created a valuable PhD pipeline, with VIP4SD alumni progressing to postgraduate research positions. This won the International VIP Innovation Award in 2023.

The University's leadership in this space has catalysed international collaboration. Strathclyde is now working with higher education institutions across the UK, Sweden, US, and Kenya to replicate the VIP4SD model and develop a global network. As a founding member of the International VIP Consortium of over 40 institutions, the University is leading discussions around Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) to connect complementary SDG-focused research programmes worldwide, creating unprecedented opportunities for cross-cultural learning and international student-staff research exchange.

SDG ALIGNMENT:



PLUS alignment with all SDGs through project-specific research focus areas addressing global sustainability challenges.



THEME 2: Education for Sustainability

Highlights

There are numerous ways in which we are mainstreaming sustainability across our educational offerings both as credit bearing and extracurricular opportunities. This includes strengthening our partnerships with our student body and international partners in the development and delivery of educational opportunities, and auditing of our progress.



Working in Partnership

Since 2021, the **Centre for Sustainable Development** has been delivery a credit bearing programme as part of the Peking University. Globex Summer School to explore Sustainability Theories and Practice. With over 90 students each year, this course attracts under and postgraduate students from across the world to the Beijing campus to explore a diverse range of sustainability challenges and opportunities for new ways of working.



Sustainability Learning Passport

At Strathclyde, we recognise that everyone is starting from a different place in terms of the knowledge and understanding they have of sustainability and sustainable development. With this in mind, we have developed an online learning platform open to all students and staff at the University where they can build their knowledge, understanding and interests in and of sustainability.

Everyone begins with an Introduction to Sustainable Development, and the Climate Accelerator courses. These short offerings are not credit bearing but provide a certificate or badge for completion. Individual ‘Sustainability Learning Passport’ achievements can be shared with others to show the work and progress you have undertaken in this area.



Responsible Futures Accreditation

In 2023, the University achieved its first Responsible Futures Accreditation from Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK). The programme supports students and staff to work in partnership to integrate sustainability and climate justice through the formal, informal and subliminal curriculum using a tried-

and-tested framework of criteria. Assessed through a student led audit every two years, this accreditation talks to our commitment to work hand in hand with our student body, learn from across participating institutions and make the transformative changes needed.

Sustainability Festival

A highlight of our student engagement in March every year is the Sustainability Festival – an opportunity for students to showcase their work across undergraduate, Masters and PhD programmes. The conference welcomes keynote speakers, and an expert panel to judge pitches from our Vertically Integrated Projects for Sustainable Development, and student societies to access funding to expand their sustainable practices and research.



THEME 3



Research and Innovation for a Better World

Our ambition: The University of Strathclyde has a leading reputation as a place of useful learning, where our academic partnerships with external stakeholders create real-world impact. We will continue to build on this, making tangible change by leading and participating in research and innovation that tackles complex sustainability challenges.



This theme specifically supports the **UNIVERSITY KPI 15:** Increase our research and innovation related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) year on year.

3.1 Mainstreaming Sustainability in our Research and Innovation

We are committed to integrating sustainability into every stage of the research and innovation journey, both in what we do and how we do it.

We will achieve this by:

- Offering continuous and consistent access to learning opportunities for students and staff engaged in research and innovation.
- Making sustainability an integral part of how we think about and assess our research.
- Providing our students, staff and partners with the skills and knowledge to evaluate the broad spectrum of impacts their research and innovation might create.

3.2 Research and Innovation for a better world

We will strive to ensure that our research and innovation efforts help to advance local, national and global sustainability goals whenever reasonable.

We will achieve this by:

- Using internationally recognised and endorsed frameworks (e.g., UN SDGs) as a lens to consider the design, delivery and impact of our research.
- Collaborating across disciplines and sectors through inter- and transdisciplinary approaches, to encourage new ways of thinking and unique perspectives.
- Working in ethical and equitable partnerships, ensuring that diversity and inclusion are cornerstones of our research culture.
- Co-creating, evaluating and sharing our research and outputs openly.
- Communicating our research with, and for, a broad range of audiences in ways that are meaningful and easily understood.
- Maximising the positive impacts our research may have on sustainable development whilst reducing and mitigating any negative impacts (directly and indirectly.)



THEME 3: Research and Innovation for a Better World

The University has seven interdisciplinary Strategic Themes all of which contribute to the sustainability agenda - **People, Place & Policy; Environment, Infrastructure and Transport; Innovation & Entrepreneurship; Energy; Health & Wellbeing; Measurement, Digital & Enabling Technologies; and, Advanced Manufacturing and Materials**—that provide focus for research and knowledge exchange activity aligned with local, national, and global needs.

This thematic approach breaks down traditional faculty silos, creating new interdisciplinary connections and fostering an open, inclusive culture that stimulates partnerships and enables researchers to collaborate across disciplines. By bringing together the full breadth of Strathclyde’s research capabilities, the Strategic Themes ensure the University directly addresses pressing societal challenges, from energy transition and sustainable manufacturing to health innovation and policy development, positioning Strathclyde as a leader in delivering useful learning for a sustainable future.

HIGHLIGHTS



Advanced Manufacturing & Materials

The University of Strathclyde launched the Advanced Net Zero Innovation Centre (ANZIC) in 2025 as a major national facility supporting the UK’s transition to a net zero economy through innovation, collaboration, and advanced manufacturing. Located at the Rolls-Royce facility in Inchinnan, Renfrewshire, ANZIC provides open-access, industrial-scale research, testing, and development capabilities for clean energy, transport, and digital technologies. The Centre combines Strathclyde’s world-class research with expertise from the Power Networks Demonstration Centre (PNDC) and the National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS), creating a unique ecosystem strategically aligned with both the UK Government’s Net Zero Strategy and the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan.

Environment, Infrastructure & Transport

In the lead-up to the 2023 UCI Cycling World Championships, Strathclyde launched the Active Mobility Hub. The Hub is a cross-University initiative using research, knowledge exchange, and community action to champion cycling and active travel as drivers of healthier, low-carbon living. This work addresses numerous SDG, including health, sustainable cities, and reducing inequalities. The Hub’s activity has been establishing and expanding, bringing in researchers from more disciplines as well as external practitioners, securing external funding, and leading local and global conversations on active mobility.



THEME 3: Research and Innovation for a Better World

HIGHLIGHTS

Innovation & Entrepreneurship

Researchers from the entrepreneurial mindset team, with support from Scottish Government, are helping young children develop an entrepreneurial mindset. Outputs include ‘Meet the RECCO Crew’, an illustrated book series that turns the abstract entrepreneurial mindset concepts of Resilience, Empathy, Creativity, Collaboration, and Optimism (RECCO) into fun, cartoon characters that children can relate to and learn from in a way that is natural and engaging for them.

Other researchers from the Innovation and Entrepreneurship theme have been part of the UKRI funded InterAct programme which encourages manufacturing companies to innovate and adopt digital technologies to become more competitive, sustainable and resilient.



Energy

The University launched the **Scottish Global Renewables Centre (GRC)** in 2023 as an innovative knowledge exchange hub connecting Scotland’s renewable energy expertise with international development partner countries—Malawi, Zambia, and Rwanda. Addressing the critical SDG 7 challenge of affordable, reliable, sustainable energy for all, the GRC enables collaboration to tackle unique energy access challenges faced by each partner country through networking, shared learning, and targeted resource development. The GRC has also enhanced global citizenship at Strathclyde through research collaborations, funding bids, and student-led Vertically Integrated Projects focused on real-world renewable energy challenges, creating meaningful learning opportunities while addressing pressing sustainability needs.



Health & Wellbeing

The University of Strathclyde is hosting professionals from health and social care to conduct part-time PhD and MPhil research. The students merge professional practice and academic rigour to derive challenge-led innovation in their respective fields of work. With over 30 students across all four Faculties convened under the ‘Future Hospital & Beyond its Walls’ initiative, the centre of learning provides outcomes and guidance for sustainable healthcare development.



People, Place & Policy

Sustainability is a key focus of our research and collaboration efforts. One example is the project “Margin to Mainstream: Using Engagement to Change Entrenched Consumption Practices Around Food Waste”, in collaboration with the University of Adelaide. Working with Zero Waste Scotland and Green Industries South Australia, this project explores how everyday engagement, particularly on social media, can help shift accepted ways of behaving around food waste, especially when guided by thoughtful leadership and strategic messaging.



Measurement, Digital & Enabling Technologies

STRATHLab is an ecosystem for the entire community at the University of Strathclyde, and for our citizens, commercial, community, and civic partners. This ‘Living Lab’ uses inclusive co-design to identify and prioritise what matters, helping to co-create solutions that solve real-world problems, and generate evidence of impact in inclusive and socially progressive ways.


STRATHLab has a collection of state-of-the-art research and innovation facilities including design space, labs, and innovation zones, enabling it to operate here, there and everywhere. These range from a Virtual Reality lab space to modelling ‘real-world’ spaces such as GP surgeries, pharmacies, or rooms around the home. Examples include our Fabrication Lab, The Centre for Co-Creation of Rehabilitation Technology and the Laboratory for Innovation in Autism.

THEME 4



Operational Sustainability

Our ambition: Acting in an environmentally responsible way is vital if we are to continue delivering world-leading education and impact into the future. To ensure we are delivering positive, fair outcomes for all, we will embed sustainability across all operational activities. Continue to work towards Net Zero emissions by 2040, and developing a greener and more climate-resilient campus.

 This theme specifically supports the **UNIVERSITY KPI 16:** 80% reduction from 2018/19 baseline for Scope 1, 2 and Scope 3 (where this is quantifiable) by 2030, with the remainder of Scope 3 and 4 to be routinely reviewed and played in as appropriate over the planning period, achieving Net Zero by 2040 at the latest.

The actions we take now to address the climate and nature crises will determine our ability to reach our future Net Zero target. We will take a whole University approach, working with our community, and local and global stakeholders to implement known solutions and adopt innovative approaches to reduce our environmental impact.

4.1 A whole institution response

We will set an example by taking bold steps to decarbonise our operations. Ensuring that sustainability is embedded across all our operational activities requires strong leadership and collective action, with all faculties and departments actively participating.

We will achieve this by:

- Delivering and enabling engagement activities which promote a positive and inclusive culture.
- Empowering staff with tailored information, guidance, tools and training to enable everyone across all faculties and departments to understand and minimise the impact of their operational activities.
- Incorporating sustainability into all University decision-making and governance, ensuring consideration of impacts, for example, investment cases and project approvals.
- Updating and implementing relevant institutional sustainability policies, which inform staff and student activities, reduce emissions and improve monitoring processes.
- Leading and engaging with sustainability networks, adopting appropriate best practices and standards that align with improving our operational performance.

THEME 4: Operational Sustainability

4.2 Delivering operational emissions reductions

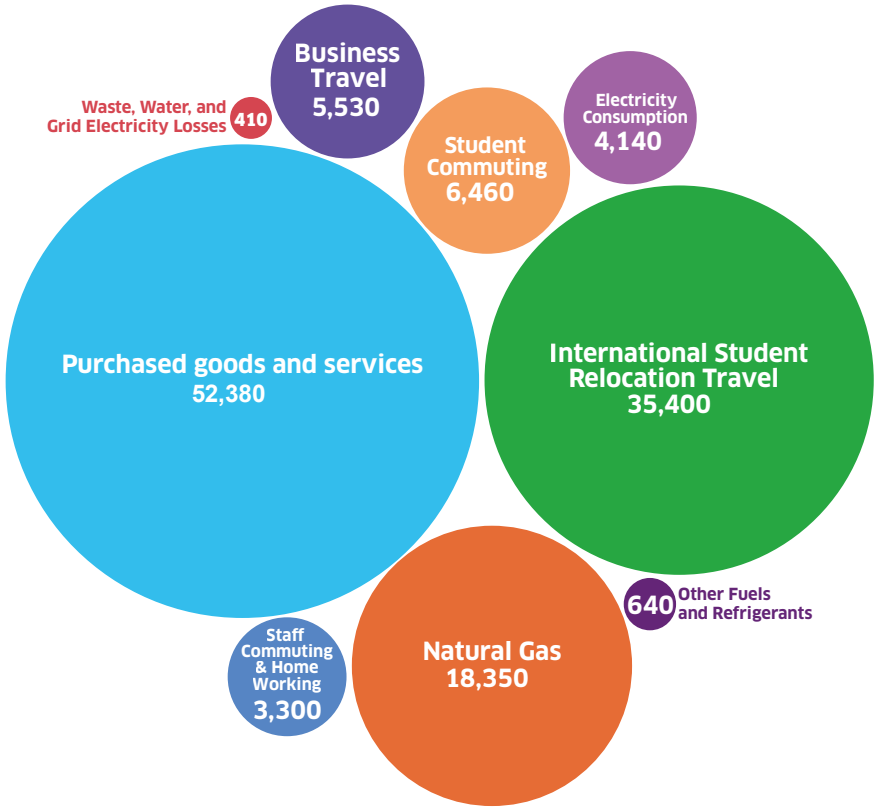
Our campus will serve as an example of sustainability: a vibrant, green, healthy space for all.

Our pathway to Net Zero requires continued investment across our estate, including building refurbishments, energy efficiency measures, new heating, cooling and lighting solutions, and renewable power generation systems.

We will achieve this by:

- Reducing further our direct and indirect operational emissions associated with fuel and energy usage across our estate (Scope 1 & 2).
- Preparing a pathway to Net Zero for the decarbonisation of our estate. This will include infrastructure maintenance and refurbishment, energy efficiency projects and taking steps to ensure we use our buildings in the best way.
- Working with our Glasgow partners and stakeholders to deliver decarbonisation regionally. For example, continuing our support of Glasgow City Council in delivering their Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy, specifically a District Heat Network covering the Glasgow City Innovation District.
- Continuing to reduce the impact of the materials we use, finding innovative ways to reduce our embodied carbon and embed circular economy and reuse principles into our day-to-day activities.
- Researching funding options to support our shift to a sustainable estate and operational model.

University Carbon Emissions by (tCO2e) category



THEME 4: Operational Sustainability

4.3 Being transparent and accountable of our progress

Having an open and robust approach to progressing our goals is vital to build trust across our staff, students and wider community. We will deliver accurate and timely reports on our progress towards the ambitions set out in this strategy and supporting implementation plan. We commit to following best practices in both emissions reporting, aligning with the SDGs and other sector and international metrics and standards as they emerge.

We will achieve this by:

- Reporting our progress annually, building on statutory climate change and sustainability reporting requirements set by the Scottish Government.
- Ensuring that our Net Zero target remains aligned with up-to-date climate science, and continuing to improve our data quality, particularly for Scope 3 emissions sources.
- Adopting appropriate sustainability standards and integrating them into future capital projects.
- Researching and adopting additional standards and tools to measures our success beyond carbon reduction, including social impact and inclusion, climate risk and adaptation.

4.4 Leaving no-one behind

Our operations are critical to the delivery of our Net Zero ambitions and our ability to withstand, adapt to, and recover from the impacts of climate change. We will work with our staff, students, partners, and local communities to maximise the societal benefits that our estate can bring and ensure nobody is left behind during the transformation

We will achieve this by:

- Identifying future climate risks to our estate and operations and implementing an action plan to minimise risks and strengthen our resilience against future climate change impacts.
- Promoting, protecting and restoring biodiversity and the natural environment across our estate and, where possible, that of our partners and local communities.
- Embedding sustainability within and beyond the laboratory environment and into our scientific research through direct collaboration.
- Putting sustainable development and social inclusion principles at the heart of the University's Ethical Investment policy.
- Developing projects with input from our communities and those most impacted by our activities, delivering meaningful community benefits wherever possible.



THEME 4: Operational Sustainability

CASE STUDY:
TIC: Sustainability in Action

Since opening in 2015, our Technology and Innovation Centre has become a true exemplar in sustainability, led by our Conferencing and Events Team.

With support from Sustainable Strathclyde, the team applied for the [Green Tourism](#) award scheme, and in 2019 achieved their bronze award, followed by the silver and gold awards in quick succession.

The team have continued to look at all aspects of their products and services which includes the venue itself, the catering offering, delegate travel to the venue, AV and IT equipment required for events, and the materials used by organisers, delegates and exhibitors. This has resulted in the team creating their own green policy, with highlights including building energy efficiency measures, onsite water bottling, active travel facilities and initiatives and hands on support for delegates.

Our Catering Team have also worked hard to improve their sustainable menu offering, including implementing a plant-forward approach, removing beef

from all menus in 2023 and emphasising more veggie and vegan options. Catering also help clients to prevent food waste by donating to the University of Strathclyde Foodbank Society, or to one of their approved food redistribution partners such as Launch Foods.

TIC's commitment to continual improvement in sustainability and wellbeing, and supporting clients to make their events as green as possible has been widely recognised, with the team winning a Glasgow Business Award for Green Champion, and the Green Meetings Gold Award.

SDG ALIGNMENT:



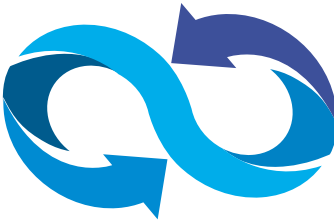
THEME 4: Operational Sustainability

HIGHLIGHTS

National Manufacturing Institute for Scotland

The University is a founding partner and operator of the £57M National Manufacturing Institute Scotland (NMIS). This groundbreaking facility opened in 2023 and aims to boost the Scottish manufacturing community through hosting world-class R&D facilities and working with businesses of all sizes and sectors.

Not only is NMIS an exemplar of Strathclyde’s sector-leading approach to collaboration with industry, government and academia; it embodies Strathclyde’s strategic commitment to sustainability.



Circular Economy Across Campus

The materials we use can have significant social and environmental impacts, so we are committed to using our resources more efficiently. In 2021, we achieved 100% waste diverted from landfill and continue to explore ways to improve our recycling infrastructure and embed circularity into our operations.

Since 2024, the University has made strong progress in furniture upcycling and refurbishment, with 263 items reused or refurbished to date. This has resulted in savings of over £34,000 compared to purchasing new furniture and avoided an estimated 19,368 kgCO₂e.

Sustainable Labs Milestones

In 2016, the University of Strathclyde launched Sustainable Labs to drive sustainability within laboratories. Early champions were celebrated through the first Sustainable Labs Awards, helping build momentum for change. In 2019, the S-Lab PhD Credit Course earned international recognition for its innovative approach. Progress continued in 2023 with the launch of the LEAF Awards, helping reduce energy use and waste across labs without compromising research. That same year, the team published its first academic paper, calling for mandatory sustainability training in laboratories and sharing insights from a fume cupboard case study.



Delivering the Strategy

Implementation

This strategy represents a step change in our overarching ambitions to embed social and environmental sustainability into the way we live, work, study and play. Significant change must be achieved through targeted, measurable and verifiable steps. To keep us on track, we will be developing a Strategy Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan will provide a more detailed breakdown of our deliverables and metrics across all four themes from 2025-2030, ensuring accountability and progress measurement.



Governance

As a large and diverse institution, it is essential that the University fosters a culture of shared ownership of our ambition and goals, where all members of our community – students, staff, and partners – can actively contribute to and benefit from our sustainability journey. Our governance structure includes clear roles, responsibilities and decision-making pathways, supported by regular reporting and performance reviews. This approach will not only track progress against our goals and KPIs but also ensure our stakeholders' voices remain central to how the strategy adapts and evolves over time.

The University's existing Sustainability Strategic Steering Group (SSSG) will oversee progress of the Strategy. This group includes representation from both academic and operational staff and elected student officers. Its membership and Terms of Reference will be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

Reporting and Monitoring

An annual report will be published on the University website to ensure accountability and transparency. This, along with in-year progress reports for SSSG, ET and Court, will cover all elements of the strategy and Implementation Plan, including engagement, training, research, and estate environmental performance metrics. Monitoring methods and KPIs will be agreed during Implementation Plan development.

Climate change and emissions reporting are currently managed by the Sustainable Strathclyde Team, with data drawn from across the University. The main submission is the annual Public Bodies Climate Change Duties (PBCCD) report to the Scottish Government, which provides the most complete record of the University's emissions and climate actions.

The University will also monitor educational, research and knowledge exchange activities for sustainability alignment, using systems such as PURE and new tools where needed, supporting Faculty-led action plans. A review of current systems will assess how best to integrate reporting on climate change and sustainability across the institution



Be Part of the Change

Our Social and Environmental Sustainability Strategy marks a shift in the way we think about sustainability. The challenges we must tackle if we are to reach our sustainability and Net Zero goals are interlinked and complex, so it is important that we approach them in a holistic way. We need to work together to champion new, better and more socially inclusive approaches to create a better world.

Feeling inspired? Why not start by looking into some of Strathclyde's existing sustainability opportunities and find out more about what you can do.

Lead by example

Embed sustainability into your team activities and operational planning. Champion upskilling in sustainable practices and foster open dialogue on how your areas contribute to our Social and Environmental Strategy.

Connect with Sustainable Strathclyde

Connect for tailored training and expert advice on reducing departmental emissions, embedding sustainability into your day-to-day operations, and getting involved in our engagement programmes.

Collaborate

Work with the Centre for Sustainable Development to integrate sustainability into your teaching, curriculum, and research. Bring your ideas to the University's Net Zero Accelerator Group. Join the Sustainable Labs Engagement Programmes if you work on a laboratory to reduce lab emissions.

Volunteer!

Participate in activities and workshops throughout the year. Take action through Jump and earn rewards for your sustainable behaviours. Students, become a member of the Strathclyde Green Office or join societies focused on sustainability.

Beyond Strathclyde

Partner on research, innovation, and community projects that drive social and environmental impact. Support student learning through internships, placements or mentoring. Share best practice, co-develop solutions, and stay connected through our events and networks.





Glossary of terms

- **Active Citizenship:** Motivating and inspiring people to make a positive difference. Active citizens advocate for change and take action on the issues they care about, often with a social and environmental focus.
- **Adaptation:** taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current effects of climate change and the predicted increasing impacts in the future.
- **Ethical Investment:** a set of investment principles or an investment Framework that fully integrates these three aspects within decision-making. Investors are concerned with financial returns and real-world positive impact that protects the value of their investment, reduces e.g., environmental risk and promotes social and environmental benefit. It is also known as responsible or impact investing.
- **Greenhouse gas (GHG)/greenhouse gas emissions:** any gases in the atmosphere which absorb heat and keep the planet’s atmosphere warmer than it otherwise would be. GHGs encompass the six gases covered by the UNFCCC: carbon dioxide (CO₂); methane (CH₄); nitrous oxide (N₂O); hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs); perfluorocarbons (PFCs); and sulphur hexafluoride (SF₆).
- **Just transition:** means ensuring fairness is integral to securing support for the scale and pace of societal and economic net zero transition required, including leaving no-one behind, nor creating disproportionate financial or inequalities burdens in the net zero transition.
- **Net Zero (emissions):** when the GHG emissions released into the atmosphere by an organisation or country are balanced by removals over a specified period (e.g., by mitigation, or carbon removal/sequestration).
- **Resilience:** the ability of a system (e.g., a community, an economy, or an ecosystem) to withstand, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. These impacts may include extreme weather events such as flooding or drought.
- **Scope 1 emissions:** emissions from operations that are owned or controlled by an organisation. Scope groups are defined in the latest Scottish Government Guidance, using guidance from the Greenhouse Gas Protocol.
- **Scope 2 emissions:** are those generated through purchased electricity, steam, heating or cooling consumed by an organisation.
- **Scope 3 emissions:** are all indirect emissions (not included in scope 2) that occur in the value chain of an organisation, including both upstream and downstream emissions.
- **Sustainability:** is the long-term maintenance and enhancement of human well-being within finite planetary boundaries. This means operating within the three rules set out by Daly et al. (1990): (1) exploit renewable resources no faster than they can be regenerated; (2) emit wastes no faster than they can be assimilated; and (3) deplete non-renewable resources no faster than renewable substitutes can be developed to replace them.
- **Sustainable Development:** defined in the 1987 Brundtland report “Our Common Future” as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- **Sustainable Development Goals:** United Nations approved set of 17 global development goals to end poverty and other deprivations with improving health and education, reducing inequality and spurring economic growth – all while tackling climate change and preserving our oceans and forests. They were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 with a goal to reach them by 2030.
- **UNESCO Education for Sustainable Development:** An internationally recognised framework to empower people with the knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and behaviors to live in a way that is good for the environment, economy, and society.



University of
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