

Sustainability - Operational Policy

1. Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy expresses the University's commitment to enabling the creation of a sustainable future and to embedding sustainability principles and practices throughout learning and teaching, research, engagement and operational activities.

2. Policy scope and application

2.1 This policy applies to all staff, students and members of University decision-making or advisory bodies, including the University Council and its Committees. It is applicable to all University campuses or sites owned or operated by the University.

3. Definitions

Please refer to the university Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures. Terms and definitions identified below are specific to this policy and are critical to the effectiveness of it:

Sustainability means ensuring inter- and intra-generational equity and justice. It means living within natural constraints and recognising the interconnected nature of environmental, socio-cultural and economic systems. Sustainability seeks to support resilient communities by reducing or eliminating negative environmental impacts due to human activities, protecting human rights for the most vulnerable and working towards global sustainable development initiatives such as the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.

Circular Economy is a system that is designed to eliminate waste by keeping materials in use as long as they have some function. This involves reusing materials where possible and repairing, refurbishing or recycling those materials where reuse is not an option. One benefit includes improved productivity of resources. Another benefit is the reduced need for disposal as materials are recovered in whole or as a component for use in another product.

ESD is Environmentally Sustainable Design. ESD principles are intended to guide building construction and retrofits to minimise negative environmental impacts and maximise environmental benefits while improving the health and wellbeing for the structure's intended users. ESD principles take all aspects of a building, from its construction through its operation to its decommissioning and disposal, into account.

Key Stakeholders, for the purposes of this policy, are groups or individuals that contribute to University projects and initiatives and primarily encompasses contractors and community and business partners.

Sustainable (as re: practices or forms of transport) indicates that the option selected seeks to find a balance that maximises environmental, socio-cultural and financial/economic benefits and minimises or eliminates (physical and mental) harm to humans, biodiversity and the environment.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 integrated goals set out by the United Nations that serve as a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and drive peace and prosperity. The goals are: (1) No Poverty; (2) Zero Hunger; (3) Good Health and Wellbeing; (4) Quality Education; (5) Gender Equality; (6) Clean Water and Sanitation; (7) Affordable and Clean Energy; (8) Decent Work and Economic Growth; (9) Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; (10) Reduced Inequalities; (11) Sustainable Cities and Communities; (12) Responsible Consumption and Production; (13) Climate Action; (14) Life below Water; (15) Life on Land; (16) Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; and, (17) Partnerships for the Goals.

4. Policy Statement

4.1 The University makes sustainability an organisational priority. The University is committed to supporting the creation of a sustainable future through its teaching, research, community engagement and operations and through the provision of leadership at the local, national and international level.

4.2 The University recognises it has a responsibility to:

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Council

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Vice-Chancellor and President

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

FIRST APPROVED

13 October 2009

LAST AMENDED

8 October 2021

REVIEW DATE

8 October 2026

STATUS

Active

(a) create leaders, entrepreneurs and a workforce that recognises the importance of sustainability in their respective fields and understands how to embed sustainability into their work;

(b) build sustainability into both the design and intended outcomes of research and, where possible, to use current barriers to sustainability as indicators of where research should be focussed;

(c) turn its focus inward to ensure operational activities are environmentally, socio-culturally and financially sustainable. This includes using the University's operations as a tool for learning to test best-practice models of sustainability and provide students with access to these learning opportunities;

(d) share its knowledge around sustainability with broad audiences across the communities in which it operates;

(e) share its understanding of sustainability and the impacts of its research with individuals and organisations (including local, state and federal political establishments and international organisations) that have the power to influence action; and

(f) embed innovation into its sustainability actions wherever possible.

4.3 The University accepts accountability for achieving sustainability objectives by establishing and implementing short, medium and long-term plans to enhance campus sustainability and embedding sustainability considerations in decision-making at all levels of the organisation.

5. Principles

5.1 The University is committed to reviewing environmental, socio-cultural and economic priorities and promoting best-practice sustainability across its teaching, research, engagement and operational responsibilities across the campus network.

5.2 Sustainability is a complex area that is constantly evolving, requires change and contains great room for innovation. The University extends its strategic commitment to excellence and innovation by providing opportunities and support to develop and innovate in sustainability teaching, research and operations. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #9.

5.3 The University is transparent about its sustainability performance and progress towards achieving sustainability-focused targets and goals. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #17.

5.4 The University utilises mandatory and voluntary sustainability reporting programs to measure the impact of the University's teaching, research, engagement and operational activities and benchmark its standing amongst higher education institutions.

5.5 The University is committed to use its resources, activities, programs and external partnerships to raise awareness and understanding of sustainability amongst its students and regional, national and international communities. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #17.

5.6 The University promotes and fosters an ethos and awareness of sustainability through the provision of high-quality education and/or training to staff, students, visitors and key stakeholders. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals #17 & 4.

5.7 The University's commitment to sustainability requires it to lead by example by incorporating best practice Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) principles in the development and operation of its sites and campuses and extends to the use of sustainable supply chains and purchasing choices. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #11.

5.8 The University is actively working to minimise the consumption of energy, water and other resources (both natural and manufactured) across the campus network and to incentivise the use of sustainable forms of travel by staff and students. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals #6, 7 & 12.

5.9 The University's commitment to innovation takes a proactive approach to teaching, research and operations that seek to advance knowledge and practice in the areas of environmental and socio-cultural sustainability. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals #9 & 11.

5.10 The University is working towards enhancing the physical and mental health and well-being of all staff and students and supports diversity across staff and student profiles. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #3.

5.11 Native biodiversity is conserved and, where possible, enhanced or regenerated across all nature-based University sites and field activities. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals #14 & 15.

5.12 The regeneration, reuse and recycling of resources as guided by circular economy principles is encouraged and waste-streaming is managed responsibly across locations where the University has operational control. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #12.

5.13 Staff and students have a role to play in helping the University to achieve best practice sustainability and a responsibility to follow and embrace the University's sustainability processes and procedures.

5.14 The University supports the advancement of evidence-based sustainability research. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #16.

5.15 External partnerships are developed and maintained to embed sustainability in University operations, leverage influence and promote sustainability within the local region and beyond. To achieve this, the University proactively engages and collaborates with First Nations peoples, industry, government, schools and the broader community to promote sustainability. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #17.

5.16 The University recognises and addresses inequalities within its student population. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goals #4, 5 & 10.

5.17 The University is committed to improving its sustainability through concerted efforts in research, teaching and operations that recognise the importance of achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This section relates to the UN Sustainable Development Goal #17.

6. Authorities / Responsibilities

The following authorities are delegated under this policy and associated procedures:

ACTIVITY	UNIVERSITY OFFICER
Provide leadership to ensure high-level sustainability-related decisions are made and delegations are assigned.	Relevant Executive members and Senior staff members
Commit support and resources to organisation-wide sustainability goals.	
All organisational units and faculties will incorporate consideration of sustainability, sourcing and resourcing within their annual operational plans.	Relevant Senior staff members
Embed resources for key actions into department/school-wide budgets.	
Establish actions to achieve sustainability commitments in organisational unit annual operational plans and embed them into relevant staff PPRs and/or role descriptions.	Organisational Unit Managers
Lead implementation of sustainability-related operational and communication initiatives.	Sustainability Officer
Consider sustainability in the design of research projects and communicate sustainable impacts/results of research projects.	Senior Research staff, Research Advisors and Higher Degree Students

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Sustainability - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Sustainability - Procedures