



OU Students Association  
Environment and Sustainability Action Plan  
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# Environment and Sustainability Action Plan

| Impact   | Engagement  | Policy  | The University   |
|--|---|---|--|
| Reduce and mitigate the impact the Students Association has on environmental sustainability through its working practices. | Encourage students to engage in, think about and contribute to our goals for this group, and environmental sustainability more broadly. | Create a Students Association's Policy on Environmental Sustainability. | Establish the Association's position on the OU's actions relating to environmental sustainability. |

# Underpinning Principles

- We, The Students Association Environmental & Sustainability Working Group, acknowledge the challenges of living sustainably.
- We recognise that balance is needed in all things – particularly when considering Environmental Sustainability at the Association and within the University. We know that many students need physical books in order to study, we know that face to face meetings give huge benefits in relation to building relationships, we know that a thank you email can be hugely important.
- We seek to encourage and empower through positive actions – never through shame or judgement.
- We want to highlight that small actions can make a big difference.

# Action 1: Impact

**How can we reduce and mitigate the impact the Students Association has on environmental sustainability through its working practices?**

## Short Term

## Medium Term

## Long Term

### Baseline Impact

- Assess current status using Net Positive Futures Framework.
- Involve students in impact research.

### Waste Reduction

- Reducing waste – work with Go Green team.

### Carbon Saving

- Can we reduce our emails? Calculate & share statistics on carbon saved through online meetings.

### Environmental Impact Assessment

- Embed assessment of environmental impact into all activities of the Association.

### External Engagement

- Keep up to date with new initiatives/innovation from Government/organisations.

### Association Events

- Hold events across the four nations and internationally to reduce travel.
- Also consider hybrid/online alternatives for environmental and accessibility reasons.

### Carbon Offsetting

- Consider use of offsetting carbon where it is not possible to eliminate impact.

# Action 2: Engagement

**What can we do to get students to engage in, think about and contribute to our goals for this group, and environmental sustainability more broadly?**

| Short Term   | Medium Term  | Long Term  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Website</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Environment and Sustainability webpage.</li> <li>• Include an ideas bank with explanations for students and a Resource hub with links to carbon footprint calculators etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to students – what are their concerns? What do they want us to be doing?</li> <li>• Linking staff and students – Responsible Futures, Earth, Environment Events</li> <li>• Sustainable prizes at our existing events</li> </ul> | <p><b>Campaigns</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raise awareness.</li> <li>• Competitions – e.g. upcycle/recycle, reducing carbon impact over a month.</li> <li>• Encourage students, volunteers and staff to consider individual carbon footprint.</li> </ul> <p><b>Volunteering</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of a Sustainability Champion role.</li> <li>• Build skills/experiences for students in the sector - for both personal and career development.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Recognition</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability Awards.</li> </ul> |



# Action 3: Policy

## What is the Students Association's Policy on Environmental Sustainability?

| Short Term   | Medium Term  | Long Term  |
|--|--|--|
| <p><b>Stakeholder Mapping</b></p> <p><b>Policy Review</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Review existing policies at the Association.</li> <li>Review Environmental and Sustainability Policies at other SUs and membership organisations which might better reflect our unique online/hybrid way of working.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Stakeholder Consultation</b></p> <p><b>Policy Drafting</b></p> <p><b>Association Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Advocate for Sustainability to be a core aspect of Association Strategy for 2023-2027.</li> </ul> <p>*Prioritise a four nations approach.</p> | <p><b>Embedding Policy into Practice</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build sustainability actions and activities as part of business as usual</li> </ul> <p><b>Review &amp; Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Schedule an annual review and update of the policy as part of the Terms of Reference of the Working Group. To include relevance, successes and room for improvement.</li> </ul> |

# Action 4: The University

What is the Association's position on the OU's actions relating to environmental sustainability?

| Short Term   | Medium Term   | Long Term  |
|--|---|--|
| <p><b>Transparency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage openness and transparency around impact and goals for sustainability – joint statement from the University and Association.</li> <li>Write a response to OU’s placing in league tables for sustainability - people and planet.</li> </ul> <p><b>Books</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To create a position statement on options for students to decide if printed module materials (books) are required and take that to the University.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Campus</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage changes at The Hub (on campus refectory) and on campus shop.</li> </ul> <p><b>Events</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encourage changes in face-to-face events.</li> </ul> <p><b>Empower Volunteers</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable volunteers to navigate difficult conversations on these issues - be aware of the balance between accessible formats.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Climate emergency</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with OU on declaration of climate emergency – encourage interim statement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fossil Fuel divestment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track the University's progress towards fossil fuel divestment.</li> </ul> |