

# University of Southampton Annual Sustainability Report 2024-25



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# FOREWORD

The University of Southampton's (UoS) vision is that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University does. This will encompass our individual behaviours, our work, and how we make decisions to achieve our key mission of changing the world for the better. The Sustainability Strategy [1] is one of ten Strategic Plans [2] created to underpin and drive forward the overall University Strategy. The Sustainability Strategy was developed to deliver on the University's sustainability targets, set out under the six agreed Goals. These Goals do not only address reducing our emissions, but also cover embedding sustainability in our teaching, research and investments.

This is the second overall annual report on the Sustainability Strategy prepared by the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG), providing updates on the development and progress against the Strategy's 6 Goals for the academic year 2024-25. Goals 1 to 3 relate to our institutional emissions reporting under the various scopes of the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reporting Protocol [3] and the other 3 Goals cover education, research and investment. This report describes the 6 Goals and summarises the current status of work undertaken, including accounting for our emissions across the Goals. The report also provides an update on our Environmental Management Systems (EMS) Review.

In terms of carbon emissions, our overall goal is to achieve net zero CO<sub>2</sub> emissions for Scopes 1 and 2 by 2030 and for Scope 3 by 2045. This report summarises University emissions trends for Scopes 1, 2 and 3 covering those for the academic year 2023-24. The University's Scope 1-3 emissions for 2023-24 were estimated to be around 243.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, as compared to the 211 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e reported for 2022-23. This rise was due to an increase in estimating Scope 3 emissions to include 2 trips for student relocation and student commuting emissions, totalling 81.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e. This was previously reported outside of Scope 3 under "*Other Reporting*" for only a single relocation trip.

Comparing the 2023-24 emissions to those of the base year of 2018-19 (pre-COVID period), the total emissions under Scopes 1 to 3 increased by around 51%. This was due to a slight increase in Scope 1: *Stationary Combustion* and, as highlighted above, a large increase in Scope 3: *Purchased Goods and Services* as post-COVID activity levels increased. In comparison with the base year, Scope 2 emissions have fallen by approximately 89% due to switching the University's national grid electricity supply to those certified as low carbon at the end of 2020-21. Nevertheless, Scope 1 emissions, which we control, remain a challenge and a pathway to reduce these by the target date is clearly identified.

In addition to the above, the review of the University's EMS certified to ISO14001:2015, provides Senior Management with the opportunity to steer the EMS to deliver a consistently effective output and to demonstrate continual environmental improvement. The review also provides an update on the energy and waste performance within the academic year, hence its link to the Sustainability Strategy.

The University's Sustainability Strategy Board (SSB) will closely monitor the SIG established milestones, Goals' targets and their delivery within the Sustainability Strategy. The set milestones are developed to transition the University to achieve net zero emissions for Scopes 1 and 2 which includes endeavours to eliminate the use of gas for electrical power and heat generation, and the establishment of appropriate programmes for refurbishing our buildings to reduce our energy demand. Milestones are also in place to reduce Scope 3 emissions by managing our services usage and procurement as well as working with our suppliers to reduce their emissions. In relation to Goals 4 to 6, these are on track with major achievement on mapping our modules to UN Sustainable Development Goals (Goal 4), creating a new research institute dedicated to resilience, sustainability and impact under Goal 5 and putting the underpinning processes to reduce our investment to zero of the current residual 0.5% of exposure to fossil fuels.

Thanks to the combined work of the SSB, SIG, staff and students, the University understands the challenges and, through its current planning and processes, remains in a strong position to deliver on the Goals embedded in the Sustainability Strategy despite increases in our staff numbers and buildings footprint. The University is also working with City stakeholders to link ambitions and knowledge sharing to address wider net zero aspirations. We are confident that the Sustainability Strategy will continue to help us to address the considerable challenge to implement the University's wider strategic ambitions while progressing towards our net zero emissions objectives.

**Professor Phillip Wright**  
Senior Vice-President (Academic)  
Chair of the Sustainability Strategy Board &  
Champion for the Sustainability Strategic Plan

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# CONTENTS

Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Status of Energy & Emissions	7
Scope 1-3 Emissions	8
Goals 1-3: Highlights & Progress	11
Goal 4: Highlights & Progress	13
Goal 5: Highlights & Progress	14
Goal 6: Highlights & Progress	15
Biodiversity: Highlights & Progress	16
EMS Objectives & Progress Updates	17
Appendix A: Sustainability Governance	21
Appendix B: SCEF Mandated Categories	22
References	22
Feedback	23



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The University of Southampton (UoS) adopted the Sustainability Strategy and its vision (see front page) in 2020 which was embodied in its six Goals covering the assessment and reporting on our emissions, research, education and investments as described in the Foreword. The Strategy has facilitated and enabled a more interconnected implementation of sustainability in the University.

The University has now endorsed embedding sustainability in everything it does through the adoption of the Sustainability Impact Assessment Tool [8] setting out the minimum standards required for decision making within the University.

Our emission reporting for this year has utilised the sector specific framework - Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF) which follows the methodologies of the gold standard GHG Protocol approach to quantifying and monitoring our emissions covered under Goals 1 to 3. This approach will improve consistency, transparency, and comparability of our emissions reporting across the sector. In terms of emissions, these are summarised within the section entitled *Goals 1-3: Highlights & Progress* (pgs. 11-12) and Table 1.

**Table 1:** University of Southampton Scope 1-3 emissions totals for the periods 2018-19, 2022-23 and 2023-24.

	Specific Yearly Emissions (ktCO <sub>2</sub> e)		
	2018-19 (baseline year)	2022-23	2023-24
<b>Scope 1</b>	13.4	17.4	15.8
<b>Scope 2</b>	10.6	0.8	1.2
<b>Scope 3</b>			
With Student Travel	137.3	192.7	226.2
Without Student Travel	101.5	117.4	144.4
<b>Total Emissions</b>			
With Student Travel	161.3	211.0	243.2
Without Student Travel	125.5	135.7	161.4

Reporting under **Goals 1, 2 and 3** showed that the total University emissions were ~243.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023-24 (Figure 8, pg. 11) a rise of around 15% from the previous year and about 51% higher than the baseline year 2018/19 (Table 1). This includes the additional 81.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions arising from student relocation and commuting named as *Student Travel* in Table 1.

Scope 1 emissions for 2023-24 were ~15.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, representing 6% of the University's total emissions and have increased by about 18% on the base year of 2018-19 (Figure 4, pg. 8). Over 99% of Scope 1 emissions arose from the use of gas for the in-campus combined heat and power (CHP) plant providing heat and power for the University. This is a relatively small increase when considering that since 2018-19, the size of the University's estate has grown by 7%, however data shows a gradual decline of Scope 1 emissions since 2021/22 (Figure 4, pg. 8).

Scope 2 emissions for 2023-24 were ~1.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, less than 1% of total emissions. Due to switching to the purchase of electricity supply from certified low-carbon sources in 2020- 21, Scope 2 emissions have declined by 89% from the baseline year of 2018-19. It should be noted that the increase in emissions from the previous year was associated with steam and hot water purchase, as a direct result of the University acquiring new estate in Southampton City Centre.

Scope 3 emissions for 2023-24 were ~226.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, approximately 93% of our total emissions in this period, which have increased by 65% since the baseline year of 2018-19. *Purchased Goods and Services* represent 52% of total emissions whilst *Student Travel* emissions (including student relocation and local commute) accounted for 34% of total emissions (Figure 6, pg. 9).

In addition, during this period the University have explored:

- Alternative ways to decarbonise heating at our campuses. This includes modelling and analyses for deep well geothermal energy and heat pumps.
- Modelling options for building refurbishment options across all the University estate.
- Initiated understanding of energy consumption across University laboratories.
- Tools to support achieving emission target include (i) Sustainable Impact Assessment Template [10] and (ii) Sustainable Building Design Standard (SBDS) [9].
- Building level energy consumption was established and ongoing (Figure 10, pg. 12). This will support emissions reduction approaches and engagements.
- Completed building level solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation for our estates (Figure 9, pg. 12). This will support planning, deployment and monitoring of PV across the University estate.
- The building blocks for the pathway to achieve net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030. This is now well understood and plans for CHP replacement and grid constraint is now under full consideration by the Estates & Facilities Team.

**Goal 4** aims to ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programmes by 2025 and is now nearing its targeted completion date and has achieved the majority of its milestones. These included:

- Mapping compulsory modules to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- Developing and launching new sustainability learning resources including the Southampton Sustainability Solutions e-learning online module for all students and staff, along with the new University-wide Global Sustainability Challenges undergraduate module for students across all academic disciplines.
- Delivering sustainability specific resources for students and staff, such as Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) mapping documents for each School, identifying the SDGs addressed in every undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes, along with a new *Skills for your Sustainable Future* resource, linking the SDGs to the *Southampton Skills Model*, a comprehensive framework showcasing 14 key employability skills, reflecting what today's graduate recruiters are looking for and the links to sustainability (Figure 11, pg. 13).

Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS research and societal impact sits at the centre of **Goal 5**. During this period work has included:

- Developing the 'Clean South' network, focusing on Clean Air and Clean Water to understand and support regional policy needs.
- Ongoing activities including sustainability focused research under the Goal 5-created Sustainability and Resilience Institute (SRI).
- The University signing up to the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) to promote sustainability practices in all laboratories and applications to be accredited under the scheme.
- The University is in the process of signing up to the UK Research and Innovation Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice.
- The new SRI Centre for PostGraduate Research (CPGR) was launched in October 2024 with over 50 members in a pilot year that has included sustainability leadership certified courses, sustainability writing retreats, and a research partnership with the Mekong Climate Change Institute at Can Tho University Vietnam.

The SRI, under Goal 5, leads on our submissions to the national and global sustainability rankings which have improved year on year, recognising the work taking place across the whole of the University.

- The University was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the UK in the QS Sustainability World Rankings, climbing four places on our position last year, and 23<sup>rd</sup> worldwide, up from 34<sup>th</sup> last year. Whilst for the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, the University was ranked in the top 101-200 universities in the world, having previously been ranked in the top 201-300 universities in the world.

**Goal 6** addresses the implementation of a sustainable and ethical investment policy. A University Investment Committee was established tasked with developing our sustainable and ethical investment policy, including sanctioning the *Annual Fossil Fuel Exposure Audit*. During this period, the University is using its influencing power to support a more sustainable and ethical future through three main objectives:

- Developing and implementing a sustainable and ethical investment policy.
- Migrating our fund portfolio to align with this policy.
- Monitoring our direct and indirect fossil fuel investments on an annual basis.

The University disinvested substantively from two funds with higher fossil fuel holdings by placing funds in investment with lower exposure. Our published *Annual Fossil Fuel Statement* highlighted our direct fossil fuel exposure to be ~0.52% and indirect to be ~0.04% of the University's total investments (Table 5, pg. 15). This should also be seen under the lens for ensuring the security of the sums invested, maintain adequate liquidity to meet operational needs and gain an appropriate level of investment return. The University continues to monitor funds to make decisions aligned to sustainability, migrating any remaining funds where appropriate, and continue to publish data on direct and indirect fossil fuel investments.

This year we also commenced work to create more stringent, sustainable and ethical investment policy which is due to come into effect in September 2026. Another key milestone was that by 2025, our portfolio will be fully compliant with our sustainable and ethical investment policy as evidenced by our reporting. This has now been achieved.

Biodiversity is part of the University's Estate and Facilities Strategy and hence full reporting is addressed within the Estates Strategic Plan [8]. However, since the last period we have migrated the reporting to be included within the Sustainability Strategy. Over this period activities to improve biodiversity across our University estate and the wider area have been undertaken and are listed within the Section entitled *Biodiversity: Highlights & Progress*.

The University's Environmental Management System (EMS) is certified to ISO14001:2015 where its Senior Management specified in the EMS procedure UOSEMSP018 being the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG). The SIG steers the EMS processes to deliver consistent and effective outputs, demonstrating continual improvements. The section *EMS Objectives & Progress Updates* provides a summary of activities under the EMS's objectives, the current progress and RAG rating (Table 6, pg. 17), with detailed updates on the energy and waste performance documented in the *Status of Energy and Emissions* section (pgs. 7-12).

This report is testament to the combined work of the University of Southampton's staff and students guided by the Sustainability Implementation Group and the Sustainability Strategy Board. The University understands the challenges and, through its current planning and processes, remains in a strong position to deliver on the Goals embedded in the Sustainability Strategy. The University is also engaging with other City stakeholders to collaborate, link ambitions and knowledge sharing to address wider net zero aspirations. Hence our Sustainability Strategy will continue to help us to address the considerable challenge faced by our communities, propelling us towards our net zero emissions objectives.



# INTRODUCTION

The University of Southampton's (UoS) vision is that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University does; including our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future. This vision is key to achieving our mission of changing the world for the better. Underpinning this vision is the Sustainability Strategy which is one of ten Strategic Plans created to underpin and drive forward the overall University Strategy. The Sustainability Strategy was developed to deliver on its sustainability targets set out under six Goals (Figure 1). These Goals do not only address reducing our emissions but also cover embedding sustainability in our teaching, research and investment. The Sustainability Strategy is one of the University's overall 10 strategies geared to deliver its success across all its intertwined activities of education, research and knowledge exchange and enterprise. These strategies also support the University's Triple Helix approach which aims to strengthen such links to achieve greater impact and accelerate new ways to tackle the world's most complex problems. Hence, the Sustainability Strategy links to other strategies, as shown in Figure 1.

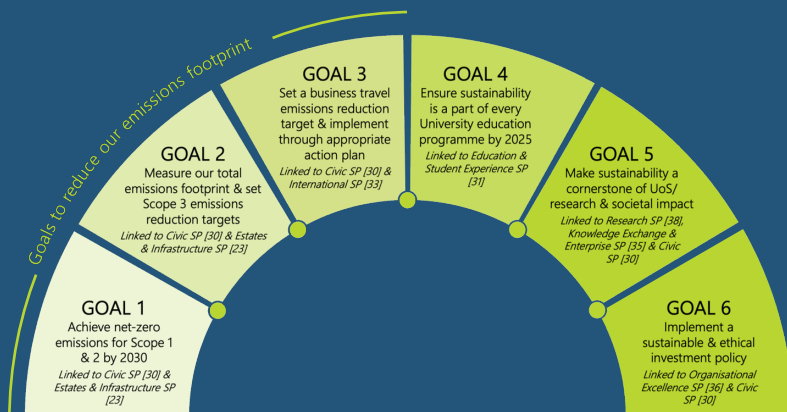


Figure 1: University of Southampton Sustainability Goals with linked Strategic Plans (SP).

The delivery of the targets within the Goals is assigned to the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG) under an appropriate governance structure where quarterly reports on the status of the targets are submitted to the University's Sustainability Strategy Board (SSB), which reports directly to the University Executive Board (UEB). SIG oversees the day-to-day implementation of the Sustainability Strategy Plan underpinned by its Goal-specific milestones to achieve the agreed targets. Membership of the SIG includes Goal Leads, Student Union (SUSU), Faculty, and Professional Services representatives as well as the SIG core team. The SIG meets monthly and reports quarterly to the SSB. The overall governance structure of the Sustainability Strategy is given in Appendix A.

In terms of our emissions reporting, this year represents a shift in the framework used. Previously the University reported its emissions in accordance with the Gold Standard Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, which is not industry specific. Recently, the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF), funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and developed by the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges was launched. The SCEF framework for tracking and reporting carbon emissions is still based on the GHG Protocol but is specific to our sector. This change in reporting is fully compliant with GHG accounting and reporting requirements but entails minor changes to our emissions reporting.

## Report content

This is the second overall annual report on the Sustainability Strategy prepared by the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG) providing updates on the development and progress against the Strategy's 6 Goals for 2024-25. Goals 1 to 3 relate to our institutional emissions reporting under the various scopes of the GHG Reporting Protocol [3] and the other 3 Goals cover education, research and investment. This report summarises the current status of the work undertaken across the 6 Goals, including reporting on our emissions across the first 3 Goals (pgs. 7-12), progress against Goals 4 to 6 (pgs. 13-15) and provides a summary review on the Environmental Management Systems (EMS). The EMS review (pgs. 17-20) provides an update on our performance related to biodiversity, energy and waste emphasising its link to the University's Sustainability Strategy and Estate and Facilities Strategy [4].



Find out more:

Scan the QR code to visit the University of Southampton sustainability webpages.

# STATUS OF ENERGY & EMISSIONS

Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are the leading cause of the planet's rapidly changing climate. The University of Southampton (UoS) recognises the need to reduce its emissions to support the national and global effort to address the climate crisis. At a local level, reducing our emissions will contribute to improving our environment and hence health and wellbeing in our region. The Sustainability Strategy was devised to meet the key challenges as highlighted in Table 2.

Table 2: Sustainability Strategy Goals and their key challenges.

Sustainability Strategy Goal	Key Challenge
<b>Goal 1:</b> Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 & Scope 2 by 2030.	Reduce current Scopes 1 & 2 emissions of 17 ktCO <sub>2</sub> e to net zero by 2030. Address heat, electrical power & retrofit at different scales.
<b>Goal 2:</b> Measure total emissions footprint & set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions.	Robustly quantify Scope 3 emissions of 226.2 ktCO <sub>2</sub> e (including student commuting & relocation), & identify a progressive reduction path to net zero by 2045.
<b>Goal 3:</b> Set & implement a business travel emissions reduction target.	Set targets & implement action plan to balance travel benefits with environmental impact, targeting net zero by 2045.
<b>Goal 4:</b> Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025.	Sustainability mapped across 100% of compulsory taught programmes & provide training to all Schools. Maintain periodic renewals.
<b>Goal 5:</b> Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS research & societal impact.	Establish support structures to enhance innovations & impact at institutional, city, regional, national & international levels.
<b>Goal 6:</b> Implement a sustainable & ethical investment policy.	Address exposure to fossil fuel investments & influence fund managers through sustainability criteria.

As highlighted in the *Introduction*, from this period forward the University will be reporting its emissions under the sector-specific framework, the Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework (SCEF), for more details see Appendix B. This change will improve consistency, transparency, and comparability of our emissions reporting across the sector, particularly for Scope 3 emissions. This change, while entailing minor changes to our emissions reporting, is fully compliant with the GHG accounting and reporting requirements. The two major changes arising from this type of reporting are as follows:

1. Student commuting and relocation emissions (both international and UK) will now be reported under Scope 3 under *Downstream Transportation and Distribution*. Previously, the University reported these emissions under "Other Emissions" category separately outside of the three emissions scopes.
2. The SCEF mandates that at least two round trips per student per academic year should be included in estimating relocation emissions for both the international and UK cohorts. Previously, only one round trip per academic year was included in our emission estimates.

In light of the above changes, Scope 3 emissions and overall emissions will see an increase going forward. In this report, these changes have been applied retrospectively from the base year of 2018-19 onwards to make the year-on-year data comparable.

Goals 1 to 3 (Table 2) represent the targets related to the University's Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions. Total emissions under Scope 1 to 3 were estimated to be around 243.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e (Figure 2), with *Student Travel* (relocation and commuting) accounting for 34% of total emissions. Overall emissions under Scopes 1 to 3 have increased by around 51% from those in 2018-19 (pre-COVID period) due to an 18% increase in Scope 1 and a 65% increase in Scope 3, in large part from increases in *Purchased Goods and Services* and *Student Relocation*.

Note that emissions are reported as CO<sub>2</sub>e – carbon dioxide equivalent units. This enables the reporting of emissions from non-CO<sub>2</sub> sources which have different warming potentials than CO<sub>2</sub> to be quantified and compared.

**Scope 1** direct emissions owned or controlled by the UoS, such as using gas for the CHP and boilers.

**Scope 2** indirect emissions from the purchase of heat and power, e.g. purchased electricity.

**Scope 3** emissions from activities that the UoS is indirectly responsible for, up and down its value chain, e.g. goods/services purchased, waste & business travel.

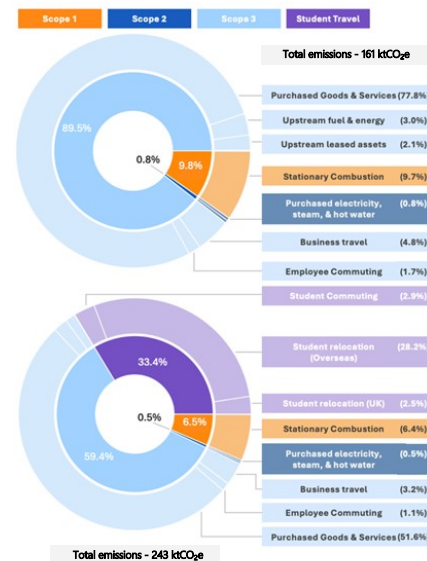


Figure 2: Scope 1-3 emissions for the period 2023-24 (top graphic is excluding student travel)

Note that the previous reporting [6], did not account for Student Travel within Scopes 1 to 3, but reported this under 'Other'. Accordingly, under this scenario total emissions were estimated to be around 161.4 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e (Figure 2), which was an increase of around 28% from those in 2018-19.

The following section reports on emissions for Goals 1 to 3 under Scopes 1 to 3 and provides summaries of historical and current status of the University emissions for all scopes.



# SCOPE 1–3 EMISSIONS

## Scope 1

Scope 1 and 2 emissions arise from our energy use. Figure 3 shows the consumption over the period 2018 to 2024, which depicts a decline despite resuming normal operations post-COVID and increases in staff numbers and buildings footprint. The academic year 2018-19 is used as the baseline, whereby our current gas usage (84GWh) is higher than the baseline level (72GWh). Figure 3 also shows the total electricity consumption for the same period which has remained at similar levels across the last 5 year reported period with a decline from the baseline year. The reduction in electricity demand compared to the baseline year can be attributed to efficiency gains from various energy efficiency measures undertaken across the estate.

In terms of Scope 1 emissions, Figure 4 shows the emissions over the period 2018-2024. In 2023-24, Scope 1 emissions were of the order of 15.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, representing 6% of the University's total emissions (Scope 1, 2 and 3), and show approximately 18% increased since base year of 2018-19. Over 99% of Scope 1 emissions were associated with the use of gas to support energy (heat and power) delivery through the in-campus combined heat and power (CHP) plant and other boilers. Although the size of the University's estate has grown by 7% since 2018-19, Scope 1 emissions have started to decline gradually since 2021/22.

## Scope 2

Figure 5 shows Scope 2 emissions over the period 2018–2024. In 2023-24, Scope 2 emissions were 1.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, less than 1% of total Scope 1-3 emissions. Scope 2 emissions have declined by 89% from the base line year of 2018-19 due to switching the purchase of the University's electricity supply to certified low-carbon sources at the end of 2020-21. The increase in emissions associated with steam and hot water in 2023-24 is as a direct result of the University acquiring new estate in Southampton City Centre.

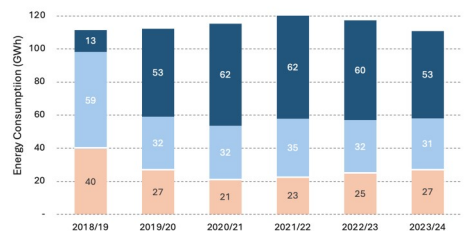


Figure 3: Energy usage (electric-orange and gas-blue) for 2018-24.

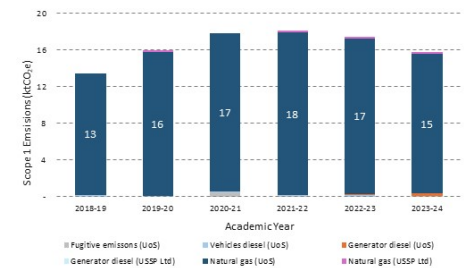


Figure 4: Scope 1 emissions for 2018-24.

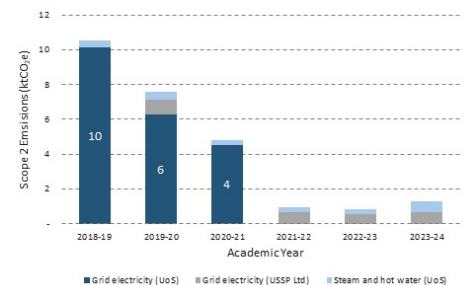


Figure 5: Scope 2 emissions for 2018-24.

## Sustainable Buildings

To support our endeavour to reduce energy demand and hence emission a Sustainable Building Design Standard (SBDS) was established in 2023. All new builds and refurbishment projects, will need to conform to the set standard for carbon, energy and water consumption, biodiversity and the circular economy. This design standard continues to be applied to all related projects, and was last revised in December 2024.

- All new projects will aim for a minimum BREEAM 'Excellent' rating.
- Blue-green infrastructure will be used in projects to improve drainage, enhance water management and biodiversity.
- Solar PV Study – A feasibility study has been completed, but further structural assessments are required.
- Sustainable principles are being embedded into project designs through the Sustainable Building Design Standard.



Find out more:

Scan the QR code to read the current Sustainable Building Design Standards.



## Scope 3

Scope 3 emissions for 2018-2024 are shown in Figure 6. In 2023/24 the emissions under Scope 3 were approximately 226.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, comprising 93% of total Scope 1-3 emissions in this period and showing an increase of 65% compared to the baseline year of 2018-19. These emissions are largely associated to *Purchased Goods and Services* (52% of total emissions) and student travel emissions (including international and national student relocation, and student local commute) under *Downstream Transportation and Distribution* (34% of total emissions). As the reporting is now under the SCEF framework, 2 round-trips for student relocation per academic year were assumed and included under *Downstream Transportation and Distribution*. Note that the emissions values for the previous years have been retrospectively re-estimated.

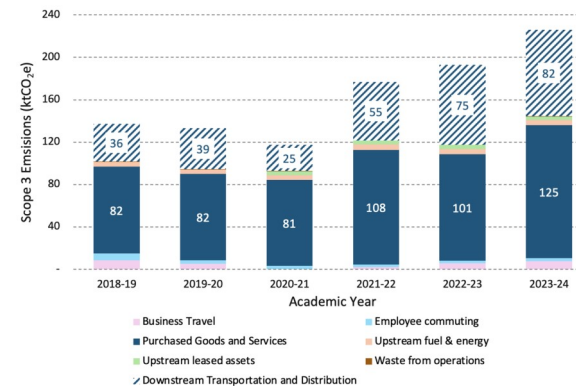


Figure 6: Scope 3 emissions for 2018-24 (dashed figure includes student travel emissions, previously reported as 'Other').

## Scope 3 emissions - procurement

The emissions from *Purchased Goods and Services* continue to grow (approximately 25% increase during this period), and represent the largest emissions sub-category at 125 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e, an increase of 53% compared to the base year of 2018-19. The University uses the HESCT (Higher Education Supply Chain Emissions) tool [7] for estimating its *Purchased Goods and Services* emissions. This assumes a direct correlation between the amount spent and the associated emissions, using DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) standardised emissions factors. As a result, reported emissions are primarily influenced by changes in expenditure, rather than actual changes in procurement practices. These estimates should therefore be interpreted with caution, as significant variations may result from changes in spending patterns or data categorisation rather than real changes in emissions.

To assist with the Scope 3 emission and other aspect of procurement, the University has established the *Responsible Procurement Working Group* which meets regularly, promoting and embedding responsible procurement, engaging with suppliers and supporting them in the development of their carbon reduction action plans.

## Scope 3 emissions - waste

Emissions arising from waste generated from our operations were approximately 0.1 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e for the year 2023-24. This is 71% lower than in 2018-19 base year and 2% lower than the previous year.

## Scope 3 emissions - student and employee commuting

Employee and student commuting emissions were estimated using a biennial University travel survey, the last was conducted in November 2024, which showed more respondents compared to the previous period of 2021-22, coupled with lowered emissions post-COVID.

The staff travel survey was directed towards two groups consisting of (i) staff and PGR (postgraduate research) students, and (ii) PGT (postgraduate taught) and UG (undergraduate) students separately. In both survey some questions were identical while others targeted specific groups. The responses were adjusted to represent the appropriate weights for part-time and full-time staff and then extrapolated to represent the total staff and student populations. Please note that student travel survey data was not adjusted for proportion changes due to a lack of data.

Employee commuting emissions were estimated to be 2.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e for 2023-24, this is approximately 58% lower than the 2018-19 base year, but 23% higher than the previous year (2022-23). Student local commuting emissions were estimated to be 7.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e for 2023-24 which is considerably higher than the baseline year of 2018-19 and the previous year (2022-23), however it should be noted that this value was partly arising from an increase in reported bus travel, however, it is important to recognise that student commuting figures are based on a survey that represented only 3% of the total student cohort.

## Scope 3 emissions - student relocation

Student relocation emissions were estimated from student numbers by domicile and were estimated to be 68.6 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e from overseas and 6 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e from UK student relocation travel for 2023-24.

The overall emissions reported under the *Downstream Transportation and Distribution* category (Figure 6) is determined by adding emissions arising from student commuting (7.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e) estimated from the travel surveys, as mentioned above, to those from relocation giving an overall total of 81.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e for 2023-24. This represents approximately 34% of total emissions, the second highest emission category, noting that since the number of students has increased from the baseline year of 2018-19, the emissions have increased accordingly.

### Scope 3 emissions - business travel

The data for estimating the business travel emissions were extracted from the University's travel management system (go2book, supplied by Clarity). These emissions were categorised as those arising from flights, hotels and rail travel booked via Clarity. These emissions were estimated by Clarity using the distance-based method, and the factors used apply radiative forcing factors, type and class of flight, but do not yet account for full well-to-tank emissions.

The business travel emissions were estimated to be 7.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e for 2023-24, accounting for approximately 3.2% of total emissions. They were 7% lower than the baseline year of 2018-19 and 34% higher than the previous year, due in large part to the resumption of normal travel post-COVID restrictions. Figure 7 shows the business travel emissions under the different DEFRA categories, where it is clear that air travel accounts for the majority of business travel emissions and rail accounts for the least. Given that the number of staff and students have increased since the baseline year, the emission figures hint towards a lower travel emission intensity.

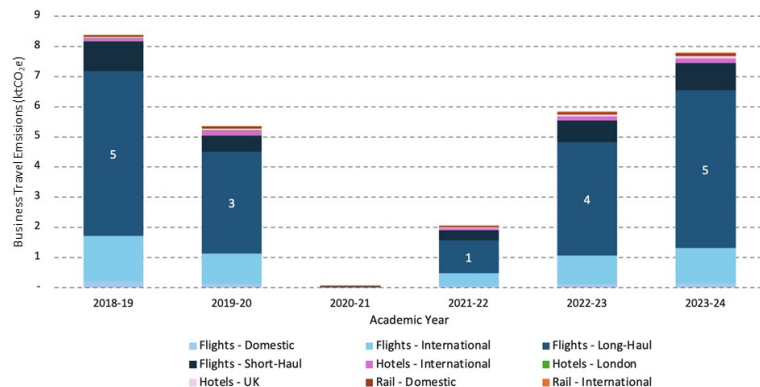


Figure 7: Business travel emissions for the period 2018 to 2024.

It is important to note that the data does not include; (i) travel not booked via Clarity, which may include light rail, bus or taxi transport paid for on-the-day and reclaimed via expenses, and (ii) travel funded by external sources or paid for from personal sources. Therefore, the values reported are likely to be underestimates of total university business travel emissions.

## GOALS 1-3: HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRESS

In terms of the overall emissions under all 3 Scopes, Figure 8 provides a depiction of the trends from 2018-19 to 2023-24. The total University emissions were estimated to be about 243.2 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e in 2023-24. This includes additional 81.8 ktCO<sub>2</sub>e of emissions from student relocation and commuting reported under the *Downstream Transportation and Distribution* category for the first time in our annual reporting. The total Scopes 1-3 emissions for 2023-24 have increased by approximately 15% from the previous year and were 51% higher than the baseline year 2018/19, with this increase predominantly led by a rise in Scope 3 emissions.

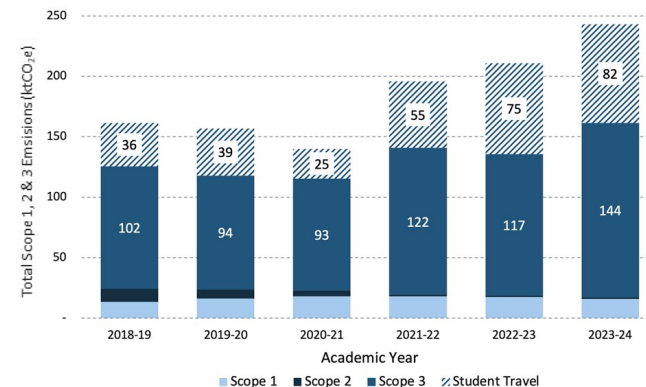
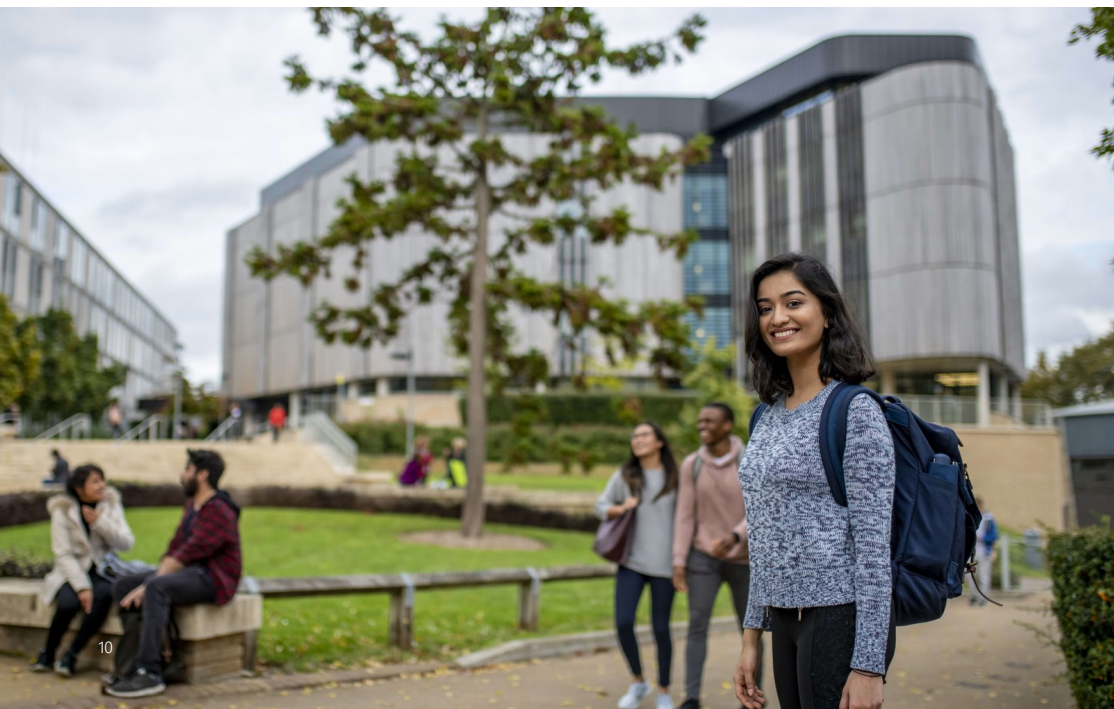


Figure 8: Scope 1-3 emissions under the various sub-categories for the period 2018 to 2024.

Table 3 provides a high-level depiction of the work programme for Goals 1-3, including what general milestones have been achieved during this period and future planned development.

Table 3: Milestones achieved and in progress for Goals 1-3.

Strategy Goal	Milestones achieved	Milestones in progress
Goal 1	<p>Developed 2030 net zero target roadmap for Scopes 1 &amp; 2 emissions and embed in Estates and Infrastructure Strategic Plan [8].</p> <p>In 2021 we moved to low carbon emissions electricity supply.</p> <p>Delivered Scope 1 and 2 emissions reduction understanding and delivery projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explored alternative ways to decarbonise heating at our campuses.</li> <li>Explored building refurbishment options across all University estate.</li> <li>Initiated understanding of energy consumption in university laboratories.</li> </ul> <p>Tools developed to support achieving emission target include (i) Sustainable Building Design Standard (SBDS) [9], and (ii) Sustainable Impact Assessment Template [10].</p>	<p>Pathway to achieve net zero for Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030 is well understood and plans for CHP replacement and grid constraint is now under full consideration by Estates. Designs and approvals for the plans will need to go through governance as per Estate's Strategic Master Plan.</p> <p>Provide actionable recommendations to support delivery of sustainability targets considering the Estates Masterplan and inform interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed feasibility study for building level solar photovoltaic (PV) power generation for our estates (Figure 9 overleaf) to support planning and deployment of PV across the University estate.</li> <li>Option for decarbonised heat at our estate are under consideration. These include deep well geothermal energy and heat pumps.</li> <li>Building level energy consumption was established and is ongoing (Figure 10 overleaf) to support emissions reduction approaches.</li> <li>Modelling of buildings refurbishment is progressing.</li> </ul> <p>Laboratory efficiency measures and accreditation are underway. Supported by a program to monitor high consuming equipment in labs.</p>
Goal 2	<p>Delivered understanding of Scope 3 emissions reduction through analyses of data, comparing and reviewing new methodology to Higher Education Supply Chain Emissions Tool (HES CET) &amp; Net Zero Carbon (NZC) tool.</p> <p>Developed understanding of relevant approaches to independently model emissions related to Scope 3 under University procurement.</p> <p>Developed a plan for Scope 3 classification with aim to quantify pathways to reduce emissions whilst reflecting on interdependencies.</p> <p>Developed approaches to capture responsible procurement activity.</p> <p>Reviewed reporting on transportation &amp; waste, as well as reports submitted to the University.</p>	<p>Data analyses are on-going including comparison of emissions based on the HES CET &amp; Net Zero Carbon (NZC).</p> <p>Undertaking analyses and engagement of high value projects and independently model these based on actual classification criteria.</p> <p>Developing an engagement strategy with our suppliers.</p> <p>Establishing inter-scope 3 classification and revising approaches to supply-side emissions to increase UoS level of control.</p> <p>Developing responsible procurement guidance with sustainability focused questions in tenders, whilst adhering to regulations.</p> <p>Work is in place to identify synergies in procurement, whilst reviewing approaches for emission reduction that can be achieved and augmented by engagement and consultation.</p>





Sustainability Goal	Milestones achieved	Milestones in progress
Goal 3	<p>Consulted and delivered on business travel emission reductions through undertaking appropriate approaches related to 'behaviour change' and supported by communications campaigns.</p> <p>Investigated approaches to keeping business travel emissions below the agreed University target.</p>	<p>Various communications and engagements undertaken during this period, highlighting travel emission footprint at University, Faculty, School and Departmental levels.</p> <p>There appears to be more awareness of travel emission impacts, however, there is a tension between achieving travel policy changes and strong University growth, which will be reviewed further.</p>

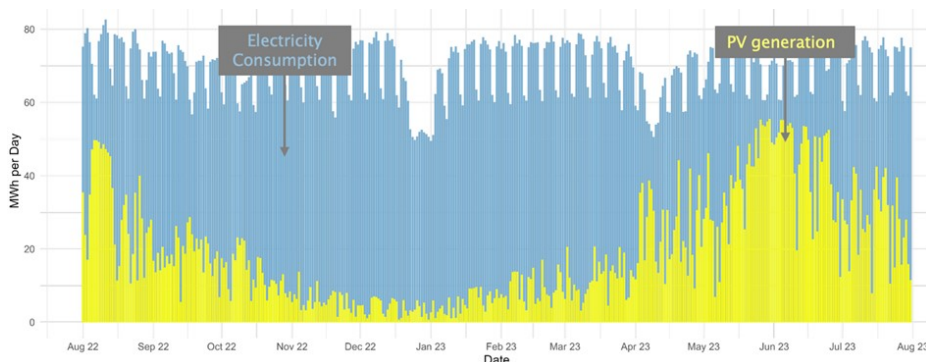


Figure 9 (a): Highfield Campus, PV generation could supply up to ~7.5% of electricity consumption annually.

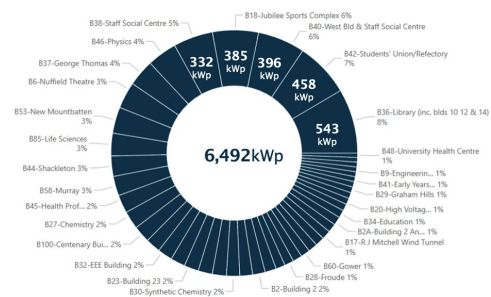


Figure 9 (b): Solar PV capacity per building on the Highfield Campus (kWp).

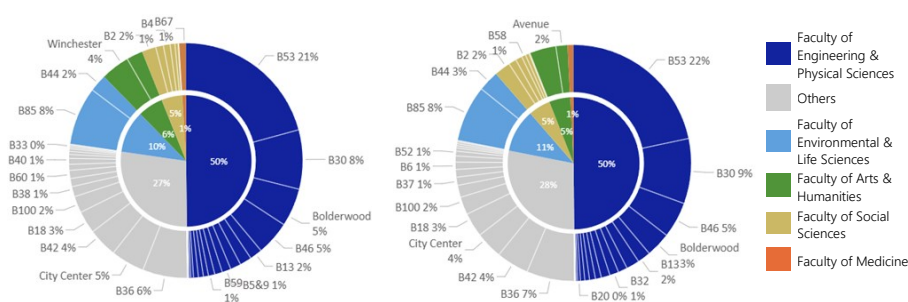


Figure 10 (a): Non-residential building level and faculty (colour code) energy consumption (2023/23), total 57GWh or 58% of total energy consumption.

Figure 10 (b): Non-residential building level and faculty (colour code) emissions, 8.1ktCO<sub>2</sub>e or 3% of total emissions.

As shown in Table 3, during this period, work was undertaken covering the following ongoing programmes to (i) support Goal delivery (ii) to inform university stakeholders on emission data, and (iii) support Estates in prioritising appropriate interventions.

- Modelled building level solar power generation (Figure 9).
- Developed building level data of energy and carbon emissions encompassed in an interactive dashboard (Figure 10).
- Modelled building refurbishment options.
- Addressed heat supply options for buildings especially for replacing the CHP at Highfield.
- Undertaking benchmarking of sustainability plans of RGU to inform strategy refresh.
- Undertook engagements with various University stakeholders (pg.20).

## GOAL 4: HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRESS

Goal 4 aims to ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025. Education of our students provides the University with an opportunity to address sustainability in our curriculum whilst developing sustainability-aware future leaders, helping to shape our impact on the planet and provide training and knowledge to respond to the climate crisis. This is consistent with the outcomes of the University annual staff engagement survey and the sustainability strategy consultation processes, where our students and staff have repeatedly confirmed that they want sustainability to form an integral part of what the University does.

Goal 4 is now nearing its targeted completion date and has achieved the majority of its milestones. These included mapping compulsory modules to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), developing and launching both the Southampton Sustainability Solutions e-learning module and a university-wide Global Sustainability Challenges (UOSM2043) module which focuses on sustainability. The e-learning module content is refreshed annually and made available to students and staff on-line, with it now part of new staff and student inductions. Engagements with all University schools on embedding sustainability into their programmes has now been completed, with many of these interactions having been undertaken during this period. Under Goal 4, a new *Skills for your Sustainable Future* resource linking the SDGs to the "Southampton Skills Model", a comprehensive framework showcasing 14 key employability skills, reflecting what today's graduate recruiters are looking for and the links to sustainability (see Figure 11 for an example of mapped SDGs for one of the 14 skills). These endeavours align well with many of the accreditation requirements for the various educational programmes offered by the University.



Figure 11: SDG wheel from the 'Skills for your Sustainable Future' resource, showing which Goals have been mapped to the Critical Thinking skill.






# GOAL 5: HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRESS

Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS research and societal impact sits at the centre of Goal 5. During this period, the University has commenced working with the University's civic directorate to develop networks that address environmental challenges faced by the region. The 'Clean South' programme encompasses South-focused networks on Clean Air and Clean Water to understand and support the regional policy needs. These activities including sustainability focused research can be found at the Goal 5 created Sustainability and Resilience Institute (SRI) webpages.

Furthermore, the University has signed up to the Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) to promote sustainability practices in all laboratories and be accredited under the scheme. The university is in the process of signing up for the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice. The annual audit of sustainability related research is underway.

The Centre for PG Research (CPGR) launched during this period and is currently in its pilot year with the number of recruits steadily increasing. In addition, the University has provided MSc scholarships to encourage a pipeline of PhD students and is actively developing partnerships to place interns including international exchange such as those with University in Vietnam.




Find out more:

Scan the QR code to read more detail about the Centre for PG Research.


Find out more:

Scan the QR code to visit the Sustainability Resilience Institute webpages.



Find out more:

Scan the QR code to read the Clean Air South Report.





“ Demonstrating a commitment to sustainability has become increasingly essential for the world's higher education institutions. It is also pleasing to see that our work in sustainability has been recognised in our 2025 sustainability rankings, which have improved year on year:

- We have been ranked 9th in the UK in the QS Sustainability World Rankings, climbing four places on our position last year, and 23rd worldwide, up from 34th last year.
- In the current Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, we have been ranked in the top 101-200 universities in the world, previously we were in the top 201-300 universities in the world.”

Vice-Chancellor Professor Mark E. Smith

# GOAL 6: HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRESS

Goal 6 addresses the implementation of a sustainable and ethical investment policy. It is recognised that through its buying power, the University has an ability to exert influence through the way it uses its assets and how it engages with other organisations. With this in mind, we want to use our institution's power to support a more sustainable and ethical future through three main objectives for Goal 6: (i) develop and implement a sustainable and ethical investment policy, (ii) migrate our fund portfolio to align with this policy and (iii) monitor our direct and indirect fossil fuel investments on an annual basis.

In addition, the primary objective of the University's treasury management activities is to ensure that core investment principles are followed which are, to ensure the security of the sum it invests, to maintain adequate liquidity to meet operational needs and to gain an appropriate level of investment return. The established UoS Investment Committee is tasked with developing our sustainable and ethical investment policy and approving the annual fossil fuel exposure statement. We have published our annual Fossil Fuel Statement on our public website [12]. As can be seen from Table 4, UoS direct fossil fuel exposure has decreased over the last five years from 0.8% to 0.52% and indirect fossil fuel exposure has decreased from 0.8% to 0.04%. The material decreases in our fossil fuel holding percentage is due to a combination of increased cash balances held in bank deposit accounts, to support the Estates Capital programme, and the change in investment product mix of our Fund Managers. We have disinvested substantively from two funds with higher fossil fuel holdings and placed the funds with lower to nil exposure funds. The University continues to monitor funds to make decisions aligned to sustainability, migrate any remaining funds where appropriate, and continue to publish data on direct and indirect fossil fuel investments.

Table 4: Fossil fuel exposure as a percentage of UoS investment portfolio for the period 2020-23.

% of portfolio in	31 Dec 2020	31 Dec 2021	31 Dec 2022	31 Dec 2023	31 Dec 2024
Direct fossil fuel companies	0.8%	0.9%	0.5%	1.0%	0.5%
Indirect fossil fuel companies	0.8%	0.7%	0.6%	0.4%	0.04%

This year we also commenced work with key University stakeholders to create a more stringent, Sustainable Responsible Investment policy, which is due to come into effect in September 2026. Another key milestone was that by 2025, our portfolio will be fully compliant with our sustainable and ethical investment policy as evidenced by our reporting. This has now been achieved.

migrate the majority of our investments to align with the sustainable and ethical investment policy. Furthermore, the University is committed to investing in line with the Paris Aligned Investment initiative (PAII) and where possible ensuring our funds align with Article 8 or 9 of the Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR).

We are working closely with our fund managers to see if there is additional information which we can publish externally in an effort to increase transparency for our investment portfolio.

In terms of objectives going forward, Goal 6 will address the following key milestones:

- Establish initial emissions reporting for the investment portfolio (2024/25) as part of an investments dashboard
- Establish and externally publish annual emissions reporting for 100% of investment portfolio by 2027.



Find out more:

Scan the QR code to read our annual Fossil Fuel Statement.





# BIODIVERSITY: HIGHLIGHTS & PROGRESS

Biodiversity is part of the University's Estate and Facilities Strategy and hence full reporting is addressed within the Estates Strategic Plan [8]. In addressing overarching sustainability, it is recognised that the University's Sustainability Annual Report needs to a line of reporting on biodiversity within its activities covered in the same fashion as other Goals with a Champion and a Lead. For the purpose of this report, we highlight the following:

- University's Biodiversity strategy sits within the Estates Strategic Plan.
- SIG will provide regular updates on biodiversity within its activities.
- The Biodiversity Policy is currently being updated and will go through the appropriate approval governance route before being implemented by the Estates Team.
- Biodiversity is also being handled at the University, via several research activities being conducted through the Sustainability and Resilience Institute and others, relating to UN SDG14 Life Below Water and SDG15 Life on Land.

Over this period activities to improve biodiversity across our university estate and the wider area have been undertaken.

- Swift boxes were installed at various locations of the estate benefitting visiting swift population.
- In 2025, a new area for wildflowers was established close to the university bee hives, with insect-friendly bulbs planted by the student 'BeeSoc' society, providing food source for the bees close to their hives.
- The Students Union (SUSU) planted raised beds outside in Portwood an area with many private student

accommodation, bringing colour and uplifting an area for the benefit of the public and pollinators.

- Our newly-drafted Biodiversity Management Plan aims to plant 40 new trees and 100m of hedgerow in the next five years. The landscaping team assisted by the BeeSoc society already made a start and planted 15 metres of native hedgerow for the benefit of nature.
- Activities on rewild of appropriate areas to produce abundance of flora and fauna varieties allowing for habitats to grow and provide a quieter space for students during the exam season.
- Last May 2025, ecologists 'Abtech' returned to engage with students and advise on careers in ecology, as well as conduct newt surveys in the University's Valley Gardens pond, with Palmate newts found in the pond.

Lastly, we have started to move away from fuel-based landscaping equipment (mowers, hedge trimmers etc) to those that are electric charged by our purchased low carbon electricity. Cuttings, trimmings and leaves are being reused grass as habitat creation, whilst coffee grounds from the cafes are being used as fertiliser.

The Landscaping Team regularly identifies areas on the university estate suitable for rewilding and allowing for wildflowers and insect species to thrive. An area close to building 44 has been left to rewild and is abundant with flora and fauna varieties. The initiative 'No Mow May' is supported annually to allow for habitats to grow and provide a quieter space for students during the exam season.



**Find out more:**  
Scan the QR code to read the current UoS Biodiversity Policy.



# EMS OBJECTIVES & PROGRESS UPDATES

The University's Environmental Management System (EMS) is certified to ISO14001:2015 and provides Senior Management specified in the EMS procedure UOSEMSP018 as the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG), to steer the EMS to deliver consistently effective outputs and demonstrate continual improvements. SIG meets monthly, and through its procedures the SIG provides annual review of the report covering compliance, performance and embeddedness of the EMS. Although the SIG does not directly work with ISO14001:2015, but its Sustainability Strategic Plan closely aligns to the EMS objectives. Over this period, decisions made by the SIG related to the EMS were presented to the Estates Leadership Team and Programme Coordination Board for input and approval. The outcome of these Management Reviews is reported regularly to the Sustainability Strategy Board, the last being October 2024.

This section provides a summary of activities under the University's Environmental Management System (EMS) objectives, current progress and RAG rating (Table 6), with definitions for the RAG ratings provided in Table 5. Updates on the energy and waste performance for this period are shown in the *Status of Energy and Emissions* section (pg. 7-12).

Table 5: RAG rating definitions.

Red	Initiative off track and cannot be delivered to plan without intervention.
Amber	Issues exist but are being managed. A plan to return to green exists.
Green	The initiative is on track. Proceeding to plan, within budget and forecast to deliver required objectives.

Table 6: Summary of EMS objectives, RAG rating and progress.

EMS objective	RAG rating	Progress & reasons for RAG rating
<b>Waste:</b> Manage our waste according to the waste hierarchy - prevent, reuse, recycle, recover & dispose.	Red	Improved internal and external bin systems are required to improve waste segregation, however a five-bin waste segregation system is now in place in the Student Union (SUSU).  The number of charities we collaborate with has increased over the past year, with students encouraged to make donations from the end-of-year move-out, with numerous collection points around our halls of residence sites and the Student Union also providing furniture donations. In total, over 84 tonnes of donations were collected and prevented from becoming waste, with donation points also set up for unwanted food and toiletries.  In October 2024, SUSU donated bags for life with recycling information to student households, to encourage correct recycling at home. These were well received and provided an opportunity to speak to students directly and answer questions about waste in the city.  In catering areas single-use plastics are being discouraged by increasing the cost of take-away coffee cups from 25p to 50p, while in SUSU areas the cost is £1.
<b>Biodiversity:</b> Maintain/enhance habitats for the benefit of people and wildlife.	Amber	Great activities improving the biodiversity on campus, including planting native hedgerows, fruit trees and species monitoring. Wider campus baseline assessment required to understand our green spaces better. For further details see pg. 16.
<b>Energy and Carbon:</b> Reduce carbon emissions by 20% from 2005/2006 baseline by 2020.	Amber	Reduced gas consumption due to faults on the CHP, resulted in an increase in purchased electricity. For further details see pg. 8.

**Water:** Reduce by 30% from 2009/2010 baseline by 2020.

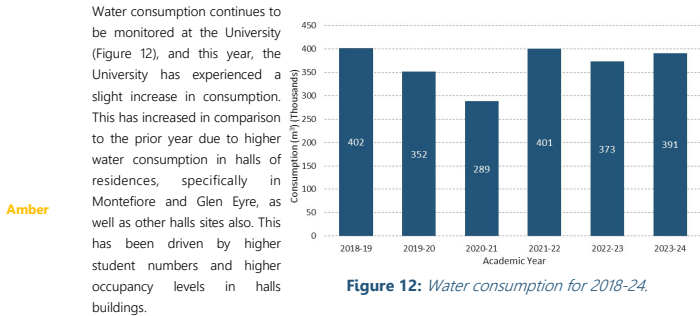


Figure 12: Water consumption for 2018-24.

The introduction of the new laundry service being included in room tariffs has also increased water consumption in the laundry areas. However, there have been water reduction measures taken at halls' sites, with increased communications to occupants on ways to reduce water, including fair use of laundry equipment in halls.

Objective summary	RAG rating	Progress & reasons for RAG rating
<b>Procurement:</b> Manage our supply chain by considering the economic, ethical & whole-life costs of purchasing decisions.	Amber	<p>Progress is being made to further engage with suppliers, while more work is needed to reduce our scope 3 emissions (see pg. 9 for details ), there have been a number of key improvements and initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A comprehensive library of template Responsible Procurement Questions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) has been developed and is now available on the procurement templates site, supporting the integration of responsible procurement into tenders. It also includes a risk assessment tool to help ensure relevance and proportionality.</li> <li>Procurement is actively engaging with suppliers during and after the tender process through an Employability Survey to drive student opportunity and strengthen their links to the University.</li> <li>Working with laboratory consumable suppliers to offer sustainability workshops/seminars to lab users, linking in with the ongoing LEAF accreditation.</li> <li>Contract Management have worked with BOF, our Office and Catering Furniture Supplier, to update the E-MarketPlace Punchout pages to include a landing page that reminds purchasers about using a refurbishment program before purchasing new items.</li> <li>The University of Southampton Supplier Code of Conduct has been published and incorporated into several tenders. This document outlines the standards expected of suppliers, their employees, and their supply chains when delivering goods, works, or services to the University.</li> <li>90 contracted suppliers have signed up to the Net Positive - Net Zero Carbon (NZC) Supplier Tool, including 100% of the University's strategic suppliers.</li> </ul>
<b>Education for Sustainable Development:</b> Sustainability course content; using the campus as a resource for learning.	Green	Students engaging with work opportunities, the SUSU sustainability forum and sustainability events, such as species monitoring. For further details on sustainability is being embedded within education see pg. 11.
<b>Communications:</b> Engage students & staff and the community on the principals of sustainability.	Green	Continued communication of the EMS and progress made in the Estates and Facilities working groups and communities of practice. For further details see pg. 20.
<b>EMS and Audit Results</b>	Green	Successful external audit in July 2025, supported by regular internal audits across university buildings and campuses.
<b>Pollution Prevention and Legal Compliance:</b> Minimise emissions to air, land & water. Ensure we operate within our compliance obligations.	Green	Improved method of reporting environmental incidences established, following a closer relationship with Security staff to report incidences. This has improved reporting and corrective actions.
<b>Sustainable Buildings:</b> Design, build & refurbish our estate in an environmentally responsible & resource-efficient way.	Green	The Sustainable Building Design Standard has been successfully applied to new projects and was updated in December 2024 to include legislation surrounding Biodiversity Net Gain. For further details see pg. 8.
<b>Travel:</b> Improve transport options available to staff, students & visitors to reduce car travel.	Green	<p>Over this period there were positive sustainable travel results in moving towards a more sustainable travel network:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In 2024/25, over 500,000 additional passengers used Unilink bus service, bringing the total annual passengers to 6,100,000.</li> <li>Continued to improve the Unilink service, growing the U1, U2 and U6 routes, and increasing U1N night service passengers by 55%.</li> <li>Launched an outsourced car parking management contractor, providing better car parking analytics to inform data-led decision-making. Legally-enforceable PCNs are issued to discourage unauthorised parking, and have achieved 'Park Mark' accreditation for Boldrewood, South Broadlands and Hampton car parks. This initiative is led by the police assessors who review the management, condition and safety of our car parks, with plans to achieve accreditation in all university car parks.</li> <li>Installed an additional four PodPoint chargers at Highfield and plan to further expand the network across all campuses alongside implementing a more robust fleet management system, accelerating the adoption of EVs.</li> <li>Improved our collaboration with cycle charities, such as donating 128 bikes with Recycle Your Cycle charity for use in prisons to aid rehabilitation of offenders. There was also a 33% increase in uptake of bike orders processed through the Cycle to Work Scheme.</li> <li>The Bike Doctor has serviced 652 staff and student bikes in the past year and have sold 14 bikes through the 'UniCycle' scheme. We also have a second-hand bike sale scheduled for Freshers Week which will be hosted by Recycle Your Cycle.</li> </ul> <p>For further details on university travel emissions see pgs. 9-10.</p>
<b>Continual Improvement</b> and enhanced performance of the EMS.	Green	The successful implementation of ISO14001 at Alpha and Beta House, achieving a 'highly commended' Green Gown Award in and improvements made to local biodiversity. For further details on continuous improvements see pg. 19.

## Progress against past year

Table 7 provides a short summary of progress against the past year for the EMS key performance indicators (KPI).

**Table 7:** EMS KPI progress against previous year.

EMS KPI	Rating	% change	Explanation
<b>Waste recycling from all streams</b> 40% recycling rate	Red	45% decrease	The significant decrease in recycling rate is due to the high level of waste generated from the demolition of the Faraday Tower on Highfield Campus.
<b>Waste recycling from academic sites</b> 44% recycling rate	Red	3% decrease	Small decrease in recycling rates which could be improved through the deployment of a new bin system which is currently under review.
<b>Waste recycling from halls sites</b> 44% recycling rate	Amber	3% increase	Increase in rate of recycling due to new donation points set up across residential halls which has reduced the level of waste when students move out at the end of term.
<b>Purchased grid electricity</b> 27.4 GWh	Amber	10% increase	Reduced output of the CHP resulted in a need to purchase more grid electricity.
<b>Gas consumption</b> 83.4 GWh	Green	10% decrease	Faults with the CHP led to reduced gas consumption.
<b>Water consumption</b> 391.4 ML	Amber	5% increase	Increased consumption from Halls of Residence.

## Continuous improvement - catering, food supply and waste

The catering team is reducing their environmental impact by decreasing the carbon intensity of meals served in the University coupled with growing our own fruits and vegetables, reducing the quantity of meat in meals, serving more vegan and vegetarian dishes and sourcing food from local suppliers. The team was shortlisted for the Green Gown Awards in 2024 and received a 'Highly Commended' award.

The catering team also supported a Master's student, who conducted a trial in the Piazza restaurant to add carbon labelling to the menu, showing the carbon intensity of each meals served. The results showed that this approach influenced behaviour, with a reduction in the number of beef dishes sold and an increase in chicken and plant-based dishes sold, both with a lower carbon intensity. Due to this, the team is now planning to roll out the carbon labelling to other catering outlets to give buyers more information when choosing their food.

In relation to food waste there were some examples of waste reduction being practiced in some of our buildings. Work clothing, such as unwanted uniforms were donated to students, whilst reuse of single use plastics was encouraged across delivered courses.

## Other EMS updates

In January 2025, work started to bring Alpha House and Beta House at the University of Southampton Science Park onto the main university ISO14001 environmental management accreditation. This was instigated due to the requirement of a bid for the NIHR Evaluation Trials and Studies Coordinating Centre. Once this extension to scope has been formalised as part of the June 2025 external environmental audit, conducted by NQA, they will be included in the scope for our ISO14001 accreditation.

NQA conducted an external environmental surveillance audit at the university (July 2024) and raised the following: (i) one minor non-conformity due to an initial lack of paperwork to support the disposal of white goods at halls of residences. However, paperwork for this was discovered soon after and the non-conformity was closed; and (ii) three opportunities for improvement related to the displaying of COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations) data sheets, documentation for water quality testing, paper use monitoring and review of waste strategy. These were reviewed and corrective actions put in place.





Continual improvement in reducing our impact on the environment is an ongoing theme in all our activities. For example, during this period:

- ## Communication & engagement

In October 2024 members of the Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG) core team exhibited the University's Sustainability Strategic Plan at the Big Sustainability & Innovation Expo. During the event the team got to learn about various sustainability initiatives and practices being adopted by businesses to save energy and engage with their supply chain to become carbon neutral and contribute positively towards net zero targets.

In November 2024 the Sustainability and Resilience Institute (SRI) hosted their first anniversary event and launched their first SDG report: The University's Sustainable Development Goals report launched at SRI's first anniversary



**Figure 12:** Q&A during the Sustainability Strategic Update event hosted in December 2024

A Sustainability Strategic Plan Update was hosted by the SIG in December 2024 building upon the annual update with the event timing allowing students to attend and engage with the plan (Figure 12). The hybrid event highlighted the sustainability targets and six Goals with presentations from Prof. Phil Wirght (Academic & Sustainability Strategic Plan Sponsor) and Prof. AbuBakr Bahai (SIG Chair)

In March 2025, as part of the Southampton Science and Engineering Festival (SOTSEF) the SIG provided an introduction to the strategy, key milestones, and an overview of recently developed work.

The Annual Sustainability Strategic Plan Update took place in July 2025 (Figure 13), with the hybrid event providing an introduction and update to both students and staff on the University's Sustainability Strategy and its underpinning Sustainability Strategic Plan.

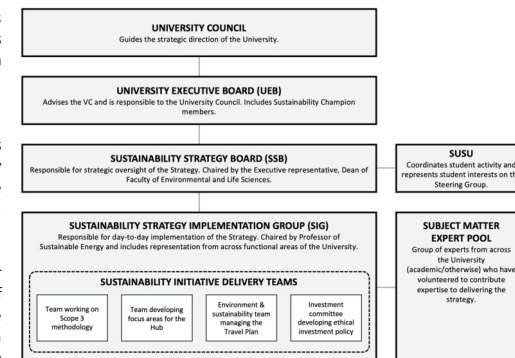
In addition to these activities the SIG have also presented to the Deans Council, Council, and various faculties and departments including iSolutions, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Engineering and Social Science. SIG have also published success stories across SUSSD and Staff Matters during the period.



**Figure 13:** Goal Champions & Leads at the Annual Sustainability Strategic Plan Update (left to right, Prof. AbuBakr Bahaj, Kevin Argent, Sally Crabb, Prof. Simon Kemp, Prof. Phillip Wright, Prof. Mark Smith, Prof. Jane Falkingham, Prof. Mark Spearing, Prof. Deborah Gill, Hayden Matthews & Eychelle Heywood).

The Sustainability Strategic Plan is one of the University's 10 strategic plans. The Sustainability Strategic Plan is supported by an agreed governance structure which ensures accountability across the university (Figure 14).

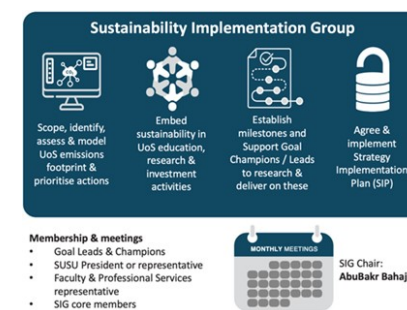
The Vice Chancellor of the University has overall accountability for achieving the University's Strategic Plans including those encompassed within our Sustainability Strategy its Vision and targets. The University Executive Board (UEB) which is chaired by the Vice Chancellor, provides advice in all matters related to the University.



**Figure 14:** Governance structure for the Sustainability Strategy



**Figure 15:** *SSB responsibilities and membership.*



**Figure 16:** *SIG responsibilities and membership*

The Sustainability Implementation Group (SIG) oversees the day-to-day implementation of the Plan and is chaired by Prof. AbuBakr Bahaj, head of the Energy & Climate Change Division in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences (FEPS). SIG features Goal Leads, SUSU, faculty and professional services representatives (Table 9). SIG meets monthly and reports quarterly to the SSB (Figure 16).

**Table 8: Sustainability Strategy Goal champions & leads**

Table 1: Understanding Strategy: Our champions & roles		
Goal 1	<b>Kevin Argent</b> <i>Exec. Dir. Estates &amp; Facilities</i>	<b>Hayden Matthews</b> <i>Dir. Engineering &amp; Infrastructure, Estates &amp; Facilities</i>
Goal 2	<b>Wendy Appleby</b> <i>VP (Operations)</i>	<b>Eychelle Heywood</b> <i>Head of Procurement</i>
Goal 3	<b>Prof. Jane Falkingham</b> <i>VP (Engagement &amp; International)</i>	<b>Prof. John Preston</b> <i>Prof. in Rail Transport</i>
Goal 4	<b>Prof. Deborah Gill</b> <i>VP (Education)</i>	<b>Prof. Simon Kemp</b> <i>Professional Fellow-Education</i>
Goal 5	<b>Prof. Mark Sparing</b> <i>VP (Research &amp; Enterprise)</i>	<b>Prof. John Holloway</b> <i>Assoc. VP (Interdisciplinary Research)</i>
Goal 6	<b>Alison Jarvis</b> <i>Exec. Dir. Finance</i>	<b>Sally Crabb</b> <i>Group Financial Controller</i>
Biodiversity	<b>Kevin Argent</b> <i>Exec. Dir. Estates &amp; Facilities</i>	<b>Sarah Puckett</b> <i>Environment &amp; Sustainability Manager</i>

**Table 9:** *Current faculty & professional services representatives*

Southampton University Student Union ( <b>SUSU</b> )	<b>Liz Harris</b> <i>SUSU Head of Sustainability</i>
Faculty of Arts & Humanities ( <b>FAH</b> )	<b>Dr Anna Collar</b> <i>Assoc. Prof.</i>
Faculty of Engineering & Physical Sciences ( <b>FEPS</b> )	<b>Prof. Andrew Cruden</b> <i>Assoc. Dean Infrastructure</i>
Faculty of Environmental & Life Sciences ( <b>FELS</b> )	<b>Prof. Felix Eigenbrod</b> <i>Prof. of Applied Spatial Ecology</i>
Faculty of Medicine ( <b>FMed</b> )	<b>Prof. Edd James</b> <i>Assoc. Dean Infrastructure</i>
Faculty of Social Science ( <b>FSS</b> )	<b>Prof. Ven Tauriangana</b> <i>Prof. of Accounting &amp; Sustainability</i>
<b>iSolutions</b>	<b>Robert Irving</b> <i>Dir. Service Delivery</i>
Public Policy Southampton ( <b>PPS</b> )	<b>Gareth Giles</b> <i>Head of Public Policy</i>
Sustainability and Resilience Institute ( <b>SRI</b> )	<b>Prof. Craig Hutton</b> <i>Dir. SRI</i>
<b>Technicians/Labs</b>	<b>Peter Morgan</b> <i>Laboratory Manager</i>



APPENDIX B: SCEF MANDATED CATEGORIES

Table 10: SCEF mandated reporting categories.

Scope	Sub-categories	UoS reporting status/methodology
Scope 1	1. Natural Gas	Advanced
	2. Fleet (owned/operated)	Advanced
	3a. Refrigerants & researched-based f-gas, VOC (Fugitive emissions)	Advanced
	3b. Refrigerants & researched-based f-gas, VOC (Process emissions)	Not estimating
	4. Other fuels	Advanced
Scope 2	5. Land-related emissions & Livestock	Not applicable
	1a. Purchased Electricity	Intermediate
	1b. Renewable Energy	Advanced
	2. Purchased Heat or Steam	Intermediate
	1a. Purchased Goods and Services	Basic
Scope 3	1b. Purchased Water	Intermediate
	2. Capital Goods	Not applicable
	3. Fuel and energy related activities	Advanced
	4. Upstream transportation and distribution	Basic
	5a. Waste generated in operations	Advanced
	5b. Wastewater	Basic
	6a. Business Travel – Flights/Train	Advanced
	6b. Business Travel – Taxi/Coach	Not estimating
	6c. Business Travel – Car Hire	Not estimating
	6d. Business Travel – Grey Fleet	Not estimating
	7a. Employee Commuting	Advanced
	7b. Working from home (staff)	Basic
	8. Upstream leased assets	Advanced
	9a. Downstream transportation and distribution – Goods & services	Not applicable
	9b. Downstream transportation and distribution – UK Student Travel & International Student Travel	Intermediate
	9c. Downstream transportation and distribution – Student Accommodation	Not applicable
	10. Processing of sold products	Not applicable
	11. Use of sold products	Not applicable
	12. End-of-life treatment of sold products	Not applicable
	13a. Downstream leased assets – leased buildings and vehicles	Not estimating
	13b. Downstream leased assets – land use	Not applicable
	14. Franchises	Not applicable
	15. Investments	Not estimating

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FEEDBACK

If you have any comments or feedback on this report, please contact us in confidence via [sig24@soton.ac.uk](mailto:sig24@soton.ac.uk).

If you are a member of our staff and student community you are welcome to start a discussion via the Viva Engage (previously called Yammer) group.





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This cycle of reporting will be repeated on an annual basis.





### **Sustainability Implementation Group**

The Sustainability Implementation Group was formulated as part of the Sustainability Strategic Plan. Its task is to oversee and co-ordinate the delivery of the University's six Sustainability Goals.

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Contributions were also received from Goal Leads, Champions, and SIG members see Appendix A for details.



#### **Find out more:**

Scan the QR code

Or visit: [www.southampton.ac.uk/susdev/our-approach/sustainability-strategy.page](http://www.southampton.ac.uk/susdev/our-approach/sustainability-strategy.page)

