



The University of Southampton's Sustainability Strategy 2020-2025

Annual update: December 2021

Our vision

Our vision is that by 2030, sustainability will be a part of everything the University of Southampton does: our individual behaviours, how we work together, and how we make decisions for the future. This is key to achieving our mission of changing the world for the better.

Why Act

Climate change and ecological destruction are the greatest challenges of our time. We have a responsibility to respond to these crises, and as a world-leading research and teaching university we can play a unique role in doing so.

Definitions

Sustainability: we define sustainability as living within the boundaries of our planet to meet the needs of current generations while protecting the needs of future generations.

Scope 1: direct emissions that the University controls, mainly from fuel combustion on-site (e.g. operational vehicles, or gas boilers).

Scope 2: indirect emissions from electricity purchased and used by the University.

Scope 3: all other indirect emissions from sources the University does not own or control. This includes emissions associated with travel, procurement, and waste and water.



Goal 1

Achieve net zero emissions for Scope 1 and Scope 2 by 2030

What we did in 2021

Switched to renewable electricity saving ~ 11,200 T CO₂e emissions per year (~45% of Scope 1 & 2 emissions); developed a 'Net-Zero by 2030' roadmap by analysing our highest emissions buildings and future options for the combined heat and power (CHP) plant.

What's next?

Implement the roadmap to ensure annual emissions reductions targets are met.

Goal 2

Measure our total emissions footprint and set targets for Scope 3 emissions reductions

What we did in 2021

Developed a method to measure our Scope 3 emissions and estimated our total Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions to be ~ 130,000 T CO₂e; developed a framework for *Ensuring Strategic Decisions Align with the Sustainability Strategy Goals*.

What's next?

Set ambitious reduction targets for Scope 3 that will become part of the net zero roadmap; pilot the 'embedding sustainability' framework to ensure strategic decisions align with the Sustainability Strategy Goals in business-as-usual settings.

Goal 3

Adopt a value-based approach to reduce emissions from business travel

What we did in 2021

Invested in high-quality online video conferencing technology and trained staff and students to get the most out of it; built an emissions calculator into our booking system to help people choose the most sustainable mode of transport.

What's next?

Set a business travel emissions target; implement a communication plan to target highest emitting business travelers; consult on a points system to help people estimate the value of their planned travel; undertake a feasibility study for a University-wide emissions budget for business travel.

Goal 4

Ensure that sustainability is a part of every University education programme by 2025

What we did in 2021

Launched a campus-wide 'Southampton Sustainability Solutions' e-learning module; mapped the Sustainable Development Goals across all University Curricula, finding that all programme compulsory modules map to at least one SDG.

What's next?

Ensure the e-learning module is embedded in all student and staff orientation; develop a UOSM Sustainability module as an option for undergraduate degree programmes; ensure all education programmes have integrated, subject-relevant sustainability themes.

Goal 5

Make sustainability a cornerstone of UoS' research and societal impact

What we did in 2021

Mapped all University research outputs and REF Impact Case Studies against the UN Sustainable Development Goals finding that 30% of outputs and all ICS map to at least one SDG.

What's next?

Consult on and establish a Sustainability and Resilience Research Hub; co-ordinate the first set of hub-linked research projects.

Goal 6

Implement a sustainable and ethical investment policy

What we did in 2021

Reviewed the University's exposure to fossil fuel investments - 0.8 % of our portfolio was held within direct fossil fuel companies and a further 0.8 % within indirect fossil fuel companies; developed and implemented a Sustainable and Ethical Investment Policy.

What's next?

Developing a transparent process of reporting on our investment decisions; evolving our portfolio to be fully compliant with our Sustainable and Ethical Investment Policy.



Our ongoing work

The strategy builds on work that our people are already doing to make the University more sustainable in areas such as waste and recycling, wastewater, biodiversity, and sustainable transport.

The Strategy sits alongside the University Travel Plan, Estates Strategy and Biodiversity Policy, which will continue to drive our approach to sustainability in those key areas.



Enablers

Partnership between the whole University community.

Leadership commitment from people at all levels of the University.

A **governance structure** that ensures we hold ourselves accountable.

A **culture** that values sustainability and encourages behaviours that have a positive impact.

Community engagement that links our sustainability vision to that of our region.

A **communications plan** that builds momentum around the Strategy.

