
Environmental Sustainability Strategy

1. Summary

- 1.1 The University of West London's Environmental Sustainability Strategy has been developed to address the requirements of the University Strategic Plan, and in particular to achieve the strategic objective to "be environmentally sustainable" by 2018.
- 1.2 The strategy is designed to provide an overarching framework to lead the University's thinking on devising its sustainability policies and action plans in the future.

2. What is "Sustainability"?

- 2.1 The commonly accepted definition of sustainability is:

"...development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." ¹

- 2.2 The core principles which underpin this are of meeting the essential needs of society while living within environmental limits.
- 2.3 The challenge for any organisation is to embed sustainability in a way that is relevant to its own operations and organisational culture.

3. Context of Environmental Sustainability in UWL

- 3.1 The University of West London has sites in Ealing and Brentford in West London and an educational hub at Fountain House, in Reading, Berkshire. The University teaches a variety of academic subjects across eight academic schools. The day-to-day activities of staff and students have a major impact on the local community and environment, and the University is a significant contributor to the local economy of West London.
- 3.2 The underlying need for this strategy is driven by the University's wider corporate and social responsibilities, and by our statutory obligations. Corporate responsibility seeks to drive environmental and sustainability benefits with regards to such matters as reducing pollution, minimising waste, product safety, and conservation of resources.

¹ <http://www.un-documents.net/our-common-future.pdf>

- 3.3 The University also has a range of statutory obligations relating to environmental topics including those relating to reducing waste, carbon reporting, water conservation, and enhancing the built environment.
- 3.4 The Board of Governors has endorsed the University Strategic Plan Ambition 2018 which contains a clear commitment to “improve significantly environmental credentials” by 2018. The KPI set by the Board of Governors to measure progress in achieving environmental sustainability is for the University to achieve a 1st in the People and Planet Green League by 2018.
- 3.5 The methods used to measure and report on sustainability within in the HE sector are currently being reviewed. As an alternative measure, UWL has adopted the goal to develop an environmental management system (EMS) that meets ISO14001:2015 by 2018. This will be done by achieving the highly recognised Eco-Campus Platinum accreditation. Applying Eco-Campus processes which focus on operational issues will make a substantial contribution to improving overall sustainability performance in UWL.

4. Sustainability Drivers

- 4.1 UWL will develop its sustainability policy in line with sector guidance from HEFCE, the requirements of ISO14001.
- 4.2 HEFCE guidance on sustainable development (December 2014/30) recommends that universities use their resources to demonstrate leadership and innovation to address the challenge of living within environmental limits. They identify the four areas of teaching, research and knowledge exchange, operations, and community involvement as contributing to this challenge.
- 4.3 The Eco-Campus Environmental Management System provides a framework for identifying environmental risks & opportunities and for continually improving environmental operational performance.

5. Sustainability Policy Development

- 5.1 Having regard to the above drivers, UWL will:
 - Ensure that environmental protection and social issues, including prevention of pollution are considered within the University's strategic planning, management and operations;
 - Ensure that all staff and students are given the opportunity to engage with this policy in a way that is relevant to them and which promotes further understanding of sustainable development;
 - Encourage the inclusion of sustainable development themes within the University's Research Strategy and;
 - Support the teaching of sustainable development topics in the curriculum, relevant to student coursework as set out in the University's Teaching and Learning Strategy;
 - Fulfil all compliance obligations relating to environmental management;
 - Communicate the contents of this policy within the University and make it publicly available.

6. Strategy Framework

- 6.1 As stated above, UWL will develop its sustainability actions around four broad themes that are set out in the HEFCE guidance on sustainable development.
- Equipping our graduates with the understanding and knowledge of sustainability that future leaders and decision makers require through teaching and the curriculum where relevant;
 - Encouraging sustainability research and knowledge transfer;
 - Using Eco-Campus to manage the environmental risks and opportunities from our own operations and achieve the Board of Governors target;
 - Communicating environmental issues to staff and students, and ensuring they understand their environmental responsibilities;

7. Sustainability Governance

- 7.1 To support progress in achieving its sustainability ambitions UWL has developed high level policy statements and management objectives for each of the above categories. By applying Eco-Campus processes, UWL has identified nine broad areas of environmental aspect.
- 7.2 It is the role of the Environmental Review Board (ERB) to devise and deliver the environmental sustainability strategy to meet the 2018 sustainability objective and report to the Vice Chancellor's Executive on progress and it will do this by developing a high level plan for each of the above categories and approve detailed action plans based on this..
- 7.3 The ERB will approve and monitor sustainability objectives for identified areas to support the delivery of the strategy; with foci on operations, communications, and education. The Board will receive regular reports on progress towards Eco-Campus targets.
- 7.4 The University's Environmental and Sustainability Manager has responsibility for recommending to the ERB systems and processes necessary to support implementation of this policy.
- 7.5 Progress towards achieving identified objectives will be communicated to all staff and students and will be made publicly available. A summary of the University's sustainable development progress will be reported to the Board of Governors and included in the UWL Annual Report and Accounts.