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ANNUAL SUSTAINABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS REPORT

US

UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

FOREWORD FROM OUR VICE-CHANCELLOR, PROFESSOR SASHA ROSENEIL

Building on our Sustainability Strengths

During my first year as the University of Sussex's Vice-Chancellor, I have been hugely impressed by the passionate commitment of our staff and students to addressing the profound environmental and societal issues facing our planet and its people. We know there is much still to do, but the enthusiasm and expertise to make real progress run broad and deep at Sussex.

The ambition set out in *Sustainable Sussex*, the University's sustainability strategy, is to establish Sussex as one of the most sustainable universities in the world. Our work on international development, global justice, human rights, and sustainability continues to be at the heart of this commitment.

Our Annual Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals Report plays an integral role in this important work by compiling a summary of the progress that we are making against all 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is our fourth Annual Report and it covers every aspect of our environmental, economic, and social sustainability work, right across the University, including our teaching, research and innovation, policy development, external engagement and partnerships, and operational practice.

I was delighted that Sussex was ranked 10th in the UK and 49th in the world out of 1,591 global higher education institutions in the *Times Higher Education Impact Rankings 2023* for our performance in relation to the UN SDGs. This strong standing is further substantiated by our ranking third in the UK for sustainable institutions and 55th in the world in the first *QS Sustainability Rankings*, which were published in October 2022. We were also very pleased that we retained our position, for the seventh consecutive year, as world number one for Development Studies, together with our on-campus partner institution, the Institute of Development Studies, in the *2024 QS World University Rankings by Subject*. These rankings indicate that we are well on our way to achieving our ambition of being one of the most sustainable universities in the world.

In early 2022, Sussex was invited to join the International Universities Climate Alliance, a group of 45 of the world's leading universities in tackling climate change. This is, in part, a recognition of the work of the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme, the University of Sussex Business School, the School of Global Studies, and the University's strong research outputs and real-world policy influence and outreach on sustainability. Sussex is also considered world-leading in energy, transition, and decarbonisation research, as exemplified by the Business School's Science Policy Research Unit (also called SPRU) which has been playing a key role in shaping global, national, regional, and local government energy policy development.

It gives me great pleasure to see how we have been building on our achievements during the past year – and introducing new initiatives. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight some, while encouraging you to read about them in more detail in the Report:

- We performed strongly in the newly added sustainability category in the *QS World University Rankings 2024*, with a score of 97.2 out of 100. We also came joint first – scoring 100% – in the areas of Sustainable Food and Education for Sustainable Development in the *2022/23 People & Planet University League*.
- We were featured in the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) solar report in May 2023, as an example of how solar is being used to decarbonise energy in the education sector. This year we were awarded a £5 million Sustainability Programme grant to actively advance our campus decarbonisation plan and achieve our institutional commitment to being net zero by 2035.
- We are tackling both the climate and cost-of-living crisis in an integrated way and have increased our financial support for students to help alleviate poverty through an increased Hardship Fund, the creation of a new affordable student housing policy and affordable housing scheme, and the introduction of a hugely popular, and much needed, low cost vegetarian and vegan £2 Sussex Special meal on campus. We also became accredited ourselves as a 'Real Living Wage' employer, and our academics have conducted further research with the Low Pay Commission to inform recommendations to the UK government on the national minimum wage.

- We have introduced new policies in key areas of our Sustainability Strategy, especially relating to biodiversity. In response to an extensive consultation involving students, staff, and the wider community, we have committed to increasing the land on our campus that is set aside for nature to 42% by 2027. These policies and practices have resulted in us winning a prestigious Green Flag award, for well-managed green spaces, for the seventh year running.
- Our (joint with the University of Brighton) medical school, the Brighton and Sussex Medical School, continued to be ranked first overall in the UK for Sustainable Health Care in the *Planetary Health Report Card* in 2023, in recognition of its work on decarbonising the NHS.
- The advancement of our Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion strategies included the achievement of a Race Equality Charter Bronze award in 2023.
- In June 2023, the University of Sussex Business School received philanthropic funding to establish the Bennett Institute for Innovation and Policy Acceleration to address and develop urgently needed policies and solutions to tackle some of society's greatest challenges, beginning with climate change.
- This year saw the launch of our first *Green Futures* event as part of a process to link our student careers initiatives to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- In 2023, Sussex was awarded the U Dine award for sustainability, along with our catering provider, Chartwells, and we currently hold the highest-possible Sustainable Restaurant Association accreditation.

Our student and staff community has also stepped up to a wide range of sustainability challenges:

- Our Volunteering Policy for staff is now being piloted and gives employees an allowance of at least two days per year (pro-rata) to volunteer in a charity of their choice that is aligned to the SDGs.
- In 2023, we awarded three more Climate Leadership Scholarships, whereby students receive £3,000 per full year of study for showing leadership in their communities in relation to climate change, and work with us to deliver engagement initiatives with the Sussex community around tackling climate change and reaching net zero.
- In April 2023, the third annual Pitch for the Planet – our Dragons' Den-style sustainable innovation competition – took place again. Winners received a share of £30,000 in prizes, which they are using for start-up incubation in areas such as sustainable sourcing, biodiversity, and reducing waste.

- Finally, I was most impressed by the Sussex students who worked with the external group, Students Organising for Sustainability, and our dedicated sustainability team to audit our entire curriculum for its sustainability content. I have received these findings with interest and we will be doubling down on our existing commitment to ensure that sustainability is taught within all degrees as part of the Curriculum Reimagined project that is being rolled out across the whole University.

All in all, I am delighted that we have so much to report this year. But we cannot rest on our laurels. We are a University that is committed to sustainable development and to making a transformative contribution to tackling the threats posed by climate change and environmental degradation. And I am personally committed to ensuring that Sussex continues to make an innovative and transformative impact on our collective ability to tackle the threats posed by climate change, the mass extinction of species, intensifying societal inequalities, and geopolitical conflict. I want our determination to be one of the most sustainable universities in the world to be evident to all students, staff, and stakeholders when they visit our campus, and for next year to see further progress. For now, I extend my warmest thanks to every member of the Sussex community who contributed to the work reported here, and I hope that you are inspired by reading about what we have achieved in the past year.



Sasha Rosenell

Professor Sasha Rosenell
10 November 2023

The data in this report includes quantitative data from the 2021/22 year as the last full HESA reporting cycle year for consistency purposes. However, qualitative reporting of good practice in relation to policy and educational initiatives reflects the position that was correct as of November 2023. In the rare occasion when quantitative data is provided for a different period (predominantly to prevent data distortions related to the pandemic) then this is specified in the report.

INTRODUCTION

This report summarises progress to date at realising each of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and highlights areas for improvement that have already been identified in Sustainable Sussex – the University of Sussex Sustainability Strategy.

The 17 SDGs are as follows:



To make this report engaging and easy to read, the performance data is provided at a high level.

If you would like more detailed information then please contact the Sustainability Team at sustainable@sussex.ac.uk

SDG1 NO POVERTY



This SDG relates to our University's research on poverty and our support for low-income students and citizens in the local community.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- The University is ranked first in the world for Development Studies in the *QS World Rankings* – jointly with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS)¹ – this shows our commitment to ending poverty across the globe. IDS also offers a specific Masters degree in Poverty and Development.²
- To follow up on our Affordable Housing Policy³ published in 2022, we are trialling a new Affordable Housing scheme for the academic year 2023/24.⁴ It provides a capped rent rate for eligible students who qualify for the Sussex Bursary.⁵ This means that the maximum amount of rent that eligible students will pay is £125 per week.
- Our Access and Participation Plan contains ambitious plans to help reduce poverty and promote social mobility through the provision of higher education to under-represented groups.⁶
- We have targets in place to increase the percentage of students at Sussex who come from the poorest 20% of households in the UK – known as Index of Multiple Deprivation Quintile 1 (IMDQ1) – from 8.8% to 21% by 2024/25. We also want to increase the number of our graduates from IMDQ1 backgrounds.⁷ We have targets to reduce the gap in progression outcomes between the poorest and richest students (ie IMDQ1 and Q5) from 16% to 0% by 2024/25.⁸
- Approximately a quarter of our undergraduates in 2021/22 were first generation scholars⁹ – that means that they are the first person in their immediate family to attend university. We recognise how important this is for promoting social mobility within our society.¹⁰
- Our Student Centre helps low-income students tackle any money worries – our dedicated Student Funding Team help with budgeting, welfare loans, hardship funds and more.¹¹ In 2021/22, over 20% of our total student population received financial aid.¹² This included students from low-income households earning £25,000 or less who received an entry bursary and access to a Student Hardship Fund.¹³ These funds can also benefit students estranged from their families and care leavers, who also automatically receive vouchers, free bedding, and the opportunity to live in University-managed accommodation all year round during their course.¹⁴
- In 2021/22, we also increased our Hardship Fund to a total of £818,000.¹⁵ This was distributed between 758 students. This was a 33% increase in financial support on the previous year. One year on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a total of £64,000 has been raised to help provide hardship bursaries to Ukrainian students affected by the conflict.¹⁶ Our £600,000 Andrew Rudd scholarship programme, rolled out in 2022, also supports students who have been in care.^{17 18}
- We encourage students from lower and middle-income countries (LMICs)¹⁹ to attend our University. We provided 847 scholarships to students from World Bank categorised LMICs from August 2022 to July 2023. This was an increase of 128% compared to the previous year.²⁰
- Our legal clinics provide advice on multiple issues (including housing and employment) to the local community, which can help to prevent poverty and homelessness.²¹ This includes our award-winning Citizens Advice Project where our law students give the public free advice²² under Citizens Advice Bureau supervision on many issues, including debt and welfare benefits.²³
- One of our Professors of Economics, and former Low Pay Commissioner (LPC), Richard Dickens,²⁴ conducted further research with the LPC, published in October 2023, to inform recommendations to the UK government on the national minimum wage and helping to alleviate national poverty.²⁵ Additionally, members of our Economics Department have influenced key poverty stakeholders, including: the World Bank, World Trade Organization, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, and the UK and US governments.²⁶
- Our Sussex Centre for Migration Research is leading two innovative projects between 2020 and 2024 on 'Protracted Displacement Economies'²⁷ and 'Inclusive Urban Infrastructure'²⁸ to influence local, national and global poverty reduction and migration policy.²⁹

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- We aim to review our approach to affordable housing actions to ensure we are meeting our objectives and continue to work closely with the Students' Union to increase the availability of housing and financial aid for our students.

SDG2 ZERO HUNGER



This SDG relates to our world-leading research on hunger, teaching on food sustainability and our commitment to tackle food waste and address hunger among students and local communities.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- This year we scored 100%, coming joint 1st in the area of Sustainable Food, according to the 2022/23 *People & Planet University League*.³⁰
- We have a Responsible Food and Water Production and Consumption section in our Sustainability Strategy³¹ and we reviewed our Sustainable Food and Agriculture Policy this year.³²
- We are part of a consortium of seven UK universities and research institutes that are helping to create future leaders in sustainable food systems via the Partnership for Sustainable Food Future – Centre for Doctoral Training (PSFF).³³
- We offer a Centre for Doctoral Training (CDT) in Food Systems³⁴ and a third-year undergraduate module in Global Food Security³⁵ as well as Global Politics of Food.³⁶
- We offer a Masters degree in Food and Development,³⁷ which teaches students about: food and nutrition security, sustainable food systems, value chains and corporate power; and agri-food technology and its contestations.
- We also teach an undergraduate module called the Forest Food Garden, enabling students to grow and harvest forest food on our campus.³⁸ This is in addition to the provision of our student garden, where students are supported to produce fruit and vegetables.³⁹
- We are creating positive sustainable food and agriculture impacts globally, locally and at campus level. For example, our policy brief 'Agricultural Voices of Syria' promotes sustainable agricultural practices to farmers in conflict zones through podcasting.⁴⁰ The innovative project won the Interdisciplinary Research Award in 2021.⁴¹
- We provide academic representation to an advisory panel that informed the development of the local City Food Strategy Action Plan (2018-2023). A key priority for the plan is to reduce inequalities (including prioritising those with the poorest diets or least access to healthy food).⁴² The City's work was recognised with the UK's first Gold Sustainable Food Places Award in 2020 because of the exceptional local results in this area.⁴³
- We also host events on sustainable food production on campus. For example, our Sussex Roots collective welcomes members of the community onto campus to learn about sustainable food production at our on-campus student garden.⁴⁴
- We have multiple interventions to help prevent hunger and food insecurity amongst our staff, students and the wider community. All excess food from our catering outlets is donated to food banks via the FareShare⁴⁵ initiative or to people in need via food redistribution apps.⁴⁶ Our student-led Food Waste Café Society allows students to pay what they can for meals made from surplus food⁴⁷ and our Meeting House runs a food bank and regular free lunch events for students and staff.⁴⁸
- In 2023, we were awarded the U Dine award for sustainability, along with our catering provider, Chartwells,⁴⁹ and we currently hold the highest-possible Sustainable Restaurant Association accreditation.⁵⁰ The animal rights charity PETA currently lists us as one of the most vegan-friendly universities in the UK.⁵¹
- All the fruit, vegetables and meat sold by Chartwells (provided by Compass Group UK and Ireland) are procured from local suppliers as a standard and we source food and drinks from social enterprises wherever we can.⁵²
- In November 2022, we introduced a £2 Sussex Special meal to help prevent food poverty and hunger. As of June 2023, more than 60,000 subsidised meals were consumed.⁵³ This provision of healthy, low-cost vegan and vegetarian hot food options on campus saw us shortlisted for the Cost of Living Award at this year's *Whatuni Student Choice Awards (WUSCA)*.⁵⁴
- In 2021/22, we collected an estimated 25.82 tonnes of food waste from the University that went to our on-campus aerobic digester, or was taken off campus for anaerobic digestion, as opposed to Energy Recovery via combustion or incineration.⁵⁵

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Continuing to increase our food waste recycling and measurement.

SDG3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELLBEING



This SDG relates to our research on key diseases and conditions and support for healthcare professions, and the health of our students and staff.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- In 2021/22, approximately 14% of our students graduated with a degree in a health profession including medicine and psychology, some of which we operate in partnership with the University of Brighton via Brighton and Sussex Medical School (BSMS). BSMS integrates teaching on sustainable health care and climate change into their undergraduate curriculum.⁵⁶
- In 2023, BSMS obtained an overall grade B+ in the Planetary Health Report Card,⁵⁷ a metric assessing medical school planetary health awareness and accountability. This positioned us third overall and first in the UK for research in sustainable health care in 2023.⁵⁸
- We collaborate with global, national and local health partners to improve health outcomes. The BSMS Sustainable Healthcare Group is at the forefront of sustainable health.⁵⁹ The group is led by Professor Mahmood Bhutta who works with the clinical advisory board of Greener National Health Service (NHS), to foster better working conditions in healthcare supply chains.⁶⁰
- In 2023, BSMS conducted a carbon footprint of products used in the five most common surgical operations carried out in the National Health Service (NHS) in England.⁶¹ In support of NHS Net Zero targets and initiatives, they were commissioned by the UK Health Alliance on Climate Change to produce a landmark Green Surgery Report due for release in November 2023.⁶²
- We host the annual Sustainable Healthcare Academic Research Enterprise Conference; a global event for healthcare professionals to share best practice on sustainability.⁶³
- Our esteemed Global Health and Infection Department (GHI) has members in various locations, including University Hospitals Sussex NHS Foundation Trust and multiple overseas institutions advising the World Health Organisation (WHO) on mental health, stigma and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).⁶⁴ In January 2023, GHI members co-organised a week-long exhibition at the UK Parliament to highlight the need for further investment in tackling NTDs.⁶⁵
- We lead community outreach programmes to improve and promote health and wellbeing. For example, since 2015 our Time for Dementia initiative has seen students supporting people with dementia and their carers.⁶⁶ We also run a Time for Autism programme.⁶⁷ Meanwhile, our Living Well with HIV project engaged HIV patients, healthcare providers and related stakeholders in a coalition to improve access to commissioned mental health services and quality of life for people living with HIV within Kent, Surrey, and Sussex.⁶⁸
- We have a widening participation scheme called Brightmed⁶⁹ that undertakes outreach to local schools to help increase the number of medical students from under-represented groups. It has been nominated for and won numerous awards since its inception, including being shortlisted in 2021 for the *Times Higher Education (THE)* Widening Participation or Outreach Initiative of the Year Award.⁷⁰
- We share our sport facilities with the local community – including access to complementary therapies⁷¹ and our sports team, Sussexsport, work closely with Albion in the Community, local schools and disability groups to promote sport in the community.⁷² We offer free match time to the VYD youth project to support disadvantaged groups including refugees.⁷³
- We protect the mental health of our staff via an Employee Assistance Programme and the Spectrum.Life app – providing in-depth tools and support to improve mental wellbeing.⁷⁴
- Our students can access a fully integrated counselling and wellbeing service and disability unit.⁷⁵
- We also provide a GP⁷⁶ and pharmacy service,⁷⁷ as well as meditation drop-in sessions on campus.⁷⁸
- Our Smoking Policy prohibits smoking and the use of electronic cigarettes in any University building or premises, including substantially enclosed outdoor areas.⁷⁹
- We provide our students with free sexual health services and advice through an on-campus health centre and through peer-to-peer student drop-ins.^{80 81}

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Further embedding sustainable health care in our teaching in partnerships with NHS Trusts.

SDG4 QUALITY EDUCATION



This SDG relates to our contribution to early years and lifelong learning, our pedagogy research and our commitment to inclusive education.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- This year we scored 100%, coming joint 1st in the area of Education for Sustainable Development, according to the 2022/23 *People & Planet University League*.⁸²
- We have a dedicated School of Education and Social Work (ESW).⁸³ This includes our Centre for International Education that has a focus on education and international development.⁸⁴
- In 2021/22, we produced 110 primary school teaching graduates, including from our Masters degree in Early Years Teaching.⁸⁵ We also produced 226 secondary school teachers.
- We provide free pedagogic vocational training in person and online to support teachers continued professional development. For example, in October 2022 we provided leadership and mentoring training to teachers in Laos.⁸⁶ In partnership with a number of institutions in India, we developed an open access module for students and teacher educators on Quality and Inclusive Education.⁸⁷ In August 2023, we also provided free training to teachers in South Africa.⁸⁸
- We are continuing to advance our pedagogic revolution with the launch of a £50,000 Education and Innovation Fund,⁸⁹ the redevelopment of the University Skills Hub⁹⁰ and workshops focusing on co-creation in the curriculum, rewarding innovation and teaching excellence.⁹¹
- Our Sussex 2025 Vision is based around four themes, including 'Learn to Transform – making students partners in the big decisions that shape our University's future'.⁹²
- We undertake educational outreach activities in the community, including schools.⁹³
- In 2022/23, we continued to offer an elective entitled Discovering Role Models – Peer-Led Mentoring in Schools. Within this course, undergraduates provided mentoring and facilitated workshops for local secondary school pupils.⁹⁴
- Our Sussex Research Network is an innovative partnership between our Department of Education and eight local schools, to undertake collaborative research and capacity building to create useful educational knowledge.⁹⁵
- Our English Department established Sussex Writes in 2016, where up to 30 tutors from a range of disciplines have run creative writing workshops in 25 schools across East and West Sussex. They aim to work with 3,000 students by 2025.⁹⁶ They also worked with 54 young people in 22 countries in the Global South with pan-African NGO The Youth Café.⁹⁷
- Our School of Education and Social Work is involved in Green United, a youth-led initiative for students across all schools in Lewes to take environmental action, such as campaigning for 'plastic free schools' and growing sustainable, healthy food.⁹⁸
- We host a wide range of free public and community events and lectures. Our Sussex Lectures⁹⁹ and Sussex Universe programmes¹⁰⁰ cover a wide range of topics, such as championing human rights and social justice globally.
- Our Maths department also offers free outreach lectures to education groups on topics such as synchronisation in technology and nature.¹⁰¹
- We provide additional educational resources to the wider community, including schools and colleges, in several ways. For example, providing free access to many of our library materials,¹⁰² Skills Hub training,¹⁰³ seminars and events¹⁰⁴ (including our Special Collections at The Keep).¹⁰⁵ We also offer modern language classes to the general public, including British Sign Language.¹⁰⁶
- The Institute of Development Studies also provides professional development courses to the wider community to help bring about social change, some of which are free.¹⁰⁷
- Our former Social, Technological and Environmental Pathways to Sustainability (STEPS) centre created a free online course called Pathways to Sustainability for the general public¹⁰⁸ and our Sussex Sustainability Research Programme also makes resources in this area freely available online,¹⁰⁹ both of which can aid professional development and teaching.

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Further embedding sustainability in our curriculum through the Curriculum Reimagined process.

SDG5 GENDER EQUALITY



This SDG relates to our research on the study of gender, policies on gender equality and commitment to recruiting and promoting women.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We have a dedicated Centre for Gender Studies.¹¹⁰ We also offer a Masters degree in Gender and Development based at the Institute of Development Studies.¹¹¹ A wide range of our degrees also include a gender-related teaching curriculum.¹¹²
- Women make up around 33% of our senior academics and we have a target to increase female representation in senior management roles.^{113*}
- Our Equality and Diversity Strategy, Inclusive Sussex, as updated in July 2022, sets out our commitment to preventing discrimination on grounds of gender.¹¹⁴
- We have a policy of non-discrimination for transgender people, as set out in our Trans and Non-Binary Equality Policy Statement.¹¹⁵ We published a Transitioning at Work Policy in 2020¹¹⁶ and have a Trans and Non-Binary staff network to enable the provision of peer-to-peer support.¹¹⁷
- We have a Dignity and Respect policy for staff and students that has a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and harassment.¹¹⁸ Our online Report and Support tool allows staff and students to report unacceptable behaviours anonymously or by giving their contact details.¹¹⁹ We also have trained Dignity and Respect Champions to support staff.^{119a}
- We reviewed and made further enhancements to our maternity and paternity policies in 2022 to support parents employed by the University.¹²⁰ We provide accessible childcare and nursery facilities for students and staff, with students receiving a 20% discount.¹²¹ We also have a Parent and Carer staff network,¹²² and introduced a carer fund in 2022 to support those returning from a period of care-related leave.^{122a}
- In 2018, we introduced a new approach to flexible working to become 'flexible by default', to encourage a range of flexible working options from day one, including at the most senior grades.¹²³ In May 2021, we also published our Remote Working Framework, which can help improve work-life balance for people with caring responsibilities.¹²⁴
- In September 2021, we published a Menopause Policy¹²⁵ with guidelines¹²⁶ for employees and managers on providing the right support to manage menopausal symptoms at work. We have been hosting Menopause Café meetings since June 2021.¹²⁷ Due to the huge success of this initiative, in October 2022 we hosted the first Menopause Festival.¹²⁸
- We also celebrate International Women's Day with multiple events across campus.¹²⁹
- We actively encourage applications from students in subjects where women are underrepresented. We hold an institutional Athena SWAN bronze award – designed to encourage increased representation and progression by women in higher education. We also have a key performance indicator (KPI) in our Inclusive Sussex strategy for all 10 of our Schools to attain an Athena Swan Departmental Award by 2025. So far, four schools hold bronze awards, three hold silver, and all our STEM (science, technology, engineering, maths and medicine) Schools have achieved an award.¹³⁰
- We currently have 22 female active mentors, who account for 28% of the total number of mentors and 49 female active mentees who account for 59% of the total number of mentees.¹³¹
- A team of Sussex staff have been organising the annual Soapbox Science outreach platform on Brighton seafront since 2017, to promote women scientists and the science they do. This year's event was co-led in collaboration with the British Neuroscience Association.¹³² In 2023, our School of Engineering and Informatics also hosted a number of events and activities to celebrate International Women in Engineering Day.¹³³
- We provide scholarships to women, for example our Scholarship for Women in STEM.¹³⁴

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Ensure our ongoing improvements underpinned by Athena Swan Action Plans are embedded to enable occupational segregation to be addressed.

* We have a target in our Athena SWAN gender equality action plan to increase female representation in grade 10, band A from 25% to 28% by 2024. This is the area of greatest underrepresentation by women

SDG6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



This SDG relates to research about water, water usage, and our commitment to ensuring good water management in the wider community.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We measure our annual water consumption, so we have a baseline from which to make improvements. In 2021/22, we used 349,071m³ of mains water totalling 16.50m³ per person compared to gross water use of 217,734m³, equivalent to 9.51m³ per person in 2020/21.¹³⁵
- We provide free drinking water around campus from taps, jugs and zip taps to reduce demand for single use plastic water bottles. 90% of our drinking fountains across campus are provided through a contract with AquAid, who help to bring clean, fresh drinking water to impoverished communities in Africa.¹³⁶
- Our catering outlets also stock bottles of Life Water – an ethics-driven, Hove-based company who are 100% carbon neutral. Part of Life Water’s mission is to build wells for small communities to ensure they have safe drinking water. The sales that have been generated at Sussex have enabled Life Water to build two wells in rural communities that are attributed to the University of Sussex and Sussex Food.¹³⁷
- In July 2021, we installed a new pump house and replacement water pipes on our campus. The modern automated valves and fittings in the new pump house operate efficiently and reliably, reducing the chance of water leaks and interruptions to the water supply.¹³⁸
- We apply building standards around water use to new buildings. We are already committed to achieving BREEAM Excellent in this area in relation to toilet flushes and sinks,¹³⁹ and creating accompanying design guides by October 2024.¹⁴⁰
- Our Jubilee Building and Student Centre have rainwater harvesting.¹⁴¹
- We have also installed grey water recycling equipment in the East Slope halls of residence, with a target of 30% of used water from showers being redirected to toilet flush systems. The grey water is currently being supplied to 1,434 student bedrooms.
- In May 2023, we published our Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Policy that commits us to water conscious planting practices, including selecting plants that do not have high water requirements, planting in shade, using mulch and minimal watering of plants.¹⁴²
- Our Geography Department conduct research into climate and water resources.¹⁴³
- We have a Sustainable Water Management Policy that contains several operational policies and procedures to support clean water and sanitation. It also sets out all relevant legislation that the University must comply with and other statutory standards and current best practices we are aiming to incorporate.¹⁴⁴
- We also have a Hazardous Waste Policy that was refreshed in May 2021,¹⁴⁵ and we provide guidance and posters on wastewater disposal via sinks.¹⁴⁶ Our wastewater is removed and treated by Southern Water.¹⁴⁷

AREAS WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Conducting a strategic review of options to improve water sustainability and set water consumption targets as committed to in our Sustainability Strategy.¹⁴⁸
- Teaching staff and students about responsible water use on and off campus.
- Developing more business cases that can generate cost effective water savings.
- Publishing additional guidance for end users on water discharges and standards.

SDG7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



This SDG relates to our research on energy, energy use, policies, and our commitment to promoting energy efficiency in the wider community.

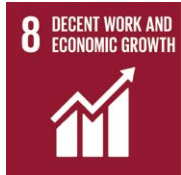
OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- University of Sussex is world-leading in energy, transition, and decarbonisation research. Academics from the University of Sussex's Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) shape global, national, regional and local government energy policy development.¹⁴⁹
- Current and recent SPRU projects¹⁵⁰ include The Whole Person Whole Place project – working with local government and communities to find new ways of renovating and retrofitting homes for a low carbon future.^{151 152} The Responsive Organising for Low Emission Societies (ROLES) project developed a toolkit for local councils and EU policymakers to identify how European city-regions can accelerate the decarbonisation of energy systems through the digitalisation of energy infrastructure, in ways that also create societal benefits.¹⁵³ The Going Dutch? project aims to improve governance of decarbonising heat and informing natural gas phase-out and national net zero policy for the UK and Netherlands governments.¹⁵⁴
- We are key partners in the Industrial Decarbonisation Research and Innovation Centre (IDRIC), “supporting British industries to lower costs, remain competitive and protect jobs as they improve their energy efficiency and transition to a green economy.”¹⁵⁵
- Our University is also a partner in the Centre for Research into Energy Demand Solutions (CREDS), which works with researchers, businesses and policy makers, to support the transition to a low-carbon energy system – including advice to businesses and local government on decarbonisation.¹⁵⁶ In July 2023, we were selected by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) to lead a new £15 million Research Centre focused on how to reduce the UK's energy demand.¹⁵⁷
- In 2021/22, we used 237,308 gigajoules of energy compared with 239,392 gigajoules in 2020/21. These figures are largely affected by changed building use during the pandemic.¹⁵⁸
- Since 2020, we have been on a 100% renewable electricity tariff,¹⁵⁹ and we also have our own renewable energy farm with 3,000 solar panels.¹⁶⁰ We were featured in the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) solar report in May 2023, as an example of how solar is being used to decarbonise energy in the education sector.¹⁶¹
- This year we were awarded a £5 million Sustainability Programme grant to actively advance our campus decarbonisation plan. This includes a commitment to auditing our entire estate and making business cases for improvements on an annual basis, with a detailed investment opportunity analysis of the entire estate by 2030.¹⁶²
- All new buildings constructed on the University campus must meet the energy efficiency standards set out in the BREEAM Excellent environmental standard.¹⁶³ We have brought our privately rented accommodation up to energy performance certificate rating E everywhere, unless gaining vacant possession has been unfeasible, such as due to tenant ill health. We are also committed to developing minimum environmental product standards for furnishings and fixture purchases to support the energy efficient retrofitting of our existing buildings.¹⁶⁴
- The Excellent Carbon Accounting section of our Sustainability Strategy includes plans for measuring our performance in relation to clean energy and associated carbon¹⁶⁵ which we have delivered in line with the EAUC Standardised Carbon Emissions Framework.
- Our Treasury Investment Policy,¹⁶⁷ updated in 2021, has included a Socially Responsible Investment Policy since 2018 that requires our appointed fund managers to consider the “protection of the global environment, its climate and its biodiversity, including the reduction and future elimination of fossil fuel exploration and production” when making investment decisions.
- Since October 2017, our endowment funds have also been invested in the Liontrust Sustainable Future Managed Fund.¹⁶⁸ Estimates suggest that our investments in the fund emit 76.1% less CO₂ than the market benchmark (scope 1 and 2 emissions only).
- In 2021, University of Sussex was amongst the founder signatories of the COP26 declaration for net zero asset management principles that intend to establish minimum climate expectations for those who manage their investments.¹⁶⁹ Following COP26, in 2023, the University sent a follow-up letter further urging institutional investors to rebel against the boards of fossil fuel companies and their backers.^{170 171}

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Further energy efficiency audits and decarbonisation feasibility work.

SDG8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



This SDG relates to our economics research, employment practices and our share of students undertaking work placements.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We are an important local employer. In 2021/22, the University employed 3,180 staff, which is equivalent to 2,545 full time employees.¹⁷²
- We are proud to have been accredited as a Real Living Wage Employer in September 2022,¹⁷³ and we paid the Real Living Wage (RLW)¹⁷⁴ uplift to all our staff working on campus from October 2022.¹⁷⁵ Also, in that same month, in recognition of the current cost-of-living crisis, all University staff received a one-off, non-recurring, non-pensionable payment totalling over £2.4m.^{176 177}
- We recognise labour rights and three specific trade unions on campus that we meet with regularly.¹⁷⁸ Between the three unions, all staff groups in Grades 1-9 are catered for under collective bargaining arrangements.¹⁷⁹
- This year, we are publishing updates to our Modern Slavery Act Statement that sets out the steps taken by us to prevent forced labour and slavery in our supply chain.¹⁸⁰
- In 2020, the University became a member of Electronics Watch¹⁸¹ who help public sector organisations work together and collaborate with civil society monitors in production regions to protect the rights of workers in their electronics supply chains.¹⁸²
- In June 2023, we published updates to our Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework – containing nine core sustainable procurement principles that we want to promote and foster within our supply chain. The framework is intended to encourage “initiatives to reduce inequality in the workplace” and “pay the real living wage” amongst other things.¹⁸³
- We continue to be active members of the Southern Universities Responsible Procurement Group, where non-profit organisations and education institutes share best practice.¹⁸⁴ We also have an ‘Our Sustainable Supply Chain’ section of our website that showcases the sustainability of some of our key supply chain partners.¹⁸⁵
- We have clear policies in relation to pay and progression, such as guidelines for academic promotions¹⁸⁶ and discretionary pay increases.¹⁸⁷
- Our Equality Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy, published in 2018, contains a target to halve the gender pay gap by 2024, from a March 2017 baseline of 20.8%.¹⁸⁸ Pay gap reviews, such as in Gender, Ethnicity and Disability, have been undertaken annually, underpinned by Equal Pay Audits and recommendations are implemented accordingly.¹⁸⁹
- In July 2022, 91.3% of staff who were directly employed by us were on secure contracts of over two years.** We also provide our staff with a wide range of employee benefits, including discounted gym memberships and travel opportunities.¹⁹⁰
- We are piloting a new Staff Volunteering Policy and allowance to help our staff engage in meaningful activities that promote sustainable development during work time.¹⁹¹
- We have a dedicated Careers Service for our students.¹⁹² All our undergraduates have the option of applying for a paid, year-long placement in their penultimate year of study. A dedicated placements team help to support students to achieve this.¹⁹³
- We are directly linking all of our student careers initiatives to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.¹⁹⁴ For example, our internship scheme, Career Lab,¹⁹⁵ includes over 500 funded student internships and consultancy opportunities, over a third of which have a sustainability focus such as work experience in renewable energy co-operatives and (smart) energy companies.¹⁹⁶ We also hosted our first Green Futures event in March 2023, which attracted 100 students and recent graduates.^{197 198}
- In our latest annual student ‘Career Readiness’ survey, 81% of respondents had done some form of work-based activity in 2021/22, 13% of this was volunteering.¹⁹⁹
- In 2021/22, 837 of our students undertook a work placement of a month or more. This represents ongoing growth since the beginning of the scheme in 2019, and an increase of 29% since 2020/21.²⁰⁰

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Increasing the number of students on paid work placements of over a month by 5% per year between 2021 and 2025 as set out in our operational plans.

**Our HR system only allows us to pull reports from a single point in time, therefore this figure only accounts for staff on secure contracts as of 31 July 2022. Due to technical issues this report is unable to exclude contracts covering maternity or other staff leave, however we recognise that it is unlikely that such contracts would carry on for longer than two years.

SDG9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE



This SDG relates to our research on innovation, research income from industry and our number of patents and spin-out companies.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We offer a specific Masters degree in Strategic Innovation Management.²⁰¹ Our Sustainability Highlights in our Undergraduate Curriculum prospectus²⁰² also showcases relevant undergraduate courses, eg Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence BSc.²⁰³
- The Research Excellence Framework (REF) is the UK's system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. The REF 2021 found that 89% of research activity that Sussex submitted is categorised as either 'world-leading' or 'internationally excellent'.²⁰⁴ In the most recent REF rankings, we were ranked 27th of all UK institutions for both 'Research Power' and 'Market Share'.²⁰⁵ In July 2023, we announced 12 new Centres of Excellence, to further consolidate on our research successes.²⁰⁶
- In 2021/22, we generated approximately £23m in knowledge exchange income²⁰⁷ including £2.6m research income from industry.²⁰⁸
- In 2021/22, Sussex's thriving community of 115 graduate and staff businesses supported 470 jobs, an increase of 150 employees from two years ago, and enjoyed a combined turnover of £32m – this represented an increase of 175% since 2018/19.²⁰⁹
- Sussex Innovation provides business support to local companies and start-ups. Some of this support is provided on a fully funded basis and European Research Development Fund grants are also available for companies to engage with academic expertise or intellectual property.²¹⁰
- We have produced 11 innovative spin outs – registered companies who exploit intellectual property developed at the University, which are still trading. We registered four of these companies since 2018: Metasonix Ltd – incorporated on 21 August 2019;²¹¹ OWidgets Ltd – incorporated on 26 September 2019;²¹² AlternOx Scientific Ltd – incorporated on 28 February 2020;²¹³ and Stingray Bio Limited – incorporated 6 December 2020.²¹⁴
- We were recognised for our partnership successes in Research England's 2023 Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF 3) results, receiving the top rating of 'very high engagement' for the external investment and turnover of our research-based, public and third sector businesses.²¹⁵
- We are a strategic partner with RISE (Research and Innovation in Sussex Excellence) along with University of Brighton and West Sussex County Council, where we offer advice and support to local small and medium sized enterprises.²¹⁶
- Our Startup Sussex ideas competition (with £16,250 of funding awarded in 2023)²¹⁷ is also helping to develop the next generation of entrepreneurs, primarily focusing on social impact solutions.²¹⁸
- In April 2023, we held our third annual Pitch for the Planet, a sustainable innovation competition funded by our Higher Education Innovation Fund. Three students won a share of £30,000 of financial support available to realise their proposed projects on sustainable materials, biodiversity, and reducing packaging waste.²¹⁹
- We have additional Elevate Grants of up to £3,000 for current students or recent graduates to pay for prototypes, intellectual property protection, specialist equipment and tools to accelerate the success of their start-ups.²²⁰ Current students can also book Entrepreneurship Exploration sessions to learn how to develop a business and access relevant mentoring.²²¹
- Our Science Policy Research Unit coordinates the Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium (TIPC), which provides a global platform for experimentation, research, training and communications on innovation policy, driven by systems thinking.²²² Their approach has been cited by governments, NGOs and knowledge communities, as a way to redirect post-COVID socio-economic recovery towards a more sustainable future.^{223 224 225} In May 2023, they established the Transformative Innovation Africa Hub to expand multidisciplinary research collaboration, policy impact and investment opportunities within the African continent.²²⁶
- We are leading a re-orientation of the local skills base towards cleaner, greener technologies and enabling the roll-out of quantum technologies based on the University's core research strengths in place of the former reliance on aviation and related industries.²²⁷
- We have multiple partnerships with industry. For example, our Department of Informatics has a long-established partnership with the Technologies division of American Express where several part-time work placements are offered to students each year.²²⁸ While in October 2022, our Sussex Drug Discovery Centre announced a new strategic partnership with Sophion Bioscience,²²⁹ and another partnership with 113 Botanicals Ltd in July 2023 to innovate in the field of cannabis-based pharmaceutical medicines.²³⁰

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Grow our collaborations with the industries of the future, intensify the adoption of our innovation across the economy and disrupt markets with our progressive spin-offs.

SDG10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES



This SDG relates to our research on social inequalities, policies on discrimination, addressing disadvantage and commitment to recruiting staff and students from under-represented groups.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We have a dedicated Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Culture, Equality and Inclusion, David Ruebain,²³¹ and an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) unit which is actively promoting, co-ordinating and embedding EDI across the entire university community.²³² For example, the unit marked National Inclusion Week 2023²³³ with a range of activities²³⁴ related to the theme 'Take Action Make Impact'.²³⁵
- Our EDI Strategy,²³⁶ published in 2018 and refreshed in 2022, objectives include:
 - To achieve a year-on-year improvement in the percentage of staff who believe that the University is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.
 - To achieve a higher representation of staff with protected characteristics*, including in senior leadership positions.
 - To gain external recognition via a Race Equality Charter award, becoming a Disability Confident Leader and a Top 100 Employer in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index (which measures progress on lesbian, gay, bi and trans inclusion in the workplace) by 2025.
- We operate a non-discriminatory student admissions policy,²³⁷ monitor applications from under-represented groups²³⁸ and have targets in place to achieve a continued reduction in student attainment gaps for people with protected characteristics.²³⁹ Our Sussex Access Programme²⁴⁰ offers post-16 and mature students from underrepresented backgrounds, support and guidance to navigate their post-16 education options. In 2022/23, 13,513 participants engaged in 419 widening participation activities (with some students engaging in more than one activity).
- In 2021/22, just over a fifth of our students and 7% of our staff declared a disability.²⁴¹ We suspect the latter number is under reporting and that the number will rise as staff make use of our new self-service personal record system. We also introduced a workplace adjustments toolkit in December 2021, supporting the process to make reasonable adjustments for staff with disabilities and their line managers, supported by HR.²⁴²
- We have dedicated advisors to help disabled students to access support and funding. This includes allocating disabled students a mentor or a support worker and liaising with their GP Counsellor, or Health Care Team, if necessary.²⁴³
- We offer accessible housing to disabled students, including rooms that are wheelchair accessible and/or adaptable for students needing specialist personal care and support. We are pleased to be working with AccessAble on making campus information accessible to all.²⁴⁴ Our new Student Centre is also an accessible building and has a Changing Places facility.²⁴⁵
- We prioritise our paid internships and student consultancy roles for disabled students, and we work in partnership with Ambitious About Autism (AAA)²⁴⁶ to train our host employers on providing an accessible and welcoming environment for autistic interns, with 14 students placed in 2022/23. We also heavily promote the Leonard Cheshire Change 100 scheme²⁴⁷ and 7 of our disabled students secured internships through this scheme in 2022/23.²⁴⁸
- In June 2020, we became one of only 15 universities to be awarded University of Sanctuary status in recognition of the work that the University carries out in providing an environment of welcome and opportunity to people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.²⁴⁹
- Our Article 26 Sanctuary scholarships support forced migrants and asylum-seekers.²⁵⁰
- We support underrepresented groups through our staff networks for ethnic minority, Disabled, LGBTQ+, Trans, Non-Binary employees, and carers, who we consult on policy changes.²⁵¹
- In 2023, we signed up to the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater pledge demonstrating our commitment to support these students and staff.²⁵²
- We achieved the Race Equality Charter Bronze Award in September 2023,²⁵³ which aims to improve the representation, progression and success of minority ethnic staff and students within higher education.

* Protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation.

- We launched 'Black at Sussex' in 2021, a five-year funded programme to acknowledge and celebrate Black staff, students and alumni.²⁵⁴
- We established a Religion and Belief forum to strengthen and develop the University's commitment to a non-discriminatory, inclusive environment for those of faith and of no faith.²⁵⁵
- We reviewed and revised our process for equality analysis for significant policy development, decisions and other changes.²⁵⁶
- We piloted experiential and practical Open Listening workshops to support the community in effectively navigating different perspectives that could lead to conflict.²⁵⁷

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Improving the recording of equality data.
- Reducing inequality, under-representation and equality related pay gaps as set out in our EDI plans and strategy.
- Continuing to take actions in line with the Access and Participation Plan targets for students to close awarding gaps.

PROGRESS REPORT

RACE EQUALITY CHARTER SUCCESSES

Important progress has been made this year with the award of the University's first Race Equality Charter (REC) Bronze award in September 2023. This meets one of the Inclusive Sussex strategy's key measures of success.

The REC is a systemic change programme which seeks to address structural racism, including under-representation and disadvantage in universities. Through data and insight gathered to prepare the application overseen by our full-time Equality Charter Manager within the EDI Unit, key issues and priorities were identified and set-out in a four-year action plan.

The objectives of the action plan are to make longstanding systemic changes that will improve:

- culture and engagement
- staff experience and representation
- student experience and support.

The changes will be achieved through initiatives including, but not limited to:

- anti-racism training and development opportunities for staff and students
- promotion of our Report and Support tool: to ensure our University community is supported and protected if anyone experiences bullying, harassment, a hate incident, sexual violence, domestic abuse, or discrimination
- reviewing, revising and debiasing recruitment and promotion systems to make them anti-racist and anti-discriminatory
- eliminating ethnicity pay gaps
- working towards a more diverse and inclusive curriculum that inspires and reflects our University community
- eliminating the BAME degree awarding gap.

SDG11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES



This SDG relates to our role as custodians of arts and heritage and our internal approaches to sustainability.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We are one of the few UK Universities to be in an UNESCO World Biosphere Region.²⁵⁸ Our boundary walk²⁵⁹ allows students, staff and members of the public to walk around the edges of the University campus – mostly in the green spaces of the South Downs National Park.²⁶⁰
- Our campus contains listed buildings that have been described by English Heritage as “an outstanding example of 20th century architecture”. The public can freely view our heritage architecture, including buildings designed by the renowned architect Sir Basil Spence.²⁶¹
- We spent £9,376,179 on arts and heritage in 2021/22, including at our library, The Keep, listed and heritage buildings and Brighton Festival. This was 2.5% of our total expenditure.²⁶²
- Our Attenborough Centre for the Creative Arts is an interdisciplinary arts hub, which connects the University with wider regional, national and international arts communities.²⁶³ The Centre presents a programme of performance, dance, live art, film, music, discussion and debate and digital practices, including a recent immersive installation.²⁶⁴
- In 2021/22, we provided free public events (designed for the external community) to over 3.1 million attendees – this included lectures, performance arts, exhibitions and museum education, amongst others.^{265*}
- We are also a major sponsor of the annual, curated multi-arts Brighton Festival.²⁶⁶
- In March 2023, our School of Media, Arts and Humanities organised our third Sussex Festival of Ideas, now as part of Brighton Festival, to celebrate contemporary ideas around documentary and film, music and creative practice, poetry and language and the vital role of our local cultural institutions.²⁶⁷
- We freely share our Special Collections of University items with the community at The Keep – a historic archive centre, including an archive of resistance testimonies.²⁶⁸
- Our library provides a wide range of open access materials and resources to the general public, including journals, statistics and data sets.²⁶⁹
- We updated our Active and Sustainable Commuting Policy in June 2023,²⁷⁰ which includes a commitment to setting new annual active and sustainable commuting targets.²⁷¹ This builds on our previous travel plan from 2019 that includes current targets for reducing car use.
- We prioritise pedestrian and cyclist access on campus with a network of footpaths²⁷² and cycle lanes running through the campus, in addition to bus routes, as shown in our 2020 travel plan.²⁷³
- EcoGo is our active and sustainable travel reward scheme that financially rewards people for making sustainable journeys to and from our campus.²⁷⁴ In 2022/23, users saved the electricity consumption of 38 houses for a full year and the equivalent of planting 2,955 trees for a year.²⁷⁵
- We have dedicated active and sustainable travel web pages²⁷⁶ that promote our Cycle to Work Scheme,²⁷⁷ which expanded in 2023 as Halfords became our second provider.²⁷⁸ Our staff and students are eligible for 10% annual discount on the Brighton & Hove (BTN) Bikeshare scheme,²⁷⁹ which was expanded to include more bikes and hubs in August 2023.²⁸⁰ Our staff are also eligible for discounts on bus and train tickets using the Easit scheme.^{281 282}
- From July 2023, eligible University staff are able to lease a new electric or plug-in hybrid car via a salary sacrifice scheme provided by Tusker, known as the Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Leasing Scheme.^{283 284}
- Our sustainable business travel working group is a collaboration between staff, students and the trade unions, which aims to reduce the emissions from our business travel in a fair and respectful way.
- We are also working to reduce travel demand through our updated hybrid working framework that enables staff to work from home up to 50% – and some even 80-100% – of the time. This builds on our pre-existing flexible working policy. Since March 2020 staff who can work from home have been supported to do so.²⁸⁵
- In 2022, we published a new affordable housing policy²⁸⁶ for students, while our on-campus accommodation helps to reduce student-related commuting emissions.²⁸⁷

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Ensuring the delivery of our active and sustainable travel commitments set out in our Sustainable Sussex Strategy, including those on better business travel.

* Actual figure 3,102,653 attendees at public focused events verified in table 5 of the 2021/22 HE-BCI return.

SDG12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION



This SDG relates to our research on responsible consumption and our practical approach to the sustainable use of resources.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We offer a circular economy module, which is about finding ways of designing without creating waste, in our Product Design degree.²⁸⁸
- Our Sustainability Strategy contains a dedicated Sustainable Supply Chain section.²⁸⁹
- In June 2023, we updated our Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework²⁹⁰ to promote responsible social, environmental, and economic sustainability consumption. This work builds on our 2020 Procurement and Purchasing Policy²⁹¹ and Supplier Code of Conduct²⁹² that also help suppliers understand the minimum ethical and sustainability standards and behaviours that are expected when working on a University contract.
- We are a member of both the national and regional Responsible Procurement Group²⁹³ – a collaboration between not-for-profit organisations and education institutes on sharing and establishing best practice in the area of sustainable procurement.
- Our Sustainability Strategy also contains a Responsible Food and Water Production and Consumption section that includes low carbon ethical food commitments.²⁹⁴ We've since complemented this with an updated Sustainable Food and Agriculture Policy in 2023.²⁹⁵
- After a procurement process, Chartwells was confirmed as our partner in a catering contract enacted in August 2023 at the University.²⁹⁶ Their parent company, Compass Group UK and Ireland,²⁹⁷ issued a supply chain integrity policy statement in 2020, covering animal welfare and human rights in the sourcing of food.²⁹⁸
- In 2022, Chartwells retained the highest rating possible by the Sustainable Restaurant Association (three stars). All our fish is sustainably caught, our eggs are free range, and our milk comes from UK cows and is Red Tractor accredited.²⁹⁹
- In 2021/22, the University produced 28 tonnes of waste, with 64% of waste sent to recovery and 30% of this volume recycled. Please note, this value excludes construction and project waste.³⁰⁰
- In July 2021, we set a target of a) recycling 50% of our waste and b) reducing the volume of waste produced per student by 10% by 2025.³⁰¹ Our Waste Reduction, Reuse and Recycling Policy,³⁰² updated in June 2023, also sets out some of the ways that we will achieve this goal, including our Policy and Pledge for Minimising Single Use Plastic. In January 2022, we also made contractual changes to prevent our sanitary waste from going to landfill.
- Compass Group UK and Ireland – the parent company to Chartwells – has an action plan to reduce single use plastic and regularly reports on their own sustainability as a company,³⁰³ as does our primary waste management and recycling partner Veolia.³⁰⁴ We have policies and procedures in place for disposing of hazardous waste.³⁰⁵
- We were the first University in the UK to install an aerobic digester to convert food waste to fertiliser in November 2019³⁰⁶ and in September 2021 we introduced £87,000 of new recycling bins to promote greater separation of recycling and reduce contamination,³⁰⁷ with improved signage and maps to locate the full list of recycling facilities on campus.³⁰⁸
- Food waste recycling was introduced to kitchens in East Slope residences in 2019 and an opt-in composting scheme is being made available to all other residences by the Roots student garden society.³⁰⁹
- In March 2022, we ran a Recycling Info Genius competition that rewarded students for designing recycling information and posters, with the winning entry displayed on all campus bins.³¹⁰
- In 2023, we also signed up to WarplT, a specialised re-use scheme designed to reduce waste by redistributing unwanted furniture and supplies amongst other schools of study, buildings, and individuals within the campus that require them.³¹¹
- We also promote sustainable fashion, for example our Students' Union led on two Clothes Swap events in January and May 2023 as part of a wider cost of living event series.^{312 313}

AREAS WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Embedding our Ethical and Sustainable Procurement Principles Framework more deeply in our culture
- Realising our long-term commitments set out within our Sustainability Strategy around responsible food and water consumption and reduction and recycling of waste.

SDG13 CLIMATE ACTION



This SDG relates to our research on climate change, our use of energy and our preparations for dealing with the consequences of climate change.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We offer a Masters degree in Climate Change, Development and Policy.³¹⁴
- In 2021/22, we, as a University, used 237,308 gigajoules of energy, 37.7% of this came from low carbon sources, ie solar, renewable electricity and combined heat and power. This was a 5% increase on the previous year (with 14.4% of energy use self-generated from renewable sources).
- In July 2021, we published our target for reaching net zero by 2035³¹⁵ for both direct and indirect supply chain emissions (classified as scope one, two and three).³¹⁶
- In 2022, the University was invited to join the prestigious International Universities Climate Alliance, a group of 45 of the world's most esteemed universities whose vision is to "provide a central hub for universities to share the latest climate research with the public and enable greater collaboration between leading research teams, supporting global leaders, policy makers and industry in planning for and responding to climate change."³¹⁷
- We are committed to creating local climate education programmes and behaviour change.
- In 2023, we awarded three more Climate Leadership Scholarships whereby students receive £3,000 per full year of study for showing leadership in the local community around climate change and working with us to deliver engagement initiatives with the Sussex community around tackling climate change and reaching net zero together.³¹⁸
- We have our own Climate Action Plan (the Decarbonising the Economy section³¹⁹ of our Sustainability Strategy³²⁰) that includes a whole section focused on providing civic leadership and partnerships.³²¹ We are also members of the Greater Brighton Economic Board (GBEB)³²² and have jointly agreed ten pledges on tackling climate change.³²³
- Our Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) run regular energy and climate seminars to educate the community both within and beyond the University. For example, in 2022/23 'Democracy and Climate Action',³²⁴ and the annual Sussex Energy Group Keynote Lecture.³²⁵
- We actively influence global, national and local policy on climate change. Professor Benjamin Sovacool, from SPRU, was a lead author of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)³²⁶ – the UN body for assessing the science of climate change, including mitigation and adaptation – Sixth Assessment Report, published in 2022.³²⁷ He also delivered a keynote address during COP27.³²⁸
- We are working hard to support early climate disaster detection and mitigation planning and are partners in the Land Use Based Mitigation for Resilient Climate Pathways project, which engages with local and regional actors to improve our understanding of how and where land-based mitigation technologies can be most effectively deployed.³²⁹
- In July 2023, a team of researchers from our School of Education and Social Work and Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP) published a free toolkit called 'Creating with Uncertainty: Sustainability education resources for a changing world' for teachers to educate and help school pupils to manage uncertainty in modern life, with a particular focus on climate change.³³⁰
- Our Discipline Hopping (DH) project in collaboration with the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC)³³¹ is focusing on the design of a flood mitigation approach that integrates data-driven modelling, water reservoir engineering, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) algorithms with support from Barcombe Parish Council, the Environment Agency and Industry.³³²
- Our Forecasting with Fishers project in the School of Global Studies has seen us collaborating between November 2019 and October 2022 with small-scale fishers to co-produce knowledge for early warning of extreme weather events in India.³³³

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Ensuring that we effectively implement our climate action plan, including completing Tranche 1 of our Sustainability Programme, expanding the Sustainability Team, renewing our Net Zero Pathway and delivering the first set of capital upgrades to our estate.

SDG14 LIFE BELOW WATER



This SDG relates to research on life below water and our education on and support for aquatic ecosystems.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We teach modules in this area, including Coastal Ecology Field Course³³⁴ at undergraduate level and Coral Reef Ecology field courses at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.³³⁵
- We directly co-fund and execute the Sussex Kelp Restoration Project,³³⁶ which is leading the regeneration of the Sussex coastal zone to promote marine diversity and carbon sequestration in the wake of banning trawling off the Greater Brighton coastline. This project has been backed by Sir David Attenborough and our academics' work on the project has been featured on BBC news.³³⁷ A number of students gain marine surveying experience at undergraduate, Masters and PhD level from this project.^{338 339}
- We are committed to providing students with a holistic education with hands on experience in their subject matters, such as via practical research projects. Professor Tim Cane is currently supervising a project on seagrass and turtles in Bermuda and another project on microplastics distribution and longevity in nearshore environments.³⁴⁰
- Researchers from the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP) are currently working on a project that focusses on community-based conservation of coral reefs and fisheries in West Papua in Indonesia.³⁴¹
- As a coastal university, we are committed to supporting and organising events aimed to promote conservation and the sustainable utilisation of aquatic ecosystems. Every year since 2021 we have organised a Silent Disco Beach Clean during Welcome Week, as a way to engage students in the fight against plastic pollution, keep our local beach clean and raise awareness regarding the impacts of plastic.³⁴²
- We organise an annual student innovation competition called Pitch for the Planet that provides students an opportunity to win funding and a spot in our Summer Accelerator Programme to help realise a sustainability idea.³⁴³ This year, the University funded a research project about Eco-Shields, which protect seawalls against the impacts of climate change, via this event. The project uses native plants and organisms to create a type of seawall that not only looks more aesthetically pleasing, but also has the potential to promote biodiversity and provide a habitat for marine species, while also reducing wave energy and stabilising the shoreline.³⁴⁴
- We have a Sustainable Food and Agriculture Policy to ensure that food on campus that comes from aquatic ecosystems is sustainably harvested.³⁴⁵
- Our catering provider Chartwells, part of Compass Group UK and Ireland, promote sustainable and responsibly sourced seafood and do not serve seafood on the fish-to-avoid list (as defined by the Marine Conservation Society (MCS)).³⁴⁶ Compass Group UK and Ireland is also partnering with the Sustainable Seafood Coalition (SSC)³⁴⁷ and committed to SSC's Codes of Conduct³⁴⁸ that requires annual risk assessments on all fisheries that Compass procures from.³⁴⁹
- Within our grounds, newly planted trees and shrubs are watered only according to the weather and will most often only be watered during drier summer periods to reduce unnecessary water use.³⁵⁰
- We have further policies and procedures in place to encourage water conservation and sanitation – see SDG6 Clean Water and Sanitation of this document for more information.
- Sussex academics featured in the recent Plastic Warriors documentary,³⁵¹ which investigated the damaging effects plastic pollution is having on our health, lifestyle, and wildlife.³⁵² This included a key contribution from senior lecturer, Claire Potter, from our School of Engineering and Informatics, which focused on the role of design, the issues with consumption and retail, and the responsibility of brands and corporations in global marine pollution.³⁵³

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Tasking leading Life Sciences academics to review our contribution to life below water.

SDG15 LIFE ON LAND



This SDG relates to our research on life on land and our education on and support for land ecosystems.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- Our vision is to become the most biodiverse campus in the UK. Our Sustainability Strategy contains an entire section of commitments for achieving this goal.³⁵⁴ In 2022, we announced we are investing £20,000 in innovative projects as part of this bid, including planting a community orchard, increasing pollinator habitats, supporting bird populations, and encouraging scrub.³⁵⁵
- In May 2023, we published our Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Policy.³⁵⁶ This included a commitment to achieving biodiversity net gain and ten key biodiversity principles.
- We are proud that 38% of campus land is already set aside for nature. In August 2023, we announced the outcome of a consultation on dedicating more of our campus to nature. In response to the extensive consultation involving students, staff, and the wider community, we decided to increase the land set aside for nature to 42% by 2027.³⁵⁷
- The Love Your Scrub project is inviting the campus and wider community to increase biodiversity via the development of scrub habitat, which is important for supporting 44 nationally scarce plant species, 281 rare, vulnerable or endangered insects, and 39 birds classed as priorities for conservation or of conservation concern under the Biodiversity Action Plan. Initial baseline surveys of the scrub area, against which future changes to the biodiversity can be measured, were carried out during 2022/23.³⁵⁸
- Our research team at the Nicholls Lab,³⁵⁹ who are among the University's resident bee and insect experts, have worked with volunteers to install more pollinator habitats on campus, building bee hotels and hoverfly lagoons, which are also being monitored for research and teaching. In April 2023, they produced beginner-friendly guides on wildlife gardening, urban growing spaces and pollinators.³⁶⁰
- Our Sussex Forest Food Garden enlists the help of volunteers across various disciplines at the University to create a garden that emulates natural woodland ecosystems, and the food plants that grow in them. Volunteers regularly meet to manage the garden and recently began the next round of planting herbaceous perennials and a ring of nitrogen-fixing *Elaeagnus* plants.³⁶¹
- We sustainably manage our land on our campus that is surrounded by the South Downs National Park:
 - our campus is home to approximately 158 species of birds and 32 species of mammal, including three social groups of badgers and several bat colonies
 - we also have meadows and native wildflower areas and a Jubilee woodland
 - we support the ongoing restoration and development of our chalk grassland and engage in extensive tree planting during the autumn and winter.³⁶²
- Our Grounds Management Plan includes principles and actions to support native species, increase biodiversity, restore and conserve habitats and reduce pesticide and water use.³⁶³
- We maintain and extend existing ecosystems and their animal and plant biodiversity, especially ecosystems under threat. Our 'bee hotels' and pollinator-friendly plants led to us being one of only 26 organisations to win a Bees' Needs Champions award (for the fifth year running) in 2023 for our work to save and raise awareness about pollinators.³⁶⁴
- These policies and practices have resulted in us winning a prestigious Green Flag award³⁶⁵ for well-managed green spaces, for the seventh year running.³⁶⁶
- We consider biodiversity in our planning applications for the construction of new buildings. For example, submitting plans for green roofs in our new student accommodation developments and undertaking bat and badger surveys to ensure that we mitigate any environmental impacts associated with improving our campus.³⁶⁷

- We regularly organise events about sustainable land use. For example, in July 2023, as part of our SSRP funded collaborative research project on South Coast sustainable land use,^{368 369} we held a community workshop to learn about the transitional tensions experienced by local stakeholders when adopting sustainable practices, to explore our role in stakeholder engagement and to understand more about the barriers to sustainability.³⁷⁰
- In 2022, SSRP/HEIF-funding established our not-for-profit start-up Ecoforensic,³⁷¹ that successfully sourced external funding to empower Ecuadorian community-level ‘paraecologists’ in collecting ‘ecological forensic’ data to effectively protect ecosystems under constitutional Rights of Nature (RoN) legislation.³⁷² The First International Forum for ‘Ecological Forensics’ took place on June 2023 to exchange knowledge and develop effective strategies to further implement the RoN legislation.³⁷³
- Our Biodiversity Lecturer and Rights of Nature Researcher and Practitioner, Dr Joanna Smallwood,³⁷⁴ wrote a policy brief for Biodiversity COP15 in December 2022, where the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted by all parties to the convention to support biodiversity goals and further sustainability progress up to 2030.³⁷⁵
- We also run educational and outreach programmes on ecosystems for national and local communities. For example, our Senior Lecturer in Biology, Dr Christopher Sandom, runs Rewilding Sussex as a community group to engage people with rewilding locally.³⁷⁶

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Engaging our esteemed life sciences academics in developing further policy and practice in this area that support biodiversity and help guard against mass extinction.

CASE STUDY

SUSSEX PROFESSOR SUPPORTS RIGHTS OF NATURE LEGISLATION SUCCESS

This year, the Llorimagua copper mining project in Ecuador has been suspended by a court decision that revoked its Environmental License. The court based its decision on the lack of consultation with local communities and the threat to biodiversity. The project was located in Junín, a community owned protected forest in the Intag Valley that is home to many endangered species including the spectacled bear, the harlequin frog and the jaguar.

The not-for-profit Ecoforensic team, led Dr Mika Peck, Professor of Conservation Ecology at the University of Sussex, provided evidence of the ecological impact of the mining activity to the court. It is hoped that this case will set a precedent for the Rights of Nature and deter mining companies from exploiting biodiverse areas.^{376a}

SDG16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



This SDG relates to our research on law and international relations, our participation as advisers for government and our policies on academic freedom.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- In 2021/22, over 6% of our graduates received law and enforcement related degrees.
- We are proud of our strong and democratic governance arrangements. We have elected representation on our highest governing body (Council) from academic and professional services staff and students,³⁷⁷ as set out in our statutes.³⁷⁸
- We publicly recognise our Students' Union (the University of Sussex Students' Union), which is affiliated with the National Union of Students. The Union has elected officers who work with the various University governance committees and campaigns.³⁷⁹
- All of the actions in our Sustainability Strategy are implemented in co-ownership between the Sustainability Team and a named Senior Leader within the University.³⁸⁰ Our students elect an annual Sustainability Committee within the Students' Union,³⁸¹ to ensure student involvement in high-level decision-making processes in this area.
- We strategically identify and engage with key stakeholders within the community to form strong local partnerships, as outlined in our Sussex 2025 Strategic Framework vision, which sees us as "both listening and acting in the local and regional interest, working with public bodies, charities and civic society to find solutions to economic and social challenges."³⁸²
- We have a dedicated public affairs function³⁸³ within our External Relations Team and Global Engagement Team to foster international co-operation with our stakeholders.³⁸⁴
- Our Vice-Chancellor Professor Sasha Roseneil sits on the Sussex Health and Care Assembly,³⁸⁵ and our Deputy Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Knowledge Exchange Professor Debbie Keeling sits on the Greater Brighton Economic Board,³⁸⁶ to collaborate with local and regional stakeholders.³⁸⁷
- We have clear policies designed to prevent bribery, fraud and corruption on our website.³⁸⁸
- We review and update our policies on freedom of speech annually to ensure they are effective and fit for purpose and we enforce these through our governance structures. We published a revised Freedom of Speech Code of Practice³⁸⁹ and our External Speaker Procedure in January 2023.³⁹⁰
- We publish an annual financial statement online for transparent public scrutiny.³⁹¹
- Our ten legal clinics in the Sussex Clinical Legal Education project are run by more than 80 law students under the supervision of their tutors and qualified solicitors. Together, they offer pro bono legal services to members of the public in family law, criminal justice, housing and welfare law, employment law, environmental law, migration law and performing arts law.³⁹²
- Our Environmental Justice Law Clinic³⁹³ is run in partnership with the Environmental Law Foundation charity.³⁹⁴ Students have advised clients on issues including noise pollution and biodiversity conservation, as well as researching the incorporation of sustainability criteria in local neighbourhood plans.
- Our StreetLaw Clinic is new for 2023/24, following a successful pilot in 2022/23, and provides interactive and accessible legal education to charities, schools and other community organisations.³⁹⁵
- We provide expert policy advice to Government, based on our research. We have a dedicated and highly esteemed Centre for the Study of Corruption (CSC),³⁹⁶ whose faculty advise and engage with governments, companies and civil society across the world. For example, in the UK, the CSC is currently providing input for the UK National Anti-corruption Strategy, regularly provides policy briefings for expert bodies such as the Committee on Standards in Public Life, and is working with senior lawyers and large law firms to define how to apply the principles of SDG16 to their work.^{397 398}
- We create a neutral platform to discuss political issues. For example, we are home to the influential UK Trade Policy Observatory (UKTPO), which is a partnership with Chatham House to promote a more just international trading environment.³⁹⁹

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Further strengthening our relationship and partnership working with the Students' Union.

SDG17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



This SDG relates to the broader ways in which our University supports the SDGs through collaboration with other countries, the promotion of best practices and the publication of data.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

- We report annually on our performance on each of the 17 UN SDGs.⁴⁰⁰
- One of the four strategic aims of our 2022-25 Knowledge Exchange and Impact Strategy⁴⁰¹ is to lead on and influence local, regional, national and international discourse concerning the efficacy, sustainability and impact of proposed solutions for the UN SDGs.
- We regularly engage in international collaboration and research on developing international best practice on tackling the SDGs. Our Sussex Sustainability Research Programme (SSRP),⁴⁰² whose mission is 'Science for the SDGs', has financed 53 and co-sponsored nine interdisciplinary research projects to address interactions among the SDGs, while minimising trade-offs and maximising synergies. This has led to 55 additional activities and projects⁴⁰³ – many involving new or ongoing partners⁴⁰⁴ – to support gathering and measuring of data on the SDGs.
- We frequently initiate and participate in cross-sectoral dialogue about the SDGs. For example, SSRP hosted a series of SDG-related and sustainability-themed events as part of their 'SSRP Week'⁴⁰⁵ during the first week of COP27 in November 2022. Sessions included a COP27 speaker event co-hosted with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the Rapid Transition Alliance ('Good COP/Bad COP'); an audio-visual exhibition⁴⁰⁶ as well as workshops on various topics, such as The Living Coast Biosphere; sustainable supply chains; planetary health; and sustainable agriculture in conflict zones.⁴⁰⁷
- In August 2023, SSRP researchers co-hosted with Artificial Intelligence (AI) researchers the "AI for a Better World" workshop to explore the application and impact of AI to the SDGs and other sustainability related topics.⁴⁰⁸
- We influence National Government and NGO SDG policy development. For example, in July 2023, the SSRP co-organised a side event with the Government of Ghana at this year's United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.⁴⁰⁹ This brought together policymakers and experts from across Ghana, Uganda and the UK to discuss sustainable management of water resources, action for water quality and access to water for all, to advance progress on SDG6.⁴¹⁰
- In September 2022, our Business School's Transformative Innovation Policy Consortium brought together more than 70 participants from national innovation agencies and research institutes and international intergovernmental agencies, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), to preview new tools and learning-based materials focused on both Global South and Global North contexts, for transitions toward sustainability and achieving the SDGs.⁴¹¹
- We are committed to providing meaningful education around the SDGs across the University, to all students and offer many relevant and applicable courses in this area.⁴¹²
- The Ethical Educators section of our Sustainability Strategy commits us to embedding sustainability into all aspects of student learning, experience and research.⁴¹³ We have begun to move this work forward by working in partnership with the NGO Students Organising for Sustainability who trained our students to audit the entire undergraduate and Masters curriculum for its content related to all 17 SDGs, to identify areas of best practice and scope for improvements.⁴¹⁴
- We provide meaningful education outreach on the SDGs, including to our alumni and the wider community. In July 2023, SSRP launched their new 'Sustainability Toolkits', covering a wide range of SDGs and topics. These evidence-based resources provide stakeholders with useful tools and best practice needed for integrating sustainability principles into their own work; implementing a sustainability approach for innovative projects and maximising project impacts.⁴¹⁵
- The University encourages its staff and students to take the time to support good causes in the community. Our Volunteering Policy for staff (currently being piloted) provides employees on a contract of 12 months or more an allowance of at least two days per year (pro rata) to volunteer in a charity of their choice that is aligned to the SDGs.⁴¹⁶ We have also published and are actively signposting a list of 10 charities that are pre-approved for Volunteer Leave by the University so as to build up a critical mass of local impact and strengthened relationships with the local third sector.⁴¹⁷

AREA WHERE WE WANT TO IMPROVE

- Continuing to grow as a global and local leader in Sustainable Development.

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