



UNIVERSITY OF
BATH

University Sustainability Engagement Plan 2026-27

Context

Universities are uniquely placed to support action for sustainability through their research, education, operations and engagement activities. The University of Bath's Sustainability Plan identifies sustainability as a core institutional value, strategic opportunity and risk. Our approach reflects our University commitment to environmental stewardship and climate action, social responsibility, equity and inclusion, and long-term economic and financial sustainability.

The University already makes significant contributions through world-leading research, education, partnerships and innovation. At the same time, we recognise that our activities generate environmental and social impacts. We are therefore committed to maximising our positive contribution to a sustainable future while minimising negative impacts across all aspects of our work.

Successfully embedding sustainability will require action across every part of the institution. This includes changes to operational practices, decision-making, teaching, research, leadership and culture. Achieving this transformation will depend on meaningful engagement with our staff, students and external stakeholders. Empowering our community as leaders in sustainability will support both institutional objectives and resilience, and individuals' ability to thrive in a changing world.

Vision

By 2030, sustainability will be embedded across the University of Bath's identity, culture, operations, education and research.

Our staff and students will understand the University's sustainability commitments, feel empowered to contribute towards them, and recognise sustainability as a shared responsibility and defining characteristic of the University community.

Through effective engagement, we will:

- integrate sustainability into institutional culture and decision-making
- support the delivery of sustainability commitments and targets
- enable staff and students to contribute confidently to sustainability action
- prepare and support our University community for a future affected by environmental and climate-related challenges
- strengthen our reputation as a leader in sustainability within Higher Education (HE) and beyond



Purpose of engagement

Engagement is essential to achieving institutional sustainability goals. Many of the changes required to meet our commitments depend on informed decision-making, collaboration and behaviour change across the University community.

Engagement helps to:

- build awareness and understanding of sustainability priorities, progress and remaining challenges
- create support for organisational change
- enable behaviour change
- empower individuals and teams to take meaningful action
- develop leadership and ownership across the institution
- foster collaboration and innovation internally and externally
- celebrate progress and share learning
- strengthen our external reputation and influence

The Sustainability Engagement Plan provides the framework through which these outcomes will be achieved. This strategic plan will be underpinned by annual engagement and communications plans, which will contain detailed campaign schedules, budgets, event calendars and delivery actions.

Stakeholders

- University leadership
- Academic staff
- Management, specialist and administrative staff
- Facilities and operations staff
- Technical and experimental staff
- Prospective and current students, and student groups
- Students' Union (SU)
- Alumni and donors
- Local community and businesses
- Policy makers and researchers
- Higher Education (HE) sector

Strategic objectives

The plan is organised around three strategic objectives.

- **Objective 1: create a shared culture of sustainability**
Inspire understanding, commitment and pride in the University's sustainability ambitions, embedding sustainability as a visible and valued part of university life and decision-making, while strengthening the University's sustainability profile and reputation.
- **Objective 2: enable meaningful action and impact**



Empower staff and students to contribute towards sustainability goals through informed choices, collaborative action, innovation and active participation, creating measurable positive impact.

- **Objective 3: embed leadership and accountability**

Build a culture of sustainability leadership at all levels, equipping individuals and teams to champion change, influence decisions and take accountability for delivering sustainability outcomes.

Communications

How we choose to represent ourselves as an institution externally is an opportunity to showcase our values, and to honestly share the challenges, failures and successes of our sustainability journey. Authentically and consistently presented, this can have a broader influence in generating sustainability awareness and action. This sits within our wider responsibilities to engage people in our research and science.

Communicating clearly and transparently why we are taking sustainability actions is an integral part of a behaviour change programme and vital for successful implementation of new policies and processes.

Approach

Consistent institutional narrative

Since 2025, work has been underway to develop a consistent University narrative on sustainability that brings together all aspects of work across the institution. This will be built on and further strengthened through the launch of a new Institutional Strategy in October 2026 and the first University Sustainability Plan in November 2026.

Communicating progress

We will use roadmaps, annual reporting, case studies and impact stories to transparently communicate progress towards sustainability goals and demonstrate collective action across the University.

Staff and student voices

We will increase representation of staff and student voices within sustainability communications to strengthen authenticity, relatability, inclusivity and participation.

Campaign-led communications

Annual institutional campaigns will be coordinated around priority themes and initiatives, including:

- Active and sustainable travel
- Switch off (targeting energy saving over key holidays)
- Green Week (targeting student sustainability action)

Reputation building

We will actively communicate successes and innovations through:

- Awards and rankings
 - QS World Sustainability Rankings



- o People & Planet University Sustainability League
- Research impact
 - o Building on success of existing Research with Impact campaigns
 - o Through relevant research institutes and centre communications
- Case studies
 - o Showcasing operational actions and progress
 - o Highlighting diversity of contributions and change makers from across our community
 - o Providing inspiration and personality to technical and complex topics
- Media engagement
 - o Focusing on global research impact and expertise
 - o Highlighting local community impact and leadership stories
 - o Targeting opportunities to demonstrate HE sector leadership
- Sector events and partnerships
 - o Targeting opportunities to demonstrate leadership in our regional community, in HE and sport sector
 - o Showcasing strength of and profile within strategic partnerships for sustainability (such as those to help deliver on decarbonisation projects) to build visibility and reputation

Key messages

- **Sustainability is essential to our future success.** Delivering our sustainability commitments is not a separate agenda or optional extra. It is fundamental to the long-term success, resilience and reputation of the University and the wellbeing of our community.
- **Bath is the place to be part of positive change.** Through world-leading research, education and partnership working, we are empowering change makers and developing practical solutions to environmental and social challenges, creating positive impact locally, nationally and globally.
- **We are a community that wants to and can make a difference.** Sustainability is a shared responsibility that requires transformation, not incremental change, and has a role to play. Our staff and students consistently demonstrate strong concern and desire for meaningful action. This passion and commitment are among our greatest strengths.
- **We believe in openness, collaboration and shared learning for sustainability.** We will be transparent about our progress, successes and challenges, and work with others to maximise the positive impact we can achieve together. We're translating research to real-world impact through partnerships across industry, government and.
- **We're building from our strengths in sport and health to help shape the future of sustainable sport.** Drawing on internationally recognised expertise, facilities and partnerships, we are developing approaches that enable sport to contribute to a healthier, fairer and more sustainable society.

Evaluation

We will monitor progress against these measures in our bi-annual all-staff and all-student Sustainability survey, as well as other relevant metrics and feedback. Specific targets for 2026-27 include:

- 78% staff and 59% students are aware of the University's sustainability work – meeting and exceeding respective targets of 78% and 57% respectively. Targets for 2026-27 are 80% and 60%.



- 57% staff and 34% students are aware of the University's sustainability webpages – failing to meet respective targets of 70% and 35% so these targets will remain the same for 2026-27.
- 61% of departments and 10% staff are engaged in a sustainability engagement programme (Green Impact and/or LEAF) – exceeding respective targets of 60% and 5%. Target for 2026-27 are 65% and 12%.

Engagement

Action areas and activities are detailed in the table below.

Area	Objective
University wide	Embed formal responsibility for sustainability strategically through the University, i.e., Sustainability Advocates, JDs and SDPRs
	Provide sufficient information to empower departments with tools to embed sustainability
	Provide support and guidance to encourage innovation across our community, i.e., Sustainable Projects Fund
Lab sustainability programme – LEAF	Establish and support internal LEAF network
	Provide regular training for lab users
	Provide resources and guidance to support lab users in taking action
	Ensure sufficient funding is available to support initiatives
	Provide regular comms to ensure ongoing awareness and engagement support
	Establish University-level commitment and targets
Office sustainability programme – Green Impact	Ensure our efforts align with technical and policy mechanisms to support change, such as ChemInventory system
	Establish and support Green Teams network
	Provide resources and guidance to support colleagues in taking sustainability action in the workplace
	Ensure sufficient funding is available to support initiatives
	Provide regular comms to ensure ongoing awareness and engagement support
	Establish University-level commitment and targets to support action
Student behaviour change programme	Ensure our efforts align with technical and policy mechanisms to support change, such as infrastructure projects and new policies
	Conduct programme of activities in campus accommodation to target a range of pro-environmental behaviours
	Provide a range of interventions and support mechanisms to enable students to address personal behaviours, i.e., diet, travel
	Collaborate with the SU to support student action, i.e., through teams and societies, as well as student voice activities
	Engage with departments to explore opportunities to embed sustainability in existing student engagement programmes, i.e., wellbeing, skills, careers.
	Hold key events and engagement activities through the year, i.e., Green Week



Sustainability Champions

Students are recruited to work with the Sustainability team and Campus Services on a casual basis to deliver peer-to-peer engagements activities, including, for example, comms support, annual survey promotion, campaign support and leading student projects. Working with Campus Services they also conduct activities such as energy saving and waste reduction competitions in accommodation.

Sustainable Projects Fund

Supported by Alumni Funding, this £5,000 annual grant is available for students and staff to apply, to fund small-scale projects that target campus emissions reduction. Grants are available for projects up to a maximum of £1,000 each. Previously funded projects include:

- Installing water butts on campus to reduce water use – completed in 2025.
- Establishing a new community garden – completed in 2025.
- Team Bath Drones sustainable design project – completed in 2025.
- E-waste investigation in EEE teaching labs – completed in 2024.
- Sustainability solutions student competition – completed in 2024.
- E-racing sustainable design project – completed in 2024.
- Dr Bike event – run in 2023.
- [Bike maintenance course](#) for staff cycling commuters – run in 2022.
- Eat Green Week by Sustainable Food VIP – run in 2022.

Implementation

Governance and responsibilities

The Sustainability Team will lead coordination, monitoring and reporting for this plan.

Delivery will involve collaboration with:

- Communications and Marketing
- Campus Services
- Students' Union
- Advancement Office
- Human Resources
- Faculties and departments
- Research institutes and centres (including Institute of Sustainability and Climate Change, Institute for Policy Research, Centre for Climate Change and Social Transformations)
- Sustainability networks and champions

Resources

The University's Sustainability Engagement Plan is supported by an annual budget of £35k and through contributions from partner teams across the University. Detailed annual budgets will be maintained separately from this plan.

Resources will be prioritised towards:



- Strategic communications
- Behaviour change programmes
- Training and development
- Student engagement
- Recognition and awards
- Sustainability networks

Evaluation and monitoring

Progress will be reviewed annually using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.

Annual survey

The Sustainability Survey will run bi-annually and will remain the primary mechanism for measuring:

- Awareness
- Engagement
- Behaviour change
- Empowerment

Annual report

The Annual Sustainability Report will provide transparent reporting on:

- Progress against University targets, commitments and key performance indicators
- Case studies of successes from across our community
- Engagement outcomes
- Ongoing challenges and emerging priorities

Annual plan review

The engagement plan will be reviewed annually to:

- Assess progress against KPIs
- Respond to emerging institutional priorities
- Incorporate new opportunities and sector developments
- Refresh annual delivery plan