



**GREEN**  
**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
**SUSTAINABILITY**  
**STRATEGY**  
**FOR UCL**  
**UCL**

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## 1. Introduction

The world is facing many environmental challenges including climate change, resource depletion, biodiversity loss and water shortages. These continue to foster debate and disagreement, both over the scale of the problems and the most appropriate means to manage them. These challenges must be addressed in the context of economic development, social change and social justice, and UCL as a world-class, inter-disciplinary university has an important role to play: by addressing the environmental impact of its activities and operations; by providing ethical leadership through its decisions and actions; and deploying its academic excellence, research and entrepreneurial activities to tackle real-world challenges, and contribute to the solutions.

This is UCL's first Environmental Sustainability Strategy. It establishes a framework to tackle the environmental impacts of the Institution's operations (e.g. carbon emissions, water use, waste generated, materials procured and consumed, impact on biodiversity, travel and transport) in the context of supporting and enhancing the Institution's core academic activities. Indeed, it is arguably the work that is undertaken by UCL's academic community, which has the greatest impact on sustainability (for example, by addressing issues of global health, poverty and equality, and sustainable living).

This strategy has been developed in consultation with UCL staff and students and represents a framework for action to be taken. It will be reviewed annually and updated as our understanding of the scale of challenge and opportunity develops.

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## 2. The Vision

*Our Vision is for UCL to become a leader in the field of sustainability through performing at the highest levels of excellence in multidisciplinary academic teaching and research; creating a culture of inspiration, innovation, action and trust, through engagement with its schools, faculties, departments and other stakeholders; and through the sustainable development and use of the estate.*

This reflects the values and guiding principles set out in the 2011-21 UCL White Paper.

The Environmental Sustainability Strategy is built around five core aims, which together will support a realisation of our ambitious vision:

1. To create a campus which supports UCL's academic, research and enterprise activities in a sustainable way
2. To enable, empower and support all UCL communities to address our environmental sustainability impacts
3. To provide the education, advancement, dissemination and application of sustainable development
4. To maximise the wider impact of UCLs environmental sustainability activities at local, regional, national and international level through collaboration, partnership and communications
5. To become a leader across the HE sector in terms of environmental sustainability

Each of these aims is supported by a number of key objectives and actions.

## 2.1 Create a Sustainable Campus

### **The campus provides the platform for UCLs activities**

The campus and estate supports UCL's activities – from the buildings and space required for teaching, research and accommodation to the infrastructure needed for the Institution to operate. It is UCL's aim to create a campus that is efficient and effective; is easy to maintain; adaptable to accommodate change; meets the needs and expectations of the users; whilst minimising its environmental impact.

### **Where are we now?**

The campus is undergoing dramatic change and expansion. In 2011, UCL published the Bloomsbury Masterplan, which set out a strategic framework for the development of the Bloomsbury campus over the next ten to fifteen years. Work has already started on the refurbishment of existing buildings as well as the design of a new Student Centre on the vacant Gordon Street site. Outside the Bloomsbury campus, UCL has a large Satellite estate and Student Accommodation, which is also the subject of major growth and refurbishment. Alongside this, the Institution has stated its intention to upgrade its infrastructure with a strategic maintenance programme. Sustainability is 'a common thread' running through all of these activities and UCL has been looking to use BREEAM and RICS Ska accreditation systems to support its own sustainability criteria, both during and following construction projects, as standards for achieving higher environmental performance in building construction, refurbishment and use.

And yet, there are some major environmental challenges: UCL's environmental footprint is high (carbon emissions are forecast to rise without significant intervention); UCL is an ambitious Institution whose plans for growth include a new campus; UCL's academic work is increasingly reliant on high quality IT infrastructure that includes data centres and high powered computing; UCL has a large direct and indirect supply chain which supports the efficient operation of the campus and needs to be considered as part of this strategy; and compounding this is a lack of certainty over the scale of the problems and the priorities for action as data is patchy and work is needed to monitor performance.

### **What we will do next?**

- a) Understand how the existing buildings and facilities services perform

This will include a review of all environmental baselines (including, but not limited to, water, carbon, waste and purchasing) and the development and implementation of measures to improve data capture, analysis and monitoring. Meters will be installed across the estate by 2014 to enable us to track and manage performance and identify projects for improving efficiency of the estate. Data will be shared openly with UCL staff and students on UCL's performance against the baselines.

- b) Identify long term targets which reflect UCL's proposals for growth and the need to reduce our operational impacts on the environment

UCL already has a set of environmental targets for waste and carbon emissions. Whilst we recognise the need for clear and stretching targets to drive improvements in UCL's environmental performance, it is important that these targets are both ambitious enough to drive change and realistic to enable their achievement. This has not always been the case and a review of some of the existing targets will be necessary. In light of plans for the growth

of the estate as well as increasing need for IT services, UCL will also set out some core medium and long term targets which go beyond 2020.

c) Prioritise improvements through existing Estates-led projects

We will target and prioritise improvements through existing Estates-led projects, such as those identified in the Bloomsbury Masterplan and the Strategic Maintenance Plan. The highest standards of sustainability will be expected from the UCL capital investment programme: to minimise life cycle costs; deliver environmental and sustainable improvements; ensure comfortable working environments; design spaces and buildings which are flexible and adaptable for other uses; and ensure optimum maintainability. A Sustainable Design Brief has been developed to guide this work. Strategic maintenance projects will include the upgrade of the UCL district heating system. We will also ensure that any facilities service contracts explicitly include high standards in environmental and ethical performance.

d) Introduce new processes and procedures to ensure that estates and infrastructure decisions are based on sound financial AND environmental information

We will be working to develop processes and procedures which ensure that the environmental and ethical impact of key decisions is taken into account at UCL Boards and Committee meetings. A carbon costing methodology is currently being developed and trialed for future Estates Management Committee and Estates Approval Committee meetings. Likewise, we will be looking at a methodology for whole life costing which can be applied across our work.

*Key targets and commitments:*

- *Review UCL's 34% absolute target to reduce carbon*
- *Set a target for waste intensity (kg/per FTE)*
- *85% recycling of operational wastes by 2015*
- *100% HCFC phase-out in air conditioning systems by 2015*
- *All new build achieves BREEAM (New Construction) Excellent, or equivalent*
- *All major refurbishment work achieves BREEAM (2008 Education or Refurbishment), Excellent, or equivalent*
- *All minor refurbishment work achieve RICS Ska Gold where appropriate*
- *10% reduction in delivery vehicles on campus by 2014 (based on 2011 baseline)*
- *Review and revise the UCL Green travel plan by mid-2013*
- *Introduce discharge monitoring by 2013 and reduce discharge levels by 5% against discharge permit levels by 2015*
- *Reduce water consumption by 10% by 2014 against 2009/10 baseline*
- *Introduce at least 50m<sup>2</sup> of new, biodiverse urban space by 2014*
- *Achieve Food for Life catering marks Silver standard by 2014*

## 2.2 To enable, empower and support all UCL communities to address their environmental sustainability effects

### **Departments and Divisions have a critical role to play in driving UCLs environmental performance**

The day-to-day behaviours and actions of UCL's staff and students whilst working, studying (and residing) in UCL buildings have a large potential impact on our environmental footprint: through lights and computers being left on; unnecessary printing of materials; purchasing of poorly-rated electrical equipment; over-procurement of lab supplies; and control of regulated activities. It is important that departments, divisions, staff and students are supported,

empowered and incentivised to address these impacts. Strong leadership support for improvement is vital but it is important that we work collectively to create the right culture and environment for action.

### **Where are we now?**

UCL has a team of Green Champions, which was established to help support and encourage environmental activities in UCL's Departments and Divisions. In certain Departments and Divisions, the Green Champions, supported by the Head, have been very successful at raising awareness of environmental issues. In other Departments and Divisions, little or no action has been taken to date – partly due to the lack of clarity over the Green Champion role; the lack of support from those with authority to make decisions; time pressures; and the need for guidance. Changes to senior management roles and responsibilities are currently being made with the aim of clarifying environmental accountabilities and encouraging greater support for action to be taken.

The NUS Green Impact programme was introduced in 2011 with the aim of encouraging greater environmental action in Departments and Divisions. 28 teams signed up to participate in the first year. The programme has helped teams to focus energy and resources on key environmental issues and to put in place measures, which support change in the Department or Division. 19 teams were successfully awarded the Green Impact bronze award, with 2 teams achieving the silver award. The programme has been rolled out in 2012/13.

### **What we will do next?**

- a) Work together with all departments and divisions to identify the environmental impacts that might result from their activities.

We will work with all Departments and Divisions to enable environmental impacts to be identified and appropriate mitigation to be put in place. This will include: training for the individuals with responsibility for managing environmental sustainability (see below); tools allowing for the management of the environmental impacts (risk registers, development of RiskNet to support logging environmental risks, action plans); and incentives to encourage action.

- b) Ensure that those individuals accountable for UCL's day-to-day activities are managing their environmental responsibilities

Clearly defined accountabilities, roles and responsibilities are critical to the successful implementation of an environmental sustainability programme. Clarifying the role of individuals within Schools, Faculties, Departments and Divisions is important as they have accountability over environmental risks (such as managing hazardous waste) as well as responsibility for energy use in IT, waste produced, procurement and water. Individuals are responsible for the sustainability management and environmental compliance of any activity under their authority. Not only is it important that these responsibilities are clarified but that support is in place to ensure that the roles can be fulfilled. We will be working with the VP (Operations) to ensure that roles across UCL reflect environmental obligations and responsibilities and that appropriate support and incentives are in place.

- c) Engage through communications, events and initiatives to raise the profile of UCL's environmental sustainability issues

To enable, empower and support UCL environmental action, we will coordinate, encourage and support a series of events and initiatives, which help to raise the profile of our issues and generate activity. Green Impact will be developed for wider participation and to ensure

that the programme reflects and complements this strategy. We aim to move towards a Green Impact scheme that is mandatory for all UCL Departments and Divisions by 2015. Not only will Green Impact support Departments and Divisions with a set of measures for reducing impacts, it will also provide performance data (on energy use, waste, resources) and incentives for action. Green Week UCL will be developed in collaboration with staff and students to focus on issues of importance for UCL and to generate wider participation in our activities.

d) Provide regular feedback on UCL's environmental sustainability performance

Regular feedback and reporting will be critical to the success of UCL's environmental sustainability strategy. We will provide feedback on the performance of departments and divisions and the performance of UCL as a whole. This will include an annual report which sets out our progress against all of our commitments. We will also be looking at Visual Display Units in building reception areas which provide data on a building's performance as well as the regular issuing of Departmental/Divisional performance data.

#### *Key Targets and commitments:*

- *Achieve EcoCampus Platinum standard by mid-2014 & ISO 14001 by 2014*
- *All departments to participate in Green Impact by 2015*
- *Incentivisation programme developed to coincide with Green Impact*
- *Achieve Level 5 in the Sustainable Procurement Flexible Framework by 2014*
- *Deliver a rolling programme of Sustainability Training (2013-ongoing)*
- *Develop RiskNet to incorporate Environmental risk (2013)*
- *Targets for improvements in Departmental/Divisional performance agreed and in place by 2015.*
- *A commitment to UCL-wide annual reporting from 2013*

## 2.3 To provide the education, advancement, dissemination and application of sustainable development

### **UCL's major contribution to sustainable development**

Through its teaching (formal and informal), research and enterprise activities, UCL can deliver its greatest contribution to sustainable development. Through its teaching activities, UCL is educating tomorrow's leaders and decision-makers in the complexities of the global sustainability agenda whilst its research is seeking to find ways to address global issues of significance. To support this agenda, we will be working with staff and students to develop environmental sustainability programmes and initiatives, which enhance the learning experience and provide opportunity for research.

### **Where are we now?**

UCL has a number of academic departments and Institutes, including the Energy Institute, Institute of Sustainable Resources, Geography and CEGE, which address key environmental sustainability issues through teaching and research. However, the scale of academic work in this area is much wider – covering global health and poverty, sustainable regeneration and urban environments, biodiversity, climate change, and so on. UCL will be participating in the Higher Education Authority's Green Academy programme over 2013 and will use this to map the scope of its academic work on environmental sustainability. Some of the known activities include:

- The UCL Grand Challenges programme - which includes Global Health, Sustainable Cities, Intercultural Interaction and Human Wellbeing – has been established to provide

an environment in which researchers are encouraged to think about how their work can intersect with and impact upon global issues.

- The UCL Global Citizenship Programme to be piloted in 2012-13 will provide a tangible experience of the global citizenship agenda for undergraduate students, as well as bringing together elements of the Grand Challenges, opportunities for volunteering and enterprise activities and support with careers planning.
- UCL Enterprise has recently introduced a Social Enterprise Grant (for students), and UCLB have been awarded some HEFCE funding for a similar programme of social enterprise grants (for staff and students).

The campus provides an important opportunity to develop and test research as well as provide an opportunity for study and learning. In the past year, we have started working with CEGB to develop a Green Building Information Model (BIM) for the Chadwick building as well as exploring opportunities to link teaching modules to the estate (one of the new BAsc modules has been looking at water management in the University's Chemistry department).

### **What we will do next?**

- a) Through the Green Academy programme, we will work in collaboration with staff, students and the Office for the Vice Provost in Education to map the scope of UCL's environmental sustainability academic work

As noted above, UCL has a number of departments, which undertake teaching and research in the field of environmental sustainability. The scale of the UCL activity in this area is not widely known and there is potential to use this information to identify gaps and opportunities to widen our provision of 'Education for Sustainable Development'. A small project team, including the Vice-Provost (Education) and UCL's Head of Sustainability, will be taking the following work programme forward over the next year:

- Mapping our current provision of education for sustainable education across the institution, and developing measures to monitor against the sector
  - Embedding the principles of education for sustainable development in the new Global Citizenship Programme
  - Looking to identify opportunities to develop both formal and informal education to integrate education for sustainable development
- b) Establish programmes which use the estate and our communities as the basis for sustainable learning and research

The UCL community and the estate, with its infrastructure and services, offer an excellent opportunity for both study and research, providing a 'living lab' to learn from. From the analysis into the behaviour of a large community to the modeling of UCL's buildings and infrastructure, there is opportunity to bring UCL's core activities closer to its surroundings. We will be working with the Grand Challenges programme, UCL Estates and UCL Enterprise to find ways to encourage greater use of the estate and infrastructure whilst also respecting the need to maintain a reliable and resilient campus.

- c) Identify events which complement UCL's curriculum and encourage wider debate in the sustainability arena

The launch of the Global Citizenship programme is an opportunity for UCL to provide further discourse on a number of major global issues. It is proposed that this complements the work of the Faculties, Schools, Institutes and Departments. We will work with staff and students to develop a number of events, which support further discourse on issues of environmental sustainability including the re-launch of the Planet UCL discussion series.

- d) Encourage innovation and entrepreneurship as the basis for addressing some of our sustainability challenges

By working with academic departments, students and staff, we will be looking to encourage innovative solutions to our environment and sustainable development issues. An innovation challenge programme is being developed with UCL Advances to encourage staff and students to identify solutions to some of our most immediate challenges. The campus and our community offer us the opportunity to test innovation.

**Key Targets and commitments:**

- *Map the scale of UCL's academic work in the field of environmental sustainability*
- *Trial a UCL Innovation programme by 2013*
- *Develop the 'Living Lab' concept and identify projects which can be undertaken across the campus (2015)*
- *Re-launch the Planet UCL discussion series (2013)*

## 2.4 To maximise the wider impact of UCL's environmental sustainability activities at local, regional, national and international level through collaboration, partnership and communications

### **UCL has a wide scope of influence**

UCL has a wide scope of influence as a result of: the work of its academic community; its alumni and their linkages back to the Institution; its geography and the local networks that this helps to foster; volunteering programmes; and the partnerships and collaborations which it has formed. Building on these networks, we will seek to leverage our actions in the sustainability field through active communications, partnerships and collaboration at local, regional, national and international levels.

### **Where are we now?**

Across the Institution, environmental sustainability is being addressed by academic research, education and the work of the Estates team and other professional service divisions. However, much of the activity is isolated or under-promoted, leading to missed opportunities in collaboration across UCL and with external partners, as well as in widening the potential impact of work being undertaken in these fields. By communicating our work in the field of environmental sustainability to a wider audience, we will look to maximise potential for internal and external partnerships and collaborative work.

This, in part, will allow for greater collaboration and sharing of knowledge. UCL has been developing environmental sustainability partnerships over the past year with the Government's Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP); London Wildlife Trust; Building Research Establishment (BRE); and the Carbon Trust as well as partnerships developed through our academic institutes and departments. These partnerships have allowed UCL to draw on the expertise of these organisations in order to shape its own activities and programmes as well as provide a test bed for piloting solutions. We are also a member of the London Universities Environment Group (LUEG) and the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC).

As part of this process of promoting our work and widening our influence, we have been working to strengthen relationships at the local level – getting involved with community initiatives run through the London Wildlife Trust and seeking to build partnerships with the London Borough Local Authorities.

## What we will do next?

### a) Highlighting UCL's work which is undertaken in the field of environmental sustainability

This issue is, in part, being tackled by UCL's cross-disciplinary institutes, for example the Energy and Environment Institutes, which are tasked with bringing together academic activities from a range of faculties to address particular issues or questions. However, there is an opportunity to go further and highlight the work or activities of students and the UCL campus infrastructure.

The UCL Environmental Sustainability team has been working with UCL's new Institute of Sustainable Resources and the Grand Challenges to develop an environmental research portal. The aim of the portal is to create a central hub to showcase the breadth and depth of UCL's research expertise in the areas of environment and sustainability, and to provide a knowledge resource.

### b) Working to develop partnerships and collaboration with other HEIs, the private sector, and charities which support UCL's environmental sustainability activities

Partnership and collaboration should be the basis of a strong environmental sustainability programme. Internally, we will be looking for UCL communities to work in collaboration to resolve our own environmental impacts. But equally, we will seek to build further partnerships with external bodies: to share best practice and knowledge; to draw in new resources to support our activities; to explore opportunities for volunteering programmes; and to undertake further research. There is great scope to develop relationships with the private sector, which is driving much of the sustainability agenda forward. Moreover, we will be working to develop our relationships with other Higher Education Institutes on projects such as the development of a sustainable building standard for the HE sector.

### c) Building local initiatives with and supporting local communities

The Bloomsbury campus is at the heart of London – and UCL is considered an important organisation in its local community – as a local employer, as a local service provider, and as a landowner. In recent months, the UCL Environmental Sustainability team has been engaging with the Borough and local groups to identify ways of working more closely together. Support for local initiatives will help to strengthen its relationship with communities.

We will be developing communication programmes which highlight local opportunities – working with the Borough. As part of this, we will be looking to develop links to UCL-supported programmes such as Ecojam, which aims to create a resource for local communities to get more involved in local environmental activities.

#### *Key Targets and commitments:*

- Create a web portal which identifies and promotes UCL's research activities in the environmental sustainability field by 2014
- Work with other HEI's to develop a network for sharing best practice
- Develop 5 new voluntary programmes which contribute to the local and regional community

## 2.5 To become a leader across the HE sector in terms of environmental sustainability

UCL currently sits 89<sup>th</sup> in the People and Planet Green League. This league table acts as a benchmark for environmental sustainability performance across the UK Higher and Further Education sector. Whilst it presents a basis for comparison, the sector itself is diverse – from small teaching colleges based on a single site to large teaching and research institutes with multiple campuses – and therefore, the League should not be used as the only benchmark of performance. UCL will strive to improve its position in the Green League whilst also working with a credible external party to assess our current performance against other sectors – in terms of our operations and how these are managed, to our academic work and the scale of influence that this has in a complex global environment.

Our aim is to be recognised across the HE sector as an institution which produces the highest quality research and academic work in the field of environmental sustainability and that this work is undertaken in a physical and social environment which is achieving the highest sustainable standards.

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## **3. Managing sustainability**

The strategy sets out the forthcoming actions and the aims in relation to environmental sustainability. There are a number of important management steps to support the strategy. These are:

- Management systems and tools;
- Procurement;
- Assurance;
- Stakeholder engagement;
- Communications

### **Management systems**

UCL has been developing its own Environmental Sustainability Management System (ESMS), which is based on the traditional management approach to plan, do, check and act. An Environmental Sustainability policy was approved by the Senior Management Team and signed by the Provost in March 2012. The ESMS will provide the framework for managing implementation of the policy and this strategy – identifying the actions, which need to be taken; roles and responsibilities; ways of monitoring and reporting performance and improvements that need to be made. The ESMS is being developed in collaboration with staff and students and achieved the EcoCampus Silver phase in July 2012. We are aiming to get the ESMS accredited to EcoCampus Platinum phase by mid-2014 and will ultimately seek ISO 14001 accreditation.

### **Procurement**

An important element in our efforts to deliver the environmental sustainability strategy will be the way that we procure goods and services. UCL has been using the Flexible Framework for Sustainable Procurement as the basis for reviewing existing procurement procedures and putting in place measures to improve the sustainability of our procurement processes. This includes the development of a comprehensive Sustainable Procurement strategy; benchmarks to monitor progress; training for individuals undertaking procurement;

development of life cycle analysis tools; engagement with key suppliers to ensure that UCL policies are adopted by the supply chain; and independent assurance of our procurement processes. We will be aiming to achieve level 5 on the flexible framework by 2014.

### **Assurance**

As a client, UCL is responsible for assuring its own sustainability performance and that of its supply chain. It will carry out sustainability audits from time to time in line with an audit schedule, in order to assist with this internal assurance function.

In addition, UCL will be looking to work with a credible external party to audit our systems and processes and provide a benchmark of performance against the HE sector and other public and private organisations.

### **Stakeholder Engagement and Communications**

UCL is committed to the transparency of its activities, and plans to publicly report annually on its progress on environmental sustainability.

Its approach to the delivery of its environmental sustainability objectives may change over time and in accordance with UCL's commitment to continuous improvement. UCL anticipates reviewing the strategy on an annual basis, as it develops a better understanding of its impacts.

In line with UCL's desire to be a leader within the HE sector, UCL is keen to share lessons learnt through the delivery of this strategy with industry, policy makers and other interested parties. To this end, UCL will seek to provide information on its activities and approaches through the Green UCL website, regular participation in events, close working with the sector, UCL staff, students and local community and wider industry and by using case studies and other mechanisms to share information.