Environment and Energy Policy

This Policy establishes the University's commitment to environmental protection, sustainable development and continual improvement of sustainable practices and performance. It provides a framework to ensure the fulfilment of the University's 2020-2026 Strategic Plan, the Environmental Sustainability Strategic Action Plan and supports the University's Energy & Environmental Management System.

The University is committed to establishing a culture of sustainability throughout its business strategy and decision-making. Our unique position as a landowner, educational establishment and research centre, offers a significant opportunity to not only enhance and conserve the natural environment but also contribute to global efforts to address issues such as climate change and initiatives such as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

The University of Reading commits to:

Education and Engagement

Student, staff and community involvement

1. Ensure that all graduates have a fundamental understanding of Sustainable Development. To ensure that our students are enabled and empowered to positively contribute to sustainability in their lives, professions, and communities.
2. Ensure all staff are trained and supported to understand their part in delivering environmental sustainability through their work and in their own lives, promoting best practice.
3. Build a community of active supporters committed to taking action to improve environmental sustainability.
4. Communicate on its environmental performance annually, both internally and externally.
5. Invite and respond to feedback and suggestions for ongoing environmental improvements.

Research and Influence

6. Cultivate a thriving network of institutional level strategic partnerships, locally and globally, working together to find solutions to the challenges the planet faces.
7. Ensure that our business community has access to our knowledge and skills to achieve their sustainability ambitions through innovation.
8. Widely promote our leading role and impact in addressing sustainability challenges to our stakeholders and work with organisations, decision makers and business to identify and influence specific opportunities to address key sustainability challenges.

A Green University

Energy & Carbon

9. Continually reduce carbon emissions in line with the commitments set out in the Net Zero Carbon Plan.
10. Continually reduce energy consumption and improve energy efficiency across the estate.
11. Work towards appropriately metering all buildings, linking all metering automatically to the University's utilities database and monitoring, measuring and reporting on energy consumption on an on-going basis

Water

12. Reduce water consumption and improve water efficiency using absolute and relative metrics to assess performance, including implementing appropriate, cost-effective water efficient and re-use technologies.
13. Improve water metering in order to monitor, measure and report on consumption on an on-going basis.

Waste and Resource Use

14. Ensure resources are efficiently utilised and circular economy principles are adopted where possible.
15. Ensure our waste is carefully managed to minimise the impact on the environment and ensure, as a minimum, statutory obligations are met.
16. Promote and facilitate waste segregation and the encourage the consideration of the waste hierarchy (reduce, reuse, recycle, recover, dispose); diverting waste away from landfill where possible.

Our Natural Environment

17. Actively enhance biodiversity on our Estate and operate in a manner that protects our natural environment.
18. Harness research and learning opportunities, and engage our community to promote awareness of the natural environment and deepen their connection with nature.
19. Reduce the risk and minimise the impact from campus activities by controlling emissions, meeting regulatory standards and implementing emergency response procedures to prevent pollution.
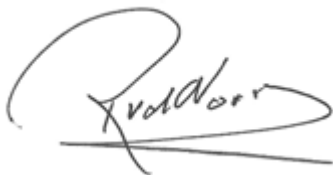
Travel and Transport

20. Promote and facilitate sustainable modes of travel including walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing by actively progressing a University Travel Plan.
21. Monitor business and commuter travel (students and staff), exploring options for reducing the need to travel as well as encouraging sustainable modes of travel.

Compliance and Estate Development

22. Comply with applicable legal requirements, accreditations, agreements and other compliance obligations (as listed in the EEMS).
23. Continually improve the Energy and Environmental Management System (EEMS) in order to:
    a. To protect the environment by preventing or mitigating adverse environmental impacts;
    b. To enhance the University's environmental and energy performance;
24. Ensure that necessary resources are available to meet the requirements of this policy and that effective governance structures are in place to review, authorise and oversee relevant actions.
25. Manage the University's property portfolio by using sustainable construction and maintenance principles including the consideration of energy and water efficiency opportunities, in the design, construction, modification, and refurbishment of new and existing facilities where practicable.

Responsible Procurement

26. Promote sustainable resource management practices and support the purchase of products and services that support our environmental sustainability goals.
27. Ensure that sustainability and responsible procurement is an embedded part of the University's end to end procurement process.

Signed: _____ .

Professor Robert Van de Noort
Vice Chancellor

Date: 24 June 2025
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Progress against these Policy Objectives is reported to University Executive Board via the Annual Environmental Sustainability Report www.reading.ac.uk/sustainability/policies-and-strategies

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