

Environmental Sustainability Policy



Responsibility for policy: Environmental Sustainability Committee

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: December 2021

Next review: April 2024

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff and students of the University of Waikato.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to outline the principles and processes that underpin the University's commitment to, and demonstration of, environmental sustainability in relation to its activities, operations, buildings and campuses.

Related documents and legislation

3. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
 - [Commitment to Sustainable Practices of Higher Education Institutions - UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio 2012](#)
 - [Higher Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO](#)
 - [Independent Contractor Policy](#)
 - [Procurement Policy](#)
 - [Property Services, Standard Brief for Design and Construction of Campus Facilities](#)
 - [Travel Plan](#)
 - [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)
4. This policy takes account of the following:
 - [Academic Plan](#)
 - [Building Act 2004](#)
 - [Education and Training Act 2020](#)
 - [Hazardous Substances and New Organisms Act 1996](#)
 - [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
 - [Local Agenda 21](#)
 - [Resource Management Act 1991](#)
 - [Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi \(1840\)](#)
 - [University of Waikato Strategy](#)
 - [University of Waikato Charter](#)
 - Waikato Regional and District Plans
 - [Waste Minimisation and Management Plan](#)

Principles

5. In alignment with the vision and goals set out in the [University of Waikato Strategy](#), the University is committed to:
 - the sustainability of our environment, economy and society
 - contributing to the delivery of the United Nations (UN) [Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs) and to solutions to critical economic, social and environmental problems, and
 - making its campuses exemplars of good environmental practice including the sustainable use, conservation and restoration of land.
6. The University of Waikato recognises its responsibility to manage the environmental impacts of its activities, and is committed to:

- the integration of its environmental sustainability commitment throughout all dimensions of its activities including its teaching, research, planning, operations and management
 - demonstrating leadership locally, nationally and internationally through its sustainability practices
 - implementing environmentally sustainable practices throughout its campuses, which includes the protection and restoration of the campus environment
 - meaningful partnerships with Māori under the Treaty of Waitangi, which recognise the role of Māori as kaitiaki of New Zealand's natural environment.
7. These principles will be enabled through the following:

Education and research

8. The University will encourage and support the development of educational programmes and curricula that include a focus on environmental sustainability and contribution to the achievement of the SDGs by:
- developing papers and components of papers which have an emphasis on interdisciplinary studies and partnerships that are required to address sustainability
 - encouraging and supporting staff to incorporate appropriate material on the environment and sustainability into their teaching programmes
 - raising awareness of environmental sustainability in programmes of student and staff orientation and staff development
 - encouraging and supporting informal learning opportunities about environmental sustainability for its staff and students.
9. The University will support research that fosters new ideas, values and practices related to environmental sustainability and citizenship, as well as the innovation, development and implementation of new solutions and technologies that enhance environmental sustainability and address or resolve critical sustainability issues for the organisation, its community, the region, the nation and internationally.

Community involvement and public profile

10. The University will promote and encourage environmentally responsible partnerships, and seek on-going interaction with community groups and other stakeholders, in relation to environmental sustainability matters, by:
- participating in its communities and leading in the provision of expertise and advice on environmental matters
 - sharing resources and information for community education on environmental sustainability matters.

Sustainable resource management and conservation

11. The University will implement sustainable practices on its campuses, which include:
- efficient resource use by managing energy, water and all other resources in an environmentally responsible manner and maximising the reuse or redeployment of these resources wherever practicable
 - wherever practicable, sourcing supply from renewable energy suppliers
 - protecting and restoring natural ecosystems and enhancing amenity ecological values, especially biodiversity on campus such as, by example, controlling pest species and monitoring water quality in the campus lakes
 - managing and minimising output of solid [wastes](#), and discharges of liquid [wastes](#) and airborne contaminants, including into storm water systems and the campus lakes to reduce or eliminate the impact of potential marine, land or air pollution
 - the responsible and appropriate management of hazardous waste in accordance with relevant legislation
 - the responsible and appropriate management and recycling of electronic waste

- working with suppliers and contractors to minimise the environmental impact of activities on its campuses
 - ensuring the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems associated with the University
 - identifying, monitoring and protecting any International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) [Red Listed](#) species and national conservation list species with habitats in areas affected by the operation of the University.
12. The University will encourage staff and students to make environmentally responsible transportation decisions in their commuting and work practices.
 13. The University will manage the built environment on its campuses in an environmentally responsible manner.

Social and cultural environment

14. The University will recognise the key importance of social and cultural factors for environmental sustainability by:
 - engaging in collaborative and meaningful consultation with staff and students on decisions that affect them
 - fostering a culture amongst all staff, students, contractors and visitors to the University that embraces the principles of sustainability and actively raises awareness of environmental matters
 - promoting a diverse and inclusive social and cultural environment.
15. The University will promote and enhance its partnerships with Māori under Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi by:
 - recognising that the Waikato-Tainui iwi is *tangata whenua* of the University's Hamilton campus and has a major role in the care of its environment
 - supporting an understanding of Te Tiriti o Waitangi /Treaty of Waitangi and Māori environmental rights, lore and values that should be encouraged in teaching and research programmes where appropriate, and amongst its staff, students and the wider community
 - supporting collaborative teaching and research with iwi and other Māori organisations
 - supporting dedicated funding for Treaty/environmental research.

Responsibilities

16. The Environmental Sustainability Committee is responsible for overseeing the implementation, promotion and monitoring of this policy. The committee will engage in an annual planning and reporting cycle to fulfil this responsibility by working with staff and students of the University.
17. The Environmental Sustainability Committee will report annually to the Vice-Chancellor and Executive Leadership Committee regarding environmental achievements, areas for improvement and any issues related to this policy.
18. The Environmental Sustainability Committee or Sustainability Manager will initiate regular audits in relation to the commitments listed above, analyse the outcomes and recommend and initiate changes necessary to improve performance in meeting these commitments.
19. The Environmental Sustainability Committee will regularly review this policy in consultation with stakeholders.
20. The Environmental Sustainability Committee will plan and implement an annual programme of initiatives and activities, subject to approval by the Vice-Chancellor, in support of this policy.
21. Heads of School, Directors and equivalent are responsible for ensuring that activities and decision-making in their areas of responsibility are consistent with the commitments set out in this policy.
22. Staff members and students have a responsibility to carry out their day-to-day activities in ways that enhance environmental sustainability outcomes for the University; informal learning opportunities to encourage their activities will be supported by the Environmental Sustainability Committee.

23. Staff who are managers of independent contractors are responsible for ensuring that the independent contractors are aware of, and support, the University's commitment to environmental sustainability as outlined in this policy, in all their dealings with the University.

Note

The term 'School' in this policy includes Faculties and the term 'Head of School' includes Deans.