

Heriot-Watt University Sustainability Engagement Plan

Introduction

This Sustainability Engagement Plan supports the delivery of [Heriot-Watt University's Global Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#):

Commitment 1 – we will inform, empower and support our global community in taking personal and collective action to assist in delivering the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

We consulted staff and students via surveys, focus groups, forums, meetings, and stakeholder events to identify these **strategic engagement objectives**:

1. **Inform** - our staff, students and external communities are aware of our sustainability research and its impact, the sustainability action being carried out, and future action plans.
2. **Connect** – enable staff, students and external communities to connect to sustainability themes and encourage them to build relationships and collaborations to foster a culture of sustainability.
3. **Participate** – provide opportunities for our staff, students and external communities to actively participate in our sustainability engagement programme.
4. **Act** – empower and support our staff, students and external communities to take positive action and drive a more sustainable future.

Progress

At Heriot-Watt University, we are co-designing the Sustainability Engagement Programme with our key communities – staff, students and external communities. This approach takes guidance from the Scottish Government's [individual, social, and material model \(ISM\)](#) to facilitate behaviour change. The ISM tool uses social and material factors, as well as individual factors, to consider all the elements that shape people's behaviours.

1. Surveys

We co-designed a sustainability survey with staff and students, to establish interests, behaviours, attitudes and barriers to sustainability. We received over 300 responses from students and 200 from staff.

We identified key sustainability themes from these surveys which will shape the sustainability engagement programme: food, fashion, travel, and heat and energy.

2. Focus Groups

We co-designed the engagement programme with students to identify specific initiatives and events to deliver the key sustainability themes. All ideas put forward by students in the focus groups were captured and will be kept for future engagement activities.

3. Student Forum

The student sustainability survey informed us that students wanted to find out more about current and future sustainability plans at the university. Together with the Student Union and student societies, we developed the Forum to provide a space to bring students together to share their interest, enthusiasm and ideas around sustainability, discussing some of the multi-faceted solutions that are needed to address the climate crisis.

Subsequent forums were co-designed with students, providing input on every aspect including the format, topics for discussion, venue, timings and catering provided. To date, we have engaged with >70 students and held seven Forums. This has allowed us to raise awareness within the university community of the importance of sustainable living and the power of collective action.

4. Community Partnerships

To support the creation of a sustainability culture beyond Heriot-Watt, we are working to maintain our ongoing relationships and partnerships with community facing organisations. We are co-developing initiatives and events with our community partners to deliver key sustainability messages and drive climate action.

5. Community led events, initiatives and projects

We have delivered a number of sustainability events, initiatives and projects - including a panel discussion on sustainable clothing; climate action themed events for Edinburgh Science Festival; and sustainability mural project where students co-designed the concept with artist Jen Collier. [Please see our website for more details](#)

Action	Method of delivery	Success Measure (SMART)	Timeframe	Outcomes
Raise awareness of the solutions to sustainability issues, our sustainability research and its impact, and of the current and future sustainability activities and initiatives at the university.	Online content will be developed for staff and students at our global campuses, our online and external communities on the current and future sustainability events, initiatives and activities.	Webpage content, social media coverage. Increase in traffic through sustainability website. Increase in reach on HWEEngage and Heriot-Watt University Instagram and other social media accounts. Increase in #sustainableHWU usage on social media.	May 2024 – May 2025	Enhanced recognition of importance of engagement to deliver sustainability goals. Boost to reputation internally and externally for purposeful community engagement.
		Increase in awareness of solutions to climate change shown in follow-up staff and student engagement survey – from 38% staff to 48%, and from 49% students to 59%.	2025	

	Promotion and awareness of the climate advocacy training for staff and students.	Increase in engagement numbers and co-development workshop attendance for the Climate Advocacy Training.	Sept 2024	
	<p>At least 4 events for staff and students will be delivered during Sustainability Week. Promotion of sustainability initiatives and events to staff and students.</p> <p>Sustainability team presence at Welcome Week.</p> <p>Sustainability team presence at Get Set Fair.</p> <p>Promote the Student Sustainability Fund. Hold at least 12 sustainability events or initiatives for students and staff in 24/25.</p>	<p>Increase in student and staff event sign-up numbers – from 175 to 210.</p> <p>Increase in student involvement in leading events and initiatives.</p> <p>Increase in HW Engage and Heriot-Watt University Instagram reach, interactions, impressions and follows. Students using the Sustainability Fund to develop sustainability projects and initiatives.</p>	Within the academic year 2024-2025	

Create opportunities for staff and students to contribute and develop sustainability initiatives and events.	Provide opportunities for staff and students to feed into initiatives, events and campus activities.	Increase in student and staff participation and contribution to events, initiatives and campus activity – e.g. Curriehill Link Project.	May 2024- May 2025	Enhanced internal reputation and recognition for student and staff involvement in initiatives, activities and events.
	Co-develop and support students to run Forum sessions with the SU.	<p>Increase in the number of students signed up to the Student Forum Teams Channel – from 19 to 30.</p> <p>Increase in student involvement in organising, planning, promoting and running the Forums and progressing the initiatives from the Forums.</p>	June 2024 – June 2025	
	Co-design and promote the student engagement survey to students at our Global Campuses – Malaysia and Dubai.	<p>10% of Malayia Campus student population responding to survey.</p> <p>10% of Dubai Campus student population responding to survey.</p>	September 2024 to March 2025	Increased understanding of the behaviours, interests and barriers to sustainability at our Global campuses.

	Co-design and promote the staff engagement survey to students at our Global Campuses – Malaysia and Dubai.	10% of Malaysia Campus staff population responding to survey. 10% of Dubai Campus staff population responding to survey.	September 2024 to March 2025	
	Launch the Sustainability Mural to celebrate community participation in the artwork.	Increase in social media reach for mural content – HWEEngage and Heriot-Watt University Instagram. Presence of staff, students and local community at event.	October 2024	
Support sustainability researchers and create opportunities for them to share their research and its impact with our wider communities.	Co-develop initiatives and events with sustainability researchers.	Increase in the number of researchers participating in events and initiatives – from 3 to 6 events.	Within the academic year 2024-2025	Enhanced number of sustainability researchers participating in community engagement opportunities.
Enhance and build-on new and existing community partnerships to support connections with our researchers and deliver	Foster and maintain partnerships with community facing organisations and groups. Develop new	Events or initiatives co-developed and delivered with community partners.	December 2024	Community partners are informed and connected to our key sustainability themes

engagement opportunities that benefit both partners.	<p>partnerships with community facing organisations.</p> <p>Map the existing community partners, and co-develop events and initiatives with them to enhance dialogue around sustainability with defined audiences.</p>			and Heriot-Watt sustainability research. Community partners have participated in community engagement opportunities.
Facilitate opportunities for our communities and community facing organisations to share knowledge and skills on sustainability and exemplary community-led initiatives.	<p>Collaborate with community facing organisations to enable them to share their sustainability stories, skills and knowledge with staff and students.</p> <p>Co-develop and deliver events for students and staff to build knowledge and learn new skills.</p>	Activities co-developed and delivered with community facing organisations.	December 2024	New and mutually beneficial relationships with community organisations.