

Supplier Engagement HE Tool

Action Plan for University of Worcester

This is your sustainability action plan based on the issues and impacts you have selected as being relevant to your business.

Social Issues and Impacts

Actions you select here will help increase your NETpositive impact on society. Indicate against actions from this list whether they are in progress, are ready to start or have already completed.

Your issues

1 Modern slavery is an issue for every business and we need to explore it
The Modern Slavery Act requires organisations with a turnover of over £36 million to produce a public statement outlining how the risk of slavery and human trafficking is managed throughout the business and supply chain. However, issues relating to Modern Slavery can impact businesses of any size.



Your action plan

Publish a Modern Slavery Statement Completed
A responsible business is transparent and understands that Modern Slavery is more than a compliance issue. Legislation has driven rapid progress in this area and best practice is developing quickly. Businesses obliged to produce a transparency statement are encouraged to provide evidence of their commitments including appropriate [governance and reporting mechanisms](#)

Evidence
The University publishes a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking statement, which is updated annually. This can be accessed via the following link:

2 We could do more to engage and develop our staff

Engaged staff are assets to your business; when they understand what you are trying to achieve they can help make it happen. Sustainability is linked to staff development as it forms part of organisational process and practice.



Support staff to shape sustainability strategy and drive implementation Completed

Help your staff understand what sustainability means and how their professional practice contributes to broader strategic ambitions. Systems and processes can be developed to include sustainability formally across the business or a network of 'champions' might be supported to drive progress less formally. Reporting on progress and impact should be part of either approach, as should ensuring your approach is inclusive, which will bring the benefits of diversity to your sustainability activity.

Evidence

University Staff have often taken a lead in encouraging and promoting sustainability. There is a wide cross section of staff from across the University who sit on the Sustainability Strategy Committee. The University of Worcester sees its commitment to society to be much broader than mitigating its negative impacts and focuses its resources on positive societal impacts of activities. The assessment of what is material is a matter of professional judgement and we have utilised the wisdom of the Sustainability Strategy Group to help set and identify these over a series of workshops to keep this continuously under review.

3 We should know more about where the things we buy come from and how they are made

Every product we buy has a story attached to it; how it is made, what it is made from, who has made it and where it has travelled from. These stories all have both positive and negative impacts. Select this issue to explore how to embed responsible purchasing in your business or to share your own approach.



Understand the impacts of the products your business buys In progress

There is a business risk attached to not having any understanding of your supply chain. There may also be opportunities to source more ethical or environmentally sound alternatives (those which produce less waste, have a lower carbon footprint, use less raw materials or are produced with less damage to the environment, and where good labour practices are followed). The starting point is understanding where the products your business depends upon come from and how they are made and transported. Don't be afraid to ask questions of your own suppliers.

Evidence

4 We could do more work with smaller businesses and/or the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSEs) sector

Micro, small and medium-sized businesses (MSMEs) or those providing products and services as social enterprises add significant value to communities. Supporting them supports local employment and maximises community benefit.



Review your procurement practices to support access by MSME and VCSEs *In progress*

The government has committed to making [access to public contracts](#) easier for SMEs and civil society organisations. Consider how your procurement processes could be updated to reflect this accessibility. This could include targeting marketing of opportunities so they reach this audience, streamlining your procurement processes or sharing examples of successful relationships with these organisations to promote your activity.

Evidence

The Procurement Act 2023 will see improvements in this area, the creation of a Central Digital Platform encourages the transparency of opportunities all in 1 locations and suppliers will only need to provide basic business details once reducing duplication.

1 Customer feedback is important to us

All businesses are subject to customer scrutiny. An efficient and responsible business will understand the importance of responding positively to feedback from its customers. Negative feedback will be viewed as an opportunity to improve processes or practices and positive feedback as a success story to share.



Regularly publish customer feedback *Completed*

Transparency is crucial for all organisations. Regularly publishing customer feedback can build trust with clients and consumers as well as enhancing your brand value.

Evidence

The University values the feedback from students and utilises the information to make positive improvements, feedback data is available as follows: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover...> Feedback from the Sustainability surveys can be easily accessed as follows: <http://susthingsout.com/wp-content...>

Have a meaningful process for dealing with customer feedback. *Completed*

A meaningful process for dealing with customer feedback will be clear and transparent for your customers as well as your staff. It will be clear what actions and responses have been provided and there will be a culture of learning from negative feedback as well as sharing positive feedback broadly.

Evidence

The Students at The University are our main customers, feedback is taken on a regular basis to assess satisfaction <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover...> The University also takes part in The National Student Survey <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discover...> The results from the surveys are then reviewed to make positive change. The Sustainability Department frequently gathers data to monitor the progress of embedding a culture of sustainability across the curriculum and campus. Further details can be found at: <http://susthingsout.com/index.php/...>

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Employ an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator Completed

Larger businesses should consider developing an equality, diversity and inclusion strategy. Developing such a strategy will demonstrate that the company takes social inclusion seriously and is working to embed such principles in its daily activities.

Evidence

The overarching governance of EDI falls to the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Committee (EDIC). EDIC will oversee the EDI Delivery Plan with specific members taking responsibility for the themes. It will work closely with existing sub-Committees of our Academic Board in this delivery, in particular, Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee (LTSEC), Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) and Research and Knowledge Exchange Committee (RKEC), and with University Working Groups, whose area of focus closely aligns with one or more of our EDI themes. It will also work with existing staff/student networks and communities to ensure that the wider University is fully engaged in the delivery of this Framework. EDIC will further establish working groups with appropriate cross-University membership to deliver specific objectives. Further information can be found at <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...> The EDI committee reports directly to the executive board and the board of governors. They also report to the academic board through the sub-committees mentioned above. The Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive is responsible to the Board of Governors for the development, promotion and implementation of the equality of Opportunity policy, within the resources available, working with the senior management team, the Academic Board and the Personnel Committee

4 We are interested in (or are currently) employing apprentices or providing work placements

Employing apprentices equips young people with vital skills and supports social cohesion within the local community. Your business may be able to get funding to pay for the training of an apprentice.



Provide short-term work placements In progress

Your business may be unable to support a full time apprenticeship programme but it could still offer work experience on shorter placements. Schemes are usually run locally so try your nearest College or University as a starting point.

Evidence

The University supports opportunities for members of the local community to complete work experience within various University departments.

Join an apprentice scheme Completed

Offering apprenticeships can be a great way for a business to grow talent and expand their staff base at low cost and risk.

Evidence

The University directly employs Vikki Greenfield within the Directorate, her role is Head of Apprenticeships & Work Based Learning. The University has in place a number of apprenticeship schemes accessible to the students:

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/journe...> School of Nursing and Midwifery worked in partnership with Herefordshire and Worcestershire NHS Trust employers and Health Education England to be one of the first Higher Education Institutions to pilot the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship programme. As of September 2022, over 100 apprentices have successfully completed their apprenticeship across Teacher, Nursing Associate and Operations / Departmental Manager apprentices. Our apprenticeship strategy can be found at <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...>

5 We have an opportunity to make a positive contribution in our local community

Organisations are likely to have a range of positive or negative impacts on their immediate locality; a responsible business will strive to understand what these impacts are. They will then seek to reduce any negative impacts and make the most of opportunities to enhance the positive impacts they could have.



Support the vulnerable in your community In progress

The vulnerable in your community might be the elderly, at-risk youth, migrants or others living in isolation. Supporting or developing schemes to support these groups might be an activity you can link to staff volunteering or community outreach initiatives.

Evidence

Our Association for Dementia Studies is nationally renowned for the training and research that it undertakes to improve the care of people with dementia and related conditions. The newly formed Centre for Palliative Care, a joint initiative with St Richard's Hospice, aims to further improve care and support for the terminally ill and their families. We also nominate an annual charity of the year for whom we raise money for. Currently we are donating to the Worcester Foodbank which provides food for those who need it most.

Develop a volunteering or community engagement plan *In progress*

Many organisations already have a strong reputation for supporting community activities. From wildlife conservation or growing projects such as Britain in Bloom to volunteering at food banks or youth clubs. Consider how you can maximise your community contribution through your staff engagement programme.

Evidence

We hold an annual 'Go Green Week'. The week comprises of activities including; Recycling advise and awareness, making bug hotels and bird feeders, climate workshops, bulb planting, Sustainability workshops, carbon literacy sessions, litter picking and a repair café to fix broken items.

Support crime reduction activity in your local area *Completed*

There are likely to be a range of ways your organisation could help reduce crime in your local community. From provision of surveillance to effectively managing spaces so they discourage anti-social behaviour. More information and suggestions can be found in this [Bre Trust briefing paper](#)

Evidence

The University has an in-house security team, supported by an external security company. The Security staff carry out regular patrols around the University estate and within the local area. The University is part of the Community Safety Accreditation scheme, this links the University to West Mercia Police and provides limited but targeted powers to tackle crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour. It is important to The University of Worcester to work closely with the community and policing team for the benefit of both our students and the Worcester community. The University of Worcester is one of a limited number of universities in the Country to be accredited under the Police Reform Act 2002. Staff work alongside the two University-funded Police Community Support Officers, who work on campus and within the local community. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/...>

Support homelessness and rough sleeping initiatives in your area *In progress*

The national [Rough Sleeping Strategy](#) outlines ambitions to eradicate homelessness by 2027 and there are likely to be local initiatives in your area. Consider how your organisation could contribute to these local efforts.

Evidence

Our Elgar Café is home to the social enterprise Change Please and change is brewing! Every cup of coffee you buy, helps to benefit the life of someone experiencing homelessness. 100% of Change Please profits helps people experiencing homelessness by training them to become baristas, supporting them with everything they need to turn their lives around – a living wage job, housing, therapy, bank account and onward employment opportunities. Our students also help initiatives in the area such as Students from the criminology course lending a hand to Worcester charity Maggs Day Centre, sorting their Clothing Project for the winter months. <https://www.worcesternews.co.uk/ne...>

Economic Issues and Impacts

Actions you select here will help increase your financial resilience, reduce your business risk and generate a positive impact on the wider economy. Indicate against actions in this list whether they are in progress, are ready to start or have already completed.

Your issues

1 We want to be part of a robust, resilient and ethical supply chain

Ensuring strong business relationships are formed with suppliers is key to maintaining and developing trust along your supply chains. An effective and responsible business will be keen to share its values with its suppliers for mutual benefit.



Your action plan

Guarantee suppliers a payment date *Completed*

Businesses can ensure payments are met by a specified date, and offer compensation or another gesture if this deadline is not met. Guaranteeing suppliers a date of payment builds trust across your supply chain as suppliers feel they will suffer less financial risk when carrying out business with you.

Evidence

The University is committed to paying valid invoices within agreed timescales. The University has standard payment terms of 30 days net of invoice being received. Alternative payment terms to be agreed and formalised via negotiation with the contract manager. The Procurement Act 2023 has provisions for an increased attention to contract management, this includes the need to provide regular notices on payments being made within the agreed 30 day terms. This will give suppliers the opportunity to understand which organisations are paying suppliers within the agreed terms.

Ask suppliers for feedback *In progress*

There are a range of ways you can ask your suppliers for feedback. As well as using this to inform your business development it can also be something you publish to attract new business.

Evidence

Procurement engage with suppliers at various stages of the tender process subject to strict regulations. Supplier engagement is encouraged at various points of a tender process depending on the specific requirements. An example of this is when tendering for catering requirements, companies were invited to site before the tender documents had been finalised and published to engage with the suppliers and give an opportunity to gain feedback from existing suppliers in the catering market to use their expertise to help build the tender documents. The Procurement Act 2023 due to come into force 28 October 2024, the act emphasises the benefits of Pre-market engagement, and supporting SMEs and local businesses. The Act aims to achieve transparency to assist both buyers and suppliers.

Embed a commitment to social value within your supply chain *In progress*

Part of demonstrating social value for your customers is delivering it with your suppliers. Consider how you can support your suppliers to consider their social value as part of your own procurement processes. This could be as simple as encouraging them to develop a Social Value Action Plan (like this one) for their organisation too.

Evidence

Suppliers are encouraged to set up an action plan with Net Positives to consider their social value. The University has over 450 suppliers signed up to the Net Positives Tool. Attached is a link to show engagement from The University of Worcester Suppliers with the Net Positives tool. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...> When completing tender processes sustainability and social value questions are included within the evaluation criteria.

Find ways to support local SMEs as part of your procurement processes *In progress*

It can often be harder for SMEs to negotiate the procurement processes of larger businesses. Find ways to work with local and smaller suppliers to ensure they are not inadvertently excluded from your supply chain.

Evidence

The University would encourage local suppliers of all sizes to quote/ tender for opportunities at the University. Advice can also be provided on how to complete a tender. A number of events are also run in the Worcestershire area to encourage SME'S to engage with local business, such as <https://www.finditinworcestershire....> In line with the Procurement Act 2023 the University will be looking at reducing any potential barriers to SME's in the tender process.

2 Political or economic uncertainty is a real challenge for our business

The business landscape is never static but during periods of significant change planning effectively can be challenging. Adaptability and resilience are vital elements of survival but also enable pro-active businesses to spot opportunities that will also help them thrive. Select this issue to explore ways to ensure business resilience or share your existing approaches.



1 We are keen to communicate with our customers

An effective and responsible business understands that customers can be your biggest supporters and so it is important to communicate openly and honestly with them.



Communicate sustainability to your customers Completed

Including the benefits of sustainability and how you integrate it into your business practice can help build a stronger customer base. Considering sustainability in your business and communicating it is now becoming normal business practice, ensure you are part of this growing trend!

Evidence

The University takes its sustainable responsibilities extremely seriously and has received high recognition as a result. The Sustainability Team are very proud to have received a number of awards for their commitment and hard work in this area. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/...> There are a number of events held throughout the year such as Go green week to gain students attention and to get them involved. Students are encouraged to get involved in many ways throughout the year by volunteering with the green impact team, student switch off. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discov...>

2 We are keen our business contributes to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

192 Member States of the United Nations (including the UK) agreed new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. They will need the support of businesses to achieve them. Select this statement to explore how your business can get ready to meet this new global challenge.



Know how your business activities can contribute to the SDGs In progress

Identify how your business activities contribute to the [global goals](#) or how they could contribute. A mapping exercise may be needed to identify both risks and opportunities from the SDGs for your business operations.

Evidence

The Sustainability team have completed a mapping exercise to identify risks and opportunities. A Sustainable Procurement Steering Group of the Sustainability Strategy Group was created in April 2014 to oversee this important work; membership includes students, academics and procurement professionals. The main focus of this group is ethical procurement issues, including workers' rights such as Modern Slavery in the supply chain, factory conditions and reforming supply chains and Social Values Act. These are all issues which can improve our contribution to the SDG's. The University of Worcester has been awarded First Class Honours for environmental sustainability in the latest People & Planet national rankings. This is the 14th straight year that the University, one of Britain's most sustainable, has earned First Class Honours. People & Planet's University League has placed the University ninth out of 151 UK institutions in its latest 2023/24 table. The University scored 100% in 4 of the 4 categories. The league, compiled annually by the UK student campaigning network, People & Planet, ranks universities by environmental and ethical performance. They look at aspects including environmental policy, carbon management, how sustainably food is produced, how the University equips students with the knowledge and understanding of sustainability, energy sources, waste and recycling, and reduction of carbon and water use. This evidences the positive impact we are making.

Find out more about the SDGs Completed

The [Sustainable Development Goals](#) were adopted to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. They will impact on business practice over the next decade at least as governments are challenged to demonstrate progress against the targets within them.

Evidence

We have split the 17 SDG's into 4 themes in our sustainability strategy and identified our key commitments. We then break down these commitments into targets to help us work towards each of the sustainable development goals. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/documents/sustainability-strategy-2030.pdf>. The University has signed up to the SDG Accord which demonstrates our commitment to do more to contribute to the Global Goals through our activities. It requires annual reporting on our progress in ways which share the learning with other learning institutions both nationally and internationally.

Include the SDGs as part of your sustainability plans and reporting Completed

The [SDGs](#) could be at the heart of your sustainability activity with targets and evidence of progress part of your journey. Have a look at the [South Yorkshire Police Sustainability Strategy](#) to see how they have included the SDGs in the strategy.

Evidence

The University of Worcester has signed up to the SDG Accord and are reporting annually on our progress on the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The Sustainability Policy has clear objectives to promote 8 314.934 142 313.276 14 People 276 ainsibility

Environmental Issues and Impacts

Actions selected in this sector will help increase your environmental sustainability. Indicate against actions from this list whether they are in progress, are ready to start or have already completed.

Your issues

1 Our business generates different types of (non-food) waste

Excellent businesses understand their waste streams and take steps to manage them proactively. This is not only better for the environment, as resources can be re-used or recycled rather than being sent to landfill but better waste management is also likely to save you money. Waste may also actually be a procurement issue; looking at purchasing choices to reduce waste at source can result in less waste being produced (which would reduce associated waste disposal costs). Select this issue to explore actions to help you think about understanding and managing waste or to provide information about how you already do this effectively.



Your action plan

Undertake a waste audit Completed

[Understanding your waste streams](#) and how they are generated is a vital first step in managing them effectively.

Evidence

The University reviews and frequently maps its waste stream, the University has a clear waste strategy which can be found here: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discov...> Progress against the waste targets can be found here: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...>

Could your waste become a resource? In progress

Waste from one activity might be considered a resource for another. Clothing, textiles, electricals and furniture can all be re-used. Investigate how your own waste materials might be utilised in other processes or given to re-use projects before they are recycled. There is more information and support offered via [WRAP](#).

Evidence

The Sustainability team run a go Green week which encourages students to reuse textiles and highlight ways in which to reduce waste. When offices are being refurbished, if furniture is being removed from a workspace, if it is of sound condition it will be taken to stores. When University staff require furniture they can access the furniture in stores. The University also sends furniture to charities in need, reducing the impact on landfill. There is also a sustainability hub being built in the Thomas Telford building. This will include sewing machines and is open to everyone to use for personal items. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...>

Engage for waste reduction success In progress

Helping your staff, customers or other stakeholders understand how you are trying to [reduce waste](#) will help them to help you. Encouraging re-use or sharing can create a culture of efficiency and reduce running costs. Consider who can help think about waste at the point of purchasing to reconsider use of disposables or to avoid over-ordering. Training staff on waste reduction is also a great way to get them involved.

Evidence

The University has clear posters highlighting which waste can be recycled/reused reducing waste to landfill. <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...> The University is looking at different ways in which it can account for furniture disposal costs when staff request new furniture, so that the full cost is taken into consideration, to make staff more mindful of waste.

Plan for waste reduction Completed

Understanding your waste streams will help you work out how to reduce the amount you produce. This could mean buying different products, finding ways to re-use certain items or increasing recycling rates. Having a [plan to reduce waste](#) will help you monitor progress and you can share it with others.

Evidence

The University of Worcester has a Waste Strategy plan as follows: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...> The University is dedicated to reducing waste.

→

3 Our goods (or our people) travel

Whether your people or your goods travel there are impacts on health and wellbeing, the environment and, of course, the bottom line. Select this issue to explore actions suggesting sustainable travel options for your business or to provide information about your existing activities in this area.

→

Understand the travel impacts of your business In progress

Determine what moves from A to B as part of your business operations and exactly how things are transported. This will help you develop a baseline for your sustainable travel plan or simply help you make the most obvious changes to your business practice. Even if road travel is critical to your business efficiencies are possible. [Read about efficient-driving](#) or explore [energy efficient products](#).

Evidence

The University has commissioned an external company to complete a travel plan: <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/docume...>

Explore your sustainable travel options Completed

An efficient and responsible business will be striving to reduce dependence on polluting vehicles, exploring low carbon options and sourcing goods and services locally where possible. This will have environmental benefits, promotes health and wellbeing as well as impacting on your bottom line. Start by considering if the need for travel is business critical and then explore the most sustainable options that meet your needs. Useful starting points for your planning include [Sustrans](#) and the [Energy Saving Trust](#).

Evidence

Transport related carbon emissions account for the second largest contribution to carbon at the University, consequently the University has set specific targets to reduce this impact. The Sustainable set spellbeingons>he Univon ecce

Offer sustainable travel options Completed

Whether updating your fleet, encouraging lift sharing or remote working for your staff or incentivising certain kinds of travel there are ways to make travelling sustainably part of your culture. Highlighting public transport options for your visitors, having somewhere for staff to store bikes securely or considering a government-supported [cycle-to-work scheme](#) might all be ways you can support sustainable travel. Try to extend the range of sustainable travel options you promote over time and think about linking to regional plans where possible.

Evidence

The University promotes sustainable travel for students, staff and visitors. We have car share, Woo Bike share so staff/students can have worry free cycling for a year, cycle to

2 We are keen to strengthen our commitment to carbon reduction in the light of the climate emergency

The UK Government has legislated for 'net zero' greenhouse gas emissions to help halt climate change. Leading businesses are making their own commitments to achieving net-zero and making plans to reduce their carbon emissions. This is a complex and long-term ambition requiring appropriate planning and investment.



Understand the carbon impact of your business

Complete a materiality analysis Completed

A **materiality assessment** is a systematic review of your business impacts. It is generally considered a key activity in the development of a sustainability strategy and subsequent action or implementation planning. Consider including this as part of your sustainability reporting also.

Evidence

The Sustainability Strategy Committee has completed a materiality analysis to help identify the material aspects of the University which have the greatest societal impacts, a series of workshops have been carried out to help set and identify these <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/discov...> The University has undergone a review of all activities and completed an impact analysis for each category area in 2016, In 2018 a member of the procurement team has revisited the highest risk areas and completed an updated Impact analysis in these areas, identifying opportunities. All data is available on request.

Ensure Board or senior leadership commitment to your sustainability activity

Completed

To successfully embed sustainability within an organisation requires high-level ownership and accountability for any targets that are set. Appointing a senior member of staff to be responsible for your approach to sustainability will encourage buy-in across the organisation, provide profile for related activity and ensure plans are developed and delivered in line with your existing business practices.

Evidence

Sustainability is embedded into the University of Worcesters strategic plan which originates from the Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive David Green <https://www.worcester.ac.uk/about/...> The Sustainability Strategy Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor Research The Energy Committee is chaired by the Pro Vice Chancellor of Finance & Resources

4 We are keen to communicate our environmental or sustainability commitments and performance

Having sustainability policies and plans embedded within your business provides an opportunity for you to communicate your ambition and progress. This might help you demonstrate leadership in your sector, align with your customers' values or simply enhance your position in the marketplace. Select this issue to explore ways to communicate your sustainability journey or to share your existing good practice.



5 We have opportunity to enhance or support biodiversity

Even the smallest sites can provide a home to wildlife and so taking opportunities to enhance habitats and consider the biodiversity on sites you directly manage is always worthwhile. Your operations might also impact on biodiversity more broadly through products you source and this should also be considered. Select this issue to explore actions to help you enhance biodiversity or to provide information about how you have already taken action in this area.



Volunteer to support biodiversity in your local area In progress

There may be opportunities to support local biodiversity or ecological restoration projects in the local area using staff volunteering initiatives. Consider how you can support staff to contribute to this type of project in your area.

Evidence

A key focus for the university will be developing the links with the Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership that includes local government, statutory, voluntary and public bodies committed to working together to deliver the regional BAP.

Enhance the biodiversity of the sites you manage