



Integration of SDGs in

- ☐ Institutional governance/strategic level
- ☐ SDGs in research
- ☐ SDGs in campus operations
- ☐ SDGs in curriculum development
- ☒ SDGs in student engagement activities
- ☒ SDGs into community activities
- ☐ SDGs at a whole-institution level

Focus on

- ☐ Goal 1 - No poverty
- ☐ Goal 2 - Zero hunger
- ☐ Goal 3 - Good health and wellbeing
- ☐ Goal 4 - Quality education
- ☐ Goal 5 - Gender equality
- ☐ Goal 6 - Clean water and sanitation
- ☐ Goal 7 - Affordable and clean energy
- ☐ Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth
- ☐ Goal 9 - Industry, innovation and infrastructure
- ☐ Goal 10 - Reduced inequalities
- ☒ Goal 11 - Sustainable cities and communities
- ☒ Goal 12 - Responsible consumption and production
- ☒ Goal 13 - Climate action
- ☐ Goal 14 - Life below water
- ☐ Goal 15 - Life on land
- ☐ Goal 16 - Peace, justice and strong institutions
- ☒ Goal 17 - Partnerships for the goals

Summary

Through our Sustainability Framework we commit to actively encouraging and supporting student engagement with Sustainability initiatives. Sustainability Week is the Union's annual focus week for sustainable action and eco-awareness where students can run and get involved with events both at the university and externally. Sustainability Week was developed following student requests for more events and activities linked to sustainability and a desire by Union and University staff to further incorporate sustainability into the Union. Each year, Sustainability Week aims to raise awareness of sustainable action and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, gather the thoughts and opinions of current Leeds Arts University students on sustainability, deliver information on how the University is embedding sustainability and to provide enjoyable and thought-provoking events that encourage healthy climate action and community outreach. This year, the Union reached out to more external partners than ever before; organising a week of visits, clean ups and planting sessions with Meanwood Valley Urban Farm, Kirkstall Valley Nature Reserve, Nunroyd Park and Hyde Park Source's Rosebank Community Garden. These events involved meeting and networking with on-site staff, giving students the opportunity to explore sustainability-focused careers and volunteer opportunities, and strengthening relationships with the wider climate conscious community of Leeds.

Outline the benefits of integrating this theme:

- 1.** An opportunity for student engagement with sustainability, outside of the curriculum.
- 2.** An opportunity for students to meet others with similar interests, to feel an increased sense of belonging to an institution with similar values as their own and increased health and wellbeing, with opportunities to discuss and act upon eco-anxiety and to spend time outdoors in nature.
- 3.** Increased engagement and development of relationships with external partners on sustainability.

Outline the barriers or challenges encountered in integrating this theme and how you overcame these:

- 1.** Student engagement has been challenging over the last two years, with many feeling fatigued by virtual activities but still feeling a sense of uncertainty over in-person activities. As a number of activities offered were hosted in-person and outdoors this encouraged student attendance, and has led to more activities being arranged to follow Sustainability Week under this theme.
- 2.** Students can express feelings of eco-anxiety when addressing sustainability issues. We decided to address this head on and work with our Student Conscious Creatives society to develop a social media campaign around eco-anxiety.
- 3.** Engaging students with sustainability can be challenging, with different messages and methods engaging each cohort. We engaged with the Student Conscious Creatives society throughout the planning and organisation phase to ensure that we were developing activities that appealed to the current cohort.

Conclusions and recommendations

With a call for more sessions to be booked throughout the academic year, Sustainability Week was deemed to be a success. Sustainability contributed to the 'People' branch of the University's Sustainability Framework by encouraging student action and awareness of their climate responsibilities and helping them to understand the impact of their practices by supporting sustainability initiatives within the University and the local community. The event also led to the development of new partnerships across the City linked to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Overall feedback from students was that the event helped them engage positively with sustainability and helped them worry less about the wider problem of global climate change. We would recommend that any institution looking to engage their students in sustainability engagement activities, involves students throughout the planning and organisation of any events, letting them take the lead to ensure good levels of engagement, and to include not just those currently very engaged with sustainability, in order to create a more inclusive approach.

Sustainability Week graphic

