



UNIVERSITY OF PLYMOUTH

Sustainable Earth Institute

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

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Summary

The University of Plymouth is committed to being a leader and partner in local climate action, examples include:

The Low Carbon Devon project - developed to connect university research and expertise with local enterprises to help catalyse action in the community. Devon SMEs are supported with reducing their carbon use and/or developing low carbon products, services or processes. To date the project has engaged one-to-one with over 250 enterprises, and placed 35 student/ graduate internships supporting specific climate action projects.

The Plymouth Net-Zero Partnership Action Group, initiated and led by the University of Plymouth is a forum for the City's larger carbon emitters to collaborate on taking measurable action on climate change. The group work together on the challenges and solutions of reaching net zero, including joint initiatives, sharing best practice, funding opportunities, shared procurement and collective public engagement.

Future Plymouth 2030 is an award-winning webinar series bringing together university research with industry best practice to tackle the climate emergency in the built environment. The university is a lead partner, with over 20 academics presenting on topics including low carbon technologies, energy efficient buildings, renewable energy, green walls and more. By bringing industry, researchers, students and the local community together on the topic, it has facilitated a forum to explore collaborative climate action for Plymouth.

Net-Zero Visions is a collaboration between Devon Climate Emergency and the University bringing together community groups to produce visions of their communities as carbon net-zero by 2050. The project raises awareness of the Devon Carbon Plan and engages with local communities in climate action through creative narratives.

The Sustainability Hub on campus is a collaborative space for staff, students and the local community to come together around climate action. It is regularly used by various groups including Environment Plymouth, Plymouth Tree Partnership, Plymouth Energy Community and Community Climate Conversations.

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

- 1.** All projects and initiatives require funding, with funding sources often being time limited and therefore impacting on the ability for long-term, ongoing climate action. We have overcome this through developing a portfolio of funding sources including internal, research council and economic development.
- 2.** Partnerships have enabled the successful delivery of a number of the projects outlined. However, fostering of local partnerships takes time and effort to develop trust and a considered approach. We have overcome this through regular catch ups and clear aims that are valuable to all partners.
- 3.** One challenge encountered throughout the climate action projects was the Covid pandemic. This has been overcome through regular online communication and has even led to innovation that wouldn't have taken place otherwise e.g. the Future Plymouth 2030 series

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was originally intended to be delivered in person but holding webinars has made the series more accessible.

Outline the benefits of integrating this theme:

- 1.** These climate action projects have provided opportunities for the university to forge strong partnerships with all sectors within the local community; connecting research with the wider world.
- 2.** Climate action initiatives have supported the university's systems-thinking approach towards achieving the UN SDGs by providing opportunities for collaboration across disciplines and sectors.
- 3.** Working towards this theme has led to multiple collaboration opportunities, resulting in many positive outcomes including development of new low carbon technologies, award-winning initiatives, and increased reputation for the university's sustainability research and commitment to net zero. This has been recognised by the Times Higher Education impact rankings, in which the university is ranked 15th worldwide for SDG 13: Climate Action, recognising its work to drive climate innovation, its efforts to reduce energy use on campus, and its preparations for dealing with the consequences of climate change.

Conclusions and recommendations

In 2019 the university declared a climate emergency and if it is to reach its net zero goal by 2025, and support both its local and global community in similar goals, it is clear climate action is needed urgently at all levels. This requires a systems-thinking, holistic approach working with all areas of society.

Partnerships are key; by connecting with business, industry, and community it has sparked ideas and led to collaborative projects that are helping to accelerate climate action. We have found real impact can be made by combining the university's assets in world leading sustainability research and operational best practice with the strengths of our external partners. Our climate action has been built on developing strong knowledge exchange activities and creating spaces and projects that foster collaboration.

The university's commitment to climate action has been recognised by the Times Higher Education impact rankings, in which the university is ranked 15th worldwide for SDG 13.

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Image: The Sustainability Hub on campus at the University of Plymouth provides a collaborative space for sustainability research, education and partnerships.