



Sustainability

We are committed to being a sustainable university, building on our teaching, research and operational excellence and embedding UN Sustainable Development Goals in everything that we do.

Indicator:
Times Higher Impact Rankings

We will be participating in this ranking in autumn 2022

Target:
+25% 

achieve a 25% improvement in our base position by 2027

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:

During 2022, we made great steps towards integrating the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across our whole portfolio of activities at an institutional level. We launched a new Corporate Plan which defines our ambitions for the next five years. Titled 'Ambition 2027 – creating impact together', all members of our community were given the chance to come together to imagine Cranfield in 2027. A defining theme from this feedback was that sustainability was important to all our stakeholders. That's why sustainability is integrated throughout the plan with a stated 'commitment to being a sustainable university, building on our teaching, research and operational excellence and embedding the SDGs in everything that we do'. One of the seven high-level key performance indicators for Ambition 2027 will monitor our progress on sustainability. Specifically, we aimed to enter the Times Higher Education Impact ranking for the first time in 2022 and to improve our level of integration year on year. The process of collecting data for the ranking has already raised the profile of the SDGs across the university. Integral to our corporate plan, we developed a renewed vision: 'to be valued globally for tackling the real-world issues of today to deliver a sustainable future'. We also put in place three new websites to highlight our sustainability credentials in research, teaching and campus management, supported our Environment Team to undertake new projects with staff and students and across our campus, placed emphasis on sustainability in new research, education and outreach programmes and provided financial assistance (scholarships) for students accessing our sustainability courses. We also launched an exciting new Green Investment Fund. Karen Holford (CEO and VC) said: "I'm excited by the difference that our teaching, research and global partnerships will continue to make towards a sustainable future for us all."

Outline the 3 key benefits of integrating this theme:

- 1. We raised the profile of sustainability across the whole university.*
- 2. All staff and students were encouraged and supported to get involved in sustainability projects.*
- 3. For the first time, we collected together information about our sustainable university, our education programmes and our sustainability research programmes, raising our external profile.*

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

- 1. Not everyone understood how their work fitted into sustainability. To address this, we delivered several seminars and made sustainability the focus of a University Executive Forum to encourage debate and dialogue.*
- 2. Time and resources to enable already stretched staff to focus on sustainability. We embedded all the Ambition 2027 KPIs, including sustainability in our Performance review process to encourage and support staff in achieving these aims.*
- 3. There remains a risk of overpromising and underdelivering on our strategic level sustainability goals – or "greenwashing". Dialogue across the university including through*

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our Executive Forum is helping with this, and we're developing action plans in Research, Education and Outreach/civic responsibility supported by a collaborative programme for universities run by Advance HE in collaboration with Times Higher Education.

Please outline your conclusions and recommendations to others:

There is increasing evidence that sustainability is important to staff and students within universities, and to prospective students (increasing participation in sustainability rankings; People and Planet ranking). Making a true commitment to sustainability across the whole portfolio and delivering on it has to be led from the top with full support of the university's Executive and its major stakeholders. Success also requires senior resource to help co-ordinate and raise the profile of all sustainability activity across the university. We found that entering a ranking and signing up to the SDG Accord also helped us to amalgamate a body of evidence which we could then use for many purposes.