

The SDG Accord

The University and College Sector's Collective Response to the Global Goals



SDG Accord Case Study

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:

Like many countries, the United Kingdom is currently affected by inflationary pressures which have impacted the cost of living. In response, the University of St Andrews has introduced whole-institution measures to address the cost-of-living crisis and to help our staff and students during this financially challenging time.

These include a [Cost of Living Guide](#) for students - supported by a money advice team, discretionary funds and student employment opportunities to ensure all students can fulfil their potential whilst studying at St Andrews; publication of an interactive map of communal warm spaces across the University, food discounts and breakfast clubs, and a subsidised bus travel scheme.

The University of St Andrews worked in collaboration with Stagecoach to offer a discount of 75% off weekly and monthly bus ticket bundles across St Andrews, North East Fife, and East Scotland. The scheme is open to all staff and students with the aim of easing the pressure on household budgets for those who travel for study and work. Through offering ticket bundles the scheme aims increase demand for public transport to reduce the University's carbon footprint and decrease car use and congestion in St Andrews.

QUOTE– “Nice to see cost of living and carbon footprint of Uni travel tackled together - well played [@univofstandrews](#)”

The University's Accommodation, Conferences and Events team has partnered with the Students' Association on a series of free food initiatives. These include subsidised 50% discount on meal deals, breakfast clubs during the week and breakfast Bags at the weekend, and scheduled giveaways of surplus food from University catered events, which will also help to reduce food-waste.

Outline the 3 key benefits of integrating this theme:

1. Cost of living – institution wide response
2. Fair share – designed to provide equitable support to all students and staff
3. Sustainability positive – measures also provide sustainability benefits

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

1. Broad support already was already place as part of the University's sustainability and social responsibility strategies – reducing the barriers in place
2. Quantification of costs (and benefits) was challenging on some measures, which needed to be estimated from past survey data and implemented with a level of uncertainty
3. Given broadness of some measures, there is a potential risk of misuse – the University took the pragmatic view that the benefits far outweighed these risks.

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Please outline your conclusions and recommendations to others (Max 200 words):

This theme has been impactful as it has reflected coordinated work across multiple University departments and business units, which were then able to be reviewed and communicated centrally. This approach has been made easier by the investment the University undertaken in the creation of institution-wide sustainability structures. This enables an accelerated implementation of projects which support the SDGs.

Core to making these decisions has been the adoption of a data-driven approach, at a whole-institution level. Whilst estimates (and risk) were required to be made, the University was also able to assess and understand the broader benefits of measures, and therefore make use of bigger levers to simultaneously target the cost of living and climate crisis'.

Work does not stop here however, and continual monitoring and follow up surveys are planned, and will be required to understand the longer-term impacts and ensure these measures stay relevant to provide targeted support as we move forwards on our sustainability journey.