



The SDG Accord

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

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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SDG Integration Working Group

Building on being the first University to adopt the Sustainable Development Goals as the framework for its research, in 2017, our Strategy 2030, launched in 2021, now uses the SDGs as the guiding framework for our whole institution. To successfully achieve Strategy 2030, our focus is on integrating the SDGs across all the activities of the University. We have established a SDG Integration Working Group with Executive-level leadership and membership from right across the University including research stars, learning and teaching experts, communications colleagues, sustainability leads and students. There are a number of key work streams underway, and we are heartened by the commitment of colleagues to embedding the SDGs within our University.

Strategy 2030 will act as a guide for the University through the challenges of the pandemic and post-pandemic world. Our commitment to the Common Good and through addressing the SDGs demonstrates the University's goal of influencing recovery through social innovation, locally and globally, and signals the major role that universities can play in contributing to socially just and sustainable communities now and in the future. Sustainability is a key feature of all our underpinning strategies and plans as we refresh our strategic and financial planning process to align with this. We will assess impact through annual reporting against our Strategy and KPIs to our governing body via our committee structure.

Many of our institutional/corporate KPIs relate to impact, such as widening access measures, carbon reduction etc. This means that we have some solid data reported consistently in relation to our impact. In addition, our position in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings, the only global university league table to assess social impact, is also a KPI, and this means that there will continue to be a broad focus on reporting against the SDGs at the University.

BENEFITS

1. The University is undertaking many new initiatives to ensure that we achieve our new objectives and KPIs, for instance a working group has been established to provide the forum for ensuring the SDGs are integrated across the University to guide the achievement of our Strategy 2030, and ensure responsibility for engaging students and staff (both academic and in support functions such as IT and Estates) across the University.
2. A strategic level focus on the SDGs within the University ensures that they will remain a central focus of the University until 2030, and that we will report our contribution to them annually to our governing body.
3. In order to successfully focus on our contribution to the SDGs universities need a top down, as well as a bottom up approach. The Strategy consultation identified a bottom-up desire to work towards the SDGs, and the inclusion of the SDGs within Strategy 2030 ensures there continues to be a top-down focus also.

BARRIERS

1. When it comes to the SDGs, there are different levels of knowledge, commitment and ambition across the University. Including performance against the SDGs as a KPI in our Strategy helps to address this, as it encourages focus on the SDGs, our internal working group on the SDGs is also developing an action plan to raise knowledge and measure action across the university. Our varying levels of ambition need to be balanced with achievability and adaptability.
2. Ensuring there is buy in from right across the University: A new planning process will be aligned with Strategy 2030 and will seek to enhance the integration of sustainability and the SDGs across the university.

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CONCLUSIONS

Inclusion of all staff is essential, and institutions need to undertake both a top-down and a bottom-up approach. There needs to be buy-in and support at a senior level, but colleagues 'on the ground' also need to be focused on the sustainable approach to their work in order to succeed.

The distinctiveness of the GCU Strategy, is the long-standing focus on the University's mission 'For the Common Good', and input our University Community had on the development of the Strategy. Including the SDGs within a Strategy is a key step in enabling SDGs to be central to a university's approach to all its activities, including teaching, research, outreach and community engagement.

A successful approach to the SDGs is a long-term project, and needs a focus on where the institution wants to be by 2030, the end date of the SDGs.

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