

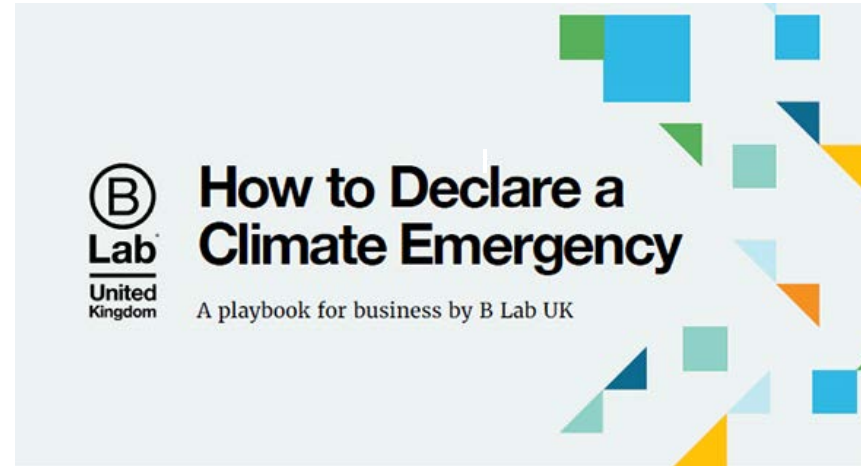
A photograph of a modern university building with a glass facade and orange pillars. The building is multi-storied and has a contemporary design. The foreground shows a paved area with several people walking. The background shows a clear blue sky and some trees.

Adapting universities and colleges to a changing climate

Making the case and taking action

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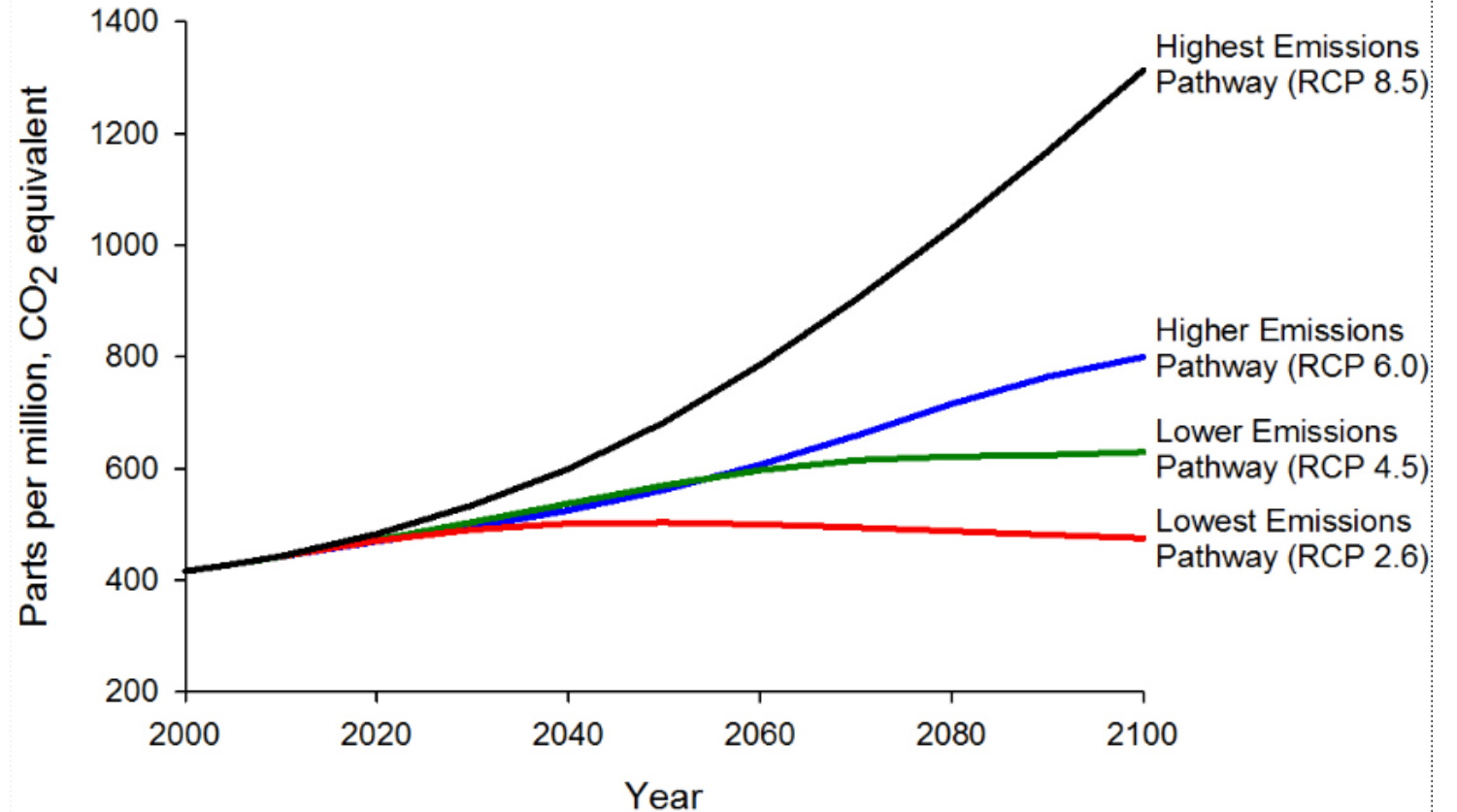
A growing emergency!



Mitigation



Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow or stop global climate change (e.g. *shifting to public transport, renewable energy*)



~40 year lag time between emissions and warming

Even if global efforts accelerate, **some climate change is locked in**

Mitigation

vs

Adaptation



Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to slow or stop global climate change (e.g. *shifting to public transport, renewable energy*)



Adjusting to the impacts of climate change to reduce the negative consequences and exploit opportunities (e.g. *strengthening protective infrastructure, checking on neighbours during a heatwave*)

Who?

Sustainability Managers

Business Continuity Managers

Estates Managers

A tool for:

- *Understanding key climate adaptation principles*
- *Effectively influencing senior decision-makers*
- *Understanding your organisation's level of maturity*

Climate readiness self-assessment

Each organisation will be at a different place in the process of adapting to climate change. The statements below can be used to determine where your organisation currently sits in this process.



Milestone

01.

Establish the case for action

Milestone

02.

Identify risks & opportunities

Milestone

03.

Execute adaptation strategies

The 'Elevator Pitch'

A quick way to communicate the need for investment in climate adaptation to decision-makers

“ The science is settled. Our climate is changing, and no matter how quickly we reduce greenhouse gas emissions, some major effects are locked in. This will influence nearly every area of our institution, from delivery of teaching, research and examinations, to student recruitment, supply chains, insurance premiums and the profitability of investments. The results will not always be catastrophic, but unless we systematically assess the risks we are driving blind.

Taking action doesn't necessarily mean 'reinventing the wheel' or spending significant amounts of money. Universities and colleges already have well-established processes for managing risk – factoring in climate change simply means applying a different lens and set of expertise.

How will our key assets and business processes stand up to a future of more extreme weather? New investments in infrastructure may be around for decades to come – how future-proof will they be? Now is the most cost-effective time to ask these questions and ensure our institution is climate-ready. ”

The map below shows headline level climate projections by devolved area of the UK and the Republic of Ireland. 2070s time period, high emissions scenario (RCP8.5).



Key risks to the sector

Under a changing climate, the UK will see weather that tends towards the extremes: heavy rainfall, heatwaves, drought, stronger storms. Although the more extreme weather will generate entirely new challenges for the sector, most critical is how climate change will be a 'risk multiplier', exacerbating risks that are already of high priority, such as reputation and financial sustainability.

Infrastructure and business continuity

Health, safety and wellbeing

Reputation and student recruitment

Political landscape

Milestone

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Skills

Enterprise risk management

Enterprise risk relates specifically to risks to your university's stated objectives. Familiarity with undertaking risk assessments is a critical skill to have in your working group.

It is often a good idea to integrate your approach for a climate-focused study with your organisation's existing enterprise risk management guidance (e.g. using similar criteria to assess likelihood and severity).

Ability to interpret weather and climate data

An increasing amount of data is available to help us understand future climate; however, this can be daunting. Some familiarity working with trend and projection data would be ideal, but resources are available to bring you up to speed (see page 16).

Strategic planning

Ideally your working team will include someone who is involved with your institution's strategic planning process and has strong links with senior leadership. This increases the likelihood that recommendations can be integrated into key plans and policies going forward.

Communication and awareness raising

Your institution's efforts around climate resilience will interest different stakeholders for different reasons. An important skill is clear and targeted communication across all levels, from officer level

Institutional knowledge

Critical functions and key existing risks

What are your institution's key products, services, systems and activities that could be affected by changes in climate?

What risks are already important to senior leadership?

Effects of past extreme weather events

How have past events affected your institution's operations? What have been the financial costs or other impacts?

Incident registers, media reports and memories of long-standing staff can all be key sources of insight.

Key institutional stakeholders

Who relies on your organisation and vice-versa?

How could a changing climate affect what your stakeholders need from your institution, or what you can provide?

Existing policies, plans and regulations

What relevant internal policies and plans could benefit from consideration of climate change?

Are there any specific policy or regulatory considerations within your local government area or devolved area of the UK (e.g. Climate Change (Scotland) Act; Future Generations Act (Wales)?

Useful tools

A full sector-specific approach to considering the business impacts of climate change is summarised on page 16. However, there are many other tools that may also be of use to your organisation.

Climate Information and Learning

UK Climate Projections 2018 (UKCP18)

A world-leading platform providing the most-up-to-date climate observations and projections data for the UK. Can seem daunting at first, but taking some time to explore the interface can provide useful insights.

Red Cross Climate Centre Games

The RCCC help organisations and governments better understand climate change impacts and the benefits of adaptation by seeing these actions play out in real-time through 'climate games.' This tool could be useful when trying to engage and communicate with broader FHE officials about the importance of institutional action on climate change.

Adaptation Support Tools

UKCIP (Climate Adaptation Wizard)

This tool walks you through the adaptation process, assessing your organisation's vulnerability to climate change, helping you make the case for adaptation to your organisation, and aiding you in developing a climate change adaptation strategy.

BACLIAT (Business Areas Climate Impacts Assessment)

This assessment can be used together with the UKCIP Climate Adaptation Wizard or in isolation. This is a workshop-based vulnerability assessment tool based around areas of business operations.

LCLIP (Local Climate Impacts Profile)

This tool can be used as part of the UKCIP Climate Adaptation Wizard or on its own. Drawing on sources such as past media reports, a Local Climate Impacts Profile helps organisations assess their exposure to weather.

Adaptation Scotland

Aimed specifically at a Scottish audience but offering a growing catalogue of resources with applicability across the UK and Ireland to support adaptation progress.

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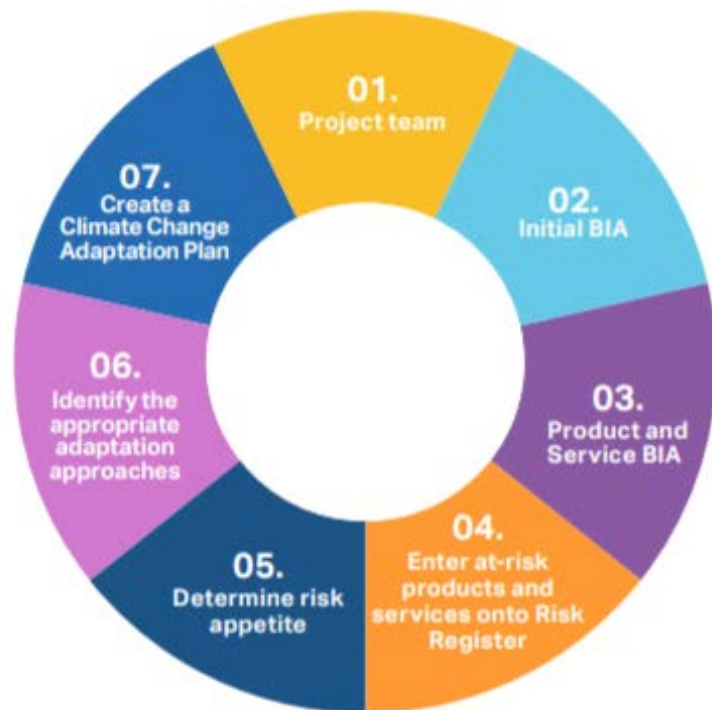
03.

Execute adaptation
strategies

Business Impact Assessment for Universities and Colleges

The table below outlines the many free tools that universities and colleges can use to support their efforts to improve climate resilience.

Using your existing organisational resilience framework



Adaptation approaches

This section provides examples of actions FHE organisations can take to increase their resilience to climate change. The list is not exhaustive, nor will all approaches be relevant to every institution.

Adapting to climate change means taking targeted actions to address known and potential risks. This can occur in three ways:

- **Reducing exposure:** This means ensuring that key activities, resources and assets (economic, social, cultural and environmental) are located out of harm's way. This can mean redirecting a hazard (e.g. by constructing a sea wall) or moving things of value to another location (e.g. relocating computer servers or document archives from a flood-exposed basement).
- **Reducing sensitivity:** Sometimes it is not practical to eliminate exposure to a risk. In such cases, we can take measures to reduce susceptibility to harm. This can be as simple as encouraging staff and students to drink more water during a heatwave.
- **Increasing adaptive capacity:** This simply means increasing the ability to cope with and adjust to change. We can do this by ensuring we have a Plan B, such as backup power should a storm or heatwave result in an electricity outage.

For more
specifics on
how....



Using an existing organisational resilience framework to develop a **Climate Change Adaptation Plan**

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