

Environmental Sustainability Action Statement

May 2025



At Queen Mary University of London, our commitment to sustainability is grounded in our values of inclusivity, integrity, and global engagement.

Through our world-leading research, education, and partnerships – both local and international – we are actively part of the movement to make the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals a reality, contributing to a more sustainable, equitable future.

This Sustainability Action Statement outlines our priorities and approach as we embed sustainability more deeply into everything we do – from the way we operate as an institution, to the way we teach, learn, and conduct research. It is a step forward in our ongoing journey to create lasting impact and deliver on our Strategy 2030 ambitions.

Professor Colin Bailey
President and Principal Queen Mary University London

Climate emergency goals

The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Sixth Assessment Report, *Climate Change 2022: Mitigation of Climate Change*, stresses the need for immediate action if we are to limit warming to 1.5°C or even 2.0°C. Queen Mary is committed to supporting the Government's ambition of reaching net zero by 2050, both by mitigating the net-negative impacts of our operations and accelerating the net-positive contributions we make through education, research and engagement.

Our Action Statement

Queen Mary recognises its responsibility to drive action in sustainability. We also recognise the unique position we are in to contribute to solutions to support climate change mitigation and adaptation. Acknowledging the significant impacts our operations have on the environment and through our ISO 14001:2015 certified Environmental Management System (EMS), we are working to implement measures and controls to mitigate any potential negative environmental impacts.

As such, we are pleased to publish our revised Action Statement, setting clear objectives for the next three academic years (2025/26–2027/28), embedding them into the wider Strategy 2030.

The Sustainability Action Statement aligns carbon and environmental management with wider strategic work, such as our CIVIC objectives, championing Queen Mary's foundational ambition of being the most inclusive research-intensive university in the world. We cannot achieve this ambition without mission-aligned action to mitigate the Climate Emergency.

Responsibility

Sustainability Committee

Queen Mary's Sustainability Committee (SC) provides leadership, coordination and guidance in the development and management of the university's sustainability risks, responsibilities, opportunities and Sustainability Action Plans to deliver continual improvement of environmental performance across all areas of Queen Mary. The SC is a senior leadership governance group with members representing our three core pillars: Research and Innovation, Education and Operations.

Among other things, the SC is responsible for coordinating the delivery of our environmental sustainability commitments and providing assurance of our environmental sustainability performance. It is the responsibility of all members of the Sustainability Committee and wider Queen Mary employees to ensure the aims and commitments outlined in this statement are upheld. This includes a clear annual review process, ensuring our targets remain ambitious, relevant and connected to key strategic work across the university.

Workstreams

Queen Mary's Workstreams provide leadership, coordination and guidance in the development of the individual strategic pillars for sustainability. Headed by a senior workstream lead, each group has representation from across the university, reporting directly to the sustainability committee and taking ownership of their areas to deliver the action statement objectives and targets, ensuring accountability and transparency.



United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

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un.org/sustainabledevelopment

Objectives and targets

Headline Objectives	Targets	SDGs supported	Ownership
Research and Innovation			
Promote adoption of sustainable research practices when undertaking research.	Report annually on our progress and priority actions in line with our commitment to the Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice, report due by the end of 2025.	9 12 13	Joint Research Management Office, Procurement, Sustainability Team, Office of the Principal
	Continue to develop and improve guidance and support for researchers to help them make project-based decisions about how to reduce the environmental impact of their work and integrate sustainability considerations into external funding applications.	9 12 13	Sustainability Team, Lab Managers, Joint Research Management Office, Business Development
	Support and encourage laboratories to achieve recognised sustainability accreditations (e.g. LEAF Silver, My Green Lab) by 1 January 2026.	9 12 13	Lab Managers, Sustainability Team
	Collaborate with other universities on a Wellcome Trust funded project to pilot a tool for capturing data on carbon emissions associated with our research grants, initial project phases planned for 2025/26.	9 12 13	Joint Research Management Office, Sustainability Team
Promote, map and celebrate research that drives sustainability goals at Queen Mary University London.	Facilitate a scoping exercise to identify how to tag sustainability related research at Queen Mary, in line with the SDGs, by the end of the 2025/26 financial year. Assess how this could be embedded into practice, associated costs, and make a recommendation to the Sustainability Committee.	9 12 13 17	Research Services, Library
	Continue to share good practice and examples of how Queen Mary's research is contributing to sustainability goals through institutional communications (i.e. Research Highways) and impact case studies.	9 12 13 17	Research Services, Queen Mary Innovation, Research Managers, Communications Team
	Promote and encourage participation in projects that can help deliver the sustainable development goals, including opportunities for collaboration and partnership.	9 12 13 17	Research Services, Queen Mary Innovation, Research Managers
Education			
As a graduate attribute, we will embed sustainability into the formal curriculum, delivered as part of the education student experience enabling plan and principles of program design.	The Sustainability Curriculum Action Network (SCAN) is formally recognised as part of the sustainability governance structure by the end of 2024/25 financial year, meeting quarterly starting in the 2025/26 financial year.	4 13	Careers and Enterprise, Queen Mary Academy
	Develop formal guidance, supporting staff to embed sustainability into their curriculum by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, in context of key documents such as the Employability Framework.	4	Human Resources, Sustainability Team, Careers and Enterprise, Office of the Principal
	Re-start Queen Mary as a Living Lab within the curriculum, equipping students to deliver projects supporting local challenges by end of the 2026/27 financial year.	4 11 13	Careers and Enterprise
Ensure students and staff have access to training and opportunities to learn about sustainability.	Co-create a university-wide sustainability short-course available to both students and staff, as a HEAR approved activity by the beginning of the 2026/27 financial year.	4 11	Queen Mary Academy, Office of the Principal
	Following the delivery of IEMA's Introduction to Net Zero course in the first half of 2025, assess the possibility of expanding CPD opportunities for staff by adding IEMA's Environmental Sustainability Skills for the Workforce and Environmental Sustainability Skills for Managers courses, based on demand and finances.	4	Sustainability Team

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Continue to enhance the employability of our students in the environmental sustainability sector.	Work with the employability team to strengthen sector relationships by the end of the 2026/27 financial year.	8	Office of the Principal, Careers and Enterprise
	Continue to collaborate with the Students' Union and Queen Mary Enterprise team to deliver opportunities upskilling students (e.g., Skills Award Sessions, QMIncubator) with an annual update on progress	8 13	Office of the Principal, Careers and Enterprise, Queen Mary Students' Union
Operations			
Energy and carbon emissions			
Support the government to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050.	Develop a carbon management plan, published on the website by the end of the 2026 calendar year.	7 9 11 12 13	Sustainability Team, Engineering and Estates, Campus Services, Finance
	Develop a Heat Decarbonisation Plan for Queen Mary's managed estate by the end of the 2026/27 financial year.	7 9 11 13	Engineering and Estates, Sustainability Team
	Reduce consumption of energy by 20% by the end of the 2027/28 financial year against 2023/24, looking to increase energy supply from renewable sources (if PPAs are available).	7 11 12 13	Engineering and Estates, Sustainability Team
	Reduce scope 1 and 2 emissions (tCO2e) by 18% by the end of the 2027/28 financial year against 2023/24 emissions.	7 9 11 12 13	Engineering and Estates, Sustainability Team
	Improve the capture, monitoring and reporting of scope 3 emissions, establishing baselines by the beginning of the 2027/28 financial year and consider appropriate approach to management and mitigation.	13	Sustainability Committee, Sustainability Team
Waste and resource management			
Reduce overall annual volume of waste generated, maximise recycling rates and promote a circular economy approach.	Develop a Waste and Resource Strategy and Action plan, published on the website by the end of 2025/2026 financial year.	12 13	Sustainability Team, Campus Services
	Reduce operational waste generated annually to achieve an overall reduction of 10% by the end of the 2027/28 financial year against 2023/24 figures, with associated reduction in scope 3 carbon emissions.	12 13	Campus Services, Sustainability Team, Commercial Services
	Achieve a minimum annual recycling rate above 50% by the end of the 2026/27 financial year for non-hazardous waste, with zero non-hazardous waste sent to landfill.	12	Campus Services, Sustainability Team
Sustainable food and catering			
Increase the sustainability of food and surrounding practices.	Increase the sustainability of our hospitality services, including the continued offer of vegan and vegetarian options, and look to introduce carbon labelling of food.	3 12 13	Commercial Services
	Roll-out ReUser cups across all UK-based campuses, including containers by the end of the 2027/28 financial year.	3 12 13	Commercial Services, Sustainability Team
	Implement the Food Made Good action plan and achieve 2* rating by the end of the 2027/28 financial year.	3 11 12 13	Commercial Services, Sustainability Team

Headline Objectives	Targets	SDGs supported	Ownership
Ethical investment			
Continue to review the university investment portfolio and banking to align with ethical investment.	Review and update the Investment Policy Statement by June 2025.	11 13 16	Chief Financial Officer
Water			
Improve infrastructure, monitoring and awareness of water supply use to deliver an overall reduction and improve efficiency.	Improve monitoring of water consumption through Automatic Meter Readers on water meters and by getting water surveys completed. Establish a water consumption baseline, with a specific reduction target to be agreed with SET by the end of the 2025/26 financial year and included in the Action Plan.	6 12 13	Estates and Facilities, Sustainability Team
Biodiversity			
Maintain, enhance and promote green spaces across campus.	Develop and start implementing a Biodiversity action plan across our UK campuses, informed by campus biodiversity assessment by the end of the 2027/28 financial year and drawing on our academic expertise in this area.	11 13 15	Campus Services, Sustainability Team, Capital Projects
Encourage more interaction with biodiversity in and around UK campuses (ongoing).	Continue to support and engage with the wider internal and external community on biodiversity each term, supporting our Civic University Agreement objectives.	15	Office of the Principal, Sustainability Team
Travel and transport			
Increase awareness and adoption of sustainable travel options amongst students and staff.	Develop a proposed Sustainable Travel Policy, with input from the Research Innovation Board, and agreed by the Sustainability Committee and SET by the end of the 2026 calendar year.	11 13	Office of the Principal, Sustainability Team
Construction and refurbishment			
Embed sustainable practice into all construction and refurbishment projects from conception to completion.	Aim to achieve BREEAM “Excellent” rating for new buildings and BREEAM “Good” and/or SKA Silver rating for refurbishment projects year on year.	9 11	Capital Projects
	Capture and record accurate waste data related to all construction and refurbishment projects.	9 11	Capital Projects, Sustainability Team
	Develop a Sustainability Design Guide, published on the website by the end of the 2026/27 financial year.	9 11	Capital Projects, Sustainability Team
Sustainable procurement			
Develop sustainable procurement guidance for staff	Create sustainable procurement guidelines across categories for staff, by the end of the 2026 calendar year.	12	Procurement, Sustainability Team
Improve the sustainability of our supply chain, contributing to carbon reduction targets.	Embed and implement the Social Value TOMS framework into tender processes and establish a target for the 2025/26 financial year once we have baseline data for 2024/25 .	8 10 12	Procurement, Sustainability Team
	Review and identify top suppliers by spend and environmental impact. Engage with the top 10 key suppliers by 2027/28 to improve carbon footprint data quality and reduce the carbon intensity of purchased products, and ensure they have carbon reduction plans.	12 13	Procurement, Sustainability Team
Improve the sustainability of lab and medical equipment procurement.	Encourage researchers to consider the environmental sustainability of project-related purchases.	12	Principal Investigators and Research Managers, Procurement, Sustainability Team
	Investigate feasibility of lab and medical resource sharing and evaluate financial feasibility of single-use plastic alternatives.	12	Faculty Directors of Operations, Procurement

Headline Objectives	Targets	SDGs supported	Ownership
Governance			
Have a renewed, approved and functional governance structure for sustainability at Queen Mary.	Active Sustainability Committee meeting quarterly from 2025, with supporting governance structure.		Sustainability Committee, Office of the Principal
Integrate the principles of sustainable development into all aspects of our operations.	Maintain presence of sustainability on the Queen Mary University strategic risk register, reviewed bi-annually at the beginning of the financial and calendar years.	13	Sustainability Committee, Office of the Principal
	Maintain a certified ISO 14001:2015 Environmental Management System (EMS), with continual improvement of the university's environmental performance	11 13	Sustainability Team
CIVIC Community Involvement and Engagement			
Finalise the engagement plan.	Finalise an engagement plan identifying key objectives and engagement areas across all pillars by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, with workstream leads.	13	Sustainability Team, External Relations, Workstream Leads
Collaborate with key stakeholders on sustainability plans and targets across East London.	identifying areas for action and collaboration, including through the East London Civic Action Network. Build connections and engage with leaders from local councils and community groups (e.g., Tower Hamlets Greening Growing and Biodiversity Subgroup) at least once per term.	11 13 17	Sustainability Team, Office of the Principal, External Relations
Represent Queen Mary on East London sustainability and Climate emergency groups/ strategies/boards.	Engage with sector-wide networks (EAUC, LH, Tower Hamlets Climate Partnership, etc.) at least once a term.	11 13 17	Sustainability Team, Workstream Leads
Establish baseline student understanding of sustainability.	Take part in the annual SOS Sustainability Skills survey and other relevant surveys (e.g. making used of those from EAUC). Identify other mechanisms through which to gather insights from the [student] Queen Mary community.	13	Queen Mary Students’ Union, External Relations, Sustainability Team, Student Experience
Increased awareness and visibility of Queen Mary’s Sustainability activities for both internal and external audiences, building on reputation.	Develop a sustainability communications strategy and calendar of key milestones by the end of 2025,	13	Office of the Principal, Sustainability Team, External Relations
	Improve position in key sustainability rankings (such as QS) year on year through commitment to sustainability.	13	Sustainability Team, Office of the Principal, External Relations
	Deliver a COP report including both an external facing comms piece and internal learnings/actions by the end of January each year.	13	Office of the Principal, External Relations, International Office, Research and Innovation
	Align key Queen Mary Activity across the three core strategic pillars with the SDGs, to be reviewed annually.	13 17	Office of the Principal, Sustainability Team, Workstream Leads
	Deliver key behaviour change campaigns and initiatives annually, including, but not limited to Climate Action Week.	13	Sustainability Team, External Relations, Office of the Principal, Workstream Leads
Increased offering of sustainability engagement and learning opportunities for students and staff.	Update the Staff Induction Checklist to include key sustainability documentation and information for staff. This will be reviewed by the end of the 2025/26 financial year, and a decision will be made by the VP of Policy and Strategic Partnerships on introducing mandatory sustainability training for all staff.	13	Human Resources, Sustainability Team
	Continue to work with the Students’ Union and local organisations to deliver sustainability volunteering activities annually.	13	Office of the Principal, Sustainability Team, Queen Mary Students’ Union

The climate emergency requires a diversity of ideas, perspectives, and approaches if we are to overcome it.

No single institution, company, or government holds all the answers. Lasting solutions will only come through collaboration, innovation, and shared commitment, using the SDGs as a shared blueprint for action.

At Queen Mary, we remain committed to nurturing the ideas, technologies and leadership that the future demands. Our community of students, staff, and partners from all walks of life, are at the heart of this – bringing together knowledge, creativity and lived experience that will help shape a more sustainable and just future.

