

Teaching and learning for sustainability

Ensuring the sustainability of our planet is the biggest challenge facing humanity in the 21st Century. Sustainability cuts across all subject areas, and requires a truly interdisciplinary approach to teaching and learning.

Our commitment

Launched in 2021, [Sustainable Futures](#) brings together the unique depth and breadth of internationally leading research at The University of Manchester and builds on the University's track record of successful interdisciplinary working, to produce integrated and truly sustainable solutions to urgent environmental challenges.

The University Academic Lead for Sustainability Teaching and Learning, Dr. Jennifer O'Brien has been appointed to lead 'Informed and Inspired Futures' with the aim to underpin all of our research, teaching and operations with Education for Sustainable Development working across the University and beyond. We will empower and equip all of our staff, students and our partners in communities, industry, businesses, schools, councils, to name but a few, to affect change for a better world. Through Sustainable Futures we are mapping our teaching and research in and around sustainability across all of our Faculties to identify gaps, synergies and opportunities. We are identifying and sharing training and good practice opportunities for colleagues and partners.

Through our teaching, volunteering, programmes and projects, we are providing our students with the opportunities to gain understanding and experience to tread lightly on our planet. We will equip students with knowledge and experience to positively contribute to our world as professionals, leaders and citizens of tomorrow. We will showcase the positive impact of our research that is addressing some of the world's most fundamental sustainability challenges.

Our commitment to education for sustainability is outlined in

- [Our Future](#)
- [Our Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#)
- [Our Social responsibility and civic engagement plan](#)

We also have a [dedicated academic lead](#) in this area, Jennifer O'Brien.

Review

We review and report on the progress of the integration of education for sustainability through the [Environmental Sustainability Leadership Group](#).

Supporting academic staff

Support for academic staff is provided through

- Our New Academics Programme includes a section on teaching for sustainability.
- [Seminars](#) which can be registered for [here](#).
- [Guidance](#).
- [Case studies](#).
- [Funding available](#) for embedding sustainability into teaching.
- Highlighting School, Faculty and Research team projects for sustainable development through [Sustainable Futures](#).
- Recognition through the [Making a Difference Awards](#) outstanding teaching innovation in social responsibility category.
- Staff can share progress they are making in this with the rest of the University community through our flagship [50,000 Actions programme](#).

Trade Union representatives

John Vass De Zomba is a trade union representative for the University and College Union (UCU). He sits on our Carbon Action Group as well as our Environmental Sustainability Committee where education for sustainability is regularly discussed.

Lydia Meryll is a trade union representative for the University and College Union (UCU). She is an active member of the Climate Network where education for sustainability is regularly discussed.

Opportunities for students

We provide applied project opportunities to our students through our [Living Lab](#). Examples of these can be seen in our [featured reports](#).

Students from all degree disciplines can also take credit-bearing units through our [University College for Interdisciplinary Learning](#) (UCIL). UCIL introduces students to new topics and ways of thinking, tackling the key questions facing society in the 21st century. Current courses related to sustainability include

- Climate change and society.
- Creating a Sustainable World: 21st Century Challenges and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Creating a Sustainable World: Applying the Sustainable Development Goals.
- Crisis of Nature: Issues in Environmental History.

As part of the [Ethical Grand Challenges Programme](#), all students are invited to take part in our award winning [Sustainability Challenge](#). Students learn more about sustainability and how to make the most of opportunities while at Manchester to help build a more sustainable future.

Through our [Stelify Award](#), students have the chance to take on a sustainability leadership role by becoming a [Sustainability Champion](#).

We have a number of [massive online open courses](#) (MOOCs) relating to sustainability that anyone can take for free, wherever they are in the world. All that is needed is an internet connection:

- Managing Responsibly: Practicing Sustainability, Responsibility and Ethics.
- Our Earth: Its Climate, History and Processes.
- Protecting the World: Introducing Corrosion Science and Engineering.
- Water Supply and Sanitation Policy in Developing Countries.

Fieldwork

Fieldwork is integral to many disciplines across the University. We are working with our students and colleagues to ensure that we undertake fieldwork in the most sustainable way. Geography within the School of Environment, Education and Development, for example, co-constructed the [Royal Geographical Society Principles for Undergraduate Fieldcourses](#) to support departments to develop their fieldwork programmes in ways which maximise the benefits of field education and minimise the disbenefits. This includes questions of inclusivity and accessibility for all and ethics as well as carbon and environmental impacts. A number of working groups across the University are considering their fieldwork. If you would like to discuss your fieldwork or join this work please contact Jen on Jennifer.obrien@manchester.ac.uk

Mapping and audit

We audit and highlight research and teaching related to the [UN's Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Comprehensive research has been concluded looking at all of our research and teaching, mapping and aligning them to the SDGs. A [report](#) on these findings can be found on [our social responsibility website](#).

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