

MANCHESTER
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The University of Manchester



IT Environmental Sustainability Plan

2026 - 2028



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Introduction

The University of Manchester is a world leading research and teaching institution whose performance is underpinned by a wide range of rapidly evolving IT services. The Directorate of IT Services' purpose is to provide innovative digital leadership, IT services, and to create collaborative partnerships in order to enable the advancement of education, knowledge and wisdom for the good of society.

Societies and ecosystems around the world are facing increasing threats from climate change and biodiversity loss. IT Services, like all parts of the organisation, has its part to play in minimising the negative environmental impacts of the University. As advanced technologies, including AI, become increasingly central to achieving the University's research, teaching and learning goals, it is up to us to ensure that their environmental impacts are minimised and that our service users can make informed, balanced choices.



John Vass-de-Zomba
IT Environmental Sustainability Manager



Environmental Sustainability

Environmental Sustainability is the behaviours and actions which allow us to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Directorate of IT Services meets the present's ever growing technological needs by providing cutting edge IT solutions which are increasingly complex and power-hungry.

Our Environmental Sustainability Plan is the framework we use to procure, implement and operate IT responsibly and in so doing reduce greenhouse gas emissions from our supply chain and operations. This ensures we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Our Environmental Sustainability Vision

To be recognised nationally as an environmental sustainability leader amongst university IT services and to demonstrably play our part in fulfilling the University's sustainability ambitions.

The University's Sustainability Ambitions

In 2019, The University of Manchester declared a climate emergency. Following on from this, the University committed to zero direct carbon emissions (Scopes 1 and 2) by 2038 and has aligned to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The University has also committed to reducing its indirect Scope 3 emissions to net zero by 2050 and is taking major steps to achieve that. This is supported by work to divert 100% of our waste from landfill.

The ITS Environmental Sustainability Plan has been put in place to ensure the Directorate plays its part in achieving these goals. Our plan is informed by the University's Environmental Sustainability Plan, supports the University's commitments, and aligns with the SDGs.



Our Environmental Sustainability Mission

Our ambition is to embed environmental sustainability into our culture, capabilities and operations in order to improve the environmental sustainability of the technologies and services we provide, whilst empowering our staff, students, and partners to use IT sustainably.

Environmental Sustainability is a complex, multilayered topic. We will actively embrace internal and external collaborations to build knowledge, develop innovative digital approaches, strengthen capabilities, and reduce energy usage and greenhouse gas emissions.

Environmental Sustainability in IT Services

This strategy is built around **five pillars** wherein the Directorate of IT Services will focus our contributions to improving the environmental sustainability of the University. We are responding to From Manchester for the world's bold statement that "Climate change will require us to rethink our operations and research" and in doing so, we are answering the call to focus our energy on "driving climate resilience and the transition to net zero". Each of our five pillars is linked to the SDGs and these University-level ambitions.

The five pillars identified through a detailed consultation process with IT Services staff and stakeholders are:



Sustainability Governance

We embed sustainability into our processes and controls to improve the environmental sustainability of our operations.



Sustainability Culture

We live and demonstrate environmental sustainability through our practices and behaviors.



Sustainability Capabilities

We provide our people and service users with the skills and knowledge to empower them to make sustainable choices.



Energy Sustainability

We use energy efficiently and prioritise the use of renewables to reduce both usage and greenhouse gas emissions.



Sustainable Sourcing

We consider the life cycle impacts of goods and services when making procurement choices.

Sustainability Governance

By embedding strong Sustainability Governance best practices, we will support the University's goals to:

- Achieve Net Zero for all emissions by 2050
- Embed sustainable, responsible approaches in all our practices and key activities
- Be an international exemplar for pioneering civic collaboration to deliver on environmental benefits for all

Objective

We embed environmental sustainability into our processes and controls to improve the environmental sustainability of our operations.

Link to SDGs



How we will embed environmental sustainability into our processes and controls:

- Set Environmental Sustainability KPIs with senior leadership team and track in the ITS SLT meetings from January 2026.
- Launch an Environmental Sustainability working group within the governance framework in Q3 2026.
- Include checks for Environmental Sustainability in Research Infrastructure Strategy Group Terms of Reference in Q1 2026.
- Introduce a Sustainability Impact Assessment that incorporates life cycle impacts and circularity into IT Projects by the end of 2027.
- Create an Environmental Sustainability reporting system and dashboard that shows energy consumption and computer utilisation in 2027.

Sustainability Culture

By building our Sustainability Culture, we will support the University's goals to:

- Align with the United Nations SDGs
- Embed sustainable decision making into operations
- Foster engagement with environmental sustainability
- Support staff in taking sustainability action with confidence

Objective

We live and demonstrate environmental sustainability through our practices and behaviours.

Link to SDGs



How we will live and demonstrate environmental sustainability through our best practices and behaviours:

- Conduct stakeholder mapping to identify opportunities to embed Environmental Sustainability into ITS culture in 2026.
- Develop an Environmental Sustainability communications action plan in Q1 2026.
- Incorporate an Environmental Sustainability section into the Research IT newsletter and RLP communications channels and IT Update in Q1 2026.
- Identify opportunities to create recognition for Environmental Sustainability wins within ITS and the Research community in 2026.

Sustainability Capabilities

By building our Sustainability Capabilities, we will advance the University's goals to:

- Build sustainability and climate risk and resilience into training for all staff by August 2026
- Provide staff with the skills and techniques to embed environmental sustainability into everyday activities
- Support leaders and managers, enabling them to have the skills and confidence to take sustainable action
- Include a commitment to net zero in all job descriptions

Objective

We provide our people and service users with the skills and knowledge to empower them to make sustainable choices.

Link to SDGs



How we will develop the Directorate of IT Services' sustainability capabilities:

- Deliver introductory environmental sustainability training, tailored to the needs of the IT sector, to all staff in 2026/7.
- Create an ITS ES rating systems for commonly used End User Devices that can be used to easily compare and communicate lifecycle impacts in 2026.
- Create or adopt an ES capability framework to identify gaps and develop an implementation plan in 2027.
- Produce and implement a set of off-the-shelf ES requirements for incorporation into all future solution designs in 2026.
- Add a "Desirable" line to all future ITS job descriptions regarding environmental sustainability awareness as applied to the role in 2026.

Energy Sustainability

By improving Energy Sustainability, we will support the University's goals to:

- Achieve zero carbon operating emissions by 2038
- Reduce Scope 1 and 2 emissions by 13% year on year to remain within our carbon budget

Objective

We use energy efficiently and prioritise the use of renewables to reduce both usage and greenhouse gas emissions.

Link to SDGs



How we will make the consumption of energy by the Directorate of IT Services more sustainable:

- Create a baseline energy consumption report; develop an action plan to reduce consumption & improve efficiency in 2026.
- Create a baseline utilisation report and develop an improvement plan in 2026.
- Incorporate energy efficiency and optimisation of utilisation into design principles that are owned by Enterprise and Business Architecture in 2026.
- Implement annual monitoring of energy consumption and utilisation and set KPIs from 2025/6 onwards.

Sustainable Sourcing

By moving to Sustainable Sourcing, we will support the University's goals to:

- Measure Scope 3 emissions from procurement and develop reduction targets
- Include carbon emissions and life cycle costings in equipment purchases above £100,000
- Develop and deliver a category demand management engagement programme in line with carbon commitments
- Increase positive action to reduce waste at all stages of procurement, use and disposal

Objective

We consider the life cycle impacts of goods and services when making procurement choices.

Link to SDGs



How we will make the use of equipment by the Directorate of IT Services more sustainable:

- Execute plan to increase device return rates of all IT equipment purchased and provisioned by ITS.
- Identify methods, frameworks and 3rd party audits to incorporate lifecycle emissions and circularity into sourcing decision making processes in 2026.
- Create an implementation plan to measure and reduce Scope 3 emissions in 2027.
- Create a system to provide a second life for all eligible IT equipment in 2027.
- Incorporate environmental sustainability questions into all full procurement exercises, with a defined minimum percentage weighting in 2028.

Our Partners

Environmental Sustainability is a complex, multilayered topic. We partner with colleagues across the University to progress towards our common goals.

The Directorate of IT Services works closely with the Directorate of Estates and Facilities to reduce energy consumption. We have partnered with Estates and Facilities to embed environmental sustainability and carbon commitments into the Integrated Infrastructure Plan.

Sustainable procurement is essential to achieving Sustainable Sourcing. We will therefore work closely with colleagues in the University's procurement team to develop and enhance our capabilities and governance structures.

By providing information on the environmental impacts of the IT services available to colleagues, we empower them to make sustainable choices. We work closely with researchers across the University to improve our understanding of information technology's environmental impacts. By partnering with our research community, we will support researchers in maximising their impact.



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To find out more about The University of Manchester's Environmental Sustainability Plan and its commitments, visit: www.manchester.ac.uk/sustainability

To explore our Manchester 2035 strategy, visit: www.manchester.ac.uk/manchester-2035

To learn more about the Directorate of IT Services, visit: www.itservices.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus

