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Approval Authority	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sustainability
Contact Officer	Sustainability Advisor – Facilities Management, People, Culture and Campus Life

Introduction | Kupu Whakataki

This Policy outlines the University's commitment to sustainability.

Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to frame the values and principles guiding the University's work towards creating a sustainable community and campus, while contributing towards solving global sustainability challenges.

Definitions | Tautuhinga

Hapū – kinship group, clan, tribe or subtribe – section of a large kinship group and the primary political unit in traditional Māori society.

Kaitiakitanga – a whakapapa-based system for applying ideas about preservation, conservation, repair and utilisation of environments for present and future generations.

Mahinga Kai – traditional customary food gathering, encompasses the places where natural resources were obtained; the resources themselves; and the practises and principles that guided how those resources were managed.

Manaakitanga – the extension of care, hospitality, reciprocity and respect to others.

Mana Whenua – the people who exercise kaitiakitanga (stewardship) and possess the rights to hold responsibility for land and/or resources in a geo-political area. Ngāi Tūāhuriri are the mana whenua of the land where the University is situated.

Mauri Tū – environmental health is protected, maintained and/or enhanced.

Rūnanga/iwi – council, tribal council, assembly, board, boardroom, iwi authority – assemblies called to discuss issues of concern to iwi or the community.

Sustainable Development – the United Nations Brundtland Commission, 1987 (Our Common Future) offers an initial definition of sustainability as “*meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs*” (see [Related Documents and Information](#) section).

Tauutuutu – Reciprocity; giving back what is taken; maintaining balance.

Principles

- The University has a genuine desire to weave sustainability into the working culture and vision of the University.
- The University strives to achieve real change, using the transformative potential of the United Nations’ 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(United Nations website\)](#) as a basis for teaching, research and operational performance. The University views sustainability as a broad, multi-faceted concept in which ecological, social, cultural and economic systems mutually reinforce and support one another into the long term. In particular, the University supports the notion of ‘strong sustainability’, in which the ‘econo-sphere’ rests within the ‘socio-sphere’, which in turn is dependent on a strong ‘bio-sphere’.
- Acknowledging the global ecological crisis, the University will, with urgency, ensure that the University’s research, teaching and learning, community engagement and operational plans align with the United Nations’ 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(United Nations website\)](#) and [Greenhouse Gas Emission commitments \(Ministry for the Environment website\)](#).
- The University is committed to facilitating actions to address environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability within the University. This includes actively promoting inclusive and barrier-free education, and a working culture that celebrates all forms of diversity.
- The University actively encourages work (including through teaching and research) in order to achieve the United Nations’ 17 [Sustainable Development Goals \(United Nations website\)](#) to solve local and global sustainability challenges.

Policy Statements | Kaupapa Here

The University recognises it can play a role towards securing a sustainable environment for current and future generations, and is committed to

- Meaningful partnerships with iwi, hapū, rūnanga, and Māori communities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi | The Treaty of Waitangi, which recognises the concept of Kaitiakitanga, or guardianship, of the natural environment. The University also recognises the concepts of Manaakitanga, Mauri Tū, Mahinga Kai and Tauutuutu.
- Increasing awareness of environmentally sustainable development and engagement.
- Complying with all relevant environmental legislation.
- Identifying and implementing affordable, evidence-based, sustainable practises that not only minimises the University's ecological footprint, but seeks to leave a net positive impact on the natural world through the University's operating practices.
- Supporting the teaching, learning and research in sustainability topic areas.

With these in mind, the following sections articulate actions that the University focused on:

1. Research for Sustainability

The University plays a role in New Zealand's, regional (Pacific) and global education, research, policy formation and information exchange, all of which are crucial to creating a sustainable world. Thereby the University will

- Promote and support Ngāi Tūāhurīrī, Ngāi Tahu and wider Māori engagement and Te Ao Māori knowledge systems in the University's sustainability research portfolio.
- Promote and support research that contributes significantly to knowledge and action across the interdisciplinary dimensions of sustainability.
- Support researchers across different fields, to work collectively to develop interdisciplinary approaches to curricula, research initiatives, and outreach activities that support improved sustainability outcomes. This includes accessing both internal and external resources and collaboration.
- Support research activities that build social and community connections, acknowledging the relevance of hauora and wellbeing to sustainability.

2. Teaching and Learning for Sustainability

The teaching and learning programmes at the University will seek to inspire students and create graduates making a difference – tangata tū, tangata ora. Thereby the University will

- provide opportunities that enable students to engage with Ngāi Tūāhurīrī, Ngāi Tahu and Te Ao Māori knowledge systems related to sustainability across all disciplines;
- develop graduates to be bi-culturally competent, globally aware and to be engaged with their communities in order to contribute to sustainable human societies, including through their future careers and daily lives;
- offer education and opportunities that enable students from all disciplines to contribute to reducing ecological, social and economic impacts and improving sustainability outcomes;
- provide opportunities for interdisciplinary education in the areas of sustainability;

- explore options for enhancing low carbon methods of teaching, for example remote laboratory access and other on-line delivery modes; and
- support teaching activities that build social and community sustainability, acknowledging the relevance of hauora and wellbeing to sustainability.

3. Sustainable Operating Practises

Sustainable practices are embedded in the University's operations, ensuring that it seeks to become a sustainable organisation. Thereby the University will

- continue to build and uphold a strong and sustainable infrastructure and a healthy environment;
- provide opportunities for staff and students to be involved in the on-going improvement of the University's environmental performance;
- work to be a role model in the University's community for leadership on climate change and sustainable practices;
- engage with the community, and share experiences and other information, to inform creative and innovative solutions to sustainable challenges;
- establish constraints for carbon emissions, including air travel. In doing so, the University will encourage creative, alternative modes of international engagement, which minimise travel and carbon emissions;
- have a positive impact on biodiversity, including identifying, monitoring and protecting any International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red Listed or Ngāi Tahu taonga species and national conservation list species with habitats in areas affected by the operation of the University;
- responsibly manage watersheds/waterways on University lands (including stormwater) to reduce or eliminate the impact of potential marine pollution and conserve and restore aquatic ecosystems associated with the University;
- ensure that the University follows best practice regarding waste minimisation, including the safe and sustainable disposal of hazardous waste; and
- minimise the use of plastics (especially single use plastics).

4. Partnerships for Sustainability

The University embraces its contribution to New Zealand and the global academic community. Thereby the University will

- draw on the special significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and commit to being good stewards of the University's environment in line with the principles of Kaitiakitanga, Manaakitanga, Mauri Tū, Mahinga Kai and Tauutuutu;

- develop bicultural and intercultural competence and confidence through knowledge of and engagement with Mana Whenua, locally and nationally;
- strengthen partnerships with the Pacific community in New Zealand and the region, and encourage social engagement for sustainability outcomes, noting issues of equity and climate change and their impact on Pacific communities;
- commit to developing new, and enhancing and leveraging existing, partnerships and networks that will advance sustainable development;
- make a positive impact on social sustainability (hauora/wellbeing) in Ōtautahi Christchurch and Waitaha Canterbury;
- ensure that the University's procurement systems support sustainability principles, for example by requiring that materials purchased are sourced ethically, favour or support sustainable initiatives (such as sustainable fisheries / Mahinga Kai);
- minimise the use of disposable single use items, including through any outsourced services and the wider supply chain; and
- take measures to reduce the overall amount of waste sent to landfill, noting that waste minimisation efforts extend to any outsourced suppliers and the wider supply chain.

Related Documents and Information | He kōrero anō

Legislation | Whakaturetanga

- [Education and Training Act 2020 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#)
- [Resource Management Act 1991 \(New Zealand legislation website\)](#)
- [Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 \(New Zealand legislation website\)](#)

UC Policy Library | Te Pātaka Kaupapa Here

- [Asset Management Policy \(PDF, 576KB\)](#)
- [Equity and Diversity Policy \(PDF, 226KB\)](#)
- [Procurement Policy \(PDF, 227KB\)](#)

UC Web and Intranet | Te Pae Tukutuku me te Ipurangirotu o UC

- [Sustainability Hub \(University Sustainability Hub website\)](#)
- [Sustainability Office \(University Sustainability Office website\)](#)
- [Sustainability Plan \(PDF, 775KB\)](#)

External | Mōwaho

- [Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability \(Acts INC\) \(Acts INC website\)](#)
- [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC website\)](#)

- [Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Section 3:27 \(SCRIBD website\)](#)
- [Paris Agreement – Information on Aotearoa New Zealand's post-2020 commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions \(Ministry for the Environment website\)](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals \(United Nations website\)](#)

In addition to the Sustainability Plan, several specific plans are in place to advance particular areas of sustainability at the University. These include:

- [Biodiversity Plan 2022-2025](#)
- [Cycle Plan 2014-2022](#)
- [UC Watershed and Waterways Plan 2017-2023](#)
- [Waste Plan 2022-2030](#)

Document History and Version Control Table			
Version	Action	Approval Authority	Action Date
1.00	New document setting out the University's framework around incorporating sustainable practices into decision making.	Vice-Chancellor	February 2018
1.01	Review date pushed out for 6 months.	Policy Unit	November 2019
2.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, major re-write and major changes to content and document title.	Vice-Chancellor	October 2020
2.01	Updated AA and CO with Vice-Chancellor's approval.	Vice-Chancellor	July 2022
3.00	Completed Policy Review.	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sustainability	October 2022
3.01	Updated content	Pro-Vice-Chancellor Sustainability	March 2022