

Last Modified	October 2020
Review Date	September 2022
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Contact Officer	Sustainability Advisor, Facilities Management – People, Culture and Campus

Introduction

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

Kaitiakitanga – guardianship and protection of people, environment, knowledge, culture, language and resources for 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 charity, hospitality, reciprocity and respect to others.

Mana Whenua – mana or ‘authority’ held by the local hapū or iwi over the land or particular area.

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

Sustainable Development – according to the foundational definition in the Our Common Future (“Brundtland Commission”) Report to the United Nations on March 20, 1987, is “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.

Approach to Sustainability

The University has a genuine desire to have sustainability institutionalised into the working culture and psyche of the University. It affirms that we want to see real change. Therefore, 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 our research, teaching and learning, community engagement and operational plans align with New Zealand's [Sustainable Development Goals \(New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade website\)](#) and [Greenhouse Gas Emission commitments \(Ministry for the Environment website\)](#). The University is committed to discovering and facilitating actions to address environmental, cultural, social and economic sustainability within the University.

The Focus of Sustainable Initiatives

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

- Increasing awareness of environmentally sustainable development and engagement;
- Identifying and implementing affordable, evidence-based, sustainable business practises to reduce and manage the University's own ecological footprint;
- Supporting the teaching, learning and research in sustainability topic areas;
- Meaningful partnerships with Māori 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 Tautuutu.

With these in mind, the following sections articulate actions that the University will focus 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 it will:

- 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.

- Promote Ngāi Tahu and wider Māori engagement and Te Ao Māori knowledge systems in the University's sustainability research portfolio.

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:

- 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;
- Provide opportunities that enable students to engage with Ngāi Tahu and Te Ao Māori knowledge systems related to sustainability across all disciplines.

3. Sustainable Operating Practises

Sustainable practices are embedded in the University's operations, ensuring that it seeks to become a sustainable organisation. Thereby it 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.
- Seek to be a role model in our 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.

4. Partnerships for Sustainability

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

- Draw on the special significance of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and commit to being good stewards of our 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, 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.

Reporting and Review of the Framework

Reporting against this Framework is undertaken annually by Tari Toitū te Taiao | The Sustainability Office. This Framework will be reviewed every two years.

Since 2016, annual sustainability reporting has been based on the [Learning in Future Environments \(LiFE\) \(Learning in Future Environments website\)](#) framework.

Related Documents and Information

Legislation

- [Education Act 1989 \(New Zealand Legislation website\)](#)
- [Resource Management Act 1991 \(New Zealand legislation website\)](#)
- [Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 \(New Zealand legislation website\)](#)

UC Policy Library

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

UC Web and Intranet

- [About the Sustainability Office \(University Sustainability website\)](#)
- [Sustainability \(University Sustainability website\)](#)

External

- [About the Paris Agreement \(Ministry for the Environment website\)](#)

- [Australian Campuses Towards Sustainability \(Acts INC\) \(Acts INC website\)](#)
- [Climate Related Financial Disclosures \(Ministry for the Environment discussion document\)](#)
- [Greenhouse Gas Emission commitments \(Ministry for the Environment website\)](#)
- [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC website\)](#)
- [Learning in Future Environments \(Learning In Future Environments Website\)](#)
- [Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987. Section 3:27 \(SCRIBD website\)](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals \(New Zealand Foreign Affairs and Trade website\)](#)
- [Sustainable Development Goals \(United Nations website\)](#)

Appendix

- [Sustainability Implementation Plan](#)

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	Feb 2018
1.01	Review date pushed out for 6 months	Policy Unit	Nov 2019
2.00	Scheduled review by Contact Officer, major re-write and major changes to content and document title.	Vice-Chancellor	October 2020

This policy remains in force until it is updated

Appendix

Sustainability Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan for the strategic goals lists the following priority actions for the near future:

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1. Replace boilers with Biomass Boilers.
 2. Map relevant taught courses against the United Nations SDGs.
 3. Establish a Carbon sequestration programme with the School of Forestry.
 4. Work to reduce waste to landfill and increase use of reusable, compostable and recyclable materials, and reduce water consumption.
 5. Invest in key areas of research to help solve global sustainability challenges.
 6. Benchmark UC sustainability.
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A more detailed Implementation Plan sits alongside these high-level priority actions.

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

- [Biodiversity Plan](#)
- [Cycling Plan](#)
- [Engaging Students in Sustainability Plan](#)
- [Sustainable Food and Drink Plan](#)
- [Waste Plan](#)
- [Waterways Plan](#)