

Sustainability Policy

Context

Sustainable Development as outlined in the Brundtland Report, United Nations, 1987, is '... development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs' (Brundtland, 1987).

The London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE) is a world leading international university based in London.

LSE was founded in 1895 to create and share knowledge addressing major social challenges and to shape a better world. Our mission is to advance knowledge in social science and a range of related fields so as to inform public policy, economic decision-making, and social welfare both nationally and globally.

We educate around 12,500 students from 154 countries. We employ around 3,300 members of staff, and manage about 30 campus buildings and 6 halls of residence across four London boroughs, as well as a 23 acre sports ground in Surrey.

LSE is committed to acting responsibly and sustainably, as set out in both [LSE's 2030 Strategy](#) and our [Ethics Code](#).

As part of LSE's 2030 strategy, LSE released the [Sustainability Strategic Plan](#), in close partnership with our diverse community. It sets a comprehensive package of measures to integrate environmental sustainability across our operations, with six key areas of focus: Education, Research, Engagement and Leadership, Investment, Collaboration, and Our School (campus operations). The plan is a catalyst for sustainability action and accountability at LSE with the six strategic themes being mutually supportive of each other.

1. Education

Embedding sustainability across our teaching and learning experiences

We will equip LSE graduates with the knowledge, understanding, critical thinking and skills needed to become citizens and leaders, empowering them to address the future challenges of society and make a positive impact in the world.

- **Build on our existing offer:** We will strengthen and promote existing courses and learning pathways which can provide students with a fuller understanding of the environmental and social dimensions of sustainability.
- **Connect across disciplines:** We will embed environmental sustainability into the LSE curriculum, promoting interdisciplinary activities and solutions.
- **Foster collaboration:** We will create new collaborations among key stakeholders within and beyond the School, with a particular emphasis on working in partnership with students and LSE Students' Union to respond to and promote the sustainability agenda.

2. Research

Shaping the global sustainability debate through our research

We will work strategically to bring together the School-wide research community on environmental sustainability issues, and to enhancing and leveraging the impact of our contribution to the public debate.

- **Take a strategic approach:** We will reaffirm the contribution social sciences can make to the global sustainability debate, and to focus and strengthen our efforts and resources on impactful sustainability research.
- **Create supportive mechanisms:** We will implement structural change and create funding incentives to advance the sustainability agenda.
- **Foster collaboration:** We will foster stronger internal cross-disciplinary collaboration within LSE to leverage and extend our external partnerships.

3. Our School: operations and estate

Becoming net-zero carbon and reducing our environmental impacts

Carbon

- Become a carbon-neutral university from 2020/21 for all the emissions we currently measure (scope 1 and 2 for our energy use, and scope 3 for water, waste and business travel), using carbon reduction offsets to mitigate the emissions we have not yet reduced or avoided.
- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 at the latest, and by 2030 for our energy use (scope 1 and 2), adopting a challenging carbon reduction pathway aligned to climate science and using carbon removal measures for our residual emissions.

Also see the [Carbon Reduction Strategy](#). Note: Undertakings in reference to carbon will be kept under review in light of developing understandings.

Energy

- Operate a highly energy efficient estate and adopt renewable energy sources.

Also see LSE's [Energy Policy](#).

Procurement

- Make sustainability and ethics a key consideration of:
 - our purchasing decisions throughout the lifecycle of the goods and services we buy and tender.
 - Requiring contracts that involve deliveries to assess if less frequent deliveries are possible and if vehicles used for deliveries are of a low impact to the environment in our tender process.
 - our supplier relationships by ensuring suppliers and contractors also work transparently towards our sustainability goals in accordance with our supplier code of practice.

Also see LSE's [Sustainable Procurement Policy](#); [Modern Slavery Statement](#) and [Supplier Code of Practice](#).

Buildings

- Design and construct new buildings and refurbishments that enhance the public realm whilst meeting the highest standards of environmental sustainability, climate resilience and human wellbeing, throughout the lifecycle of the building.

Waste and recycling

- Reduce waste and adopt circular economy principles of resource management including the 'Reduce, Reuse, Recycle' waste hierarchy: Minimise waste, re-use ,repair or donate items (those that do not meet the waste definition) where feasible, recycle as much possible of the remainder, send zero waste to landfill.

Catering

- Deliver a sustainable catering service which promotes low-carbon food choices.

Biodiversity

- Enhance biodiversity on the LSE estate by protecting and expanding green spaces, supporting connected habitats and community wellbeing.

Water

- Reduce our water consumption on campus and in Halls of Residence by installing water-efficient infrastructure and promoting waste-avoidance.

Travel

- Manage emissions from business travel, contractors and deliveries, whilst providing facilities to enable students and staff to access campus by low-carbon means.

Pollution

- Prevent pollution of land, air and water.
- Engage with partners to minimise local air pollution and improve air quality.

4. Engagement and Leadership

Deepening public discussion on sustainability across the world

LSE will play a leading role in shaping the global discussion of ideas on sustainability and the challenges it raises. We will engage with public, private and non-governmental organisation actors to promote understanding and informed decision-making about sustainability around the world.

Communication and training

- *Engage in dialogue with students, staff, and the wider community on sustainability issues, and provide opportunities to develop knowledge and skills for sustainability.*

5. Investment

Making sustainability a key part of our investment decisions

We will increasingly focus on the investment incentives open to the School to ensure the transition to a low carbon economy.

- **Make an impact:** We will incentivise changes in corporate behaviour by selecting fund managers who actively engage with the companies they invest in, encouraging transitions to low carbon business models.
- **Communicate our approach:** We will actively communicate our approach in an open and transparent manner.
- **Cooperate with others:** We will leverage and extend our external partnerships, using our influence to advocate for positive change.

Please refer to LSE's Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Policy [\[link\]](#) which governs how the School invests its endowment reserves, retained surpluses and surplus working capital. The School also issued a Sustainable Finance Framework [\[link\]](#) to raise private finance to fund environmentally and socially sustainable projects at LSE.

6. Collaboration

Working in partnerships within LSE and externally

In advancing the sustainability agenda we work closely with the LSE community: be it students and LSE Students' Union, alumni, professional services staff, and academics many of whom are themselves experts in sustainability topics. We also work with a range of external partners, including our suppliers, other universities, and a range of national and international organisations.

Governance

Leadership

Create an institutional culture that embeds sustainability into policy and systems across LSE, and embraces and promotes it throughout all levels and areas of the School.

Protecting the environment

Continually improve LSE's environmental and energy performance by maintaining an ISO 14001 and 50001 certified Environmental Management System and Energy Management System. (These are internationally recognised standards that help organisations to strategically identify, monitor, manage and enhance their environmental and energy impacts.)

Compliance

Fulfil and where possible exceed all regulatory and other compliance obligations.

Reporting

Report publicly on performance against key environmental objectives and indicators.

Review schedule

Review interval	Next review due by
2 years	June 2025

Version history

Version	Date	Approved by	Notes
1	15 May 2018 13 March 2018	Council ELG	
1	Mar 2019	ELG	No changes
1	22 May 2020	ELG Council	Minor wording edits, and contact details.
2	30 June 2021	Sustainability Leadership Board	Embedded objectives set in Sustainability Strategic Plan
3	May 2023	Sustainability Leadership Board	Biannual review

Contacts

Position	Name	Email	Notes
Head of Sustainability	Tammy Armstrong	sustainability.team@lse.ac.uk	

Communications and Training

Will this document be publicised through Internal Communications?	Yes
Will training needs arise from this policy	Yes
If Yes, please give details: Sustainability training and engagement needs are mapped and delivered via the Sustainability Training Plan, which is periodically reviewed as part of LSE's ISO 14001 and 50001 certified Environmental and Energy Management System.	

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Reference

Brundtland, G.H. (1987) Our Common Future: Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development. Geneva, UN-Dokument A/42/427