Environmental and Sustainability Policy

The Open University acknowledges the UN's World Commission on Environment and Development (Brundtland) definition that sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The Open University is committed to the principles of environmental protection and sustainable development.

By its very nature, distance learning is inherently more sustainable than residential HE institutions and the University will continue to act on the many external drivers including HEFCE sustainability strategies that focus attention on the environmental performance of HE establishments.

The Open University recognises and accepts its ethical and legal responsibilities to minimise its effect on the environment and to comply with, if not exceed, all statutory environmental requirements.

Objectives

To enhance environmental awareness among members of the University community:

- by provision of information, instruction and training
- to incorporate best practice in the management of environmental impacts
- in the procurement of resources

To minimise:

- the consumption of resources
- the production of waste
- harmful emissions to air, land and water

Implementation

The University will take action, whilst continuing to ensure that business objectives are being met:

- To promote the awareness of environmental matters amongst its staff and students.
- To reduce energy consumption and to incorporate long-term strategies for energy efficiency into planning and development.
- To monitor water consumption and reduce leakage and eliminate unnecessary and excessive use.
- To encourage the use of environmentally-friendly means of transport by staff and students and to examine the operation of University-owned vehicles.
- To assess and reduce the environmental impact of all purchases as far as possible in terms of their raw materials, production, packaging, delivery, distribution and use.
- To reduce the volume of waste produced by, in order of priority, reducing the acquisition of new materials, re-using materials and recycling materials.
- To be aware of and reduce any harmful environmental impacts of University sites, buildings, and future developments or refurbishments.
- To manage University land to protect and enhance open spaces and maintain biodiversity.

Monitoring and Review

Performance is monitored and reviewed by provision of environmental information and data to the Higher Education Statistics Agency and this is published annually in the Estate Management Record.