

A MESSAGE FROM NICK BRAITHWAITE



Dear Colleagues,

I hope that many of you have enjoyed some well-deserved time off over the summer, and if you have not been able to, I hope you manage to take some time soon. As autumn arrives, we continue our countdown to COP26 which has focused our recent sustainability activities.



COP26 Green Zone event

I am delighted that our application to the cabinet office to host an event in the official COP26 Green Zone was accepted from over 4000 applications. On Sunday 7th November, the OU will host a 90-minute collaborative event with Glasgow Life bringing art, Indigenous artists, climate science and Citizen Science together. The event is due to be held face to face and we hope there will be a livestream for those who would like to watch at home (further details will follow as they are confirmed with the organisers).

COP26 Observers

We are currently in the process of allocating our passes for official COP26 Observer status. Colleagues were invited to apply in my August bulletin. Thirty seven applications were shared blind with an external expert to collate an initial shortlist based on the 200-word summary as to why the applicant would be a good candidate. This initial shortlist contained more applicants than allocated spaces, and we are now taking into account several factors including carbon footprint of attending the event and ensuring we have a spread of expertise, perspectives and methods for disseminating learning. We'll be in touch with applicants this month and update you on our final selection next bulletin.

Go Green events

In the countdown to COP26, we also have some in house events that colleagues are encouraged to attend:

- Monday 20th September (12.30 – 1.15pm): [What's next for environmental policy? Responding to the climate crisis during a global pandemic](#) – with David Humphreys, Professor of Environmental Policy
- Wednesday 13th October at 11.00am -12.30pm: [Sustainability vision update and discussion with VCE Sustainability Sponsor \(Prof. Nick Braithwaite\)](#).

- Date TBC (Mid-late October): Go Green – COP26 Green Zone Preview event

COP26 Hub on OpenLearn

In support of activities around COP26, a new COP26 Hub on OpenLearn launches on the 20th September. The Hub, led by Derek Goldman from the OU in Scotland and supported by Andy Lane from Engineering and Innovation, STEM, will feature existing free courses as well as a series of articles written by people from across the OU community over the next 6 months. It also features a specially commissioned animation that introduces the COP26 Hub. You can preview the animation [here](#) but please do not share this link outside the OU. It will be live on the COP26 hub from next Monday, after which time, we would be delighted if you share the Hub and animation with as many people as you would like.

Sustainability at the OU - Our Vision

Earlier this month, I was also able to report our ambition to VCE as follows:

- Four nation engagement and a ‘levelling up’ approach using best practices and standards across the four nations to inform the OU sustainability policy
- University-wide coordination and reporting on sustainability including preparations for submissions to the SDG Accord and Global Compact and a set of KPIs
- A focus on OU as an educator: the creation and sharing of knowledge, whilst ensuring legal compliance for OU as business: direct carbon emissions, travel and supply chains across four nations

I welcome your views on the draft sustainability vision for what will be achieved by 2030 as a basis for the OU sustainability policy - how can we deliver on this, what do we need to stop doing, what do we need to do more of, what must we start doing, who is best placed to embed this in their roles, what support do they require, how can you help us? Do email sustainability@open.ac.uk

By 2030 we shall be confident that:
Our creation and sharing of knowledge and skills enriches and transforms society, enabling our students to deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals which are visible in our curriculum, our research, and our enterprise activities.
Our student-centred pedagogy enables responsible behaviours and disruptive innovations.
Our teaching model is low environmental impact and we transparently report on this.
Our course content and resources, across all disciplines, challenge unsustainability and exemplify sustainability through theories, application, stories, and practice - ensuring 21st century transformative competencies.
Our students turn to us for multi-disciplinary lifelong learning, upskilling, and reskilling for decarbonisation, decolonisation, and the just transition to a sustainable society.
Our research is recognised for its policy influence and impact which enables implementation of sustainability in all areas of society.
Our stakeholders see us as a trusted source of informed debate and holistic understanding through a range of contemporary media and partnerships.
Our staff proactively engage to embed sustainability in all roles, meeting or exceeding legislative requirements across our business operations in the four nations.

Sustainability in the Curriculum

To help us deliver our new institutional sustainability policy, we are looking to review our current sustainability-related curriculum and map this against the [17 UN Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs). Please help us to do this by identifying any modules that pertain to sustainability using [this e-form](#).

BBC events

You may be interested in these BBC events which aim to provide inspiration, stimulation and collaboration for those working in the creative industries around climate storytelling.

What on Earth is COP26?

Find out from the BBC's Chief Environment Correspondent, Justin Rowlett, everything you need to know about the UN's Climate Change Conference in November (COP26) but were afraid to ask – and how it could set the course to restore our planet to health. An essential briefing for content creators. Particularly useful for any topical programmes on air in late October and November.

[Catch up here on the BBC website.](#)

Climate Creatives Festival - 5 October 2021 at 10:30-17:00

A day of inspiration, stimulation and collaboration for all creatives and storytellers with audience insights; tips from trailblazing practitioners and technologists; thoughts from those on the climate frontline; and revelations about what the future holds. [See the full programme here](#). There's an exciting lineup of guests in the works – more details to be announced soon. [Book here to attend](#).

With continued optimism,

Nick

Prof. Nick Braithwaite

Executive Dean, STEM Faculty and VCE Sponsor for Sustainability

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