

# Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education

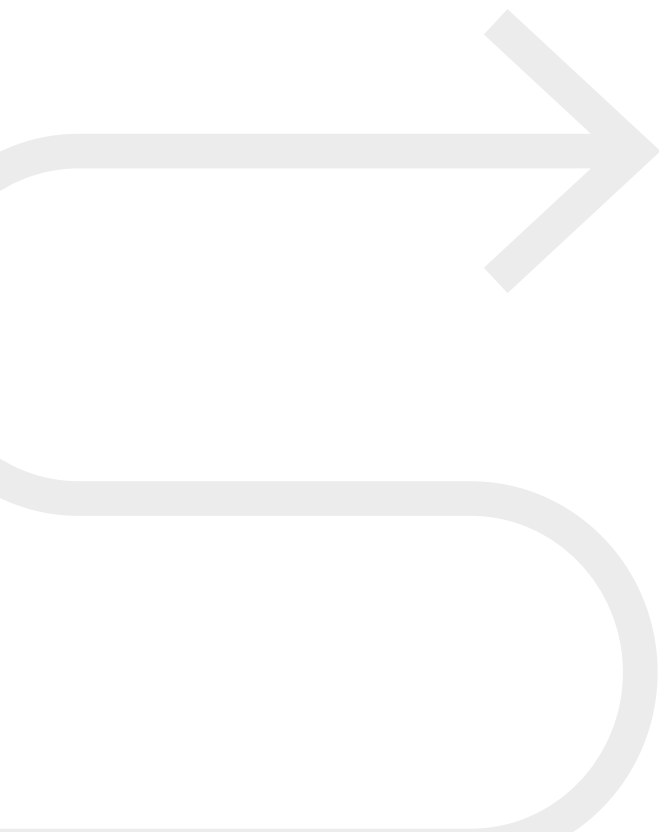
## Current Outputs and Next Steps

October 2020



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# About the Climate Commission

The **Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education**, launched in November 2019, is a unique partnership between Association of Colleges (AoC), EAUC - the Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education, GuildHE and Universities UK (UUK). The Commission is working to coordinate a clear, cohesive and consistent response to the climate emergency for the further and higher education sector by the end of 2020. With **5 million** staff and students, the further and higher education sector comprises around 7.7% of the UK population; a coordinated response to the climate emergency will amplify our voice and impact in tackling the climate crisis.

The Commission is taking the sector to the next step in the evolution of thinking and actions that institutions have already taken, to the complex social, cultural and educational role of universities and colleges have in ensuring the climate crisis is at the very heart of all institutions missions. Much has already been achieved by the sector and the Commission is building on the existing tools and resources to ensure gaps are covered and provide clear leadership targets for the sector. Institutions need to take urgent action now as time is running out.

The Commission is led by four student and four institutional Commissioners guiding its work and acting as the face of the initiative. Commissioners are supported by a council of 85, including students and university and college Vice-Chancellors and Principals. EAUC provides the secretariat function. For more information, please visit [www.eauc.org.uk/climate\\_commission](http://www.eauc.org.uk/climate_commission).

## Commissioners

### Institutional Leaders

- **Steve Frampton MBE**, AoC President & AoC representative
- **Professor James Longhurst**, Assistant Vice-Chancellor, University of the West of England & EAUC Trustee
- **Professor Joy Carter CBE DL**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Winchester & GuildHE representative
- **Professor Judith Petts CBE**, Vice-Chancellor, University of Plymouth & UUK representative

### Student Leaders

- **Amy Brazier**, Students, Portsmouth College & AoC representative
- **Manveer Gill**, Undergraduate, University of Warwick & EAUC representative
- **Marta Crispo**, PhD Researcher, Grantham Centre for Sustainable Futures, University of Sheffield & UUK representative
- **Florence Barrett**, Undergraduate, Plymouth Marjon University & GuildHE representative

## Steering Group

- **Ian Munro**, Director, Association of Colleges
- **Iain Patton**, CEO, **Fiona Goodwin**, Director of Operations & Planning, **Sonya Peres**, Climate Commission Officer, all EAUC
- **Alex Bols**, Deputy Chief Executive, GuildHE
- **Christopher Hale**, Director of Policy, Universities UK

# About this Document

Since 2019, the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education has been working to understand the sector's priorities and needs in taking coordinated climate action. After months of evidence gathering events, four discussion groups and workshops, the Commission is delighted to present summaries of its upcoming outputs. The outputs will support the sector in advancing sustainability in response to the climate and ecological emergency, and will communicate to the government its needs and priorities to be supported in doing so.

The outputs consider the pressures universities and colleges are currently under due to the unprecedented challenges brought on by COVID-19. EAUC's **Principles for a Green Recovery**, "The Time is Now" have been embedded in these outputs, adding value to its development and use not only by addressing the climate crisis, but recovering sustainably from COVID-19. You can see the full Principles in the Annex.

We thank members of the Climate Commission Council for review and input into this document.

## **Output 1:** Targets for the Sector

## **Output 2:** Clear Roadmaps to Meet Targets and Accompanying Resource Bank

## **Output 3:** Key Climate Priority Statement/Report from UK Academics

## **Output 4:** Curriculum Resources

## **Output 5:** Deep Adaptation Institutional Toolkit



# Output 1: Targets for the Sector

Published January 2020

The Climate Commission has agreed on several targets to which it believes UK colleges and universities should strive to implement to ensure an effective and consistent response to the climate emergency.

Interested in this output? Email [info@eauc.org.uk](mailto:info@eauc.org.uk) for more information.

**1** Further and higher educational institutions should aim for net-zero Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions for Scope 1 and 2 by 2030, as per IPCC recommendations, as a minimum.

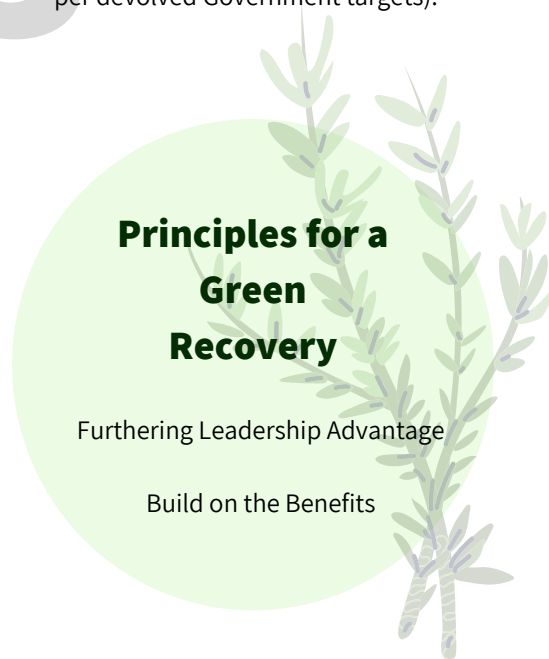
**2** There should be significant sector action towards reducing Scope 3 emissions within this timeframe. A first step should be to understand sector Scope 3 emissions and develop a framework that can be used as a basis for understanding the current baseline and establishing a meaningful target that is in line with the ambition set out above.

**3** Scope 3 net-zero GHG emissions should be achieved no later than 2050 (or as per devolved Government targets).

## Why produce this output?

During the evidence gathering events, invited experts and attendees consistently emphasised the importance of a coordinated response to the climate emergency to enhance our sector's voice as a whole, and our impact. The importance of accurately and honestly reporting scope 3 emissions was also emphasised. With scope 3 emissions being the majority of an institution's emissions, urgent action is needed in this area.

In May 2019, the UK government declared a climate emergency. As staff and students from UK universities and colleges comprise 7.7% of the population, agreed upon targets enable the sector to mobilise a strong, consistent and impactful response to the climate emergency while also influencing other sectors to do the same.



## CURRENT NEXT STEPS

- The Climate Commission will engage and consult with member organisations and partners to agree to these targets
- The Climate Commission will seek wider engagement with the sector on agreeing to these targets
- The Climate Commission will call for the sector to sign the Global Universities and Colleges Climate Letter



# Output 2:

## Clear Roadmaps to Meet Targets and Resource Bank

FE Roadmap launched July 2020 - [access the Roadmap here](#)  
 Estimated Launch of HE Toolkit: November 2020

The Climate Commission will produce two Roadmaps to provide clear, feasible actions to reach its recommended targets. The Climate Commission will collate and produce resources to accompany the Roadmaps and support their use across the sector.

Interested in this output? Email [info@eauc.org.uk](mailto:info@eauc.org.uk) for more information.

Roadmap/Toolkit to Reach Targets	&	Resource Bank
<p>Climate Action Roadmap for FE Colleges, produced in partnership with Nous Group</p> <p>Climate Action Toolkit for HE Universities</p> <p>Race to Zero: Global Universities and Colleges Climate Letter</p>		<p>EAUC's Climate Emergency Framework and Sustainability Leadership Scorecard</p> <p>UNESCO Futures of Education Report featuring insight from 37 students</p>

### Why produce this output?

During the evidence gathering events, invited experts and attendees emphasised the importance of coordinating action. Widespread changes across institutions' and sector bodies' operations and activities are needed to strengthen our voice and impact outside of the sector. Expert witnesses also identified the need to collate and signpost existing resources, case studies and examples of best practice.

The UK government has committed to net-zero emissions by 2050. To achieve this, the Committee on Climate Change emphasises that we need to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions by around 3% every year. As the Commission has proposed more challenging targets, the Roadmaps act as guidelines to achieving these targets. The Roadmaps also provide information on adaptation to climate change.



### CURRENT NEXT STEPS

- Continue promoting and sharing FE Roadmap to the sector
- Consult with the Climate Commission Council on HE Toolkit
- Continue work on producing and enhancing the Resource Bank to accompany Roadmaps



# Output 3:

## Key Climate Priority Statement/Report from UK Academics

Estimated Launch: November - December 2020

The Climate Commission will engage with research centres to produce a statement/report on key messages coming out of UK climate research findings. The Climate Commission will also launch a visual database mapping of climate research in the UK and how this research is disseminated to the wider public.

Interested in this output? Email [info@eauc.org.uk](mailto:info@eauc.org.uk) for more information.

### Statement/Report on Key Climate Priorities from UK Academics

Engage with UK research centres to collate priorities on action needed to tackle the climate crisis

Produce a public report on these priorities to share with funding bodies, the Government and the sector



### Visual Database

Produce a public and live visual database mapping climate research centres across the UK and how they share findings and research

## Why produce this output?

During the evidence gathering events, invited experts and attendees emphasised the need to develop greater understanding of the extent of climate research in the UK. Discussions also revealed the need to coordinate a key message, or voice, on climate priorities from academics and researchers. This coordinated message can support the sector's already strong and trusted voice to more easily feed into policy and effect change for a sustainable future.

Universities and colleges have a clear civic role at a local, national and international level, influencing Governments, the public sector, wider society and industry.

## Principles for a Green Recovery

Furthering Leadership Advantage

## CURRENT NEXT STEPS

- Produce and share report on key climate priorities
- Engage with funding bodies and the sector to share findings
- Engage with government bodies to share findings and support initiatives to feed into government policy
- Continue work on mapping research centres and methods of dissemination

# Output 4:

## Curriculum Resources

Estimated Launch: December 2020

The Climate Commission will produce a guide from collated curricula resources.

Interested in this output? Email [info@eauc.org.uk](mailto:info@eauc.org.uk) for more information.

The Climate Commission will collate existing curriculum resources to produce a simple guide for institutions to embed sustainability in their curriculum and reform their teaching to prepare students for a changing future. This will be aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the SDG Accord.

The guide will feature insights from the Climate Commission's discussion groups with students for UNESCO's Futures of Education.

## Why produce this output?

During the evidence gathering events, invited experts and attendees emphasised the need to reform curricula. There is an urgent need to better prepare learners for a changing future and to include students in the decision-making processes for university and college curricula.

This resource will support curricula reform to prepare students to thrive and prepare them as leaders of tomorrow. It will also include the insights of students, support institutions co-creating curricula alongside learners.

The guide will provide advice for awarding bodies to update and develop courses relevant for today's students.



### Principles for a Green Recovery

Employable and Future Fit  
Students

## CURRENT NEXT STEPS

- Collate resources on curricula including examples of student co-created curricula/student experiences
- Produce a guide on curricula change to prepare students for a sustainable future





# Output 5:

## Deep Adaptation Institutional Toolkit

Estimated Launch: January 2020

The Climate Commission will collate resources to produce a toolkit supporting universities and colleges to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate on staff, students and local communities. Institutions need to move beyond campus adaptation.

Interested in this output? Email [info@eauc.org.uk](mailto:info@eauc.org.uk) for more information.

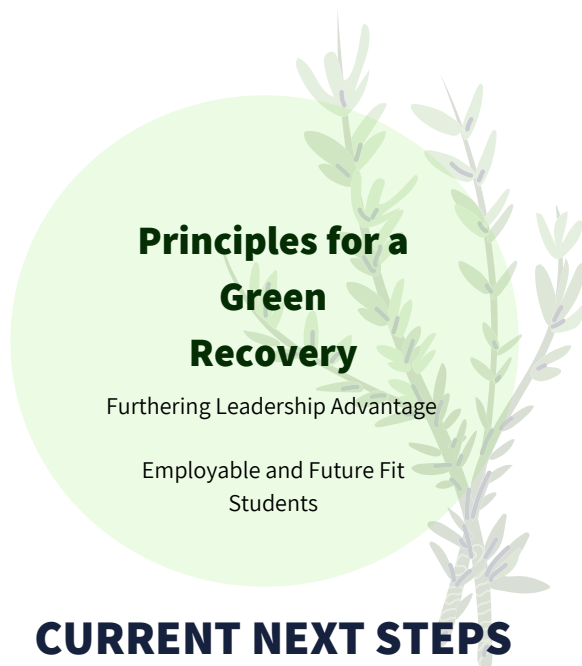
This toolkit would seek to support institutions understand deep adaptation as a driver for change .It will provide materials to support discussions at different levels (students, staff, governors) within institutions. Support for mental health and well-being will be crucial as we face the climate crisis .

### Why produce this output?

The onset of COVID-19 has demonstrated the need for resilient and adaptable societies, economies and institutions. As we emerge from the pandemic, the climate crisis will continue to loom large. We need to ensure the sector is prepared for a changing world.

Universities and colleges need to consider deep adaptation, meaning preparing for negative impacts of climate change on individuals and society. To support the sector a toolkit needs to be provided to encourage and enable honest and clear discussions amongst groups of students, staff, senior management teams and board of governors.

The Toolkit will include functional physical climate change adaptation priorities and tools for campus and college estates and infrastructure.



### CURRENT NEXT STEPS

- Collate resources on deep adaptation in the sector to produce a toolkit to support discussions about our changing world, climate justice, mental health etc.
- Engage the sector on topics pertaining to deep adaptation



# Get Involved

The Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education is a partnership between Association of Colleges, EAUC- The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership, GuildHE and Universities UK. We collaborate with institutions, individuals and organisations in the further and higher education sector.

We seek to ensure that the wide range of voices in the sector is heard, and the diverse needs, priorities and responsibilities of the sector's 5 million staff and students is reflected in our work. Throughout the year, we have hosted various events, discussions, focus groups and workshops to ensure the sector can feed into our work.

As the end of 2020 approaches, the Climate Commission will continue developing its outputs and holding events to coordinate climate action in the sector.

Please visit our website: [www.eauc.org.uk/climate\\_commission](http://www.eauc.org.uk/climate_commission) to learn how to get involved.





# Annex

# The Time is Now

## Principles for a Green Recovery

In July 2020, EAUC outlined principles for UK universities and colleges to ensure the sector's recovery from COVID-19 is just and sustainable. These principles are embedded in the Climate Commission's outputs. The following work was originally published on [www.eauc.org.uk](http://www.eauc.org.uk) on July 8th, 2020.

While we recognise the misery and hardship that the pandemic has caused for many people, we also recognise that the recovery from the COVID-19 crisis offers a historical and timely opportunity to address key public and, in particular, student concerns to accelerate the transition to a low carbon and environmentally resilient education sector.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted several things about universities and colleges over the last few months. Not least, how deeply rooted they are in their communities, and how capable they are of fostering fast and cohesive change in response to emergencies. As we look to recover from the pandemic – universities and colleges are taking time to reflect on what they have learnt.

The EAUC – the alliance for sustainability leadership in education, has worked with institutions to create a list of four civic principles and learnings that we believe are essential for a sustainable recovery. EAUC brings together staff and students across UK and Irish universities and colleges to put sustainability at the heart of their institutions. Today we represent over 2 million students and nearly 400,000 staff.

## The Time is Now

University and college staff and students have been a beacon of light in the response to COVID-19, responding with great commitment, agility and leadership. We have seen staff and students contributing to the challenge in so many ways – from front-line staff in hospitals, manufacturing PPE, being the scientific experts, use of labs for testing, providing accommodation and supporting those students who remain on campus, teaching online and securing previously unattainable carbon targets. How do we take all that is good here and secure equal collective cross sector commitment and action to respond to UK Governments declared Environmental and Climate Emergency?



## Build on the Benefits

While aware of peoples differing needs, and ensuring accessibility for all is a priority, now is the time to build on the benefits we have achieved from agile working, digital technologies and reducing our need to travel. Now is the time to not only achieve ambitious emission reduction targets, but to irreversibly lock-in the financial savings we have made, and accelerate the transition to a net zero emissions institution.

## Furthering Leadership Advantage

Using our first-hand experience of responding to the health crisis, we can be better prepared for any future pandemic, and for the climate crisis which still faces us. Institutional commitment to net zero emissions and climate adaptation and mitigation planning will be invaluable in ensuring organisational resilience, adaptability and opportunity.

## In the Heart of our Communities

Our civic mission and benefit to society has never been clearer. We must use our innovative cross-community collaborations, business enterprise and support, research, and organisational role modelling to support the transition to a new economy and more just and inclusive society.

## Employable and Future Fit Students

Both the pandemic and the opportunity for a greener economy call for new interdisciplinary skills, personal and professional resilience and low carbon graduate and employee reskilling capabilities. Recognising the economic and social opportunities of progressively decarbonising, we must embed sustainability and carbon literacy into curricula and ensure our learners are employable and future-ready.

**The time is now.**



# Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education