

Universities & Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland

We recognise the challenge:

- We recognise the scale and speed of climate change, and the likely effect on Scotland's people and places, impacting adversely on our economy, society and environment
- We consider that early action to address the expected changes will create long-term economic, health, social and environmental benefits
- We acknowledge the Scottish Government objective – to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050 – to avert the worst impacts of climate change; and realise we have a role to play in this.

We welcome the opportunities:

- To harness our academic talents and expand Scotland's ability – through our research capacity, knowledge exchange activity and the provision of skills, modules and courses – to create solutions to the challenges posed by climate change
- To demonstrate practical leadership in tackling climate change – by containing growing energy use and costs, protecting estates and buildings and promoting sustainability and social responsibility
- To engage our students, staff, alumni and local communities with the challenge of climate change.

Consistent with sustainable development principles, we commit our institution to:

1. Support the national Climate Change programmes, reducing our greenhouse gas emissions and implementing adaptation measures for future climate change scenarios
2. Allocate time and resources to implementing measures to reduce our overall carbon footprint and engage in the community planning process to deliver low-carbon solutions ('mitigation') by preparing, publishing and maintaining a five year climate action plan with targets and times scales to achieve a significant reduction in emissions from all our activities, including:
 - energy consumption and source
 - waste reduction, recycling and responsible disposal
 - sustainable estate development
 - sustainable travel planning
 - responsible procurement of goods and services
3. Assess the risks to the institution identified in projected climate change scenarios and ensure safeguarding measures are incorporated into our strategic planning, including each estates strategy review ('adaptation')
4. Work in partnership with others to implement measures to reduce emissions and engage in neighbourhood mechanisms, particularly through the community planning process
5. Collaborate within the sector and with other public and private organisations, both academically and practically, to share good practice on climate change mitigation and adaptation
6. Incorporate our work on climate change into established improvement processes and publish results on progress of our response annually, with outcomes achieved / further actions required
7. Contribute to the cooperative work, supported by relevant sector bodies, in monitoring progress and promoting best practice.

Signed

Principal: WCC Ron

Rector / Chair of Governing Body:

On behalf of: 24/11/15

Date: 24/11/15.



"Scotland's universities and colleges are making a valuable contribution to tackling climate change. Building on these achievements will be key in helping Scotland meet its climate change targets and in creating a more resilient, low-carbon society. The choices we make in the places we live, work and learn have an impact on climate change both now and in the future and it is important that we all make a positive contribution."

- Michael Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, October 2014.