

# 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 and, within a year, publishing a five-year climate action plan with targets and time 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:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Rector / Chair of Governing Body:* \_\_\_\_\_

*On behalf of:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Date: 21 January 2009*

**Scottish Ministers** welcome this timely and proactive initiative by Scotland's universities and colleges to tackle climate change. Delivering these commitments will lead to positive benefits, as well as raising Scotland's profile as a leading, learning nation, determined to make a positive contribution to one of the greatest global challenges.

Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, January 2009