

Sustainability Communications and Engagement Plan

2026-2031

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1. Introduction

This Sustainability Engagement and Communications Plan sets out how Edge Hill University (EHU) will inform, inspire and involve staff, students, prospective students and external partners in sustainable development. It supports delivery of the Sustainability Strategy by embedding sustainability into everyday behaviours, learning, decision-making and campus life.

This Plan applies to all sustainability-related engagement and communications activity owned or managed by the University and aligns with priorities set out in the Sustainability Strategy. It focuses on how sustainability is:

- Communicated clearly and consistently to staff, students and prospective students.
- Embedded into the student and staff experience.
- Promoted to prospective students as part of the University's offer and identity.
- Supported through behaviour-change activity.
- Enabled through partnership working.
- Reported transparently.

2. Engagement Framework

This Plan outlines the areas through which EHU currently engages, or proposes to engage, staff and students in sustainability and sustainable development.

These include:

2.1 Learning, Teaching and Research

EHU will engage students and staff through education and research activity that supports sustainable development, through:

- Integration of sustainability themes into curricula, aligned with Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).
- Opportunities for students to engage with sustainability through coursework, placements, projects and applied research.
- Support for staff-led and student-led sustainability research.
- Use of a Living Labs approach, enabling the campus to be used as a learning and research resource.

2.2 Campus Operations and Behaviour Change

Sustainability engagement will support responsible use of resources and lower environmental impact across campus operations, through:

- Engagement around waste reduction, recycling quality, energy and water efficiency.
- Promotion of sustainable travel, including active travel and public transport.
- Encouraging responsible consumption and reuse.

- Point-of-use messaging and campaigns that enable everyday actions with collective impact.

2.3 Staff Engagement

Staff play a critical role in embedding sustainability through their professional practice; this will be addressed through:

- Awareness-raising and training opportunities related to sustainability.
- Embedding sustainability within professional services and academic roles where relevant.
- Utilisation of the staff Sustainability Champions Network to share good practice, feedback and local solutions.

2.4 Student Engagement

Students are partners in shaping and delivering sustainability at EHU. They will be engaged through:

- Partnership working with the Students' Union on campaigns, events and representation.
- Support for student-led sustainability societies, projects and volunteering.
- Opportunities for students to influence priorities, policy and action.
- Internship/placement opportunities in the Sustainability team.
- Providing information and opportunities for prospective students to understand and engage with sustainability prior to enrolment.

2.5 Culture and Community

EHU will foster a culture where sustainability is visible, relevant and shared by:

- Celebrating success and recognising contributions.
- Connecting sustainability to wellbeing, employability and social value.
- Building local and regional partnerships to extend impact beyond the campus.
- Promoting sustainability as a core part of the University's identity to prospective students and the wider community.

2.6 Pre-arrival and Prospective Student Engagement

EHU will engage prospective students by:

- Showcasing sustainability initiatives through applicant communications, events and digital platforms.
- Embedding sustainability messaging within recruitment materials, open days and campus visits.
- Helping new and prospective become familiar with sustainable behaviours ahead of arriving on campus.
- Highlighting opportunities for involvement in sustainability activities as part of the student experience.

3.Targets

To deliver the above framework, the following targets have been identified to be carried out over the lifetime of this Plan. These targets will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain realistic, evidence-based and aligned with the Sustainability Delivery Plan and relevant external frameworks.

Area	Targets with indicative timeframes	Owner
Learning, Teaching and Research	Provide departments with the knowledge and skills to embed sustainability within teaching, research and professional practice - ongoing.	Head of Sustainability
	Provide students with opportunities to develop sustainability skills through relevant placements - repeats annually.	Strategic Assurance
Campus Operations and Behaviour Change	Develop and deliver a programme of activities targeting behaviours that improve sustainability performance across campus- repeats annually.	Sustainability team
	Deliver engagement events throughout the year to encourage participation in sustainability-related behaviour change, e.g. Sustainability Fair –target to deliver two events per year.	Sustainability team
Staff Engagement	Provide oversight of sustainability in all staff inductions – content reviewed and updated annually as required, delivered throughout the year at staff induction sessions.	Strategic Assurance
	Support staff to embed sustainability within their roles through training, guidance and awareness-raising opportunities - ongoing.	Head of Sustainability
	Establish and support an internal LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework) network – to be completed by end of 2026/27 academic year.	Head of Sustainability
	Develop and deliver training for LEAF network members –target to deliver one training opportunity per year.	Head of Sustainability
	Develop and maintain accessible materials and guidance to support sustainable laboratory practices based on LEAF– to be completed by end of 2026/27 academic year.	Sustainability team
	Provide regular updates and communications to the LEAF network through established channels - repeats annually.	Strategic Assurance
	Establish and monitor relevant University-wide LEAF commitments and targets – target to develop framework by end of 2026/27 academic year.	Sustainability team
Student Engagement	Provide oversight of sustainability in all student inductions – content reviewed and updated annually as required.	Head of Sustainability via sub-committees
	Provide opportunities for students to engage in sustainability through projects, placements, volunteering and campus initiatives – annual provision of opportunities committed to.	Sustainability team
	Support student participation in sustainability events and campaigns throughout the year, e.g. annual Sustainability Fair – annual provision of opportunities committed to.	Sustainability team
Culture and	Deliver a programme of sustainability-related events that foster a shared culture of sustainability	Sustainability team

Community	across staff and students –target to deliver two events per year.	
	Create opportunities for staff and students to engage with the wider community through volunteering and collaborative initiatives, such as the Big Campus Clear Out – ongoing.	Sustainability team
Pre-arrival and prospective student engagement	Ensure sustainability information is current, accessible and engaging across webpages for prospective and new students – reviewed annually.	Head of Sustainability
	Work with Marketing and Communications to share sustainability activity and opportunities with prospective students – ongoing via ISC meetings.	Head of Sustainability
	Include sustainability guidance and information within student induction materials, including Residential Essentials packs – content reviewed and updated annually as required.	Head of Sustainability

4.Risks

No.	Risk	Mitigation
1	Webpage content out of date	Annual review of webpages and updates undertaken by relevant teams.
2	Accessibility of content reducing engagement	Use of Learning Edge accessibility checker, alt text, captions, colour contrast checks and where appropriate consultations with key stakeholders to ensure content/material is accessible.
3	Lack of capacity to carry out sustainability-related communications, activities and events	Use of annual calendar of events, allowing stakeholders to see where communications, activities and events are going to happen, allowing for capacity-related points to be addressed in advance. Setting of quarterly priorities and use of Sustainability Champions, SU and student societies to cascade communications.
4	Duplication of events and communications across campus between different teams	Use of annual calendar of events, allowing stakeholders to see where communications, activities and events are going to happen, this will act as a central record to prevent duplication.
5	Message fatigue/messaging being lost during busy times.	Scheduling in sustainability-related surveys via central team to ensure that these are planned in around other surveys. Ensure that any sustainability-related communications are clearly ‘branded’ as sustainability content using agreed terminology to ensure non-engagement over technical terminology. Look at ways to improve engagement, such as use of Student Arch, competitions etc. Use student co-creation, incentives, and course-embedded activities (ESD, in action).
6	Low attendance at events, uptake of activities and volunteering opportunities	Planning of events to consider high-footfall days, student and staff calendars. Promote use of Student Sustainability Initiative Fund to engage students with activity development – allowing some costs to be covered by EHU.

5. Communications Approach

5.1 Objectives

Sustainability communications will:

- Be guided by the EHU Sustainability Communications Guidance (Internal), ensuring consistent messaging, alignment with strategic priorities and appropriate use of language.
- Increase awareness of sustainability goals, actions and achievements.
- Promote behaviour change through clear, practical and positive messaging.
- Demonstrate transparency through credible data and reporting.
- Strengthen engagement with staff, students, prospective students and external stakeholders.
- Embed sustainability as a core Institutional value.

5.2 Audiences

EHUs target audiences include:

- Students
- Staff
- Prospective students.
- Alumni
- External stakeholders (community, suppliers, businesses and partners).

5.3 Channels

EHU uses a range of channels for communications including:

- Website.
- Social media.
- Staff and student newsletters.
- Email.
- Digital screens and noticeboards.
- Events, inductions and campaigns.
- Media and PR where appropriate.
- Guest lectures, talks and training.
- Societies and student groups.
- External stakeholder relations.
- Annual reports.
- Academic input to journals and media.

Applicant communications (prospectus, open/offer holder day messaging).

6. Implementation and Measuring Success

6.1 Baselines

Baseline information includes:

- Existing staff and student engagement survey data
- Participation rates in sustainability initiatives and events
- Training uptake related to sustainability
- Waste, recycling and resource use data influenced by behaviour change

- Qualitative feedback from staff and students
- Engagement with sustainability content within applicant and recruitment channels.

6.2 Resource Allocation

Engagement will be delivered primarily through existing staff resource, with an allocated annual budget included for delivery. This budget varies annually and is sufficient to support the following costs:

- Campaign materials and communications
- Training and awareness campaigns
- Events and engagement activities.

6.3 Measuring Progress

Progress will be measured through a combination of quantitative and qualitative indicators, including:

- Participation rates with events and campaigns.
- Engagement metrics (digital and in-person).
- Staff and student awareness surveys.
- Behaviour change indicators (waste, energy, resource use etc.).
- Engagement metrics from prospective student communications (e.g. open day participation, digital engagement and enquiries relating to sustainability).

These measures will support delivery of Sustainability Delivery Plan objectives and will be reviewed annually.

7. Governance

7.1 Roles, Responsibilities, Reporting and Implementation

Engagement activity will be delivered through a coordinated implementation approach to ensure that sustainability communications and behaviour change are effectively embedded across the University.

- **Institutional Sustainability Committee (ISC):** Strategic oversight and annual review, with subsequent updates in response to feedback, performance and emerging best practices.
- **Head of Sustainability:** Holds overall responsibility for this Plan and reporting on its progress.
- **Sustainability Team:** Coordination, delivery, reporting on progress via ISC and annual report, and provision of guidance.
- **Facilities Management:** operational engagement (waste, energy, cleaning, water).
- **Strategic Assurance:** ensuring compliance and safe practice.
- **Professional Services and Faculties:** Embedding sustainability within operations and teaching.
- **Students' Union:** Partner delivery of campaigns and student engagement.
- **Marketing and Communications:** Support for consistent, accessible messaging.

7.2 Linked Documents

This Plan is linked to the:

- Sustainability Strategy.
- Sustainability Delivery Plan and the associated objectives document.

Together, these documents provide a coherent framework for engaging staff, students, applicants and the wider community, and delivering sustained environmental and social improvement.

Annexes

Document Control

Version	Date	Change Author	Summary of Changes
ISC 1.0	April 2026	Head of Sustainability	Creation of new document

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Title	Environmental Sustainability Delivery Plan 2026-2031
Policy Owner	Head of Sustainability
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