



Sustainability Policy

January 2021

This Policy sets out our commitments to the environment, energy and water management.

Reference Number	Version Letter	Executive Sponsor	Officer Responsible for Policy/ Procedures	Consultation Process	Date of Approval and Committee and/or Executive Officer	Effective Date

Sustainability Policy

1. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy covers all the buildings and land on the University's city centre campus and on our Outdoor Recreation Centre site, excluding areas that the University does not control management of such as residential buildings on campus. Activities covered include teaching and learning, hotel and conferencing facilities and sports facilities. Aston University occupies numerous buildings on one campus as well as an outdoors recreational ground at a separate site.

1.1 Purpose of the Policy

Through this policy we hope to support the University's Sustainability Strategy. In 2014 the University was certified to ISO 14001, which is an internationally agreed standard that sets out the requirements for an environmental management system. This was followed by being certified to ISO 50001, an energy management system. This highlights that the University looks to mitigate all impacts on the environment as well as adhere to environmental legislation. Within the higher education and local community Aston University aspires to become an exemplar for others to follow.

Moreover, Aston University is committed to the responsible use of its energy and water across all of its operations. The policy will not only meet legal requirements, and approved codes of practice, but strive to ensure that Aston is at the leading edge of good practice. This policy provides a framework for setting and reviewing energy objectives and targets

The policy of the University is to control energy and water consumption in order to:

- Avoid unnecessary expenditure on utilities;
- Improve cost-effectiveness, productivity and working conditions;
- Reduce our carbon emissions from energy in line with national, sector-wide and institutional targets;
- Protect the environment; and
- Meet legal requirements.

1.2 What is covered by the Policy

Environmental and sustainability commitments include:

- To fulfil all compliance obligations such as relevant UK and international legislative and regulatory guidelines, and strive to meet indicators and best practice requirements in respect of sustainability;
- To support continual improvement of the environmental management system to enhance environmental performance. This will be achieved by establishing demanding and measurable environmental performance targets, specifically related to energy, transport and waste, which are reviewed regularly and reported upon at least annually;
- Raising awareness within the Aston University community to ensure that everyone recognises and respects their environmental and ethical responsibilities and acts accordingly;
- Implement ethically and environmentally responsible procurement and financial management measures, policies and procedures and communicate these to suppliers, contractors and partner organisations;
- To protect the environment by preventing pollution through reduced waste, reduced emissions and responsible disposal;
- To encourage the use of sustainable transport through the implementation of the University's Sustainable Transport Strategy;
- Embed sustainability into the curriculum, research, community, and culture of the University;
- Develop and maintain the estate and associated landscape with due regard to environmental impact and social value;
- Take a leading role in advancing the sustainability agenda in the West Midlands region, and develop meaningful local, national and international partnerships and networks; and
- Monitor, annually report and continually strive to improve our sustainability performance, through the setting and achievement of clearly defined objectives and targets.

Energy and water management commitments include:

- Continually improve energy performance through reducing our energy consumption and associated emissions in line with the figures set out in our Carbon Management Plan;
- Continually improve the energy management system;
- Minimise excess water consumption and continue to use water efficiently.
- Comply with applicable legal and other requirements, and strive to meet indicators and best practice requirements in respect of our emissions;
- Monitor our performance and publish an annual Sustainability report as well as reviewing the University's Carbon Management Plan on an annual basis;
- Utilise energy and water from sustainable sources where practicable, including incorporation of renewable and low carbon technologies into building development projects;
- Invest in projects and equipment to reduce energy and water usage across the University, support the purchase of energy efficient products and services that impact energy performance, and support design activities that consider energy performance improvement;
- Raise awareness amongst staff and students of the important contribution each member can make to energy and water conservation;
- Ensure that commitment is obtained from staff at all levels within the University on aspects of energy and water efficiency under their control; and
- Implement the Space Heating and Ventilation Code of Practice.

1.3 Who is covered by the Policy

This Policy applies to all operational procedures and environmental aspects that impact the scope of this policy.

1.4 Breach of this Policy

A breach of the policy will lead to a break down in our ISO 14001 and 50001 management system and could lead to legal non-compliance.

1.5 Policy Ownership

The Sustainable Aston Working Group (SAWG) are responsible for approving all documentation linked to these standards, looking for continual sustainable improvement, as well as identify areas of opportunity to strengthen our processes and procedures without effecting our core business. The Sustainable Aston Working Group (SAWG) is an interdisciplinary group of academics, Go Green Champions, student representatives and professional support staff.

The policy implementation is supported by the Sustainability Strategy Group and Energy Steering Group.

2. THE POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 Guiding Principles

Supported by the Executive, in May 2007, the SAWG developed a vision, Aston's Sustainability Aims, committing the University to the concept of sustainability in the three key areas of community, teaching and research. This was then further developed in June 2008, when SAWG established a Sense of Direction document, detailing key areas of focus for the future. The policy looks to support the three pillars of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

3. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The terms set out in this section 3 apply to this Policy.

City centre campus: Aston University campus based at Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham. B4 7ET

Outdoor Recreation Centre: Building and land that is based at Birmingham Road, Great Barr, Birmingham, B43 7AJ