



# Social & Civic Responsibility Delivery Plan 2020 to 2030

The University of Edinburgh's **Strategy 2030** sets out our vision to **make the world a better place**. A key focus is our Social and Civic Responsibility. As Scotland's original civic university, we recognise our role in education, knowledge, innovation and research, our size and scale, presence, and ability to take a long-term view, give us a special responsibility to be future facing and address tomorrow's challenges in a fair and sustainable way – locally and globally.

We contribute positively to society through our research, innovation and education. We also recognise that as a large organisation, *how* we do things can have both positive and negative impacts on people, communities, and the natural environment near and far. Our research, our teaching, changes to our operations and our influence with business, government and society can be used along with our scale, reputation and reach to catalyse the changes we want to see.

This plan shows how we will deliver on our commitments to Social & Civic Responsibility as part of the University's Strategy 2030 (launched September 2019) and our commitments to the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



As indicated in the diagram opposite, the SDGs are nested in the economy, society and biosphere<sup>1</sup>. They provide a framework to understand the key issues underpinning social and civic responsibilities. Together with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (the global agreement for tackling emissions signed in 2016), these SDGs require deep transformations and complementary actions by government, business, experts and citizens in: education; gender and inequality; health and well-being; energy and industry; food systems and cities and digital access<sup>2</sup>.



By delivering this plan we will be on track to be net zero carbon by 2040, climate conscious thinking and actions will be embedded across our estate, our travel, our curriculum and our research. Our investments and purchasing will be supporting the SDGs locally and globally, and we will have eliminated single use plastics wherever possible as well as showing others what a resource-conscious, circular economy university looks like. Our University will be making a positive contribution to equity, using our resources where we can to support the fight against poverty, disadvantage and lack of opportunity. Our research, learning and teaching will have a positive impact.

The University of Edinburgh has the opportunity to contribute to the SDGs in different ways, from different parts of our staff and student community and in different locations. This plan has a strong focus on our operations with connections to other focus areas of Strategy 2030. The ‘**Research**’, ‘**Learning and Teaching**’ and ‘**People**’ focus areas also connect with the SDGs<sup>3</sup> and those plans will provide more detail.

Based on consultation and dialogue with staff, students and beyond we have identified three strategic objectives for Social & Civic Responsibility and one cross cutting theme. While we recognise the fundamental interconnectedness of all 17 SDGs, we have identified those we will most closely align to.

<sup>1</sup> Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University. This nesting of the SDGs was originally used by Johan Rockström and Pavan Sukhdev in looking at how food connected to SDGs.

<sup>2</sup> Sachs, J.D., et al. Six Transformations to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. *Nat Sustain* 2, 805–814 (2019). [www.nature.com/articles/s41893-019-0352-9](https://www.nature.com/articles/s41893-019-0352-9)

<sup>3</sup> For example, the ‘People’ strand outlines how we will continue to welcome and bring together people from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, both close to home and across the globe.

## Strategic objectives

## Key SDGs for strategic alignment

## Additional SDG linkages

**We will become a zero carbon and zero waste university.** Developing and pioneering approaches to deliver a zero carbon and circular economy and protecting and enhancing biodiversity.



**We will widen participation in higher education and support inclusion.** Increasing opportunities and raising aspirations by making education and employment an achievable goal for more people in Scotland and globally.



**We will work together with local communities** to contribute to improve the lives of people across the Edinburgh City Region and beyond.



**In our operations, research and teaching we will engage critically with, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals** including the promotion, protection and respect for human rights.



Measures of success and key areas of activity are included for each strategic objective on the following pages linking – where relevant – to key deliverables included in Strategy 2030.

## Principles

To achieve the University's social and civic responsibility the following principles will guide our actions:

- Students should be supported to make a positive difference for sustainability and develop a passion to engage locally and globally.
- Staff should be equipped with the skills and knowledge to ensure their teaching and research can make a positive impact on society.
- University operations, investments and purchasing decisions should have a positive impact on society and we recognise that we also need to mitigate any negative impacts (avoid, prevent, minimise, restore, offset).
- Equality, diversity and inclusion, and physical, mental, emotional and financial wellbeing should be actively promoted and supported by the University and experienced by our communities.
- We will work in partnership with our neighbours and communities.
- We will ensure a global context to social and environmental challenges and opportunities.
- We will be transparent and demonstrate accountability through our reporting and communications.

The University's Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) Committee will have responsibility for *overseeing* the progress in implementing and will monitor and review this Plan on behalf of the University's Executive Group. Monitoring progress for specific strategic objectives will also be undertaken by relevant governance structures.

A communications campaign for the University will be developed to explain what the University means by social and civic responsibility, and will set out clear actions staff and students can take to contribute to this. It will be deeply linked to specific actions contained within sub-plans and strategies (*Climate Strategy / Waste Strategy / Widening Participation Strategy / Community Engagement Plan*). Colleges and schools will be developing and integrating their actions and approaches as part of college and school planning.

This document updates and replaces the SRS Strategy 2010-2020. It will be reviewed in 2025. The key areas of activity identified for each strategic objective will form the implementation plan updated annually.

## Strategic objectives

### 1. We will become a zero carbon and zero waste university.

Developing and pioneering approaches to deliver a low carbon and circular economy and protecting and enhancing biodiversity.

The climate and ecological crisis is one of the most pressing issues facing humanity. Our Climate Strategy outlines our commitments to Net Zero by 2040. We will actively contribute to achieving SDGs 12, 13, 14 and 15 and recognise contributions to other SDGs. Circular economy thinking will be embedded across policies and systems.



**We will work to eliminate and where that is not possible sequester / offset any unavoidable Greenhouse Gas emissions.** We will seek to identify ways to become carbon negative through our whole institution approach outlined in our climate strategy and to protect and enhance biodiversity. In doing so, we will strive to go beyond ‘zero carbon’ and to be regenerative in our approach.

#### Measures of success

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##### By 2025

- Carbon emissions per £ million turnover reduced by 50 per cent.
  - Carbon emissions returned to 2007/08 baseline year levels.
  - Waste arising per student reduced by 10 per cent.
  - No single use plastic items (non-clinical / in offices and catering).
  - Biodiversity action plans for all campuses.
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##### By 2030

- **We will be on track to becoming a net zero carbon university by 2040\*.**
  - We will be a zero waste university by 2030.
  - We will be on track for sequestering the carbon we cannot eliminate.
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\*Strategy 2030 Key Deliverable

## Key areas of activity

## Responsible

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**Buildings:** New buildings will strive to be zero carbon with circular economy principles where technology allows. We will work to eliminate carbon from energy consumption in line with our climate strategy. We will increase our use of renewables while continuing to benefit from grid decarbonisation in Scotland. We will be efficient in our use of energy and find opportunities to save carbon and costs from our energy.

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Estates, SRS and all Departments

**Business travel:** Climate conscious travel will be embedded across all travel decisions and we will work with others across the FHE sector to change travel culture.

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SRS, Colleges and Schools and all Departments

**Sequester carbon and invest in biodiversity:** We will invest in Scotland's natural capital and biodiversity and develop plans to sequester carbon which cannot be eliminated. Developing biodiversity action plans for all campuses.

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SRS, Finance and Estates

**Supply chains and investments:**

Complete transition from divestments in fossil fuel (*in 2020*) and explore new ways to reduce emissions in investments.

Finance, SRS and all Departments

Improve our understanding of emissions from purchasing and explore new ways to reduce the emissions from our purchasing working with suppliers to promote circular economy thinking and action.

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**Build capabilities** across University departments so that staff and students have the knowledge, skills and tools to take actions and make changes in their area for zero carbon and zero waste (offices, laboratories, accommodation, etc).

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SRS with Strategic Planning, Human Resources, Groups, Colleges and Schools and all Departments

**Integrated decision making:** Carbon costs and benefits will be integrated into decision making through committees, planning rounds, business case reviews, and elsewhere.

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SRS, Strategic Planning, Finance and all Departments.

**Research and Innovation:** We will invest in research, innovation and partnerships to identify solutions that tackle the challenges posed by climate change and the opportunity for a circular economy. (i.e the Circular Economy Centre).

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Colleges, Schools, Edinburgh Innovations and Research Office

## 2. We will widen participation in higher education and support inclusion.

Increasing opportunities and raising aspirations by making education and employment an achievable goal for more people in Scotland and globally.

We will actively contribute to achieving SDGs 4, 8 and 10 as well as 5 and 9.

Education is a driver of mobility across the world. We have a long commitment to widening participation which will continue to be developed and new partnerships forged for opportunities in Scotland and globally.

We will use our influence and leverage through supply chains and investments to contribute positively to education and opportunity.



### Measures of success

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#### By 2025

- Increased number of young people aged 16 to 24 working at the University.
  - £8M will be invested in social enterprises delivering positive financial performance and positive impact on poverty, social housing, rural development and young people.
  - Number of new entrants to the university from the most deprived areas in Scotland, increased. *10 per cent new entrants from 20 per cent most deprived areas by 2021.*
  - Working with University suppliers, and supply chains to promote decent work locally and globally<sup>4</sup>. Community benefit leveraged to support disadvantaged communities and promote local youth employment and training.
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#### By 2030

- **We will be leading Scotland's commitment to widening participation.\***
  - We will support national ambition that 20 per cent of new entrants to higher education should come from the 20 per cent most deprived areas in Scotland.
  - **Improved digital outreach will see us enable global participation in education.\***
  - We will have delivered new opportunities for international students from disadvantaged backgrounds to access and excel in higher education.
  - **We will provide access to data skills to at least 700,000 individuals, and create new companies and solutions for global challenges (City Deal DDI). \***
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\*Strategy 2030 Key Deliverable

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<sup>4</sup> Opportunity to link target to proportion adopting fair wages

## Key areas of activity

## Responsible

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**Widening participation in Scotland:** We will enhance opportunities for all, with targeted interventions for students from the most deprived communities in Scotland. This includes a range of initiatives such as *YourEd* and the Access Programme in the Centre for Open Learning. See the Widening Participation strategy for more details.

Widening Participation, Centre for Open Learning, Colleges and Schools

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**Youth employment:** We will be a leading employer for youth and students. More opportunities for young people and students at the University will be created through modern apprenticeships and placements, enhancing their employability.

Human Resources, Careers and others

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**Social investment in Scotland:** We will deliver an innovative Social Investment Fund working with partners such as Big Issue Invest and Power Up Scotland.

Finance and SRS

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**City Deal inclusive growth and Data Driven Innovation:** We will work with our neighbours and community partners to inspire the next generation workforce, through the five inclusive growth objectives<sup>5</sup> of the City Region Deal.

Data Driven Innovation Programme

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**Widening participation globally:** We will work in partnership with others to support students from diverse backgrounds with education opportunities. Providing scholarships for students from developing countries; addressing barriers; and ensuring effective student support. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) will continue to reach all countries.

Edinburgh Global, Development & Alumni, Colleges and Schools

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**Inclusion and diversity:** We will be a welcoming and inclusive organisation which celebrates diversity, recruiting and supporting students and staff from diverse backgrounds.

Student Services, Human Resources and all Departments

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**Sustainable procurement and investments:** We will delivery our sustainable procurement duties which include a focus on reducing inequality. We will work with researchers and other partners to identify opportunities to address. We will work with our suppliers to deliver community benefits. Our commitment to the Principles for Responsible Investment (PRI) will continue drive action in this area.

Finance and SRS

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<sup>5</sup> Namely: (1) Accelerating inclusive growth; (2) Removing the barriers to growth; (3) Delivering community benefits through procurement; (4) Targeting employability and skills interventions; and (5) Delivering social benefit through innovation.



### 3. Working together with local communities to contribute to improving the lives of people across the Edinburgh City Region.

We recognise our responsibilities as a global university rooted in Edinburgh. With more than 40,000 students, 12,000 staff and many alumni living locally, we form a significant proportion of the community we serve. We will play a vital role in strengthening and driving the local economy, as well as being an essential part of the educational, social, cultural and international aspects of local life. We will increase mutual awareness, understanding and knowledge of the University and the community. We will contribute towards the protection and enhancement of the spaces and places we are part of and work with others to tackle homelessness, place-based multiple deprivation and digital exclusion.



#### Measures of success

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##### By 2025

- We will increase the opportunities for students to contribute to local communities as part of volunteering, work, study and research programmes.
- We will continue to be Living Wage accredited.
- We will support more staff to volunteer and share skills.
- We will invest (at least) £50,000 annually to support the development of community activities through the Edinburgh Local Community Grants scheme by 2025.
- We will work to ensure positive community benefit through procurement.
- We will deliver community engagement projects and initiatives which leverage University resources to support disadvantaged communities and increase opportunities.

##### By 2030

- **We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.\***
- Community engagement / service will be part of an Edinburgh student experience.
- Staff volunteering will have contributed to local community projects.
- At least £50,000 per year invested through Edinburgh Local Community Grants by 2030.

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\*Strategy 2030 Key Deliverable

## Key areas of activity

## Responsible

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<p><b>Consultation and engagement:</b> We will consult with and engage with communities on buildings and campus developments. A regular Community Forum will be facilitated. Edinburgh Local will provide a virtual front door and the Edinburgh Futures Institute a physical front door. We will work with Edinburgh City Council and other community partners to understand and jointly address issues in the community.</p>	Communications and Marketing, SRS, Estates and Edinburgh Futures Institute
<p><b>Shared learning and research:</b> We will deliver the 'Understanding Place Project', a research programme aimed at tackling multiple deprivation and empowering and giving a voice to hard-to-reach and marginalised groups. We will work with partners to undertake research for and with communities. We will increase <b>awareness of poverty</b> in our own staff/students.</p>	Edinburgh Futures Institute, Colleges, Schools and SRS
<p><b>Fair work:</b> We will continue to be a <b>living wage</b> organisation for employees and regular contractors and have no staff on hours to be notified (zero hours) contracts.</p>	Human Resources
<p><b>Volunteering and sharing skills / sharing time:</b> We will work with partners to promote, facilitate, and support staff and student volunteering. The Student's Association already support a match making service for students and we will roll out the new staff commitment to enable a day to make a difference and promote skills based volunteering and longer term partnerships.</p>	SRS, Communications and Marketing, Human Resources and Students Association
<p><b>Investing in key projects and sharing spaces:</b> We will deliver community engagement projects and initiatives which leverage University resources to support disadvantaged communities and increase opportunities. This will include projects like the Community Grants scheme. As part of the city we will aim to protect cultural heritage and enhance access to green spaces and contribute to a sustainable city and communities.</p>	SRS, Communications and Marketing, Estates, Festivals, Edinburgh Futures Institute, Colleges and Schools
<p><b>Social enterprises and social innovation:</b> We will support and develop student social enterprises and initiatives that will deliver innovative solutions to reduce poverty and create opportunities for the most disadvantaged communities.</p>	Edinburgh Innovations and Students Association
<p><b>Gaelic language:</b> Adopt a new University Gaelic Language Plan 2019-2024</p>	Communications and Marketing
<p><b>Addressing homelessness:</b> The Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health will extend its educational outreach and partnership-working in support of effective practice. We will work to support other projects and partnerships in this area.</p>	Health in Social Sciences, Law School, Edinburgh Futures Institute and Corporate Services Group

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## Cross Cutting Theme

**In our operations, research and teaching we will engage critically with, and contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals including the promotion, protection and respect for human rights**

The SDGs provide a framework for sustainability and social responsibility and link human rights as set out in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.



Progress has been made to promote and protect human rights at both a local and global level. However, the right to an education, to clean water, to be free from poverty are still not realised for millions around the world. Climate change is further impacting these rights and impacting the poorest the most. The University will continue to treat all individuals with dignity and respect, promoting equality and diversity as a fair employer, and respect human rights through our research, teaching, operations, investments and partnerships. We will use the SDGs as a lens for decision making and promote these through our learning, teaching, research and operations. We will be actively contributing to the next global goals post 2030.

### Measures of success

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#### By 2025

- We will complete a mapping of the curriculum and on our research based on the SDGs.
  - We will improve our annual reporting on social responsibility and sustainability, incorporating the SDGs. We will measure and communicate our *social impact linked to SDGs*.
  - We will be using our leverage with suppliers and others to promote SDGs and human rights.
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#### By 2030

- **We will see integrated reporting of our whole organisational impact against the SDGs.\***
  - We will provide opportunities for all staff, students and alumni, through professional development, the curriculum and co-curricular initiatives, to critically engage with the SDGs.
  - We will develop partnerships at both a local and global level to support the delivery the SDGs.
  - Every student will be learning about sustainability, social and civic responsibility in their discipline and curriculum.
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\*Strategy 2030 Key Deliverable

## Key areas of activity

## Responsible

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**Student experience and education:** We will provide opportunities for students through the academic curriculum and extra-curricular activities to critically engage with the SDGs. We will develop the graduate attributes of students, ensuring they have the skills, knowledge and passion to make a positive difference to society.

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Colleges, Schools and SRS

**Research:** We will strive to make our research even more interdisciplinary and international, to address social and global challenges including the SDGs (as per Strategy 2030). We will communicate our research impact for the SDGs and be actively contributing to the development of local and global goals post 2030.

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Research Office, Edinburgh Global, Colleges, Schools and Communications and Marketing

**Understand our impact:** We will seek to further understand actual and potential impacts (positive and negative) on the SDGs and human rights. We will integrate and act upon the findings and communicate our efforts. We will help support research to improve our understanding of human rights and justice at both a local and global level.

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Strategic Planning, SRS, Edinburgh Futures Institute, Communications and Marketing, Colleges and Schools

**Embedded across the organisation:**

Enhancing positive / preventing and mitigating negative: We will take action directly, within our sphere of influence, to contribute positively to the SDGs. Where we have negative impacts we will work to mitigate (avoid, prevent, minimise, restore, offset).

Colleges, Schools / Departments will develop plans for how they will integrate SDGs and promote social and civic responsibility in their areas. Office and lab awards and Sustainability Champions staff and student network will support this. We will provide opportunities for staff to learn about sustainability and actions they can take. We will celebrate the actions of staff and students in contributing to the SDGs (sustainability awards).

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All, supported by SRS

**Transparency and Accountability:** We will annually report on the progress made by the University in working towards the SDGs and raise awareness and understanding in Scotland and across the world. Our Integrated Annual Report and Account will use the framework of the SDGs. We will measure and report on our social impact and contributions to society.

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Strategic Planning, Finance and SRS

**Using our leverage in supply chains and investments:** We will work with suppliers, to address positive and negative impacts and share their progress on working towards the SDGs.

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Finance and SRS

## Implementation and resourcing

- Proposed actions are a mix of those to be progressed from within existing budgets and actions whose consequences will require resource that will be brought forward in specific business cases.
- Key areas of activity will inform more detailed implementation and resourcing plans.
- Colleges, Schools and Professional Service Departments will develop plans for how they will integrate SDGs and promote social and civic responsibility in their areas as part of their annual planning rounds.
- The University's SRS Committee will have responsibility for overseeing the progress in implementing and will monitor and review this Plan on behalf of the University's Executive Group.
- Monitoring progress for specific strategic objectives will also be undertaken by relevant governance structures.

## Risks

- Risk registers will be developed and updated annually.

## Equality and diversity

- Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change require deep transformations and complementary actions by all organisations. Climate change impacts disproportionately on the world's poorest and most vulnerable including women and children in the developing world. Tackling climate change and the SDGs makes a major contribution to global justice, gender, education and protection of natural resources.

## Monitoring and evaluation

- An accompanying Performance Framework for Social and Civic Responsibility will be used to track, monitor and support evaluation of progress. This framework will be used for annual reporting. See links to previous performance on Social Responsibility and Sustainability here: [www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/governance-publications-reports/reports/2017-18/key-performance-indicators](http://www.ed.ac.uk/sustainability/governance-publications-reports/reports/2017-18/key-performance-indicators) with links to SDGs.

## Sustainability (and Social Responsibility) policy

This accompanying policy sets out the expectations for staff and students around the University, and actions that the whole University community can take to be more sustainable and socially responsible.

[www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sustainability\\_and\\_social\\_responsibility\\_policy\\_-\\_april\\_2020\\_0.pdf](http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/atoms/files/sustainability_and_social_responsibility_policy_-_april_2020_0.pdf)