
Sustainability Policy

Policy Ref: SP1

Version: 9.0

Approving Body: VCEG

Executive Lead (Risk Owner): Chief
Operating Officer

Policy Owner (Risk Updater): Planning &
Administration Manager

Date Approved: June 2022

Date Reviewed: June 2024

Policy Statement

As an organisation that has been at the forefront of agricultural education and a key contributor to the land-based sector for more than 175 years, the Royal Agricultural University (RAU) recognises its role as leaders and exemplars in sustainable and ethical practice. We commit to establish, implement and maintain exemplary standards through our teaching, research and knowledge exchange activities, as well as through our operational and estate management. This includes compliance with any relevant legislative and other best practice requirements within the context of our organisation. We recognise the need to continually improve our sustainability objectives and targets in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Policy details

The RAU has identified six key objectives of this policy that have a strategic alignment to the overall aims of the organisation to become a “sustainable and efficient organisation”. These are to:

- Comply with the highest national and sector standards for sustainability
- Put sustainability at the heart of our teaching and research activities
- Minimise environmental costs and use of resources
- Embed sustainability into the core of our management and operations
- Work to actively enhance our environment
- Engage with our community and partner organisations

We have identified a number of key targets which will be measured and monitored in the pursuance of these objectives. We have also identified a number of key actions, which will be supported by multiple activities across the business to achieve the key objectives. These can all be found within the revised 2019-2022 Environmental Action Plan.

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Scope of the policy

Our sustainability policy includes all activities and operations undertaken on our main campus and satellite sites at Rural Innovation Centre, Farm 491, Coates Farm, Fossehill Equine Centre and the Alliston Centre. These activities include teaching, research, farming, estates management and other commercial and administrative functions.

Our approach to environmental management seeks to manage the environmental impacts, opportunities and risks that occur across the life-cycle of our operations. As such, we also seek to control and influence environmental impacts, risks and opportunities in our supply chain, projects with partners, and any investments we may make.

Relevant legislation and other requirements

The RAU has identified all key legislative and other requirements relevant to its Sustainability objectives. For the purposes of this policy some key statutory instruments are (list not exhaustive):

- Environment Act 1995
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1991
- Water Industry Act 1991
- Water Resources Act 1991
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990

There are additional acts and regulations together with sector and other identified schemes to which the RAU subscribes that imposes further obligation upon us.

Responsibilities

The Sustainability Action Group, chaired by the Chief Operating Officer, has responsibility for the development and implementation of environmental sustainability across the RAU. The Committee shall ensure there is an integrated, proactive approach to environmental sustainability across the RAU that is informed by best practice and supports the university's vision, objectives and strategy.

All staff have a responsibility for the implementation of this policy and are expected to support the achievement of the ambitious objectives and targets through compliance with any initiatives or schemes organised by the RAU.

Students and visitors, as members of the university community, are encouraged to act within the spirit of this policy and similarly support any RAU sustainability initiatives and schemes to enable us to meet our objectives and targets.

Colleagues to have awareness of the amount that they are printing and to 'Think before they Print'.

Related policies

There are a number of supporting policies and procedures which can be found on the RAU Website and Intranet, including our Environmental Sustainability Document – What is the RAU doing now, the Investment Policy which includes the University's approach to corporate social responsibility,

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sustainability and ethical investment, stationery and office supplies ordering procedure, Food Sustainability Policy and our Sustainability Action Plan 2022-23.

Consequences

Failure to comply with this policy and supporting procedures or standards may result in disciplinary procedures.

Management review

The Sustainability Action Group (SAG) has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Sustainability Policy. The SAG will continually improve the EMS and will oversee an annual Management Review. They will annually report to the Risk and Compliance Forum on the status of E&S management at the RAU.