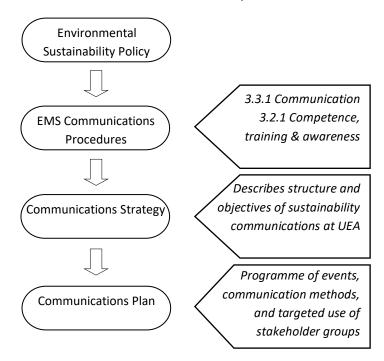# UEA Sustainability Communications Strategy

May 2018

Background and overview

UEA's Environmental Sustainability Policy commits to 'openly engage with University stakeholders by sharing knowledge and regularly publishing reports on environmental commitments, action and performance' (March 2018). There is a specific need for awareness raising and training through implementation of the Environmental Management System (EMS), as well as to help involve staff and students with meeting University targets.

Figure 1: Environmental communications documentation hierarchy

This Strategy aims to support a comprehensive and coordinated plan to encourage the behavioural changes needed across campus to support the delivery of UEA's Environmental Sustainability Policy commitments and related targets. There is also a need to ensure that key stakeholders are engaged in a proactive way. This is detailed in the Communications Plan.

The Communications Strategy and Plan will be reviewed annually by the Sustainability Board, taking into account the Environmental Sustainability Policy and programme, and in the light of changing priorities and actions.

Aims and objectives

The aim of this Strategy is to ensure transparency of UEA's EMS and operational environmental management and that all key stakeholders are made aware of (and/or are able to access information on) UEA's Environmental Sustainability Policy and their role within it.

Key objectives:
- Raise the profile of the University's Environmental Sustainability Policy and celebrate success and innovation;
- Engage key stakeholders, stimulating and embedding behaviour change through awareness raising, communication and engagement;

- Support the aims and objectives of the Energy and Carbon Reduction Programme, including delivering a 5% reduction in energy use between 2014/15 and 2020/21 through staff and student engagement;
- Enable UEA to demonstrate commitment to achieving real environmental performance improvements.

Stakeholder review

A stakeholder matrix (see Sustainability Communications Plan, Appendix 4) plots work areas and communications methods against the following stakeholder groups. Prioritisation is to reflect stakeholders' ability to directly influence UEA environmental targets, as well as similar areas of interest/ required levels of detail.

Priority group 0: Sustainability Board; Executive Team

Priority group 1: Current staff and students

Priority group 2: Potential future staff; prospective students; key academic or business contacts/ networks (e.g. CRU, DEV, ENV, SCI, Tyndall Centre, Adapt)

Priority group 3: Partner organisations (e.g. Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, INTO, John Innes and Sportspark); local community members; external audit or league table organisations (People & Planet, EMS audit bodies, HESA); contractors on campus; and visitors to campus (including schools).

Priority group 4: Wider academic community, other HEIs, financial community (HEFCE and investors), regulators and policy makers, local and national media, alumni, and the general public.

Student experience

Enhancing the 'student experience' should be a key focus of campaigns aimed at students. A longitudinal study into student attitudes towards, and thoughts on skills for, sustainable development in UK higher education is underway by the Higher Education Academy (HEA) and the National Union of Students (NUS). The 2016-17 (seventh consecutive) survey[1] found that 87% of students believe that sustainable development should be actively promoted and incorporated by UK universities. This belief has been shown to increase as they progress through their studies.

Fifty-eight per cent of domestic students revealed a desire to learn more about sustainable development, a figure that rose to 67% amongst EU students and 73% from non-EU student respondents. The survey, of over 12,000 students in total, also found that students believed skills for sustainable development are overwhelmingly expected to be important for employment. Respondents showed a desire for roles that effect positive social and environmental change with approximately half of respondents willing to make a salary sacrifice of £3000 to work in this type of role.

These highlight opportunities to 'sell' sustainability to students as beneficial to their future careers, as well as for pro-environmental reasons.

Communications tools

The 'Sustainable Ways' website (www.uea.ac.uk/about/sustainability) is owned and managed by the Sustainable Development Team. It provides information on the institution's policy, significant environmental aspects and impacts, and reports annually, openly and transparently on environmental commitments, action and performance through the Annual Environmental Reports. From the 2017 reporting year (published 2018) these will be renamed the UEA Environmental Sustainability Annual Report.

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[1] Full report available online: https://sustainability.nus.org.uk/our-research/our-research/skills-and-sustainable-development

Other tools include a range of @SustainableUEA social media platforms; print media; the SustainableUEA blog, hosted on the Sustainable Ways website; a monthly newsletter; and engagement programmes and events based around each monthly 'Focus On…' theme (see Sustainability Communications Plan, Appendix 3).

Key messages

With regular opportunities to encourage change in social norms as new students arrive every year, it is important to establish a set of key messages in order to effectively communicate a joined up and comprehensive commitment. Clear branding supports the message that UEA is committed to the sustainability agenda.

The University of East Anglia takes sustainability seriously, at both a local and global level. Every member of the University community can make a difference through the adoption of more sustainable practices, from small changes in behaviour to embedding sustainable development principles in their work and personal lives.

UEA is investing in its infrastructure and personnel to reduce negative environmental impacts and capitalise on internal expertise. For example, UEA is continuing to reduce its carbon intensity despite a growing estate.

Branding

The 'UEA Sustainable Ways' identity, @SustainableUEA online, was developed with support from UEA's central communications team. It acts as an umbrella to pull together sustainability-related actions, research, communications, curricular content, strategies, and student/ staff engagement.

Key links

Sustainable Ways website   www.uea.ac.uk/about/sustainability

Sustainable Ways newsletter back-catalogue   www.uea.ac.uk/about/sustainability/newsletter

Annual Environmental Report   www.uea.ac.uk/about/sustainability/strategy-and-policy