

# Keele University's performance in People and Planet's University League

Keele University is currently positioned 27<sup>th</sup> in **People & Planet's University League** which ranks UK Universities based on environmental and ethical performance. The league table is compiled annually and assesses a number of different areas from policy and strategy to workers' rights, carbon management and education for sustainability.

## How is Keele University performing on sustainability?....

### Environmental Policy and Strategy

Our [Environmental and Sustainability Policy 2021](#) details our commitment to embed sustainability in all that we do including within our education, research and engagement, campus operations and leadership and governance.

The policy is reviewed and updated annually at our Environment and Sustainability Steering Group (ESSG) to reflect on progress and areas of improvement.

Our Environmental and Social Sustainability Policy is implemented through various strategies and plans.

We have implemented an environmental management system, accredited to [Eco Campus Gold](#) standard, to provide a framework for managing our environmental impacts. Our [Eco Campus annual environmental objectives and targets \(SMART action plan\)](#) details our key objectives, targets and actions to improve our environmental performance. They are reviewed quarterly, alongside our Key Performance Indicator's (KPI's) at our Environment and Sustainability Steering Group (ESSG).

We are also committed to engaging our community with sustainability, through events such as Keele Green Festival with activities open to the public and involving environmental and social charities and organisations; events and exhibits through Arts Keele; free-to-attend lectures from Keele and visiting lectures through the ILAS Grand Challenge series; school visits and outreach activities; engaging and supporting businesses and local councils with climate action and carbon literacy; and engagement with community events from Pint of Science to Stoking Curiosity. These events and community engagement activities are all in line with [Keele's Education for Sustainability Strategy 2014-2022](#) and our approach to embedding sustainability in everything we do, both on campus and beyond.

### Staff

The [Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost, Professor Mark Ormerod](#) is the **Strategic Lead** for Environment and Sustainability at Keele University.

We have several staff working in [dedicated sustainability roles](#) covering operational sustainability, education for sustainability and other key areas such as the Smart Energy Network Demonstrator (SEND) project.

The University holds a central [sustainability budget](#) to fund sustainability activities and initiatives. Some examples include:

- Supporting the Sustainability Network, Innovation in Sustainability Projects Fund and Sustainability Awards scheme
- Green Week and other sustainability-themed events
- Hosting the World Student Environmental Network global summit
- Enabling staff and students to attend sustainability conferences and events such as NUS conferences, the EAUC conference, and WSEN global summits.

The Estates and Development Directorate also holds a budget for various energy/carbon and environmental activities including:

- Energy/carbon reduction fund
- Paid sustainability Inters (x2)
- Waste and recycling improvements and Audits
- Walled Garden Allotments
- Soil association catering standard
- Eco campus/ISO standard, and
- ISO 50001 standard.

Our [staff and student sustainability network](#) and award scheme increases communication and engagement with sustainability activities on campus.

### Environmental Auditing

We were awarded [Eco Campus Gold](#) standard in December 2020 for our environmental management system that provides a framework for managing the environmental impact from university operations.

### Ethical Investment and Banking

Keele University's [Ethical Investment Policy](#) explicitly outlines Keele's commitment to never invest in fossil fuels or arms companies and reinvest in clean energy and technology.

The policy allows for any group or individual member of the University community to make representations to the University regarding its investments. This should be done in writing to the Director of Finance & IT. The representations will then be considered by the Business Review Committee on behalf of Council.

The University's ethical investment policy is based on the premise that the University's choice of where to invest should be in line with its strategic aims and its environmental, social and ethical values. This means the University is commitment to screen out specific sectors from investments. These include a

- full commitment to screen out all fossil fuel companies.
- full commitment to screen out all arm companies.
- Commitment to screen out corporations complicit in the violation of international law.

Keele University is committed to focus its investments in companies with a positive environmental and/or societal impact, in particular in areas of clean energy and technology.

In addition, the University is also committed to investing in renewable energy projects on our campus and development is underway to create a [renewable energy park](#) generating 50% of the campus electricity.

## Carbon Management

[Keele University met its 2020 carbon reduction target a year early](#) with a 39% reduction against a 1990 baseline. Our [Energy Management Strategy 2016-2022](#) details our objectives, targets and action to further reduce our Carbon emissions from scope 1 and 2. (Our carbon emissions target includes our [carbon emissions attributed to residential accomodation](#) )

In May 2019 the University Council declared a climate emergency and committed to an ambitious target of net zero emissions by the year 2030.

In March 2021 we launched our [Climate Action Framework Principles](#) setting out the whole University approach that we'll take in order to reach net zero carbon by 2030.

Our Climate Action Framework Principles priority actions include:

A commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030 which includes our campus operational emissions (scopes 1 and 2) and indirect emissions (scope 3) including:

- Waste (including construction)
- Water
- Procurement (supply chain)
- Staff and student business trips e.g. flights to conferences and field trips
- Staff and students commuting to university on a daily basis
- Carbon emissions associated with the travel between students' homes and the university at the start and end of term (including international students' travel to and from their home country)

The [energy and carbon](#) section of our sustainability webpages details our carbon reduction work to date and the development of a new renewable energy park on campus.

## Workers' Rights

As a member of the North West Universities Purchasing Consortium (NWUPC) our ITC supply chains are covered by [Electronics Watch](#) , an organisation that works to protect the rights of workers in electronics supply chains.

Keele is signed up to the Can't Buy My Silence [universities pledge](#)

Fixed Term Contract policy:

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/policyzone/data/fixedtermcontractpolicyandprocedure/>

## Sustainable Food

Keele University's [Sustainable Food Policy](#) details our commitments to source sustainable food for our catering outlets, engage with our community to eat healthily and sustainable and ensure our catering operations are sustainable.

The Sustainable Food Policy is reported on annually at the [Environment and Sustainability Steering Group \(ESSG\)](#) meeting.

We've implemented several [sustainable food practices](#) within our catering outlets on campus and have been awarded the Soil Association's Food For Life Catering Mark.

There are also opportunities for staff and students to get involved in [growing food on campus](#).

## Student and Staff Engagement

Our [ESD strategy](#) details how we engage with staff and students on sustainability.

Staff and students are involved in the development of our net zero carbon plan and actions, and this is one of our key principles within our [Climate Action Framework Principles](#). One of our priority actions is to "Develop a climate emergency consultation process including development of a staff and student 'citizen assembly' on the climate emergency, alongside other forms of on-going participation."

All sustainability policies and strategies are presented at ESSG (Environment and Sustainability Steering Group) for discussion and approval. Membership of ESSG includes an elected student Sabbatical Officer from KeeleSU and the current sustainability interns, providing opportunity for feedback and scrutiny from and on behalf of students. We are proud of our close links with the Students' Union (KeeleSU) and Keele Postgraduate Association (KPA) and we see student representation as a vital means of ensuring effective communication between students and staff. The University is committed to its partnership with the Students' Unions. A copy of the Partnership Agreement can be found [here](#).

Induction – We want to ensure all students are aware of Keele's commitment to sustainability and how they can get involved during their time at Keele. Students are provided with a Sustainability Online Induction [\[https://sway.office.com/skCCb4WZecEDthml?ref=Link\]](https://sway.office.com/skCCb4WZecEDthml?ref=Link) and there are Sustainability activities and workshops that take place throughout the Welcome Festival and period. This interactive resource includes a background to the importance of sustainability and climate action, information on what Keele is doing as an institution (including a link to the Environment and Social Sustainability policy), and a wide range of sustainability projects that students can get involved with.

We engage with staff, students and the community through our annual Green Festival.

Events: [Events - Keele University](#)

The University support local [community partnerships](#) with staff and students to improve sustainability. A couple of examples of recent projects are:

- Student-led [Great Donate](#) scheme working with the trussell trust (local foodbank) and British Heart Foundation (BHF) charity
- [Community Legal Outreach Collaboration Keele \(CLOCK\)](#)

Keele provides **funding to students** living in the Sustainability Bungalow (£200 per year) to support projects and activities they want to run during the year. Keele also funds 3 paid sustainability intern roles from the University Sustainability budget which enables students to work with the Sustainability Team and gain skills and experience, as well as proposing and leading on student-led sustainability projects. Keele's allotments include 2 student allotment

beds as part of the Student Eats programme which receive funding in-kind through Grounds teams providing maintenance support. Students are also supported to attend events such as SOS-UK conferences through the Sustainability Budget, the World Student Environmental Network Summit and other sustainability-related events to develop skills, knowledge, experience and networks to drive further change on campus. Further funding opportunities to drive student-led sustainability projects on campus are available through the Keele Key Fund (supported by Keele alumni) which has funded Weigh to Go (the SU zero waste shop), Vote Leaves tree planting on campus, a polytunnel at the Sustainability Bungalow, and a bird hide to engage students and the community called 'Hide and Seek'. Student societies can also submit applications to a sustainability fund in the SU to run activities or make green choices in their societies. Details of the University's sustainability funding can be found [here](#).

### **Staff sustainability induction**

All new staff will be made aware of Keele University's Sustainability Vision, Policy and Strategy within their local staff inductions. New staff members are also required to attend a ['Welcome to Keele'](#) session delivered by the Sustainability Team which includes Keele's sustainability strategy, along with information on recycling, energy, engagement opportunities, education for sustainability and the Sustainability Network.

[Trade Union Representatives](#) are members of the University's sustainable transport and travel group and are invited to engage with the University's Sustainability Strategy, including participation in developing the University's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) Strategy.

Keele Students' Union is actively engaged in sustainability and work with the University's sustainability team on initiatives. The SU participates in the [Green Impact Scheme](#) and have achieved excellent standard.

### **Education for Sustainable Development**

Keele is committed to Education for Sustainable development and our [Education for Sustainability strategy](#) commits to enabling our students to explore their discipline through a 'sustainability lens' whether they study business, law, psychology, geography or education. In addition, Keele has a Director of Education for Sustainability – Professor Zoe Robinson, who is Professor of Sustainability in Higher Education and Co-Director of the Institute for Sustainable Futures. This role advocates Education for Sustainability working with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Provost, who is also Keele's strategic lead for Environmental Sustainability.

Education for Sustainable Development also features as the third commitment in [Keele's Climate Action Framework Principles](#) which launched in 2021. This demonstrates Keele's commitment to equipping our students with the skills, knowledge and experience required to contribute to and become future leaders in a zero carbon future. [Keele's strategic plan and mission](#) also focus on providing world-leading education build on 'leadership in environmental sustainability as a critical behaviour to secure a sustainable future'. Our approach to embedding ESD into the formal, informal and hidden curricula enable learning through degree programmes, extra-curricular activities and the spaces students (and staff) work, learn and live in. Sustainability also features as one of three core pillars for [Keele's](#)

[Curriculum Design Framework](#), highlighting the importance of ESD as a foundation for all our degree programmes.

In addition to embedding ESD through adoption of our ESD Strategy, Keele University and KeeleSU are accredited under the [SOS-UK Responsible Futures programme](#) which assess participants based on their action and approach to embed ESD as a whole-institution approach. Keele also maps ESD in the curriculum through our [Curriculum Review](#) process to identify good practice that can be shared within and beyond the university, as well as identifying opportunities for further development of ESD. The Curriculum Review report was circulated to ESSG (Environment and Sustainability Steering Group) and was received at the University Learning and Teaching Committee.

Keele makes support and training available to academic staff to support integration of ESD into curricula across all disciplines. These opportunities include:

- ESD workshops delivered through Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching Excellence,
- An online training module in Education for Sustainability,
- Individual consultations and meetings to develop resources and teaching materials,
- Promoting events like the SOS-UK SDG Teach in to encourage colleagues to embed sustainability during the teach in fortnight and share practice,
- Sharing and creating resources such as the [ESD Module Case Studies](#) document and HEFCE funded [Listening Project](#) to share practice within Keele,
- Team training sessions to support review of programme level ESD and wider opportunities, i.e with Foundation Year in 2018-19 and Computing and Maths in 2020-21,
- Online community via MS Teams for academic staff to share resources and approaches,
- Including embedding ESD into the Keele Sustainability Benchmark criteria which all Schools are encouraged to engage with,
- Including ESD in the MA Higher Education Practice programme which all new teaching staff complete as part of their probation requirements.

### Living Labs

As a campus-based university with academic and retail spaces, halls of residence, and private housing, along with considerable grounds, Keele is representative of a small town. This puts us in an ideal place to use our campus as a classroom and adopt a living laboratory approach to our research, learning and teaching, and student experience. Keele's flagship sustainability projects [SEND](#) and HyDeploy demonstrate excellence in Living Lab approaches, however using our campus as a space for students to research, test projects and learning in the real-world, and for researchers to conduct world-leading research that can feed into local and national governmental policy and action make our Living Lab approach really powerful. Keele has featured as a [Living Lab Case Study for the EAUC](#) (Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges) and further living lab projects include [renewable energy](#) and [smart roads](#).

Further learning opportunities for students include [Keele's Sustainability Bungalow](#) where students '[live sustainability](#)' and drive their own projects; the [Weigh to Go](#) shop – [a student-led zero waste shop](#); the [Greening Business module](#) which enables students to explore and propose solutions to real-world sustainability challenges teams from Catering to Grounds are working on; to the Environment and Sustainability Consultancy Study module working with Keele stakeholders and wider community groups from councils to education charities to propose solutions to sustainability challenges they face.

Keele supports and celebrates projects for sustainable development from Schools, Faculties and research teams through resources such as the [Sustainability Report](#), Module Case Studies documents, student research and ESD case studies created for events like the SDG Teach In, and news stories. Examples include the [Keele Beauty Bank](#) launched by Childrens Nursing Student Victoria Black, School of Medicine students leading on submitting a return to the [Planetary Health Report card](#) resulting in the School ranking highest in the UK, and collaboration between the School of Computing and Maths, Sports Centre, SU and sustainability team to launch [Race Around the World](#) to promote sustainability learning and wellbeing. Keele's Sustainability Benchmark also enables sharing of practice and projects and teams/[individuals](#) are frequently nominated for [Green Gown awards](#) in recognition of their achievements.

### Equal access to Higher Education

Keele welcomes applications from asylum seekers and those from a forced migrant background. Keele established the Article 26 Sanctuary Scholarship programme in 2014, offering full tuition fee waivers alongside dedicated information, guidance and support. We have supported six scholarships to date, with two students graduating successfully so far and all others continuing with their studies ([Keele Access and Participation Plan 2020-21 – 2024-25](#)). We also aim to develop and enhance specialist support for the asylum seekers and forced migrants considering all aspects of the student journey but particularly student success.

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/article-26/>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/tuitionfeesandfunding/undergraduatefunding/undergraduatebursariesandscholarshipsinternationalstudents/>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/students/lifeoutsideofstudy/supportingourdiversecommunity/asylumseekersandforcedmigrants/#financial-support>

<https://www.keele.ac.uk/access-plan/>