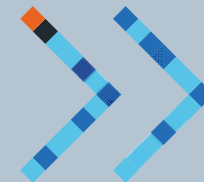




THINKING SUSTAINABLY TOOLKIT



USING THIS TOOLKIT



This toolkit has been developed to help enable individuals, teams, line managers and project leads embed environmental sustainability action into their daily work.

There is a variety of information and activities to use in whichever way work best for you:

- Key information on the University's environmental sustainability commitment and progress (pages 3 to 5)
- Thinking sustainably matrix (pages 6 to 7)
- Conversation starters (page 8)
- Environmental Sustainability in pictures (page 9)
- Everyday hints and tips (page 10)

If you experiment with any of the resources or develop activities within your own team, then please do feedback and share with m.c.berry@rhul.ac.uk



KEY INFORMATION:

OUR COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY



To help us both mitigate against, and adapt to, the climate and biodiversity emergencies, we're embedding environmental sustainability into absolutely everything we do – from how we maintain and develop our buildings and 135-acres parkland estate, to what food we serve in our outlets, and what and how we research and teach.

RH2030s, our University strategy, was launched in 2024 and commits us to being one of London's most sustainable Universities and -empowering our students, colleagues and partners to be environmental game-changers.

In 2024, we also published our **Environmental Sustainability Plan for Operations**, which outlines our specific energy, waste, water and biodiversity targets over the next two years and what actions we will complete to achieve them.

Our new **Environmental Policy** can be used to guide our day-to-day decisions and can be shared with our stakeholders, including our suppliers, to help them ensure they also align with our values.



KEY INFORMATION:

RH2030S ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC ENABLER



We will be one of London's most sustainable universities, embedding environmental sustainability in all aspects of our operations. We will empower our community through research, education and partnerships to mitigate climate and biodiversity crises and reduce our environmental footprint. We will empower our students, colleagues and partners to be environmental game-changers, drawing on our creative strengths and leveraging the decarbonisation of our estate.

Our objectives are to:

- Promote Education for Sustainable Development across the curriculum to equip our community with the skills to mitigate the climate crisis
- Support the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through research and partnerships
- Achieve Net Zero
- Continue waste reduction
- Improve water efficiency
- Increase biodiversity and climate resilience on campus

You can find out more about how the university is aiming to achieve this on the [university webpages](#)



KEY INFORMATION: THE STORY SO FAR



With thanks to colleagues and students from across the University, we're making good progress:

- Zero carbon electricity supply and increasing renewable energy from solar panels across our Egham campus
- Zero waste to landfill
- Fair Trade campus with carbon labelled meals across our food outlets
- Majority electric owned fleet
- ISO 14001 certified Environmental Management System (EMS)
- Green Flag award for our Living Campus
- Bronze Carbon Literate Educator award
- Many labs Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework (LEAF) accredited
- Full greenhouse gas, waste and water reporting in the University's annual financial reports, annually published Net Zero 2050 Carbon Reduction Plan
- Zero exposure to fossil fuel organisations across our investment portfolio
- Environmental Sustainability E-Learning course (mandatory for staff, offered to all students)

This is just the start, though, and we have even more to achieve over the coming years.



THINKING SUSTAINABLY MATRIX



Purpose:

To help understand how environmental sustainability can be embedded within any given piece of work or project (of any size!) by breaking it down into a series of smaller considerations.

Guidance:

First, we can view our work and the climate and biodiversity crises through the double lens of mitigation and adaptation:

- How our work can help us **mitigate** our impact on the planet (i.e. how we can reduce the severity of the crises through appropriately managing the energy we use, the waste we produce, the water we use and the biodiversity we support)
- How our work can help us **adapt** to the planet's impact on us (i.e. how we can increase our resilience to the effects of climate change that are already being felt, such as increased adverse weather, drought and flooding)

Second, we can break down any potential environmental impacts of our work across three stages (where applicable):

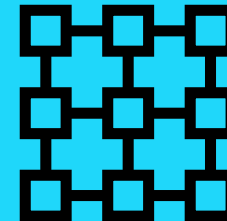
- **Procurement** – reduce and responsibly source goods and services
- **Operation** – how we work, including travel and equipment
- **Disposal/end of life** – minimise and responsibly dispose of waste

Best suited to:

Ideal for 1-1's but can also be used with teams.

Resources:

This way of thinking sustainably has been turned into the following template that can be used to help guide any piece of work, including procurement, projects, research and teaching.



THINKING SUSTAINABLY MATRIX

TEMPLATE



Impact	Aspect	Procurement (where applicable)	Operation	Disposal (where applicable)	Prompts
Our impact on the planet(Mitigate)	Energy and emissions				Is lots of energy required, can it be renewable? Is energy efficient equipment being used? How are external systems or services powered? How are web or IT services footprints minimised? What travel and modes of transport are involved? Refer to the University's greenhouse gas management hierarchy and travel hierarchy.
	Waste				Are single use products required? How can the product lifespan be maximised? How will any old equipment be disposed of? Refer to the University's waste hierarchy.
	Water				s lots of water required or wasted (including through the use of AI due to water cooling)? Can water efficiency devices be used?
	Land and biodiversity				Are any green spaces or trees being destroyed or created? Could the work support or harm any wildlife?
The planet's impact on us(Adapt)	Climate resilience				Is the work or product susceptible to increased flooding, storms and drought, or impact the University's resilience to these?

CONVERSATION STARTERS



Purpose:

Spend some time in open discussion and use the conversation starters below to help consider yours and others' roles in environmental sustainability.

Guidance:

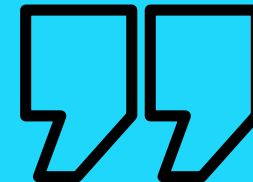
- What does environmental sustainability mean to you?
- Why is this important for our community?
- Within your work/team context what do you already do that lessens impact on the planet?
Consider impacts on energy, waste, water, biodiversity
- How can you contribute to fostering a culture where being environmentally sustainable becomes the norm?
- What ways might you integrate environmentally sustainable activities values into your work/
project planning and decision-making process from the outset?

Best suited to:

Ideal for 1-1's but can also be used with teams.

Resources:

No specific resources needed; you may want to share these prompts on screen.



SUSTAINABILITY IN PICTURES



Purpose:

To help you explore and gain a deeper understanding of how to embed being environmentally sustainable through non-verbal communication and how they may be expressed in the workplace.

Guidance:

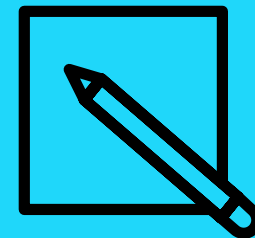
- Divide participants into small groups (4-5 people).
- Each group selects one hint or tip and draws a picture to represent it without using words.
- Groups take turns showing their picture while the other groups guess what tip is being represented.
- After each one, discuss how this can be reflected in daily work and behaviours.

Best suited to:

Small groups (4-5 people).

Resources:

Paper, Pens, Sticky notes, Pencils, Markers.



DAY-TO-DAY HINTS AND TIPS



Working in the office and remotely

- Turn off lights and equipment when not in use
- Turn off taps when not in use and use only the water you need
- Report any water leaks immediately
- Use less paper and go digital by default.
- Consider meeting with external partners virtually rather than in person
- Reduce screen brightness
- Keeping windows closed in winter
- Limit unnecessary email traffic and data storage
- Favour active travel, public transport or car sharing

Buying goods and services

- Re-use and repurpose before buying new
- Buy energy efficient equipment
- Buy products with no or low packaging
- Use local suppliers when you can
- Choose low carbon delivery options
- Buy from environmentally committed companies
- Consider vegetarian and vegan catering for events
- Invest in and care for goods that last longer
- Avoid single use items such as shopping bags, plastic cups and cutlery

Best suited to:

Individuals and team conversations

Resources:

Explore the **University's Environmental Sustainability webpages** for more ideas of how to get involved in our work.

