

***Education for Sustainability Development Code of Practice***  
**2023 – 2026**

**1. What is Education for Sustainable Development?**

Following guidance from the 2021 QAA Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), also known as Education for Sustainability (ESD), ESD can be defined as a way of viewing the world critically, and to envision how it might be in the future and how that vision may be delivered. ESD aims to develop competencies – skills, attributes and values, and how they link to subject knowledge and knowledge of sustainable development. ESD transcends all disciplines and supports all learners across all disciplines to create and develop visions of a better world. A world that recognises the interdependence of environmental integrity, social justice and economic prosperity, while acknowledging that environmental resources are finite and provide the foundation for our society and economy.

ESD is an educational change agenda embedded in transformative learning to ensure that all learners and staff will have the skills, knowledge and competencies to contribute to a more sustainable future. This is summarized by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) definition of ESD; ‘ESD empowers learners to take informed decisions and responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. It is about lifelong learning and is an integral part of quality education. ESD is holistic and transformational education which addresses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment. It achieves its purpose by transforming society’ (UNESCO 2019).

The 2021 QAA Guidance on Education for Sustainable Development states that the aim of ESD in Higher Education should focus on:

1. Supporting students and staff to develop the knowledge, competencies and ability to pursue sustainable visions of the future
2. Supporting students and staff to appreciate the complexity of our world, the ‘wicked problems’ that continuously emerge, and how they can personally and professionally contribute to positive change
3. Challenging, supporting and enabling students and staff to co-design solutions and drive change for sustainability.

**2. Aim**

Our aim is that all students graduating from Keele University will have had the opportunity to engage in activities and learning that will provide them with the knowledge, skills and competencies to make

informed sustainable decisions in their private and professional lives, with consideration of social, environmental and economic perspectives.

Our students and staff will be encouraged to:

- **understand** what the UN SDGS are, their role in achieving a more sustainable future, how they relate to different subjects and how we can all **contribute to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals**;
- learn and apply the **core competencies of sustainability** to challenges;
- consider what the concept of **global citizenship** means in the context of their own discipline and in their future professional and personal lives;
- consider what the concept of **environmental stewardship** means in the context of their own discipline and in their future professional and personal lives;
- think about issues of **social justice, ethics and wellbeing**, and how these relate to ecological and economic factors;
- develop a **future-facing outlook**; learning to **think about the consequences of actions, and how systems and societies can be adapted** to ensure sustainable futures;
- engage with **carbon literacy** and **understand the impacts of energy generation** and consumption and other actions on climate change;
- **use the campus as a 'living laboratory'** for research and teaching about ESD;
- support their own health and wellbeing on campus through engaging with Keele's green spaces and sustainability initiatives.

### 3. Approach

Our aim will be achieved through a multi-stranded approach which reinforces Keele's Root and Branch ethos of embedding sustainability in 'all that we do'. This includes using the formal curriculum, co-curriculum, hidden curriculum (the surroundings in which students live and work), our campus and estate, and overall ethos of the university. Sustainability learning opportunities must not just be stand-alone but must be integrated throughout the learning and co-curriculum opportunities that students experience. Synergies between other enhancement agendas such as interdisciplinarity, internationalisation/global citizenship and employability and entrepreneurship must also be maximised. ESD is a core theme in Keele's Environmental and Social Sustainability Plan, the Strategic Plan and the Teaching and Learning Strategy. Effective communication is at the heart of developing a culture of sustainability, and forms part of the overall student experience.

Education for Sustainability is at the heart of Keele's sustainability ambitions, reflecting the core educational purpose of a university. Education for Sustainability activities therefore must link to the whole university community, including links with the sustainability of the estate, sustainability in research, and sustainability issues within the university's wider community. Ensuring that these linkages are optimised, alongside the embedding of sustainability within the curriculum and student experience, is a core component of Keele's Education for Sustainability strategy.

The Education for Sustainability 'team' (comprising the Deputy Director of Education for Sustainability and the Sustainability Engagement Officer) is responsible for driving forward the ESD work of the University, in conjunction with other staff where appropriate, in recognition of the need to embed aspects of ESD across many institutional roles and responsibilities. Education for Sustainability is therefore co-ordinated through the Institute for Sustainable Futures (ISF), staff with responsibility in sustainability, Academic Schools, Keele Institute for Innovation and Teaching

Excellence (KIITE), and RaISE (Research and Innovation Support Enhancement). Academic staff are supported in embedding sustainability in their teaching activities through dedicated training and guidance.

#### **4. Areas of work**

##### **a) Undergraduate curriculum**

*Aim-*To ensure that every undergraduate student encounters sustainability within their formal curriculum.

*Objectives:*

- Embed sustainability within the core curriculum of every programme, through discipline-sustainability linkages, in a manner appropriate for the discipline
- Highlight in programme specifications where sustainability and core sustainability competencies are taught in all programmes
- Provide sustainability-focussed electives available to any student
- Provide a sustainability-focussed undergraduate degree programme
- Provide an online, certified 'Introduction to Sustainability and Sustainability at Keele' to be completed as part of Induction Week.

##### **b) Postgraduate Taught (PGT) Curriculum**

*Aim-*To ensure that all students undertaking postgraduate taught courses engage with sustainability issues as part of their Keele experience

*Objectives:*

- Ensure that PGT students are aware of the university's sustainability commitments and provided with support to improve their own sustainability practices through a formal induction process
- Provide an online, certified 'Introduction to Sustainability and Sustainability at Keele' to be completed as part of Induction Week.
- Embed sustainability within the core curriculum of every PGT programme through discipline-sustainability linkages
- Highlight in programme specifications where sustainability and core sustainability competencies are taught in all programmes
- Provide sustainability-focussed PGT programmes
- Establish an ISF - Postgraduate Sustainability Network to bring together students researching or interested in sustainability.
- Celebrate and award innovative ESD initiatives across the University

##### **c) Postgraduate Research (PGR)**

*Aim-*To ensure that all PGR students engage with sustainability issues as part of their time at Keele

*Objectives:*

- Ensure that that PGR students are aware of the university's sustainability commitments and provided with support to improve their own sustainability practices through a formal induction process
- Embed sustainability within the core curriculum of every PGR programme through discipline-sustainability linkages

- Ensure PGR students consider sustainability-issues in relation to their research practices and add a statement of how their research has considered sustainability.
- Include sustainability in the annual Progression Review Reports
- Provide an online, certified 'Introduction to Sustainability and Sustainability at Keele' to be completed as part of Induction Week.
- Use sustainability as a context for generic training courses for PGR students within the LPDC workshop programme
- Use sustainability as a context for generic training for PGR students run from Faculty Research Offices
- Establish an ISF - Postgraduate Sustainability Network to bring together students researching or interested in sustainability. Support the ISF Postgraduate Sustainability Network to identify sustainability challenges and projects to work on as a team.
- Celebrate and award innovative ESD initiatives across the University

#### d) **Co-curriculum**

*Aim*-To work in partnership with the Student Voice Representatives, societies, Students' Union and Keele Postgraduate Association, where appropriate, and the Sustainability Engagement Officer to ensure that students at any stage of their education, with any background and interest, can engage with sustainability through co-curriculum opportunities.

*Objectives:*

- Ensure that that students are aware of the university's sustainability commitments and provided with support to improve their own sustainability practices through a formal induction process
- Run an annual 'Green Week / Keele Green Festival' engaging staff and students in a range of sustainability-related activities
- Provide support for student sustainability-related societies
- Provide support for student-led projects (e.g. the sustainable student bungalow)
- Provide support for the careers service in embedding sustainability considerations in their work
- Provide support for enterprise initiatives embedding sustainability considerations into their activities
- Develop 'green themes' aligned with other co-curriculum events (such as the World Festival, Money Week)
- Provide support to the Students' Union in developing sustainability initiatives, including sustainability support for the SU Environmental Representative
- Careers to showcase Sustainability Careers relevant to each School

#### e) **Staff development**

*Aim*-To enhance the capacity for all staff to embed sustainability in their teaching activities through training and support.

*Objectives:*

- Embed an introduction to sustainability at Keele and an introduction to ESD into the formal induction programme for all new staff
- Ensure that staff are aware of the university's sustainability commitments and provided with support to improve their own sustainability practices in relation to their personal and professional roles through the Sustainability intranet communications.

- Embed training on ESD in the Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Programme for all new academic staff
- Provide funding opportunities for staff to develop innovative ESD teaching and learning activities
- Produce online training materials on ESD through Keele's Learning Pool.
- Provide free, bespoke 'consultancy-style' support for staff seeking support in embedding ESD and the core sustainability competencies in their teaching through KIITE, ISF-ESD fellows and the ISF-ESD CoP
- Develop and online ESD resources (ESD-Hub) with for staff and academics seeking support to learn more about ESD and how to embed ESD into their teaching and learning activities
- Develop resources highlighting and celebrating best practice for ESD from across the University
- Celebrate and award innovative ESD initiatives across the University
- Assess every three years, staff attitudes towards sustainability and training requirements, and make results publicly available

**f) External engagement.**

*Aim*-To enhance Keele's external reputation for Education for Sustainability.

*Objectives:*

- Encourage participation of Keele staff in external sustainability-related organisations (such as EAUC, local groups, partnerships, government, NUS, SOS UK, QAA, HEA)
- Establish several ISF Sustainability Outreach activities and events to educate local schools about Sustainability and Keele's commitment to sustainability
- Gain recognition for Education for Sustainability and Green:Keele activities through sustainability-related awards and league tables
- Participate in generic and discipline-related sustainability organisations where appropriate (eg. The United Nations Principles of Responsible Management Education (PRiME), Sustainability in Higher Education Developers network)
- Work in partnership with Keele's Marketing and Sustainability Comms Group to maximise external profile in Education for Sustainability
- Disseminate externally Green:Keele activities through conference, papers, reports and workshops
- Disseminate Green:Keele activities through the Green:Keele website, social media and video with support from Marketing

**g) Communication**

*Aim*-To create a culture of sustainability through the communication of university sustainability activities to all university stakeholders.

*Objectives:*

- Produce an annual ISF-ESD report covering all areas of Keele's ESD activities
- Weekly internal, and external where appropriate, 'Spotlight on Sustainability' where news celebrating best practice and innovative activities around ESD and sustainability practice are communicated
- Hold a twice yearly ISF Education for Sustainability Student Experience Group meeting for staff and students
- Include a Sustainability showcase at the bi-annual ISF event which includes ESD achievements and ISF funded projects

- Develop the Sustainability Section on the Keele website to showcase ESD activity and best practice across the University and externally.

#### **h) Links to Estates**

*Aim*-To foster a two-way relationship between the University Estate and the curriculum and student experience, ensuring the full learning potential from the University Estate and using learning to support Estates developments.

*Objectives:*

- Ensure that the environment in which staff and students live and work aligns with the University's sustainability commitment and educational messages, appreciating the role of the estate as another form of education for sustainability, through the 'hidden curriculum'
- Encourage the use of campus for teaching of ESD as a 'Living Laboratory'
- Encourage all Schools to make use of the renewables site and Smart Energy Transition Demonstrator for teaching ESD
- Use accreditations and league tables to ensure Estates are recognised for the work they do
- Ensure student projects using the estate are appropriately supported by estates and academic staff and that such projects feed back into Estates developments
- Support student-facing activities around students' use of the estate
- Link work placement opportunities in the curriculum with sustainability aspects of Estates and Grounds operations

#### **i) Links to Keele's Living Laboratory Projects such as the Low Carbon Energy Generation (LCEG) Park, BIOGAIN and Smart Energy Network Demonstrator (SEND).**

*Aim*-To ensure that past, current and future sustainability-related initiatives on campus are used to teach ESD to our own students and school children as part of the ISF-Sustainability Outreach Strategy

- Encourage the use of the LCEG and SEND as case studies to teach ESD on campus to Keele students and school students visiting for Outreach purposes.
- Encourage the use of Keele's living lab projects for undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations
- Establish a 'Research Academy' summer school for Keele students to learn about sustainability, through working with academics on the LCEG site.

#### **j) Links to Research**

*Aim*-To ensure that sustainability is integrated into research and that research carried out at Keele can be used to support ESD.

*Objectives:*

- Ensure a vibrant transdisciplinary sustainability research culture supported by the ISF, in which ESD research is also supported through the ISF- ESD Community of Practice
- Ensure that sustainability-related research underpins the embedding of sustainability in the curriculum and wider student experience

#### **k) Governance of Education for Sustainable Development**

*Aim*-To ensure that ESD work is fully integrated into the systems of University governance.

*Objectives:*

- Establish and maintain the ISF-Education for Sustainable Development and Student Experience Group (ISF ESD SEG) that meets twice a year

- Ensure clear reporting lines to the University Education Committee and the Senior Leadership Team through the ISF ESD SEG
- Ensure that ESD is integrated as appropriate into University-level strategies, for example the University’s Learning and Teaching strategy, and over-arching strategic plan
- Embed ESD considerations in appropriate Quality Assurance processes reflecting sustainability as an institutional priority
- Ensure ESD is considered annually by School Learning and Teaching Committees in Annual Review of Programmes
- Ensure adequate resourcing to ensure the continued success of ESD work

**I) Monitoring and evaluation.**

*Aim*-To regularly monitor and evaluate the impacts of the ESD work, and to make the results of such evaluation publicly accessible.

*Objectives:*

- To carry out an internal survey of student attitudes towards sustainability every three years
- To maximise the response rates to external sustainability-related surveys
- To carry out an audit of sustainability in the curriculum every three years
- To carry out an audit of staff attitudes towards sustainability every three years
- To collate annually the Education for Sustainability activity being carried out at Keele through an annual ISF ESD Report

**5. Document Control Information (to be completed)**

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