



UN Global Compact

Communication on Engagement

General Period covered: From: March, 2019 To: February, 2021

Statement of continued support by the President & Vice Chancellor 12th March 2021

The University of Leicester has been strongly and formally committed to measuring and developing our contribution to the UN SDGs since they were introduced in 2015. We were one of the first UK higher education signatories to the SDGs Accord in 2017.

As Citizens of Change, we aim to be a world leader in environmental sustainability, both academically and operationally. We are therefore pleased to reaffirm our support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

This annual Communication on Progress sets out progress we have made on integrating the Global Compact and its principles into our business strategy, culture and daily operations.

I would like to highlight the following:

- We have reduced our carbon emissions by 52% since baseline in 2004/5
- despite growing significantly (13%) in size, our Climate Strategy includes a net zero and divestment commitment
- Leicester is ranked in the top 3 per cent out of 766 universities for our SDG impact
- Despite having an urban campus, we were first for Goal 15: life on land, due to our academic excellence and commitment to conserving and developing the biodiversity of our Estate.
- Our Grounds and Gardens Team have been shortlisted for a national award for their unique collaborative, innovative approach to species enrichment incorporating our academic expertise and student enthusiasm in implementing real solutions.
- 98% of our undergraduate courses (2019/20 entry) have teaching aligned to the SDGs.
- We have already moved to a position where we have no direct investments in carbon/fossil fuel companies

Looking ahead, we are formally launching our Centre for Environmental Health and Sustainability this year which aims to improve human health and the health of the environment through cutting edge multidisciplinary research.

This University was founded on spirit of hope – hope for a better future in the wake of the first world war. As we embark on our second century, our continuing commitment to the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption signals that continuing hope.

We also commit to share this information with our stakeholders using our primary channels of communication.

Professor Nishan Canagarajah

President and Vice-Chancellor

The SDGs at Leicester

Developing education for good with research excellence and engagement

At the heart of the UK, Leicester is a leading university committed to international excellence, world-changing research and high-quality, inspirational teaching. Celebrating diversity among our staff and students; widening participation in higher education; engaging with local, national and international communities - all of these are part of what we do and who we are.

The University of Leicester is proud to be one of just a handful of UK universities working alongside more than 12,000 signatories and institutions across 160 countries putting the principles of the UN Global Compact into action to make our strategies and operations more sustainable.

We are committed to embracing, supporting and enacting within our sphere of influence the UN Global Compact's core values in the areas of human rights, labour standards, the environment and anti-corruption.

Through our research and educational resources, through helping to increase understanding and awareness of responsible citizenship, and contributing towards shaping the business leaders of the future we're helping the UN Global Compact deliver its core aims.

Our work to support the UN Global Compact includes:

- Developing and sharing rigorous methodology to measure our [academic contribution to the UN SDGs](#)
- Leading the Anthropocene Working Group of the International Commission on Stratigraphy, the body that is considering the Anthropocene as a potential addition to the Geological Time Scale
- Providing a free globally available [massive open online course on sustainable development](#), which has had 13,883 enrolments since its 2018 launch.
- Becoming a founder member of [ElectronicsWatch](#), which monitors adherence to workers' rights legislation throughout IT hardware supply chains
- Chairing the DEFRA Air Quality Expert Group
- Being one of 10 Universities to take part in the UN [10x10x10 IMPACT Champions](#) movement, specifically [HeForShe](#), with the aim of engaging and encouraging men and boys to take action against the gender inequality which women across the world face.
- Athena Swan Silver institutional award holder, demonstrating our commitment and progress to advancing gender equality in higher education.

Human Rights Principles

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses

Assessment, Policy and Goals

The University of Leicester is strictly concerned about Human Rights, there is no room for discrimination under any condition.

Our workplace policies and procedures demonstrate our commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all our business relationships. We are committed to ensuring that there is no modern slavery in our supply chains or in any part of our business. We have also partnered with local sector colleagues to ask the UK Home Office to do more to monitor (via the framework agreement) suppliers/supply chains in terms of modern slavery; compliance with the legislation and follow through on mitigations/commitments detailed in tender submissions. As a result, the first meeting of the Working group on modern slavery in public sector supply chains takes place in March 2021.

Our HR policies and procedures reflect UK employment law.

The Policies and regulations of the University support human rights:

- Equalities, Diversity & Inclusion:
 - Dignity and Respect at Leicester Policy and Framework
 - Reasonable adjustment guide
 - Dignity and Respect Policy (PDF, 173kb)
 - Staff Procedure (PDF, 508kb)
 - Third Party Procedure (PDF, 468kb)
 - Definitions document (PDF, 507kb)
 - Personal Relationships Policy (PDF, 250kb)
 - Student Sex Work Policy (PDF, 196kb)
 - Student Sex Work Toolkit (PDF, 261kb)
- Modern slavery
- Sustainable Procurement
- Widening & Participation
- Child Protection Policy
- Health & Safety

Implementation

- Health & safety Committee
 - Training
- Access & Participation Plan
 - Member of the REACH Partnership
 - Founder Member of the East Midlands Widening Participation Research and Evaluation Partnership
- Standing Together
- Free legal advice clinic

Measurement of Outcomes

- Diversity data

Labour Principles

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour;

and **Principle 6:** the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation

Assessment, Policy and Goals

- Human Resources policies
 - Dignity at Work Code of Practice
Maternity, paternity, adoption & childcare
 - On site nursery
 - Staff and Student Transitioning Guide
 - Staff Health & Wellbeing
- Sustainable Procurement

Implementation

- University Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Committee (EDIC)

The EDIC is chaired by the Vice-Chancellor, meets three times a year and reports to Council. The Committee will take executive responsibility for the development and implementation of Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy.

Our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy sets out our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion from 2017 to 2021. It is a public declaration of our commitment to develop a community that is fully inclusive, recruiting and retaining staff and students from all sectors of society. All members of our university community are expected to own and act upon our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy. Through the strategy, we will embed a University-wide culture of inclusion that incorporates all aspects of our activity and business. It will be used to map out our delivery journey by setting strategic objectives and key actions for implementation and review. This strategy will support an environment of fairness, transparency and respectfulness for every member of our University of Leicester community.

The University has 5 staff equality forums/networks:

- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Staff Forum - The BAME Staff Forum is a friendly staff group that provides a platform for those with an interest in this area of equalities. It also provides an opportunity to exchange information and ideas, discuss any issues and best practice, help change University policy and cultures, networking, and raising awareness of issues related to Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff within the University, in a confidential and safe space.
- Carers & Parents Network - The aim of the Carers and Parents Student and Staff Network is to provide a forum where staff and students who have any caring responsibilities to come together. The Network hosts information workshops and social events, as well as inviting guest speakers to present on a range of topics relevant to members of the Network.
- Disability Staff Forum - The Disability Staff Forum is made up of staff who either identify as disabled, or have a particular interest in disability issues, and are committed to advancing equality, diversity and inclusion at the University of Leicester. The Forum works to make the University of Leicester a welcoming, accessible and inclusive place for disabled staff, students and visitors. Activities include:

- Facilitating an active Disabled Staff Forum with a termly newsletter and meetings at least 3 times a year.
 - Events, including a celebration of the *UN International Day of Persons with Disabilities* on 3 December each year.
 - Advocacy on behalf of disabled staff by offering support to each other and providing a safe space for staff to air their concerns.
 - Progressing disability issues within the University by feeding back to the Disability Equality Action Group.
 - Working alongside other Equalities Fora (Women's, BAME and LGBTQ+) in representing staff equality issues on the University's EDI Committee.
 - Production and advancement of a reasonable adjustments guide for managers.
 - Input into disability training for staff and managers.
 - Collaboration with Estates and AccessAble to ensure our campus is safe and accessible for all.
- The Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT+) Staff Forum is a staff collective, working against homophobia, biphobia and transphobia. It acts as a support mechanism for interested staff and their allies, and organises events, changes University policy and works closely with the University EDI Team, Students' Union and organisations from the local community. The Forum are also interested in our university impact on the world: what we teach, research and publish that touches on LGBT+ lives.
- The Women's Staff Forum supports the work and careers of women at the University of Leicester. There are still a range of women-specific challenges in higher education that result in women not participating and advancing their careers on an equal footing with men. The forum was set up in 2014 to help overcome these challenges. With a focus on information, inspiration and voice, our meetings provide a platform for staff to raise and discuss women-specific issues of working in higher education, and to feed these issues into conversations across the University.
- Gender equality activities
 - Athena Swan - Athena Swan is a charter scheme, which recognises a higher education institute's commitment to the advancement of gender equality. The University first gained its institutional Athena Swan Bronze Award in September 2008, and it was renewed in 2011 and 2014. An institutional Silver Award was obtained in 2018. The achievement of an institutional Athena Swan Silver Award recognises a significant record of activity in addressing gender equality challenges and implementing actions across the institution. It demonstrates impact and continued work in advancing gender equality. View our [institutional Athena Swan 2019 Silver application \(PDF, 3.3mb\)](#)
 - Womens Leadership programme
- Socially responsible employer
 - Trades Union recognition
 - Electronics watch founder member
 - Netpositive Engagement Tool
 - HeforShe member
 - AccessAbility Centre
 - Staff Health & Wellbeing

- Chaplaincy
- Mandatory staff training - Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) is vitally important to both our mission as a University and to our institutional values. We would like to ensure that every University employee understands and supports our approach to advancing EDI. Our two mandatory online modules form part of the learning and development provision that we believe will help best equip staff to support inclusivity in all that we do as a University:
 - Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
 - Challenging Unconscious Bias
- Internships

Since 2020, the Procurement Unit has asked a standard tender question as to bidders' interest in taking on a University intern/placement. This is detailed in the latest version of the Sustainable Procurement Guidance.

- Student employment opportunities
- Small Business Charter Award – in 2020 the Procurement Unit supported the School of Business in its submission for a Small Business Charter award by detailing its efforts in building SMEs' tendering capabilities and removing barriers from them competing for University contracts, as well as the University's ultimate spend with SMEs (i.e. 52%, with 16% East Midlands SMEs, in 2018-19).

Measurement of Outcomes

- Staff and Student Diversity Data Monitoring and Gender Pay Gap
- Athena Swan – Silver award
- Disability Confident Employer - The University has been recognised for advancing disability equality by progressing from Disability Confident Level 1 to Level 2 and attaining Disability Confident Employer status in July 2020.
- Race Equality Charter Mark
- Race Equality Charter
- Stonewall – top 100 employer in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index (2019)
- Regional LGBT+ Inclusion Award holder

Environmental Principles

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility;

and **Principle 9:** encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies

Assessment, Policy and Goals

“The University of Leicester will continue to embed environmental sustainability within Estates operations, to reduce carbon emissions and to encourage and facilitate staff, students and visitors to do the same.”

- [Environmental Sustainability Policy](#)
- [Biodiversity Policy](#)
- [Sustainable construction design guides](#)
- [Sustainable Food Policy](#)
- [Ethical Investment Policy](#)
 - [Divestment](#)
- [Waste Management Policy](#)

Implementation

- Overseen by the [Environmental Management Working Group](#)
- [Carbon Management Plan](#)
- [Biodiversity Action Plan](#)
- [Sustainable Procurement Guidance](#)
- [Waste and recycling](#)
- [Travel Plan](#)
- [Sustainable construction](#)

Measurement of outcomes

- Travel Plan report
- [Carbon & Energy reporting](#)
- [Estates Management Record](#)

Anti-Corruption Principles

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

Assessment, Policy and Goals

“The University of Leicester:

- **is committed to carrying out its academic and business activities in an honest, open and ethical manner; and**
- **is committed to observing the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010, in respect of its conduct both in the UK and internationally.**
- **will have zero tolerance to any aspect of bribery and corruption both within the University and in respect of any third parties with whom we have dealings.”**

Examples

- Governance policies
 - Financial Regulations
 - Whistleblowing
 - Prevention of procurement fraud
- Code of Practice concerning Freedom of Speech
- Registrations and Declarations of Interest
- Whistleblowing Policy
- Ethical Giving Policy
- Research Code of Conduct
- Data Policies
 - Data Protection
 - Freedom of Information Policy
 - Information Security
 - Records Management

Implementation

- Compulsory staff training
 - Fraud awareness
 - Bribery & corruption
- Policy on the acceptance of gifts, hospitality and benefits by members of staff
- Prevention of Bribery and Corruption
- Response to fraud
- Code of Conduct and Declaration of Interests

Measurement of outcomes

- Staff training completion (within Personal Development Discussion documentation)
- Declaration of interests register