

# Social Responsibility & Sustainability Strategy 2010

## Looking to 2020 and beyond

The University of Edinburgh is justifiably proud of the many contributions made to Scotland, Europe and the world since our founding in 1583. With the world now on the brink of global economic, social and environmental changes more far reaching than those of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century Enlightenment – and the scientific, economic and social revolutions that followed – the University faces new challenges.

In 2083 the University will celebrate 500 years since its foundation. How will our successors look back at our contributions to the world in the first half of the 21st century? Will Edinburgh's researchers have helped shape a world where energy, food and water resources are secure for all?

What roles will Edinburgh graduates have played in stabilising CO<sub>2</sub> levels through technical solutions, policy development or business leadership? Will Edinburgh's medical research have helped eradicate major infectious diseases? The decisions we make now will determine the extent to which we help shape the future – or merely respond to events.

## Creating opportunities from global challenges

There is a growing recognition across the world of the urgency of tackling a range of difficult, complex and inter-related issues such as human well-being; food, energy and water security; and climate change. The need of governments, businesses and others to understand and respond to these challenges creates significant opportunities for the University community.

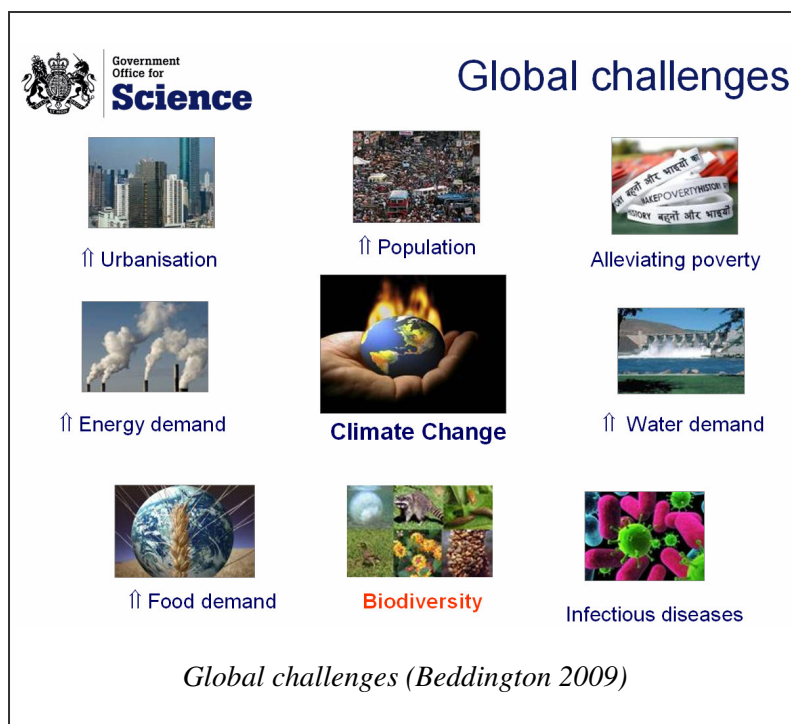
Professor John Beddington, Edinburgh alumnus and former chief scientific adviser to UK Government, argues that 'business as usual' will lead to a 'perfect storm' of food, water and energy shortages – with all the social, environmental and economic disruption that will entail – by 2030<sup>1</sup>.

New scientific, technical, economic and policy responses will be necessary, but not sufficient, to address these challenges.

Critical analysis from diverse perspectives will be essential to understand the relationships and potential conflicts between the challenges and proposed responses.

Indeed, there are many possible and often mutually exclusive, visions of what a desirable future might be – and how such a vision might be achieved.

Our role will always be to understand what is happening, to question accepted wisdom, to challenge simplistic analysis and to communicate with others. In doing so we shall help develop holistic solutions to the challenges facing the



<sup>1</sup> Commenting on his speech to SD-UK conference, 19 Mar 2009 <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/7952348.stm>

world and its people.

## Choosing our future

**We aspire to make world-leading contributions to understanding and addressing global challenges. Our overarching approach is not to direct academic endeavour, but to create the conditions in which students and staff are inspired and supported to engage with and contribute to social responsibility and sustainability throughout the University and beyond. Collaboration between disciplines across the University will be central to this endeavour.**

### **A whole-institution approach to social responsibility and sustainability**

We aim to develop – and make explicit as an exemplar for the University community and others globally and locally – a whole-institution approach to social responsibility and sustainability.

Recognising that the terms are contested, social responsibility and sustainability refer here to our contribution to both understanding and addressing social, environmental and economic global challenges. More specific definitions may be required to enhance communication in certain circumstances, for example during the adoption of particular standards or practices.

Our approach is four-fold; we shall:

- 1. Lead by example**, explicitly embedding our commitment to social responsibility and sustainability in our policies, strategies and procedures;
- 2. Actively support best practice, innovation and leadership** in relation to social responsibility and sustainability: in learning and teaching, research and knowledge exchange and across our services and physical infrastructure;
- 3. Recognise and communicate** relevant activity by students, staff and alumni;
- 4. Demonstrate and report** our main social, environmental and economic impacts.

This strategy builds on and develops a longstanding commitment to social responsibility and sustainability, and brings together the University's existing policies and commitments on these and related issues<sup>2</sup>.

This document is partly a blueprint; but more realistically it is an initial route map that sets out our aspirations, our direction and our first steps on the journey towards how we might be in 2020.

The detailed planning and prioritisation will come as these commitments are progressively embedded within the University's annual planning and resource allocation process and future strategic plans.

## Learning & Teaching

**We shall create conditions where students and staff develop their knowledge, skills and experience to engage with and contribute effectively to tackling global challenges in Scotland and worldwide.**

### **Leadership in education for active citizenship**

The University objectives are to:

- LT 1 Gain international recognition for supporting all students to be proactive, independent, critically analytical and reflective learners and communicators, able to engage with global challenges facing

*We aim to produce graduates fully equipped to achieve the highest personal and professional standards. (p1)*

*Our strategies... include encouraging the themes of sustainability and social responsibility in programme and course development and delivery. (p31)*

*Sustainable Plan 2008-2012*

<sup>2</sup> Including: Sustainability Policy in 2000; University's Strategic Plan 2008-12; Internationalisation Strategy 2009; Universitas 21 Statement on Sustainability; the Universities & Colleges Climate Commitment for Scotland; and the 10:10 campaign to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 10% in 2010.

society and to recognise their significance for interdisciplinary study.

*In 2010: Action 1.1 Action 1.2 Action 1.3 Action 2.3 Action 3.1*

- LT 2 Be respected as a leading international provider of higher education, lifelong learning and continuing professional development related to understanding and engaging with global issues. *In 2010: Action 1.1 Action 1.3 Action 2.2 Action 2.3*
- LT 3 Offer every student opportunities to study the broader aspects of the global challenges, social responsibility and sustainability and to explore in depth how their chosen subjects relate to them. *In 2010: Action 1.3 Action 1.4 Action 2.3*
- LT 4 Draw widely on the University's whole-institution approach to social responsibility and sustainability as a resource for learning and teaching. *In 2010: Action 1.2 Action 1.4*
- LT 5 Offer students a range of opportunities to engage in community and other activities relating to social responsibility and sustainability. *In 2010: Action 1.2 Action 1.4 Action 2.2*

## Research and Knowledge Exchange

**We shall critically evaluate policy responses and interventions to the global challenges from a perspective open to dialogue across disciplines.**

**We shall collaborate with local and global partners in industry, civil society and academia to contribute to development of holistic solutions.**

### Realising the potential of multidisciplinary teamwork, strategic partnership & collaboration

The University objectives are to:

- RKE 1 Establish cross-college research themes focussing on dialogue across disciplines to address global challenges that respond to the opportunities offered by major research funders and other external bodies in the UK and internationally. *In 2010: Action 3.1 Action 4.1*
- RKE 2 Create a network of research experienced alumni working across the world in academia, industry, government and civil society, who remain engaged with and contribute intellectually to the University's research, knowledge exchange and teaching on global challenges. *In 2010: Action 6.1*
- RKE 3 Promote opportunities for staff to offer their expertise to address global challenges, individually and in multidisciplinary teams, through engagement with civil society organisations and commercial consultancy. *In 2010: Action 1.2* **Error!**  
**Reference source not found.**
- RKE 4 Establish a 'New Enlightenment' programme of engagement, across multiple disciplines, with the local community, the city-region and other partners to discuss, understand and respond to global challenges and their implications. *In 2010: Action 5.1*

*We aim to... contribute to the economic, social, cultural and environmental development of Scotland and the world (p11)*

*...provide holistic solutions to important global challenges (p10)*

*...maximise the contribution of our knowledge, skills, and expertise towards influencing and realising Scottish and UK government objectives while simultaneously benefiting society as a whole (p13)*

Strategic Plan 2008-2012

## People, Services & Infrastructure

**Our success in benefiting from the opportunities and rising to the challenges that the future holds will rest squarely on the high quality of our people, services and physical infrastructure.**

**We shall develop and showcase best practice, informed by and informing the University's research and teaching missions.**

### Practising what we teach, researching our practice

The University aspires to serve as a living laboratory – practicing what we teach and researching our own practice. Our objectives are to:

- PSI 1 Encourage and support members of the University community to become effective agents of positive change, drawing on the University's own teaching resources, including the Global Academies. *In 2010: Action 1.5 Action 1.6 Action 2.3 Action 2.4 Action 3.1 Action 4.3*
- PSI 2 Apply our own research and expertise to inform our policy and practice, and offer issues in need of study as dissertation topics. *In 2010: Action 1.2 Action 4.12*
- PSI 3 Manage our physical infrastructure and the procurement of goods and services in ways that maximise efficiency and effectiveness while minimising social, environmental and other risks. *In 2010: Action 4.4 Action 4.5 Action 4.6 Action 4.7 Action 4.7 Action 4.9 Action 4.10 Action 4.11 Action 4.12*
- PSI 4 Collaborate with other organisations to share our expertise and develop best practice in addressing social responsibility and sustainability. *In 2010: Action 2.4 Action 5.1*
- PSI 5 Establish efficient and effective systems to record, report and act on our main social and environmental impacts. *In 2010: **Error! Reference source not found.** Action 4.5 Action 4.6 Action 4.7 Action 4.7 Action 4.10 Action 4.11 Action 4.12*

*This means... taking ever more seriously our commitments as a socially responsible organisation (p2)*

*We aim to... equip staff to realise their full potential as direct contributors to the success of the University (p17)*

*...deliver efficient and timely services that are customer-focused and of world class quality (p18)*

*...provide a modern, efficient and stimulating working and learning environment to sustain world-class academic and support activities (p21)*

*...embed equality, diversity, sustainability and social responsibility as fundamental principles, and assist all staff and students to realise their full potential (p31)*

Strategic Plan 2008-2012

## Conclusion

**Our journey towards 2020 and beyond will be evolutionary as we build on a wealth of existing expertise and achievement. We are however determined to act promptly and decisively to maximise the opportunities, anticipate future developments and maintain our world class status in a rapidly changing world. This strategy sets out our aspirations, our direction and our goals for 2020.**

The attached Implementation Plan expands on the objectives and highlights activities to be undertaken in 2010.

Implementation of this strategy will be reviewed annually as these commitments are progressively embedded within the University's annual planning and resource allocation process and incorporated as appropriate in future University Strategic Plans.

# Social Responsibility & Sustainability Implementation Plan 2010

## Introduction

The Social Responsibility & Sustainability Strategy is framed to guide the University over the decade to 2020.

The purpose of this Implementation Plan is to assist decision-makers in the University to respond to specific elements of the University Strategic Plan 2008 – 2012, and the wide range of existing policies and commitments and to alert the wider University community to our practical policy intentions.

The Implementation Plan sets out a number of specific actions to be undertaken in 2010 grouped under the themes in the University's Strategic Plan 2008-12. Due to their cross cutting nature, many of these actions also contribute to other strategic themes. As the delivery mechanism for the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Strategy, this work will in due course inform the development of the University's next Strategic Plan.

## Our Priorities

In line with the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Strategy, our priorities at the initial stage are to:

- P 1      Ensure that the University's objectives set out in this strategy are embedded promptly and appropriately in all strategies and policies that are currently under review or in development. *In 2010: Action 1.3 Action 4.3 Action 4.4 Action 4.5 Action 4.6 Action 4.7 Action 4.9*
- P 2      Support staff effectively as they put this strategy and accompanying implementation plan into place. *In 2010: Action 4.1 Action 4.3 Action 4.4 Action 4.5 Action 4.7 Action 4.10 Action 4.11*
- P 3      Communicate effectively, internally and externally, our current expertise, opportunities, activity and achievements related to social responsibility, sustainability and the global challenges – including progress in the implementation of this strategy itself. *In 2010: Action 2.1 **Error!** Reference source not found.*

In this initial stage – until the objectives set out in this strategy are firmly embedded within the University's annual planning and resource allocation process – progress will be monitored by and reported annually to Sustainability and Environmental Advisory Group and incorporated into the Planning and Resource process under the guidance of Central Management Group.

## Governance and monitoring progress

The 2010 actions are to be taken forward under the aegis of the named colleagues responsible for their achievement. However to assist with coordination and oversight, progress in delivering the 2010 actions will be monitored and reported by the following committees:

- Sustainability and Environment Advisory Group, (SEAG) convened by V-P Prof Mary Bownes, and
- SEAG Operations Group, convened by Nigel Paul, Director of Corporate Services.

As noted above the implementation of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Strategy will be an evolutionary process over the years to 2020. As we implement and evaluate the achievement and outcomes of 2010 actions, we shall revise and where appropriate extend the Implementation Plan for 2011 and beyond. This further work – including specific tasks already under discussion but yet to be formalised as 2010 actions – is mentioned under each Action below.

Endorsed by SEAG, January 2010

# **Social Responsibility & Sustainability Implementation Plan 2010**

## **– mapped onto Themes from the University's Strategic Plan 2008-12**

### ***Theme 1 Enhancing our student experience***

- Action 1.1**     **Develop the proposal for an MA in Sustainable Development with a view to offering the programme from September 2011**  
Lead Contact: Tom Ward, Head of Academic Office, CHSS
- Action 1.2**     **Develop a wider level of interaction between Masters students and the wider community by establishing a network of programme directors and potential clients**  
Lead contact: Dr Sue Rigby, Assistant Principal Taught Postgraduate Programmes
- Action 1.3**     **Embed consideration of social responsibility and sustainability issues into Taught Programmes Review processes**  
Lead Contact: Dr Tina Harrison, convener of Senatus QA Committee
- Action 1.4**     **Explore opportunities to embed social responsibility and sustainability objectives in proposals for the alternative learning week from 2011**  
Lead contact: Dr Sue Rigby, Assistant Principal for Taught Postgraduate Programmes
- Action 1.5**     **Develop the Community Award to recognise exceptional contributions by staff and students which promote social responsibility and sustainability**  
Lead Contact: Prof Mary Bownes, V-P for Research Training and Community Relations
- Action 1.6**     **Explore opportunities to embed social responsibility and sustainability criteria in proposed extended degree transcript**  
Lead contact: Dr Sue Rigby, Assistant Principal Taught Postgraduate Programmes

### ***Theme 2 Engaging with our wider community***

- Action 2.1**     **Identify all the social responsibility and sustainability - related activities across the University and develop a way to highlight them comparable to Edinburgh Global**  
Lead Contact: Prof Mary Bownes, V-P for Research Training and Community Relations
- Action 2.2**     **Organise “Our Global Challenges” – a public lecture series on Climate Change and Peak Oil as part of Transition Edinburgh University**  
Lead Contact: David Somervell, Sustainability Advisor
- Action 2.3**     **Progress the development of “Our Changing World”, a proposed trans-College course open to all students at the University and to the public**  
Lead Contact: Prof Mayank Dutia, Biomedical & Clinical Laboratory Sciences, CMVM
- Action 2.4**     **Deliver Transition Edinburgh University project aiming to cut the emissions from the 37,000 students and staff by 10% in 2010 in response to the challenges of climate change and peak oil – delivering the 10:10 campaign undertaking**  
Lead Contact: David Somervell, Sustainability Adviser

### ***Theme 3 Advancing internationalisation***

- Action 3.1**     **Identify and implement opportunities for Global Academies to provide focal points for academic developments in relation to social responsibility and sustainability**  
Lead Contact: Prof Steve Hillier, Vice Principal, International

*Theme 4*     **Promoting equality, diversity, sustainability & social responsibility**

**Action 4.1**     **Develop a workshop to enable researchers to write compelling impact statements**

**Action 4.2**     Lead Contact: Sheila Thompson, Director, Researcher Development Programme

**Action 4.3**     **Develop and implement plans to progressively embed social responsibility and sustainability objectives in staff development programmes**

Lead Contact: Sheila Gupta, Director of Human Resources

**Action 4.4**     **Develop and implement the University's sustainable procurement plan**

Lead Contact: Karen Bowman, Director of Procurement

**Action 4.5**     **Implement the first phase of the climate action plan and devolve energy budgets to make evident consumption and raise awareness of carbon impact of activities**

Lead Contact: Angus Currie, Director of Estates and Buildings

**Action 4.6**     **Develop a low carbon, resilient estate including BREEAM Education assessments**

Lead Contact: Graham Bell, Depute Director, Estates & Buildings

**Action 4.7**     **Develop and implement plans to maximise resource efficiency of all Information and Communications Technology (ICT) provision**

Lead Contact: Prof Jeff Hayward, V-P Knowledge Management, Chief Information Officer

**Action 4.8**     **Adopt and implement University-wide and site-specific waste management plans**

Lead Contact: Fleur Ruckley, Waste & Environment Manager, Estates & Buildings

**Action 4.9**     **Develop and implement biodiversity management plans for two campus / zones**

Lead Contact: Fleur Ruckley, Waste & Environment Manager, Estates & Buildings

**Action 4.10**    **Develop and implement site specific travel plans supporting sustainable active travel**

Lead Contact: Emma Crowther, Transport & Parking Manager, Estates & Buildings

**Action 4.11**    **Develop and consult the wider University on guidelines for business travel**

Lead Contact: Emma Crowther, Transport & Parking Manager, Estates & Buildings

**Action 4.12**    **Reduce the carbon footprint of the University vehicle fleet**

Lead Contact: Emma Crowther, Transport & Parking Manager, Estates & Buildings

**Action 4.13**    **Review the regional and international social economic and ecological impacts of food choices offered in university catering and retail outlets and develop plans to minimise adverse effects and stimulate local supplier resilience**

Lead Contact: Ian Macaulay, Asst Director, Accommodation Services - Catering

*Theme 5*     **Building strategic partnerships & collaborations**

**Action 5.1**     **Establish a 'New Enlightenment' programme of public engagement, across multiple disciplines, with the local community, the city-region and other partners to discuss, understand and respond to global challenges and their implications**

Lead Contact: Prof Mary Bownes, V-P for Research Training and Community Relations

*Theme 6*     **Stimulating alumni relations**

**Action 6.1**     **Develop plans for a pilot network of research experienced alumni working across the world in academia, industry, government and civil society, engaged with and contributing to the University's research, knowledge exchange and teaching**

Lead Contact: Prof Steve Hillier, Vice Principal, International