Sustainability Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The University of Canberra's (University) commitment to sustainability is grounded in a desire to serve the changing needs and challenges of our regional and globally-connected communities – students, staff, Indigenous peoples and other stakeholders – and a deep connection to our place in the Canberra region, on Ngunnawal country.

(2) Building on the University's ambition to become a global leader in equality of opportunity, our sustainability vision is to advance the vitality and resilience of all people and ecosystems in the face of uncertain futures impacted by climate change, economic disruption and rising Indigenous inequality. As the university of the nation's capital, with world-class research in health, wellbeing and environmental resilience, we are committed to playing an active role in championing and enabling capacity in response to key sustainability challenges though enhanced climate resilience, community resilience and Indigenous empowerment.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) This Policy outlines the practices of the University and describes the framework to embed and support sustainable outcomes and practices on our campuses. This Policy applies to all the University's operations, including education, research, community engagement, and campus operations. This policy is supported by the University's Strategic Framework for Sustainability (the Framework), which sets out our objectives, targets and implementation plan.

Section 3 - Principles

(4) Our commitment to sustainability is deeply rooted in our connection to our place on Ngunnawal country and the local communities and the Indigenous peoples of the Canberra region. Embracing the principle of "Galambany," which translates to 'Together we work to empower, connect, and share knowledge with our people, cultures, and places,' we recognise the significance of our presence on Ngunnawal country, within the heart of the nation's capital.

(5) Our sustainability vision is not merely a set of goals and activities but a reflection of our ethos, shaped by the wisdom passed down through generations of Indigenous peoples. We understand that true sustainability encompasses more than just the physical; it encompasses the head and the heart—the emotional and the spiritual—fostering holistic health and wellbeing within our community.

(6) Guided by the University's purpose and values, we are committed to strengthening our connection to place through tangible actions:

a. On campus: We embrace place-making experiences that celebrate the unique biodiversity of our campus while promoting health and wellbeing. By honouring the cultural values of our landscapes, waterways, flora, and fauna, we create spaces that showcase our commitment to sustainability, reflected in our Campus Master Plan.
b. The Canberra region: We deepen our understanding of the unique needs of our ecosystems and communities. Through collaborative approaches, we strive to make a positive impact for the collective benefit of our region, recognising that sustainability is a collective endeavour.

(7) In line with our ambition to be the most accessible university in Australia, we are committed to learning from and partnering with all of our communities, both locally and globally, and embracing multiple knowledge systems as we strive to establish a culture of sustainability accessible to all. Through individual and collective action, we aspire to be stewards of our place and of our cultures, fostering a sustainable future for generations to come.

Sustainability pathways to impact

(8) To deliver against our sustainability vision, the University has set out a strategic framework that identifies five major 'pathways to impact', underpinned by strong connection to place and with a focus on engendering lived sustainability practices across our campus, and beyond. Each of these pathways to impact defines a key category of activity that will drive forward UC's sustainability vision.

Environment and Water Stewardship	The University is dedicated to making best use of circular economy, biodiversity protection and water management practices, to be effective stewards of our campus environment and beyond.
Transition to a Net Zero Future	The University is committed to taking a proactive stance in response to climate change by making a clear and timetabled commitment to achieving net zero emissions.
Embrace Indigenous Knowledge	The University aims to activate the campus as a focal point of Indigenous knowledge sharing and community.
Health, Wellbeing and Inclusion	The University aims to deepen our impact in this domain and continue to enhance the health, wellbeing, and resilience of our communities.
Nurture Sustainability Leaders	The University is committed to fostering the development of future sustainability leaders by creating pathways to amplify passion and enable action.

(9) These pathways have been developed following extensive consultation with the University community, expert advice and benchmarking to ensure long term support for and visibility of actions for the University's commitment to sustainability.

Alignment with the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals

(10) Our aspirations embrace a broad definition of sustainability that considers environmental, economic and sociocultural aspects of sustainability, as recognised by the United Nations in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Reference to the UN SDGs throughout the Strategic Framework for Sustainability ensures the University's work in all areas remains relevant to global efforts.

(11) The University will continue to leverage the SDGs through the Framework, with the SDGs providing key reference points for the Campus Master Plan, Indigenous Leadership Strategy and Curriculum and Research focuses. With six years left to deliver on the SDGs, the University supports the United Nations' call to greater leadership through contribution to global dialogue, and to mobilisation of local action, through embedding in academic and civic partnerships.

Governance and reporting

(12) Delivery of the Strategic Framework for Sustainability will be overseen by a number of key University committees, including the the University's Sustainability Steering Committee, Executive Team, and the Council sub-committee Planning and Development Committee.

(13) UC is committed to transparent reporting of its progress towards achieving its sustainability objectives. This will be achieved through annual impact statements, cross-sector benchmarking, and strengthened reporting to sustainability rankings bodies such as Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Rankings and Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) World University Rankings.

Section 4 - Responsibilities

Who	Responsibilities
Students	Students are expected to uphold the vision of this Policy and are responsible for conducting themselves in line with this Policy.
Staff	Staff are expected to uphold the vision of this Policy and are responsible for conducting themselves in line with the Policy in respect to the Charter of Conduct and Values.
Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President Operations (COO)	The Executive Sponsor for the Strategic Framework for Sustainability, and Custodian of this Policy.
Sustainability Steering Committee	This management committee will lead the implementation and monitor the performance of the Strategic Framework for Sustainability.
Planning and Development Committee	The Committee (as a sub-committee of Council) is responsible as the delegated authority of Council for the monitoring of progress against the objectives and targets of the Strategic Framework for Sustainability.
University Council	The University Council is responsible for the University's strategic direction, including Key Performance Indicators and their annual assessment.

Section 5 - Procedures

Nil.

Section 6 - Definitions

(14) NIL.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	12th December 2024
Review Date	12th December 2027
Approval Authority	Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President Operations
Approval Date	6th December 2024
Expiry Date	To Be Advised
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