



CITY
UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
— EST 1894 —



Global Goals Report 2021

Climate Action in focus



Using our collective voices for change

Last year was one of significant changes at City: welcoming Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein as the new President, as well as responding to the continuing Covid-19 pandemic alongside the global community. 2021 was also marked by the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), galvanising the urgency in taking climate action and inspiring the focus of this report: Global Goal 13.

With the UK as President for the 2021 global climate summit, COP26 took place in Glasgow, Scotland. It brought together world leaders, negotiators, government officials, businesses and citizens. The conference was considered a crucial moment for countries to update their plans limiting the rise in mean global temperature to well below two degrees Celsius, compared to pre-industrial levels, as set out in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Together, Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein, President of City, University of London and Shaima Dallali, President of City's Students' Union, launched COP26@City with a joint statement, outlining the City community's response to the global climate challenge.

"The impact of climate change spans environment, prosperity, security and democracy. It is profoundly important for all of us. We must use our collective voice to argue for change."

Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein, President of City, University of London

A key outcome of the world summit was the adoption of the Glasgow Climate Pact. It includes renewed commitments of participating countries to maintain the 1.5 degrees Celsius target limit to global warming and, most importantly, COP26 galvanised the urgency in taking climate action.

That is why this year, City's annual Global Goals report will be focussing on Goal 13: Climate Action. Characterised by its urgency, Goal 13 stresses the need to act and combat climate change and its impacts. This goal sits among the 17 United Nations Global Goals for Sustainable Development, which were established to create a better world, end poverty, fight inequality and take action on climate change. Behind the Goals sit a number of targets to guide governments, businesses and society to work together to build a better, sustainable future for all.

City recognises the importance of global engagement and has an explicit aspiration to become a leading university that contributes to the global good of society. As educators, we recognise that we can play an integral role in attaining the UN Global Goals by 2030.

"We know that students are rightfully concerned about the climate crisis and what that means for our future. As students, we have powerful tools that we can use to make real change and create a better tomorrow. These tools are our voices and our skills."

Shaima Dallali, President of City Students' Union



Everyone has a part to play

At City, we care about sustainability – that is crystal clear from feedback from colleagues and students in the consultation work we have recently undertaken with the Big City Conversation.

This should not be a surprise. In a recent QS survey whilst up to 49 percent of students considered their university to be ‘somewhat environmentally friendly’, almost twice as many felt their university could still do a lot more.

At City, we lead by example. We research, teach and embrace key sustainability and environmental initiatives, some of which you will see in this report. By listening, engaging, learning from students and our experts in faculty and professional services we understand how City can do more.

Universities play an important role in the local community too and this relationship runs in both directions. We can be both global and local.

External collaboration with local authorities is essential. We are working within our borough of Islington to demonstrate how, in addition to our core business of research and education, the decisions we take as an employer, purchaser, landlord and investor contributes to the Global Goals agenda.

Everyone has a part to play and there is a lot of work to do.



Anthony Finkelstein

Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein
President

The leaders of tomorrow

Student voices are vital in meeting the ongoing challenges of the Climate Emergency, advocating for more accountability in organisations and overcoming forces of climate scepticism.

Climate change is now recognised as one of the most significant challenges facing the global population and shaping the world in which we live.

We are the first generation for whom science can provide clear and overwhelming evidence of what we are doing to our planet.

We have a duty to act – holding all our educational institutions to account for their decisions and actions but also contributing and collaborating to curriculum innovation, research development and policy-making.

Students today are leaders of tomorrow and City students in particular will play their part in business practice and the professions to press for urgency and pace to ensure that future generations can live on this planet in societies that are inclusive, equitable and enriching.

Shaima Dallali
President of City Students' Union



Delivering climate action at City

Research, education, engagement, campus and governance are City's five key sustainability activity themes. The following report demonstrates some of the ways City has supported work to achieve the United Nations' Global Goal 13: Climate Action.

Research

The urgency to focus on sustainability and climate change with pioneering research is illustrated by the World Economic Forum identifying extreme weather, climate action failure and human environmental damage as the top three most likely global risks in 2021¹.

City believes that universities are uniquely positioned to contribute positively to this challenge by being "at the heart of innovation and most importantly, ... excellent spaces for multi-disciplinary research and cross-sectional thinking. That is exactly what we need to solve the climate crisis", as set out in the *Confronting the climate emergency* report by Universities UK².

Research in the sector is expected to not only help achieve a better understanding of the challenges climate change poses, but also to help develop innovative solutions to them.



European Social Survey involved in new climate change project

The European Social Survey (ESS), www.europeansocialsurvey.org, based at City, is participating in a new Horizon 2020 project. The research will bring together and evaluate the most innovative measurement approaches of greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas and will develop useful tools and services for cities to support their local climate action plans.

The four-year interdisciplinary project, will see the ESS survey 2,500 citizens in pilot cities, focusing on the human dimension of climate policies: economic and behavioural impacts.

Professor Rory Fitzgerald, Director of the ESS, said "I am delighted that the European Social Survey, hosted here at City, is playing its part in tackling climate change. This is a truly interdisciplinary project and we are proud to be bringing the social science dimension to this natural science led project."



Developing cutting-edge energy technologies: marine wave energy converters



Unlocking the potential of marine wave energy

Professor Qingwei Ma

There are still many challenges to overcome before wave energy converters (WECs), devices that capture the energy generated by waves and convert it into a renewable source of electricity, can become fully effective, reliable and economically viable. Supported by a £1 million research grant from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), Professor Ma will lead on the development of a new generation modelling suite for the survivability of WECs in extreme marine environments, helping the UK achieve its net zero carbon emissions goal. The modelling suite will combine different models, new numerical approaches and machine learning techniques, which will be more accurate and require less computational effort.



Building climate resilience and mitigation in food projects

Dr Rosalind Sharpe

The global food system is the second biggest contributor to climate change, after the energy industry - but also a huge potential mitigator of climate change and biodiversity loss. It is essential that food systems should be at the heart of policies and behaviours that reverse these disastrous impacts and progress to more sustainable systems. This is at the heart of City's Food Research Collaboration initiative's work. To coincide with COP26, they have collaborated with climate scientists at the organisation Take a Bite out of Climate Change, www.takeabitecc.org, to produce a 'Food Climate Primer', helping food projects to build climate resilience and mitigation into their activities and explain it to their clients and funders.

¹ www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_Global_Risks_Report_2021.pdf, page 12

² www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/sites/default/files/field/downloads/2021-10/confronting-the-climate-emergency.pdf



Education

A recent study by SOS-UK has shown that 90 per cent of students are concerned or very concerned about climate change³. For universities, the key to addressing these concerns effectively will be by empowering students and the staff that surround them, with skills to actively engage with climate action and implement it within their personal and professional lives. With futures that will increasingly be affected by climate change, it is crucial that tomorrow's leaders are climate literate and able to be a part of the solution.

Global Ethics, School of Arts and Social Sciences

Offered by City's Department of International Politics, a variety of 'Global Ethics' modules are available to both Bachelor's and Master's students. With environmentalism and climate change ethics at their core, the modules unpack topics such as global climate justice and the moral challenges posed by climate change.

"These modules provide students with an in depth look at the ethical dimensions of the climate crisis. It frames it as an international, intergenerational and interspecies crisis that our systems of ethics have difficulty framing. Our students take from these modules the scope of the challenge but also tools that will help us solve it by locating who has the responsibilities to mitigate climate change. The scale of the crisis is taken seriously, but so is humanity's ability to rise to the challenge."

Dr Gwilym David Blunt, Senior Lecturer

Climate Change and its impact on the World Economy, Bayes Business School

The Climate Change and its impact on the World Economy elective module is available to third year Business Management students. This module is unique in its multifaceted approach, analysing the economic effects of climate change through the lenses of science, technology, politics and law. Furthermore, it provides students with a deeper understanding of the links between climate change, climate justice and human rights. In 2021, graduates reflected on what this module has meant for them:

"I feel that - at the time and maybe even now - not many universities are offering this element to studying business. I think climate change is definitely something we talk about more and more; and even in my day-to-day role, there is so much focus on ESG and sustainability."

Anamaria, Bayes Business School

"I can honestly say that this module has changed my life... It has had an impact on my consumer behaviour, as well as the way I look at what is claimed to be a 'sustainable' business."

Chiara, Bayes Business School



The London Student Sustainability Conference 2021

The London Student Sustainability Conference 2021 (the third such event) marked a first online and collaborative edition, delivered alongside King's College London. The Conference provides a platform for students to share their academic and extra-curricular projects through posters and presentations. Each project demonstrated innovation relating to one or more of the Global Goals. Over 25 student presentations from more than 50 students included ideas concerning renewable and clean energy systems, adapting food policy to reduce carbon and improve diets and empowering people to take action against climate change.

"Events like the LSSC are important because we, as a generation, care a lot about building a better future. The best ideas and opportunities can come from people you meet and the discussions you have. At LSSC you are able to work together with like-minded people."

Bahlla, Bayes Business School

³ www.sos-uk.org/research/students-climate-change-and-cop26

Engagement

The climate crisis is a challenge that needs global collaboration, it is particularly relevant for higher education institutions to use their global influence. Key to this is offering students and staff a range of opportunities to engage with sustainability and climate action outside the formal curriculum.

Not only does this allow universities to raise awareness on climate change, but they are also ideally positioned to influence behaviour among their stakeholders. COP26 was a key opportunity for institutions to engage with their local community, global peers and relevant sectors on the urgency of acting on climate change. As Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein reinforced in City's COP26 statement, it is important that universities ensure their voices are used to argue for change⁴.



COP26 at City

City's leadership made a statement in support of COP26, with the Students' Union President emphasising the role of students in bringing their voice and skills to bear on the crisis while Professor Sir Anthony Finkelstein pledged City's commitment to delivering innovative research to contribute to climate change remediation.

To coincide with COP26, each of City's five schools, as well as nearby co-working office, Better Space, hosted panel events to highlight the climate focused research it is undertaking and to provoke discussion on issues related to climate change. The wide range of topics aimed to explore different viewpoints and solutions to

key issues. Amongst other topics, the events examined ways of mobilising business to tackle the climate emergency and critiquing the role that businesses play in shaping climate policy; the role of law in helping bring about climate justice and accountability, such as protecting environmental activists from violence; greening of commercial finance; criminalising climate denial; decolonising the climate debate; and exploring how the Anthropocene's overturning of conventional narrative structures can be communicated – and perhaps productively reimagined – through the graphic novel.

City's COP26 highlights

Students

In an exciting student-led collaboration, students from City's Journalism Department, in conjunction with the Higher School of Economics, Moscow (Russian Federation) and the American University of Sharjah (United Arab Emirates), explored the most pressing climate change issues in their locations. Students reflected on how journalism is rising to the challenge of covering them and how improvements can be made.

Staff

The City Politics Podcast, the official podcast of the Department of International Politics at City, hosted by Dr David Blunt, recorded a special episode for COP26. 'The Climate Emergency and Civil Disobedience' debated topics such as the roles of new social and economic orders, systemic change and state involvement in the economy to address the climate emergency. Particularly challenging were the discussions on:

- Building a social movement around social disobedience, reflecting on disruptive strategies.
- The link between social justice and the climate emergency, in light of global inequalities and the intergenerational aspect of climate change.
- Explicit and implicit climate denial, the latter characterised by recognition of climate change at an intellectual level but paired with incongruent actions.



Alumni

Many City alumni are active in the arena of environmental sustainability. On the occasion of COP26 we took the opportunity to meet them. Here is a snapshot of some of their stories:

Iphigenia has championed environmental sustainability in the performing arts for over a decade. She is now a founding member and General Secretary of mitos21, a network of national theatres and public theatre institutions in Europe. Her book, Sustainable Theatre: Theory, Context, Practice, will be available this year.



"I found that one of the main barriers for practitioners and institutions was the lack of knowledge and expertise, they just didn't know what they had to do. So, I had the idea

of setting up a capacity-building course for implementing environmental sustainability in cultural institutions with a focus on performing arts."

Iphigenia Taxopoulou, MA Arts Criticism/Arts Policy and Management

Madeleine has put her early interest in the environment into practice as a celebrated environmental reporter for The I Paper. We talked to her about how her career has developed and what it is really like to work as a climate journalist.



"The great thing about the environment is that it applies to every part of life, so it doesn't really matter what you do for a living or where you live, or how much money you have, there are always some improvements that you can bring to bear."

Madeleine Cuff, MA Magazine Journalism

⁴ www.city.ac.uk/news-and-events/news/2021/11/cop26city-a-statement-from-citys-presidents

Campus

As Universities UK's 'Confronting the climate emergency - A commitment from UK universities' report has shown, higher education institutions can lead the way towards building a sustainable future.

Key to this is not only the research and education the sector delivers, but also their own development and operational impact⁵. A 2019 Environmental Concerns Survey showed that 94 per cent of students thought universities could do more to be environmentally sustainable, while 47 per cent think it is essential universities take action to reduce their environmental impact⁶. Acting on operational impacts is an opportunity to inspire the leaders of tomorrow by demonstrating integrity, while acknowledging that students' education should not come at the cost of their future.

Over the past few years, a response to this challenge has been an increasing number of universities committing to achieving net zero carbon emissions before 2050. Delivery of net zero carbon, through consumption reduction strategies (such as sourcing green energy, improving energy efficiency and investing in new technologies) and taking responsibility for indirect emissions, also allows financial risk mitigations by anticipating increasing energy costs and legislative changes.



⁵ www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/latest/insights-and-analysis/how-are-universities-addressing-climate

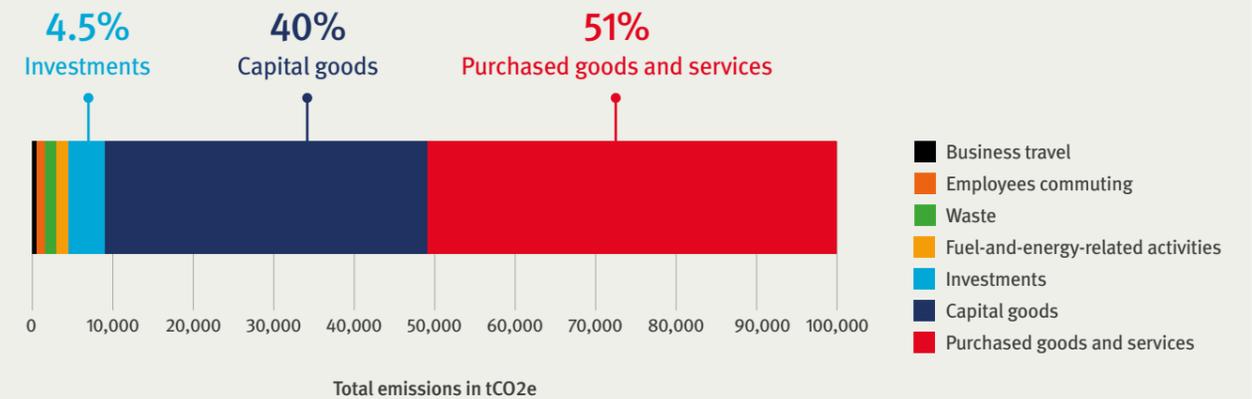
⁶ https://info.qs.com/rs/335-VIN-535/images/Sustainability-in-HE-What-More-Can-Universities-Do.pdf?mkt_tok=MzM1LVZJTio1MzUAAAGBYmfPnTwMqce-Zwabp3Rw59stgtcLUv5m3EdAPOkxKyKHM7zmbvW7db7HFOHJMS3OfPpLPySgV5GvVRp3oMUFpFAHo-fQkmO86o-JgMcGE7r5

Addressing indirect emissions

Carbon emissions are often categorised using three distinct categories called 'scopes'. Scope 1 includes direct emissions from owned or controlled sources. Scope 2 covers indirect emissions from the generation of consumed electricity, steam, heating and cooling. Scope 3 comprises indirect emissions that are not controlled or owned by City (excluding energy which is

included in scope 2). 2021 marked City's first scope 3 emissions audit, identifying purchased goods and services, capital goods, and investments as significant emission sources. Initial findings show that scope 3 emissions could contribute over 90 per cent of City's total carbon emissions and will continue to play a key part in achieving City's net zero target going forward.

Scope 3 emissions by category



Net zero carbon emissions by 2040

In 2019 City committed to achieving net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2040 at the latest. Our previous target, to reduce carbon emissions by 43 per cent by 2020 (against a 2005/06 baseline), was exceeded last year, with a total reduction of 53 per cent. This new goal will take City forward aligning with commitments across the Government, London and Islington.

The approach to net zero over coming years will be a balance between emission reductions and offsetting. Efforts will initially focus on minimising emissions, with carbon offsetting compensating for the remaining residual emissions. This approach will improve City's long-term resilience, with outcomes that are environmentally and financially preferable in the long term.

Governance

Challenges around climate change and sustainable development will keep evolving as the global climate crisis progresses. This means ever-changing shifts in landscape that will need to be navigated by cementing sustainability at the core of leadership strategies.

Changes in environmental legislation and regulations, environmental threats and the increasing importance of sustainability among both students and wider society will necessitate transformation within the sector^{7,8}. A leadership focus on sustainability improves organisational resilience, while creating new opportunities and driving innovation⁹. With the influence of higher education institutions on decision makers, climate action requires universities to lead by informing and driving change both locally and globally.

City Students' Union achieve 'Excellent' in Green Impact Awards

City Students' Union was awarded 'Excellent' in the 2021 NUS Green Impact Awards, the highest accreditation available. Green Impact is a United Nations award-winning programme designed to support environmentally and socially sustainable practice within organisations. The Students' Union also received the Green Impact award for 'Most Improved', recognising the Union's active effort and recent steps taken to integrate more sustainable operations. Impactful work by the Union has included the passing of the 'Tackling Climate Change Framework' motion at the Annual General Meeting. In collaboration with City, this policy commits to a three-year plan for a more sustainable City and to reaching a net zero target. Ongoing activity throughout the year, led by the Ethics and Engagement Officer, also saw the launch of a campaign to engage City students on the issues surrounding plant-based diets.

National and international rankings



People & Planet

City is proud to once again have received a first-class award from the People & Planet University League, a UK-wide performance indicator on environmental and social sustainability criteria. We performed particularly well within the 'environmental policy, auditing and environmental management' and 'carbon reduction' sections, achieving 100 per cent and 90 per cent scores respectively. City is also ranked among the top 10 UK universities for our success in sustainability 'engagement' and 'education'.

Times Higher Education

Through their yearly Impact Ranking, *Times Higher Education* assesses global performances across higher education institutions in delivering the Global Goals. The rankings capture universities' impact on society across each of the goals. City ranked among the top 200 global higher education institutions for Global Goal 13: Climate Action ranking, measuring universities' climate change research, energy use and climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Taking the next steps

As City moves towards the next phase of its development, our commitment to and work on sustainability and the Global Goals must continue.

2022 will be marked by progress on a new sustainability strategy, which is expected to set out the roadmap to our net zero carbon emissions by 2040 target and will draw on City's strategy review. Consequently, we are pleased to announce that the President will be appointing Executive Deans to lead across university-wide priorities, including the implementation of City's sustainability strategy. Alongside leading more world class research and education, we will role model sustainability in our civic responsibilities and in responding to the global climate challenge.

We are continually looking for innovative ways to improve our performance, through working with City's student and staff community and creating new local and global partnerships. As new strategies emerge, we look forward to engaging with City's stakeholders to develop these key tools to deliver progress. City's Sustainability team welcomes and encourages all feedback, comments and suggestions at sustainable_city@city.ac.uk.



⁷ https://uploads-ssl.webflow.com/6008334066c47be740656954/60f6908f10bfcc10d2c87d55_20210716_SOS-UK%20Sustainability%20Skills%202020-21_FINAL.pdf

⁸ www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_The_Global_Risks_Report_2021.pdf

⁹ www.sustainabilityexchange.ac.uk/files/a5_eauc_booklet_final.pdf

City, University of London
Northampton Square
London
EC1V 0HB
United Kingdom



Find out more
www.city.ac.uk/sustainable-city



Telephone enquiries
+44 (0) 20 7040 3819



Email enquiries
sustainable_city@city.ac.uk

City, University of London is an independent member institution of the University of London. Established by Royal Charter in 1836, the University of London consists of independent member institutions with outstanding global reputations and several prestigious central academic bodies and activities.



**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**



This report is printed on recycled paper

www.city.ac.uk