Times Higher Education
Sustainability
Impact Ratings

SDG 13

Climate Action

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Why we measure

Climate change is a crisis that will affect every part of society, and every country. Universities need to be at the forefront of action to reduce the impact of climate change, especially amongst the poorest who will be the most affected.

We are capturing how universities are acting to address climate issues through research, low carbon use and education.

https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/climate-change/

Links to other SDGs

SDG 13 relates to all other SDGs since, if no action taken, climate change can exacerbate storms and disasters, and threats such as food and water scarcity (SDG2 and SDG6). These impacts will be felt more severely by poorer people (SDG1). It will affect life on land (SDG15) and in the sea (SDG14). However, innovation (SDG9) and work towards clean energy (SDG7) can help to mitigate its impact.

Metrics and indicators

13.1 Research on climate action

13.1.1 Climate Action: CiteScore

This indicator measures the proportion of a university's publications appear in the top 10% of journals according to the Citescore metric. It is intended to reflect on excellence of academic output.

The indicator is normalised and is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.60% of the overall score).

13.1.2 Climate Action: FWCI

This indicator explores the quality of a university's output in the area of climate action research using the number of citations received as a metric.

This number is normalised by publication type (paper, review, conference proceeding, book, or book chapter), by year of publication, and by subject. Subjects are defined using Elsevier's ASJC classification.

This indicator is normalised and is worth 10% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 2.6% of the overall score).

13.1.3 Climate Action: publications

The number of publications looks at the scale of research output from a university around climate action. It is not scaled by the size of the institution – rather it looks at the overall impact.

This indicator is normalised and is worth 7% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 1.82% of the overall score).

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13.2 Low-carbon energy use

Year: 2024

This metric is used to understand the carbon footprint of energy use at the university.

The metric relates to the UN Targets 13.2.

This indicator is normalised and is worth 27% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 7.02% of the overall score)

This year's approach will see two indicators feeding into this metric.

The first question (indicator 13.2.1 Low-carbon energy tracking) is generally asking whether your university measures the amount of low carbon energy used. If you do, we will ask you to provide evidence for it.

If you do not measure this amount you cannot score for the second question.

13.2.1 Indicator: Low-carbon energy tracking

#	Indicator	Maximum score
13.2.1	**Low carbon energy tracking** **Year: 2024** Measure the amount of low carbon energy used across the university Up to three points based on: • Existence of measurement, maximum of one point for whole university, 0.5 for partial measurement • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	**13.50% in SDG** (3.51% Overall)

The second question (indicator 13.2.2 Low-carbon energy use) asks for the amount of low-carbon energy used in the university, and the total amount of energy used.

This indicator is normalised and a is worth 13.50% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 3.51% of the overall score)

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13.2.2 Indicator: Low-carbon energy use

Data Collected	Definition
Total energy used	Total energy used in 2024 in Gigajoule (GJ)
Total energy used from low-carbon sources	Energy used from low-carbon sources in 2024 in Gigajoule (GJ)

Data submission guidance

Guidance: Low-carbon sources

These can be:
- Renewable sources (biomass, hydropower, geothermal)
- Power generation sources (wind, solar, nuclear)
- Electricity (renewable)
- Electricity (nuclear)

This should not include energy from fossil fuels.

This can include
- no-fossil fuels (alternative fuels include bio-alcohol (methanol, ethanol, butane), refuse-derived fuel, chemically stored electricity (batteries and fuel cells), hydrogen, non-fossil methane, non-fossil natural gas, vegetable oil, propane and other biomass sources.)
- Renewable Energy (Biofuel, Biomass, Biogas): Bioethanol, Biodiesel, Biomethane, Biodiesel (from used cooking oil), Biodiesel (from tallow). Wood logs, Wood chips, Wood pellets, Grass/straw, Biogas, Landfill gas

Guidance: Total energy used

Total energy used includes both, energy generated by the university and energy purchased by the university.

We look at units of energy used by an individual, event, organization, or product (at university). We focus on all that is:
- owned or controlled by the university (e.g. fuels used for vehicles, heaters, boilers),
- consumed by the university (e.g. purchased electricity)

Definition: units of measurement

The unit of measurement is Gigajoule (GJ).

We expect these figures to be a rounded figure.

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13.3 Environmental education measures

Universities need to demonstrate activities around local education projects and collaborations on climate change impacts, mitigation and adaptation, including disaster planning.

There are a total of 15 points that could be gained from meeting the criteria in this metric, worth 23% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 5.98% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relate to the UN Targets 13.1, 13.3 and 13.B.

#	Indicator	Maximum score
13.3.1	**Local education programmes on climate** **Year: 2024** Provide local education programmes or campaigns on climate change risks, impacts, mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning Up to three points based on: • Existence of programmes or campaigns – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	**4.60% in SDG** (1.20% Overall)
13.3.2	**Climate Action Plan, shared** **Year: 2024** Have a university Climate Action plan, shared with local government and local community groups Up to three points based on: • Existence of plan – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	**4.60% in SDG** (1.20% Overall)

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#	Indicator	Maximum score
13.3.3	**Co-operative planning for climate change disasters** **Year: 2024** Participate in co-operative planning for climate change disasters, that may include the displacement of people both within a country and across borders, working with government Up to three points based on: • Existence of participation – maximum one point for both local and regional, 0.5 points for local only, 0.5 points for regional only • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	**4.60% in SDG** (1.20% Overall)
13.3.4	**Inform and support government** **Year: 2024** Inform and support local or regional government in local climate change disaster or risk early warning and monitoring Up to three points based on: • Existence of support – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	**4.60% in SDG** (1.20% Overall)
13.3.5	**Environmental education collaborate with NGO** **Year: 2024** Collaborate with NGOs on climate adaptation Up to three points based on: • Existence of collaborations – one point • Evidence provided – up to one point • Is the evidence provided public – one point	**4.60% in SDG** (1.20% Overall)

Data submission guidance

Guidance: Climate Action Plan (13.3.2)
A Climate Action Plan is a detailed and strategic framework for measuring, planning, and reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and related climatic impacts.

A plan created and published for Race2Zero would be a good

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Guidance: NGOs
NGOs – non government organisations, can be any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. They are often task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information.

Where your evidence contains collaboration with multiple groups, please indicate which are NGOs within the comments.

13.4 Commitment to carbon neutral university

Universities need to indicate whether they have already achieved its commitment to be a carbon neutral university or whether they are working on its realization.

This metric is worth 23% of the score in this SDG (equivalent to 5.98% of the overall score).

This metric and indicators relate to the UN Target 13.2.

This year's approach will see two indicators feeding into this metric.

The first question (indicator 13.4.1 Commitment to carbon neutral university) asks whether your university has a target date by which it will become carbon neutral. If you do, we will ask you to provide evidence for it.

#	Indicator	Maximum score

13.4.1	**Commitment to carbon neutral university**
	
	Year: 2024
	
	Have a target date by which it will become carbon neutral according to the Greenhouse Gas Protocols?
	
	Up to five points based on:
	• Existence of target
	• Evidence provided – up to one point
	• Is the evidence provided public – one point
	• Scopes covered - maximum of three points
	  ○ Scope 1 or not known, no points
	  ○ Scope 1 and 2, one point
	  ○ Scope 1, 2 and 3 (partial), two points
	  ○ Scope 1, 2 and 3 (full), three points
		11.50% in SDG (2.99% Overall)

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Data submission guidance

Guidance: carbon neutrality
This data point feeds into the Carbon neutrality metric and is used to indicate whether the university has already achieved its commitment to be a carbon neutral university or whether it is working on its realization. Carbon neutrality in this sense means the reduction of all greenhouse gases including (but not limited to) carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide.

Guidance: Greenhouse Gas Protocol Scopes
This provides standards and tools that help countries and cities track progress toward climate goals. Scope 1 covers direct emissions, scope 2 adds indirect emissions from purchased energy, scope 3 includes all indirect sources (travel, procurement, waste, water etc...). Because Scope 3 contains 15 categories for measurement, with different commitments and complexities, institutions that intend to achieve carbon neutrality across some, but not all, of the categories can indicate Scope 3 (partial). For more details click here.

The second question (indicator 13.4.2 Achieve by date) asks when carbon neutrality for both Scopes 1 and 2 is expected to be achieved (or has already been achieved).

13.4.2 Indicator: Achieve by date

#	Indicator	Maximum score
13.4.2	**Achieve by** Up to four points based on: • Date for achieved prior to 2024 – 4 points • Date for achieved by: 2024-2029 – 3 points • Date for achieved by: 2030-2039 – 2 points • Date for achieved by: 2040-2049 – 1 point • Date for achieved by: 2050 or later – 0.5 points	**11.50% in SDG** (2.99% Overall)

Data submission guidance

Guidance: Scope of carbon neutrality
This indicator looks at the target (or achievement) date of carbon neutrality. The target needs to cover both Scope 1 and Scope 2. A target for Scope 1 alone will not be accepted. The target date can also include Scope 3 alongside Scope 1 and Scope 2.

Where carbon neutrality has been achieved, please indicate the year it was achieved.