

RCA Environmental Sustainability Strategy

2024-2027

Net Zero

Achieve Net Zero by 2035 through reducing scope 1, 2 and 3 greenhouse gas emissions by 90% from a 2022/23 baseline and building resilience to the effects of climate change

Energy

Reduce emissions from energy by 42% by 2030 from a 2022/23 baseline, with significant progress made by 2027

Buildings

All major refurbishments to be rated SKA Gold by July 2027
Develop detailed Decarbonisation Plan to be signed off by SMT by July 2025
Measure and evaluate embodied carbon of major refurbishments
Develop a Climate Adaptation Plan to be signed off by SMT by July 2025/6 [subject to budget and resource].

Procurement

Engage with 50 suppliers (representing 80% of spend-based emissions), aiming to improve data quality and commit to setting science-based emission reduction targets, by July 2027

Staff Travel

Reduce emissions from staff travel by 90% by 2035
Maintain emissions from staff commuting from a 2022/23 baseline by July 2027

Student Travel

Reduce emissions from student travel by 90% by 2035
Maintain emission from student commuting from a 2022/23 baseline by July 2027
Model the emissions relating to internationalisation strategy by July 2027

Investments

Work with the College's investment advisors calculate the carbon emissions from as much of our portfolio as practicable by July 2025
Develop a reduction target with the College's investment advisors, that can be measured and implemented, by July 2025
Engage with InnovationRCA portfolio companies to assess feasibility of calculating emissions by July 2026

Sustainable Resource Use

Reduce our draw on natural resources and work towards becoming a circular institution

Waste

Increase recycling of operational waste from 54% in 2022/23 to 60% by July 2027
Create opportunities on all campuses for students to reuse and share materials

Water

Reduce water consumption by 10% by July 2027 from 2022/23 levels

Biodiversity

Increase biodiversity through the introduction of planters and/or green spaces as part of renovation works in Darwin by July 2027

Food

Embed “Becoming CLIMAVORE” principles in the food offering at The Refectory in Kensington by July 2027
Identify ways to reduce single-use plastic on an ongoing basis, following the successful ending of selling plastic bottles

Events & Exhibitions

Set up monitoring of environmental impact of exhibitions and events by December 2024 and seek to generate year-on-year improvements

Environmental Management

Achieve an accredited Environmental Management System by the end of academic year 2027
Work towards EcoCampus Bronze status in 2024/25 [budget and resource dependent]

Teaching & Learning

Embed environmental sustainability in all forms of teaching and learning in order for students to contribute to and work within a more sustainable future

Curriculum

Review and map the current status of sustainability in teaching and learning in conjunction with staff training needs, and identify an action plan for improvement by July 2025
Continue to deliver programmes and challenges which aim to have a positive sustainability impact
Support students to conduct living lab projects, using the College and/or local communities as real-world testbeds
Seek all opportunities to embed sustainability in all curricula delivered at the College and to explore new opportunities to design and deliver sustainability-aligned curricula where appropriate

Induction

Embed sustainability in inductions at all levels: College, School, Programme, Technical

Training

Support staff carbon literacy and understanding of the environmental and social impacts of climate change in relation to materials and ideas.
Provide staff development opportunities to support embedding sustainability in teaching and learning

Knowledge Sharing

Create a community of practice for academic and technical staff to share knowledge of sustainable practice and teaching

Technical Workshops

Develop and implement a framework for sustainable technical workshop practice

Research & Knowledge Exchange

Develop solutions to global sustainability challenges through research and innovation

Research and Knowledge Exchange

Deliver planned research and knowledge exchange addressing issues relating to climate change and circular economy
Contribute to the challenge of climate change through a bold new initiative with a national or global partner by 2027
Support cross-College research and knowledge exchange initiatives that address themes relating to environmental sustainability and the climate crisis
Seek to maximise the visibility, engagement with and impact of this research to internal and external audiences
Support staff to develop awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability in research through RCA RKE Academy sessions

Doctoral Students

Support doctoral students to develop awareness and understanding of environmental sustainability in research for PhD students through RCA Doctoral Training Programme sessions

Operations

Support staff to minimise the environmental impact of doing research
Become a supporter of the UKRI Concordat for the Environmental Sustainability of Research and Innovation Practice by July 2024 and a signatory by December 2025
Identify and develop ways to apply relevant research findings to enhance the environmental sustainability of RCA operations

Reputation

Explore feasibility of participating in the QS sustainability rankings