

BARGAINING OBJECTIVE 4

Energy and carbon management

BACKGROUND

Half of UK carbon emissions are produced by work activity. Workplaces burn energy, consume resources and generate waste and travel. It means unions are uniquely placed to hold their employers to account. This part of the GND claim may be the most challenging given the amount of statistics and different formulations that are in use. Some institutions will have a wealth of data and full-time staff, while others will have limited capacity and a lack of comprehensive information.

Green Reps should seek assistance if they are experiencing problems with some of the technicalities associated with finding or understanding the information. Further background information relating to the calculations of carbon emissions can be seen at Appendix 3 of the GND Model Claim for UCU members. Any carbon and energy management plan should contain commitments covering both energy efficiency and low carbon/net zero generation.

EDUCATION SECTOR

According to the Carbon Trust annual energy costs for the further and higher education (FHE) sector are around £400 million, resulting in CO₂ emissions of around 3 million tonnes per year.

<https://www.carbontrust.com/resources/guides/sector-basedadvice/further-and-higher-education/>

WHAT DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR?

Scope 1

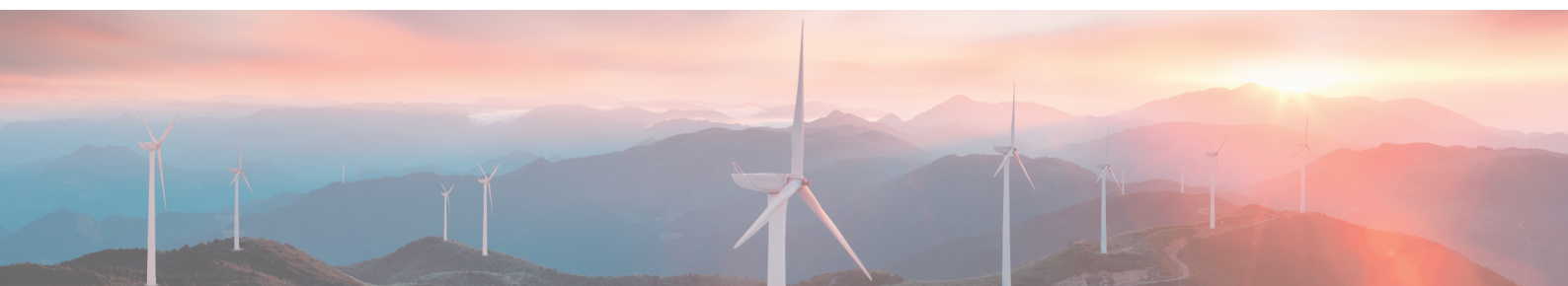
All direct emissions from the activities of an organisation or under their control. Including fuel combustion on site such as gas boilers, fleet vehicles and air-conditioning leaks.

Scope 2

Indirect emissions from electricity purchased and used by the organisation. Emissions are created during the production of the energy and eventually used by the organisation.

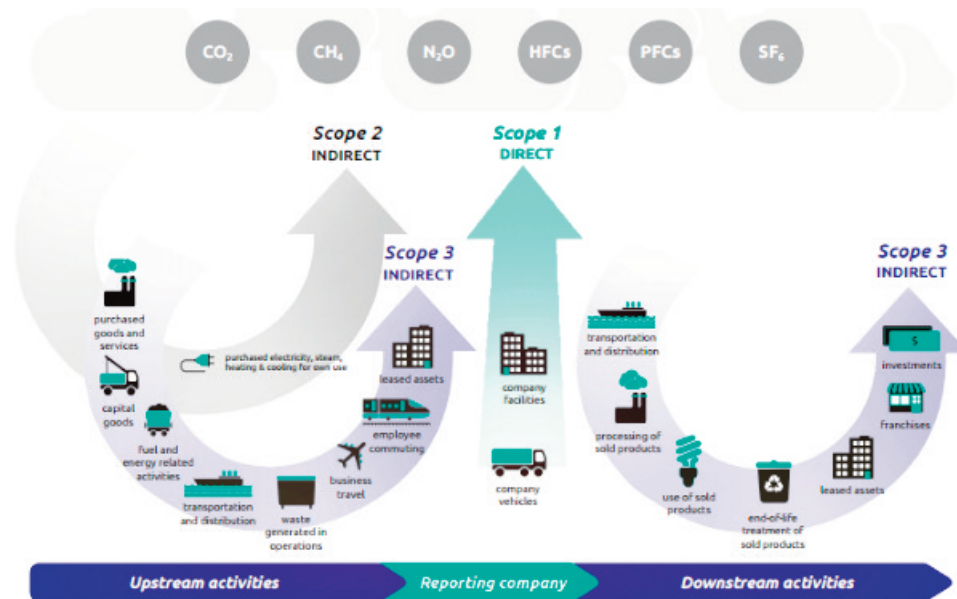
Scope 3

All other indirect emissions from activities of the organisation, occurring from sources that they do not own or control. These are usually the greatest share of the carbon footprint, covering emissions





associated with business travel, including international student travel, procurement, waste and water. This also includes commuting, endowment investments and agricultural landholdings.



Source: GHG Protocol

CARBON REDUCTION

In addition to plans and targets there needs to be a mechanism for tracking performance. This is linked to whether the institution is expanding its operations. People & Planet have devised a metric for universities that considers:

- university growth / change over time
- research activity
- size and number of buildings
- accommodation
- construction activity
- comparing like for like.

This helps to compare the change in carbon (CO₂e) intensity at the same institution over the previous year, and the total emissions reductions against the 2005 baseline.

The UK Climate Change Act 2008 set legally binding targets for a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 80% by 2050, with an interim target of 34% by 2020 against a 1990 baseline. The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) recommended a further increase to 42% by 2020. FHE sectors are required to assist in meeting these targets. The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) recommended a target for the HE sector of 43% by 2020 against a 2005/06 baseline. Some universities set their own more ambitious carbon emission targets.





CARBON REDUCTION/MANAGEMENT PLANS

Designed to:

- assign roles and responsibilities for implementing projects
- reduce energy costs
- set reduction targets
- establish an effective system of monitoring consumption
- encourage environmentally aware behaviour in staff and students
- improve the corporate image of the university
- recognise the university's role and responsibilities to act to reduce its impact on
- global climate change.

TRANSPORT AND TRAVEL POLICY

The carbon plan should contain a link to an agreement covering transport and travel policy. The emissions and control measures associated with transport and travel are often contained in a separate policy. They are included in this Carbon Management section because they normally count towards Scope 1 and 3 emissions data. Emissions from flights are on the increase.

AIR TRAVEL

Since 2004 passenger numbers have more than doubled, from two billion to 4.4 billion in 2018, with new record numbers forecast for 2019. Emissions from global air travel are predicted to double or even treble again by 2050 if no action is taken.

Universities play a role with a high and rising air travel footprint. Academics are frequent air travellers – to present at international conferences, conduct and review research, network and collaborate.

The problem starts with a lack of precise data on the air travel footprint of the higher education sector. In the UK, the first port of call should be data collected by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Currently, UK universities are asked to submit data on flight emissions to HESA, either based on destinations or on spending on flights. This is not obligatory – in the past three years only 43 percent have done so.

DEMANDS

- Ask the employer to adopt (or if one is in place) review/update a carbon management and energy management plan.
- Agree a mechanism for tracking carbon reduction performance and an annual review of progress.
- Develop or enhance a set of related policies including Transport and Travel Policy.
- Conduct a review on carbon footprint of supply chains.
- Develop a mechanism for the consideration of carbon to be made within all procurement decisions.





NEGOTIATORS' RESOURCES

- **Case study - an international perspective** The University of Tasmania's Energy Strategy 2018-22 is designed to enhance energy security, reduce energy costs, consumption and energy-related carbon emissions. The university was also the second university in Australia to be certified carbon neutral back in 2016. <https://www.utas.edu.au/infrastructure-services-development/sustainability/energy>
- **SOS-UK Carbon Targets** In partnership with NUS, People & Planet and UCU. All UK tertiary education institutions have been scored based on their carbon targets. See how your institution compares to others in the sector. <https://carbontargets.uk>
- **People & Planet** Track your university score for 'Managing Carbon' (Criteria 5), Energy Sources (Criteria 10), and Carbon Reduction (Criteria 12) <https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league>
<https://peopleandplanet.org/resources-training/people-planet-university-league/methodology/12-carbon-reduction>
- **Carbon Trust** Technical Guidance for calculating Scope 3 emissions
http://www.ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/ghgp/standards/Scope3_Calculation_Guidance_0.pdf
- **Carbon Trust** FE and HE: Training colleges and universities to be energy efficient', March 2012
https://www.carbontrust.com/media/39208/ctv020_further_and_higher_education.pdf
- **Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA)** provides information on emissions and waste in HE with comparative statistics back to 2015-16. <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/data-and-analysis/estates/table-3>

SUPPLY CHAINS

- To assist with understanding the carbon footprint of the supply chain the Carbon Trust has issued guidance <https://www.carbontrust.com/client-services/advice/supply-chain/>

TRAVEL POLICIES

- Degrowth of aviation: Reducing air travel in a just way. December 2019
<https://stay-grounded.org/report-degrowth-of-aviation/>
- The Ecologist: University sector travel emissions. July 2019
<https://theecologist.org/2019/jul/12/university-sector-travel-emissions>
- HEPI: Meaningful travel policies for academics <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/2020/04/22/develop-meaningful-travel-policies-for-academics-before-lifting-any-currently-imposed-restrictions-on-international-travel/>
- Times Higher <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/universities-urged-radically-cut-flights-help-climate>

THIS GND QUICK GUIDE provides an overview and entry point to engaging with one of six UCU Green New Deal demands for universities and colleges. To access the full GND bargaining and negotiation framework, click here: https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/11326/Green-new-deal-bargaining-guide--model-claim/pdf/green-new-deal_bargaining-guide_jan21.pdf

To discuss this further, seek advice on progressing this demand or other aspects of the GND, and to use the model claim and letter, contact environment@ucu.org.uk

