



University of Liverpool Joint Trade Unions *and* Guild of Students

GREEN NEW DEAL BARGAINING CLAIM



HEADS OF CLAIM

The University of Liverpool is a signatory to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (“SDGs”) and is currently developing policy that seeks to meet the 2030 targets set by the SDGs. In this claim, the Liverpool University branches of University & College Union (UCU), UNITE and UNISON and the Liverpool Guild of Students propose the action necessary to achieve those targets.

The role of current and future workers and workers’ organizations in combatting the climate and ecological emergency and ensuring a just transition is recognised through the intersecting policy frameworks of the Paris Agreement, the International Labour Organizations Just Transition Guidelines, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The climate and ecological emergency will necessarily have an impact on staff terms and conditions making it a matter for collective bargaining and negotiation.

This claim seeks to harness the collective power and capabilities of staff, students and local communities to drive bottom-up change through sustained democratic engagement and take the necessary action to ensure the University is SDG compliant and develops a pro-active contribution to climate justice locally, nationally and globally.

By taking effective action to develop the University’s sustainability strategy and policy in line with the UN sustainable development goals, and enshrining workers rights and a decolonisation framework in all elements of its sustainability practice, the University of Liverpool will be a leader in its contribution to tackling the climate crisis through a Just Transition framework that benefits all.

This document calls for:

- 1.** A meaningful reduction in local and global emissions – we call on the University to bring forward its net zero commitment to 2030, expand the target to encompass all emissions including all scope 3 emissions, and adopt a carbon budget approach with the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research carbon budget modelling as a maximum emissions target. This will require an assessment of the university’s estates strategy that brings scope 3 emissions within the net zero target, and the development of a set of policies, incremental binding targets and transparency mechanisms which set out how the target will be achieved.
- 2.** Sustainable Employment – we call for the adoption of measures to ensure sustainable employment policies that tackle casualization and reduce the pay gap, including a commitment to tackling gendered and racialised pay inequalities and a commitment to a 1:6 pay ratio. The University will establish a formal system of workplace green reps and allocate facility time for these roles.



3. Decolonisation and decarbonisation of the curriculum - A wholesale revision of teaching programmes along the principles of 'decolonising and decarbonising' the curriculum.
4. A just transition in research - This will entail concrete commitments to: supporting and promoting research that tackles problems of climate change and the ecological crisis; working with staff and the campus trade unions to move the University's research agendas away from with companies that are pursuing growth in unsustainable industrial, economic, social and political practices and processes;¹ ending funding streams that tie the University to companies that are pursuing growth in unsustainable practices and processes.²
5. Continual improvement of the University's divestment strategy.

1. REDUCING LOCAL AND GLOBAL EMISSIONS

Climate Emergency and Net Zero

The University has committed to a 2035 'net zero' target. We believe current plans are not consistent with the absolute reductions needed to keep in line with 1.5 degrees as set out in the Paris agreement. Current published plans lack a clear pathway to net zero. The 2017 carbon management plan states absolute reductions of only 6% by 2030. We advocate a carbon budget approach in addition to the net zero target. The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) recommends the use of a carbon budget to ensure absolute reductions and the front loading of reductions. The current net zero target does not include all 'scope 3' emissions.³ In common with the approach in development by the Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi), the target should be pursued through the principle of maximum abatement of emissions across Scope's 1, 2 and 3 before residual emission removals offsets are considered. Scope 3 is the most important as it is usually the largest proportion of an organisation's emissions. Organisations must take responsibility for reducing all greenhouse gas emissions generated through their activities to avoid 'outsourcing' emissions to achieve a carbon target. Whilst commitment to an ambitious 'net zero' carbon target is an essential first step, we emphasise that net zero is a problematic and increasingly contentious concept. Removal offsets entail environmental and social risks. Removals projects may be ineffective, unsustainable, and impact on the rights of indigenous and Global South populations. As such any use of offsets must be subject to robust and transparent scrutiny to ensure a genuine contribution to environmental and social goals.

- 1.1 A public declaration of the climate emergency.
- 1.2 Commitment to a net zero deadline no later than 2030, and feasibility scoping for a zero-carbon deadline of 2045. The net zero target must include scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions. This should include a full audit and ongoing monitoring of:
 - 1.2.1 Outsourced emissions generated from home working.



- 1.2.2 The University's plans for expansion of its estate that takes full account of scope 1, 2, and 3 and other environmentally harmful emissions
- 1.2.3 Scope 3 and environmentally harmful emissions generated in external procurement and supply arrangements.
- 1.2.4 Scope 3 and environmentally harmful emissions generated by the University's use of local, national and international transport networks. This should include staff and student commutes and all international travel associated with the university
- 1.2.5 Scope 3 and environmentally harmful emissions generated by the University's food supply networks
- 1.3 Scope 1 + 2 reduction targets should be brought in line with a publicly-declared carbon budget within the Tyndall centre carbon budget, and consistent with the principle of equity in the Paris agreement. The Tyndall centre budget should operate as a maximum emissions target, with efforts made to bring emissions in line with 1.5 degrees
- 1.4 Commit to bringing Scope 3 in line with the university carbon budget once audits are completed
- 1.5 An outline of the policies it will adopt to move beyond the net zero carbon strategy as set out in this document, with clear, measurable, incremental targets and defined responsibilities, including detail of the transparent mechanisms that will be used for tracking progress on the achievement of net zero.
- 1.6 An outline of intended use of offsets in achieving the target consistent with SBTi principle of 'maximum abatement', a policy regarding offsets, and mechanisms for transparency and scrutiny
- 1.7 Provision of sufficient resources (people and funds) to achieve the objectives set out in this document in a timely and consistent way.

Land Use and the University Estate

The University will incorporate Sustainable Development Goals in its land and building use. This means making decisions from the very start to the end of the capital development process that take account of the full impact of resource working landscapes.

- 1.8 The preparation of a University 'Sustainable Land Use Plan' which explicitly shifts the basis of capital development decisions from purely commercial to sustainability objectives.
- 1.9 The plan should establish how estates planning including construction and demolition related emissions falls within the net zero target and carbon budget.
- 1.10 Co-option of joint trade union and Guild of Students representation to all committees making strategic decisions on the University's capital development and land use.



Procurement

The power to reduce carbon emissions that the University has via sustainable procurement of its goods and services should not be under-estimated. The University can use the procurement process to promote sustainability, to improve its external relationships and to improve its contribution to the local and wider economy. To meet all those goals, the University will commit to the following:

- 1.11. Detailed assessment of the employment practices of contractors including construction, and the relevant supply chain in all procurement decisions.
- 1.12. Affiliate with the Electronics Watch socially responsible procurement programme and comply with affiliate requirements.
- 1.13. Annual audit and reporting which details the progress made in achieving 1.1-1.9
- 1.14. Reporting should include SLT reporting on how developments at the level of strategic planning will impact upon progress in achieving 1.1-1.9
- 1.15. The establishment of a new standing committee that includes both SLT and trade union and student representation that has overall responsibility for the implementation of 1.1-1.9

2 SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT

Sustainable Development Goals

The University will take measures to incorporate the Sustainable Development Goals in its employment and procurement practices and sustainability strategy, to ensure compliance with:

- **Sustainable Development Goal 12**, to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- **Sustainable Development Goal 8**, to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all.
- **Sustainable Development Goal 10**, to Reduce inequality within and among countries.

Sustainable Employment Practices

There is a fundamental connection between fair and secure employment and tackling climate change effectively. The work of participatory institutional change requires a secure and engaged staff base and relations of collegiality, autonomy, and self-governance. These conditions are eroded by precarious work. More directly, casualised workers are less likely to live near campus and their travel to and from work therefore generates significant emissions relative to those on permanent or long-term contracts who can relocate. Principles of



continual improvement in sustainability will encompass the University's employment practices.

The university will:

- 2.1 Actively promote sustainable employment practices and engage with the joint trade unions to take the necessary action to eradicate casualisation.
- 2.2 Adopt the anti-casualisation claim currently tabled by the joint trade unions.
- 2.3 Take meaningful action to reduce the pay gap, including a commitment to tackling gendered and racialised pay inequalities and a commitment to a 1:6 pay ratio.

Trade Union 'Green Reps'

This claim seeks formal recognition of workplace 'Green Reps' in each Section/Department/Institute. Green reps will have responsibility for helping ensure that the commitments set out here are fulfilled and will represent members concerns about the impact of the University on climate change and the ecological crisis.

The university will:

- 2.4 Work with the joint trade unions to facilitate the formal recognition of trade union Green Reps who will have a similar role and status to that of workplace health and safety representatives.
- 2.5 Green Reps will be given adequate time for training and representing members, and the necessary additional facilities time will be allocated to each of the trade union branches for organising and co-ordinating Green Reps.

3 DECARBONISE AND DECOLONISE THE CURRICULUM

The principle of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is embedded in Sustainable Development Goal 4, to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Principles of ESD are explicit that teaching and learning should be transformative and allow us to make informed decisions and take individual and collective action to tackle the climate crisis and ensure the sustainability of the planet. This involves embedding ESD across the whole institution, supported by the necessary resources to support staff training and development. The joint trade unions and students Guild adopt a 'decarbonise and decolonise' approach. This means addressing climate change by linking the struggle for climate justice to colonialism (the imposition of Western political and high-carbon economic systems on non-Western countries) and exploring how the inequalities driven by our system globally are closely linked to the drivers of climate change. This also means accepting that encouraging growth in the teaching areas that are more commercially attractive does not necessarily sustain positive environmental agendas. The University must



review its role in reproducing unsustainable economies through its teaching and research, and the associated careers pathways of students. All changes to the curriculum must be under the supervision and control of the lecturers and professional services staff with the expertise in pedagogy and delivery in particular subject areas.

To meet those goals, the University will commit to the following:

- 3.1 A negotiated policy for embedding ESD across the curriculum and all areas of institutional practice and activities.
- 3.2 A negotiated policy for staff training and support addressing the workload issues associated with climate proofing lesson plans, course offers and schemes of work
- 3.3 A statement of resourcing: with budget and time allocated, and development with affected staff of a calendar for delivery of change that accounts for workload models.
- 3.4 A negotiated policy to meaningfully decarbonise – to transform learning in ways that equip students with the knowledge, skills and values to transform the carbon intense economic system.
- 3.5 A negotiated policy to meaningfully decolonise teaching – to challenge the ways that institutional and systemic hierarchies are embedded in curricula and employment practices.
- 3.6 The frameworks in 3.4 and 3.5 should be developed in tandem with students and embed the principle of students as co-creators of their education.
- 3.7 Not to pursue growth in areas that contribute towards unsustainable practices and processes.
- 3.8 A publicly available Ethical Careers Policy that explicitly excludes companies pursuing growth in unsustainable industrial practices and processes from recruitment opportunities.

4 RESEARCH

University researchers face a growing expectation to engage with external sources of funding. This pressure raises questions of the compatibility of commercial agendas with the goals of researchers, the possibility of conflicts of interest, potential risks to academic freedom, and conflicts with institutional ethics policies, missions and values. Current university ethics frameworks place the onus of avoiding ethical conflicts on the individual researcher, and take no account of the pressures placed on researchers by institutions, including through the precarious nature of research contracts. There is potential for significant conflict between sustainability goals and commercial agendas in research areas across the university. This includes but is not limited to questions of partnerships with



companies engaged in continued fossil fuel exploration, the development of new fossil fuel extraction and production, or political lobbying against science-based climate legislation. For example, companies across the economy, including not only industrial and agri-food sectors but services such as legal, accountancy and financial services are implicated in the climate and environmental crisis. University research partners should be able to show a genuine commitment to meeting science-based climate goals. The University will commit to bringing its research agenda (research that is conducted by research staff and supported by internal funds and by external grants) into line with the SDGs. This will be guided by staff-led processes, with impacts on workers mitigated in line with principles of just transition. Most important in this respect is SDG 13, Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

To meet this aim, the University will commit to the following:

- 4.1 A negotiated set of policies for embedding sustainability in research practice.
- 4.2 A negotiated policy to meaningfully decolonise research – to challenge the ways that institutional hierarchies are embedded in research and employment practices.
- 4.3 Institute an audit process to measure the sustainability of research at the Department/School/Institute level. This audit should include:
 - 4.3.1 Scrutiny of the purpose of research funding in each Department/School/Institute
 - 4.3.2 Identification of potential ethical risks within research agendas and partnerships including scrutiny of environmental and social track records of partners, funders, and sponsors
 - 4.3.3 Scrutiny of the environmental impact of research outputs.
 - 4.3.4 Addressing questions of access to data arising from partnerships in relation to principles of open sourcing data, and the potential sustainability impacts of this.
- 4.4 On the basis of audit processes specified in 4.3, a move away from the development of research supporting unsustainable economic, industrial, social and political practices and processes.
- 4.5 Refusal of all new research partnerships with companies that are pursuing growth in unsustainable practices and processes, the scope of which will be determined by further consultation with staff as specified in 4.1-4.3, with reference to relevant guidance on sustainability and achieving net zero as set out in note 2 at the top of this document. Pursuant to this process, decline to renew any current research partnerships with companies that are pursuing growth in unsustainable practices and processes after the end of the contract.
- 4.6 Measures ensuring a Just Transition for workers impacted by the measures in 4.3-4.5. This should include:



- 4.6.1 Establishment of a joint process with the trade unions and those workers directly impacted by the shift away from unsustainable research and funding, to implement and shape measures which will ensure a Just Transition.
- 4.6.2 Adoption of measures to support the transition of research towards sustainable alternatives in subject areas most affected, such as university match-funding or co-funding of bids. This should include measures to reduce precarity in research in line with the anti-casualization claim.
- 4.6.3 Assessment and adoption of measures to mitigate impacts on disadvantaged students or students from global south countries who may lose study opportunities due to ending of partnerships.
- 4.7 Audits to guide action at an institutional rather than an individual level. Decision-making mechanisms should ensure that those who are disproportionately affected by climate change and lack of economic sustainability should be represented. This should include staff with disabilities, casualised staff, staff from ethnic minority backgrounds, and lower-paid workers. Time and resources should be allocated from the University so as participation in decision-making is not exploitative or tokenistic for those groups.

5 DIVESTMENT

In 2019 the University committed to divest £9.5m of portfolio assets from holdings in fossil fuel companies with 'significant revenues' from fossil fuel extraction as a result of the Liverpool Guild of Students 'Fossil Free' campaign. To meet the Sustainable Development Goals, the policy must recognise only a small proportion of emissions result from the direct activities of fossil fuel companies, with the largest proportion through the secondary use of fossil fuels by others. The 'ethical investment policy' seeks to embed human rights and labour rights within investment practice via the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI) and the principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC). The policy must recognise that the aims of the UNPRI and UNGC require active scrutiny of corporate practice by social partners including trade unions. The focus must now shift towards decarbonising the entire investment portfolio, and the development of a more rigorous approach to divestment from firms associated with labour and human rights violations and environmental harms.

The University will:

- 5.1 Commit to a timeline for reducing the greenhouse gas footprint of its entire investment portfolio to net zero.
- 5.2 Review the exclusions in the Ethical Investment Policy in consultation with unions and students and develop stronger criteria for governing investment decisions.
- 5.3 Strengthen oversight of investments through co-option of joint trade union representation to the Investment Sub-Committee.



NOTES

- ¹ The wording 'unsustainable industrial, economic, social and political practices and processes' is used to here to denote the wide range of commercial activities and economic sectors which entail significant environmental harms. For brevity throughout the document the wording 'unsustainable practices and processes' is utilized.
- ² The terms "sustainable" and "unsustainable" are used in this document consistently with the definition underpinning the UN Sustainable Development Goals and set out in the 1987 Bruntland Commission Report as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." The assessment of particular practices or processes 'sustainability' should make clear reference to relevant evidence-based targets and guidance including the IPCC framework and the International Energy Agency report on the energy transition. See IEA Net Zero by 2050 A Roadmap for the Global Energy Sector <https://www.iea.org/reports/net-zero-by-2050>. In line with the recent IPCC Reports, the concept of 'Sustainable development' and 'Sustainable growth' in the SDG's should be read in terms of respecting hard environmental limits whilst meeting social needs, as advocated by alternative sustainability concepts including doughnut economics, green growth, degrowth, post growth, post development, and just transition. See 'Chapter 1: Introduction and Framing', IPCC Working Group III Contribution to the Sixth Assessment Report https://report.ipcc.ch/ar6wg3/pdf/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FinalDraft_Chapter01.pdf
- ³ The SBTi is a partnership between CDP, the United Nations Global Compact, World Resources Institute (WRI) and the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) <https://sciencebasedtargets.org/net-zero>

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