

The background of the slide is a close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a document. It features several red checkmarks, each enclosed within a hand-drawn black circle. The document is on a light-colored surface, and the lighting creates a soft shadow in the upper right corner.

# Division of Tasks and Responsibilities

# 06

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Creating a green campus requires the involvement of all staff and often other stakeholders in the institution, in particular students. Their input is needed in helping define what type of green campus is needed for their context, in shaping the strategy for the university or college and most importantly for setting out all the ongoing tasks that are needed and who is responsible for implementing them. These tasks will often relate to four main sets of activities – leadership and governance; partnership and engagement; learning, teaching and research; and estates and operations. Everyone at all levels and working in one or more of these sets of activities will have some tasks and responsibilities that they need to exercise but key people in every unit or department will be needed to help develop, promote, and monitor those tasks that their unit or department has most responsibility for. Greening a campus takes time as the many changes will be needed to green these four sets of activities which also need to be coordinated and reported on both internally and externally to understand what works and what does not work.

### ***Tasks: What needs to be done to make a green campus?***

#### **Defining what a green campus means for your institution**

As has been shown in previous chapters, creating a green campus or sustainable university (or college) requires adopting a whole institution approach and thus thinking about what it means to green all the functions and activities of the university and all the people responsible for those functions and activities. The notion of a green campus has emerged in several ways across many parts of the world and with different takes on what should be included. The Centre for Sustainable Futures (CSF) at the University of Plymouth in the UK were early proponents of a “4C” model in which *“Curriculum, Campus, Community and (institutional) Culture are seen as mutually enfolded and complementary foci”* (Jones, Selby and Sterling, 2010, p. 7. Anand et al. (2015) adapted this 4C model by adding research as an additional element and by elaborating “campus” into “campus operations”.

Meanwhile, in 2017, The Alliance for Sustainability Leadership in Education (formerly the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges or EAUC), developed the LiFE tool which has provided its many members both in the UK and in other countries with a broader framework to bring all aspects of the institution together in a holistic, whole-institution approach (see Figure 6.1). This model reflects the fact that there are both inward looking and outward looking dimensions to a green campus centred around environmental sustainability as seen in this definition from the Green Office Movement:

*‘A green university is an educational institution that meets its need for natural resources, such as energy, water, and materials, without compromising the ability of people in other countries as well as future generations to meet their own needs’<sup>1</sup>.*

But as important is this statement from a particular green campus initiative:

*‘The Green Campus institution is a laboratory of self-scrutiny, experimentation, and application. At its best, it is a model environmental community where operational functions, business practices, academic programs, and people are interlinked, providing educational and practical value to the institution, the region, and the world’<sup>2</sup>*

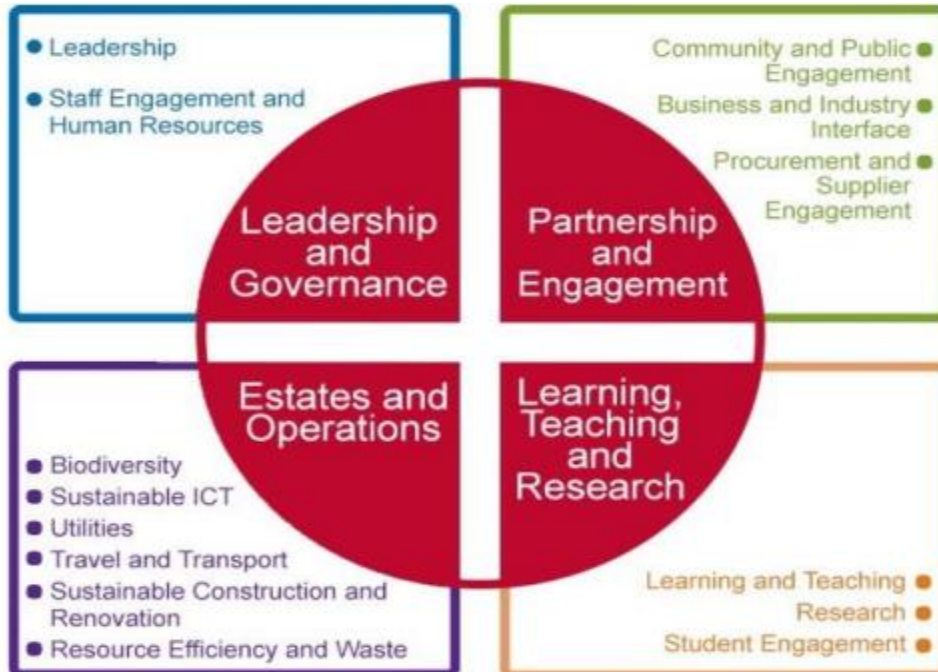


Figure 6.1: The LiFE Framework for a green campus (Appleton, 2017)

These two definitions use different language but have a similar philosophy – that of the university being a learning organisation that has a strategic goal and plan for sustainability agreed through governance mechanisms, owned by the leadership, and signed up to by all staff (and students). The operational plans for each part of the institution are then aligned with the strategic plan for sustainability and reported and reviewed by the normal governance mechanisms with everyone having defined responsibilities whatever their role and seniority in the institution.

Appleton (2017) identified several key structural and strategic dimensions that universities need to consider for a green campus:

Structural Dimensions	Strategic Dimensions
Organisational structure Governance matters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Highest level of authority</li> <li>● Monitoring and reporting</li> </ul> Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Top-down process</li> <li>● Careful language</li> <li>● Service orientation</li> </ul>	Leadership and authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The right leader</li> <li>● Champions, sponsors and academic leads</li> </ul> Engagement and representation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Bottom-up, student voice</li> <li>● Partnerships and collaboration</li> <li>● Community engagement</li> </ul>

While this may provide a list of things to consider the fundamental point is that is that there is no one standard approach to sustainability. Off the peg or tick box approaches can appear attractive on the surface but change can often be just that, on the surface. The key to success is for a university or college to define sustainability for itself and build a unique strategy and structure which reflects its nature,

context, and geography. This is particularly true for distance education universities with their mode of teaching, the geographical spread of their students and often their multi campus estate. However, much can be learned from the experiences of others.

### ***Responsibilities: Who makes it a green campus?***

Creating and running a green campus is a shared responsibility between staff, students, and other partners or stakeholders. However, each group has specific roles to play, which need to be coordinated across the institution and over time.

#### **Staff**

Most staff, whether academic or providing professional services, will be employed by the university or college for many years to undertake specific roles, but all will be dedicated to the success of the university or college. It is therefore important to show all staff at all levels and of all types how sustainability contributes to the success of the university or college through its educational, research and engagement activities and then how they can contribute to the institution's sustainability whether that be through small things they can do individually or big changes to the operations and activities that their team or teams are involved in.

An essential element is having an appropriate leadership team that both sets strategy and engages with all other staff through clear mechanisms, including having sustainability leads or champions in all parts of the university covering all aspects of what the university does.

#### **Sustainability champions in the OUUK** [\[OUUK Sustainability Office\]](#)

The Open University has a central Sustainability Office that consists of core people from across the University who are working to support the institution to embed sustainability. Led by the Vice Chancellor's Executive Team Sponsor, the office team link in and work closely with all academic units and professional services departments through the Sustainability Coordination Group (with about 50 members), and feed directly into the Sustainability Steering Group (with about 15 members). The academic faculties and/or schools each have a sustainability lead with a defined set of roles such as:

- Act as the main point of contact for sustainability in all aspects of the school's work, collaborating closely with colleagues already active in this area.
- Lead in the effective dissemination and discussion within the school of relevant Faculty and University sustainability strategies, policies and activities and other information associated with sustainability.
- Represent the School at relevant Faculty and institutional working groups and committees on sustainability matters.
- Provide regular briefings, updates and recommendations to the Head of School, School Management Team and wider School community on sustainability matters and update the Sustainability Office on progress.
- Liaise with the School Employability Lead, Faculty Employability Lead and appropriate Associate Dean(s) in terms of engagement with employers, professional and external organisations in order to identify and address professional needs related to sustainability and the School's curriculum.

As well as having sustainability leads and champions in every department there is also scope to have institution wide activities that help staff understand the bigger picture as well as the particulars of what they and their team can do. One way to help individuals is by providing bespoke training courses for all staff or creating activities and events that all staff can join in with. Delivering such training, staff development or other activities to large numbers is a strength of distance teaching universities.

### Staff training in the OUUK

The Open University in the UK has encouraged staff to use two externally devised training mechanisms to learn more about sustainability and more about what they can do both at work and in their home lives. In 2022-23 The OU upskilled and reskilled close to 700 of its staff and students through a free 8-hour Carbon Literacy training course, with half becoming Carbon Literacy Project certified. The OU also communicated to all staff and students using a monthly sustainability bulletin, a 600+ Viva Engage community, and monthly Go Green staff champion events. In addition, many staff and students have done the How Bad are Bananas game and/or signed up to use the the Giki Zero carbon footprint calculator.

### Students

Most students usually spend less time with their university than staff, but some may choose to study with a particular university based on its commitments to sustainability. And with there being many more students than staff, particularly at distance education universities, they can be very prominent in making their views known. Some students will organise to lobby their university over sustainability issues while some may coordinate their efforts with students from other universities to run national campaigns. For example, in the UK there two substantive student run national initiatives dealing with sustainability. One, the People and Planet University League, is a comprehensive and independent league table of UK universities ranked by environmental and ethical performance, compiled annually by the UK's largest student campaigning network. The other, Students Organising for Sustainability United Kingdom (SOS-UK) is a student-led education charity focusing on sustainability. They undertake programmes and campaigns, run learning events, do research, and provide consultancy to educational organisations. This can include doing a sustainability audit and curriculum mapping of a university using students, often from that university, to do the work.

The nature and scope of student involvement in green campus activities differs for a distance education university but that is where it is important to develop a strategy that embraces the perspectives of the students but that also acknowledges the wider role that students (and staff) have in supporting sustainability beyond the direct and indirect activities of the university.

### Anadolu University's Awareness Policy [\[AU Sustainability Policy\]](#)

Having trained 700 staff on awareness raising, Anadolu University plans to train all employees and students in the new semester. In this context, the Zero Waste Student Club, which will start its activities in the new semester, plans to organize a series of activities to raise awareness of the whole society, especially students.

## Partners

Partnership and engagement is one of the four key aspects of the LiFF model (figure 6.1) and recognises that a university can only do so much for sustainability on its own and that its own efforts and those of others depend on learning and working together. Most of the operations of a campus rely on procuring goods and services from others. Energy, waste, and transport are but some of the services that universities use or create. In some cases, legislation and regulations will guide activities and help promote sustainability, in others, benchmarks and standards set by professional associations (such as EAUC in the UK or the Green Campus Network in Ireland)) will do so. In all such cases it is helpful for a university to have clear policies and plans for managing all operational aspects of the institution.

Universities also partner with professional bodies, who may accredit some of their qualification, with employers who employ the students during or after their studies, and organisations involved in or the beneficiaries or research.

Lastly there is the local communities in which campuses are situated. Distance education universities may not have large numbers of students on their campus, but they can have many staff and be important employers in their locality. How they engage with that community, providing opportunities for them to learn about sustainability or being an example of best practice to local organisations is important. A whole institution approach that ignores its neighbours is limiting its own role in being a truly green campus.

### The University of Jyväskylä and SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals [\[JYU Sustainability Report\]](#)

The University of Jyväskylä's researchers participate actively in scientific panels such as the Finnish Expert Panel for Sustainable Development, the Finnish Nature Panel, and the Finnish Forest Bioeconomy Science Panel. The panels offer independent and interdisciplinary research information to the public and decision makers. In 2022, JYU joined the Nature Positive Universities network as a founding member and gave an operational nature positive commitment to sustainable development together with JAMK, Gradia and city of Jyväskylä.

## Timelines: When will we make it a green campus?

There are so many elements to making a campus green it is not surprising that many universities and colleges might find it difficult to implement. A report by Shakespeare Martineau (2023) found that the key aspects holding institutions back from becoming a green campus were:

- Funding/investment – 77%
- The delivery of renewable energy campus wide – 42%
- Resistance to change within the institution – 31%
- Expertise/knowledge within the institution and its partners – 28%
- Other – 28%
- Lack of collaboration between parties across the institution – 25%

### Realistic timelines

These challenges that are holding back action demonstrate the need to be realistic while also being ambitious. As discussed above, setting a clear strategy supported by all parties and creating plans with leaders at all levels and buy in from staff and students is crucial. However, change takes time and being sustainable is not a fixed goal, it is an ongoing process that will need continuous monitoring, review and adaptation of the strategy and plans. Strategic plans are often set over a five-year period. Operational plans are refreshed annually. These are but small steps on a long journey where regularly submitting your institution to internal and external scrutiny and promoting those results to all stakeholders provides the evidence for progress. There will be struggles and setbacks, but this is all part of being a “*laboratory of self-scrutiny, experimentation, and application.*”

### Strategic goal “Sustainable development” at UniDistance Suisse [\[UDS Sustainability Report\]](#)

UniDistance Suisse makes an important contribution to society by giving people access to university education who would not have this opportunity without the flexibility of its distance learning. Lifelong learning in all life situations stands for sustainable development under all social, ecological and economic aspects. The basic understanding of sustainable development is reflected in the values of UniDistance Suisse and is based on jointly developed values that call on you to feel responsible for the whole, to think holistically and in a networked manner, to be viewed as role models, to act transparently, to shape the future together and thus to ensure the long-term success of all those involved. This is being done through 4 areas: Creating commitment, Making university groups aware, Defining responsibilities and taking responsibility and Promoting engagement.

## References

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