



Sustainability Policy

1. Context

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin, hereinafter “Trinity”, is committed to tackling climate and biodiversity challenges for a healthy planet and healthy people through our educational programmes, our research and innovation, and our day-to-day operations, both within Trinity and in partnership with external collaborators and communities. To that end it has adopted this Sustainability Policy which sets out Trinity’s position on sustainability issues.

Sustainability is a long-term goal for the coexistence of people and planet, encompassing the responsible and equitable use of natural resources for healthy current and future generations. Sustainability is often described in three dimensions: environmental, economic and social. The pathways and approaches to achieve sustainability are thought of under the organising principle of sustainable development. The United Nations 17 Sustainable Development Goals encompass all three dimensions of sustainability.

Accelerating climate change and continued biodiversity loss present critical risks to human health and well-being. In this context, global agreements have been made to limit global warming and restore biodiversity (The Paris Agreement, and Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework). This involves transformative change to economies, restoration of biodiversity, more efficient resource use, and addressing pollution of all kinds.

The European Commission is committed to transformation across Europe to create a clean, resource-efficient, and competitive economy, in line with the goals of the Paris Agreement (Zero emissions by 2050), and to restore biodiversity, address pollution and waste, and convert to a circular economy. People are core to this transition, ensuring it is just and fair, and that the most vulnerable people are supported.

In Ireland, the Government’s Public Sector Climate Action Mandate obligates public bodies, including universities, to decarbonise and reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions.

Trinity has a long history of addressing environmental issues. In 2022, Trinity’s first Vice President for Biodiversity and Climate Action was appointed, along with a full time Sustainability Manager. This has elevated sustainability as a key priority of Trinity College Dublin and there is now a dedicated team working in Trinity Sustainability, within the Provost’s Directorate, working to achieve the Trinity Sustainability Strategy.

Failure to address sustainability issues would pose a risk to Trinity in terms of non-compliance with its legislative requirements, financial risks associated with fines, damage to built capital and human health, increased cost of resources due to supply chain disruption, and reduced employee and customer satisfaction; and reputational risks, that can result in further financial and operational risks.



2. Purpose

The policy sets out Trinity's position on sustainability issues, in order to meet moral and legal obligations under the Irish Government's Climate Action Plan, Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy, Corporate Sustainability Reporting, and Nature Restoration.

3. Benefits

The policy provides a position statement and core principles on sustainability for Trinity, which are easily accessible to those within and outside the College.

4. Scope

This policy applies to Trinity College Dublin, i.e., its estate, buildings and facilities in its entirety under its direct control and to all staff and students, as well as those engaging with Trinity (as contractors, service providers and/or suppliers), and as visitors.

5. Principles

Trinity is committed to, and has the role and responsibility to, act sustainably and promote sustainable development, both within its academic mission of education and research, and in the way it operates day to day. Thus, Trinity is committed to embedding sustainability in delivering high quality education and research, and to be transparent, fair and equitable in the implementation of this policy.

6. Policy

Trinity is committed to realising its potential to make a difference, and act as an agent for the cultural, technological, and societal changes that are needed for sustainable development. By embedding sustainability issues in the curriculum, Trinity is committed to preparing students to act as agents of change for sustainable development, in both their professional and personal lives. In addition, Trinity is committed to world-class research and to make discoveries that have positive consequences for sustainability policy and practice across disciplines and sectors, and to co-creating knowledge with communities across and beyond Trinity through partnership, collaboration and education for far-reaching, long-lasting change.



Trinity is committed to reducing its adverse impacts on the environment and to prioritising positive action for sustainable development and will demonstrate leadership and innovation on its campus(es) and in its operations.

We will do this by:

1. Providing Education for Sustainable Development for all staff and students.
2. Conducting research in a way that reduces harmful impacts, and provides the knowledge and innovation to underpin societal and economic transformation.
3. Employing practices to restore nature, both on and off-site.
4. Decarbonising our buildings, heating systems, transport and resource use.
5. Reducing resource use and waste, and transforming to a circular economy.
6. Promoting active and healthy lifestyles for improved wellbeing.
7. Operating as a responsible business by transparently assessing, monitoring, and disclosing our impacts on the environment.
8. Working in consultation, collaboration and partnership with each other across Trinity, as well as with external bodies in Dublin, across Ireland, and internationally; and communicating our progress.

7. Policy Owner

The Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action is the owner of this policy.

8. Responsibility and Implementation

The Vice-President for Biodiversity and Climate Action (VPBCA) leads on strategic decisions regarding Trinity's sustainability initiatives. With the Sustainability Manager, and Trinity Sustainability team, the VPBCA develops and reports progress on Trinity's Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan to the Provost, Executive Officers Group, and Environment and Sustainability Principal Committee of Board. In addition, risk and compliance requirements related to sustainability are addressed by the VPBCA. Because sustainability is a cross-cutting issue, the Vice Provost/Chief Academic Officer, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Financial Officer and Faculty Deans, also have responsibility for implementing all aspects of the Trinity Sustainability Policy.

9. Related Documents

Relevant Government Legislation, including:

- Government of Ireland Climate Action Plan



- Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy
- Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
- Nature Restoration law

Trinity strategies and policies, including:

- Sustainability Strategy <https://www.tcd.ie/sustainability>
- Ethics Policy <https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/about/policies/pdfs/ethics-policy-May24.pdf>
- Habitats Maintenance Policy
<https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/about/policies/pdfs/Habitats-Maintenance-Policy.pdf>
- Sustainable Procurement Policy
<https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/about/policies/pdfs/Trinity-Sustainable-Procurement-Policy-2020.pdf>
- Sustainable Investment Policy
<https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/about/policies/pdfs/Sustainable-Investment-Policy.pdf>
- Travel Policy
- Waste Management Policy <https://www.tcd.ie/media/tcd/about/policies/pdfs/Waste-Management-Policy.pdf>

10. Document Control for Revised Policies

- 10.1 Date of initial approval: 15 November 2017
- 10.2 Date revised policy approved: 4 June 2025
- 10.3 Date policy effective from: 4 June 2025
- 10.4 Date of next review: Academic Year 2029/2030