

# Sustainability Strategy

2023





## Our vision

To be the centre of excellence for  
built environment education

# Foreword

Urbanisation is one of the most significant trends around the world. In 1950 30% of the world's population lived in cities, today it is 56%. By 2050, the UN predicts we will be an almost exclusively urban species.

With cities ever growing, there is a huge demand and opportunity in the construction and real estate sectors. But this demand coincides with ever increasing pressure on our planet, with around 39% of total carbon emissions coming from buildings. There is now a growing need to do more, both at speed and at scale, to address the climate emergency.

UCEM is uniquely positioned to provide the necessary skills and qualifications to those in the built environment sector who shape the world around us. The Board of

Trustees recognises the significance and urgency of the challenge that our planet faces, and fully supports the institution's increased focus on sustainability as being central to its purpose and mission.

We are at a tipping point and have the opportunity to be big and bold in our ambitions in the sector. That's why UCEM aspires to become the world's most sustainable university, delivering the skills needed in industry and being a voice of influence to help generate the change needed to deliver a more sustainable built environment.

### Amanda Clack

Chair of the Board of Trustees



UCEM's journey to be the Centre of Excellence for built environment education continues to grow momentum, and with the launch of this ambitious sustainability strategy we are clearly setting out our intent to place sustainability at the very heart of that journey. The built environment must become sustainable and UCEM must therefore be a leading voice within both industry and higher education, helping to develop the necessary competencies and enhance the dialogue.

We have a long-term ambition to become the world's most sustainable university – through a holistic institutional approach, which employs a broad definition of sustainability beyond simply net zero, and establishes UCEM firmly as a leader in this most important of endeavours. We want to deliver measurable impact on the built environment sector and

contribute towards the defined UN Sustainable Development Goals over the coming years, through our teaching, operations and advocacy.

We will provide learning, teaching and research to develop the skills and expertise the sector needs. Our aim is to reach net zero in our own operations by 2030, and we want to provide a space for industry to generate ideas, innovation and initiatives that drive forward the sustainability agenda. At UCEM we aspire for sustainability to be synonymous with who we are and to be regarded a true global leader.

### Ashley Wheaton



Principal





# Our sustainability ambition

**UCEM's sustainability ambition is to ensure the built environment is sustainable:**

-  through the way we teach, what we teach, how we operate, who we influence and our leadership and governance
-  and become the world's most sustainable university

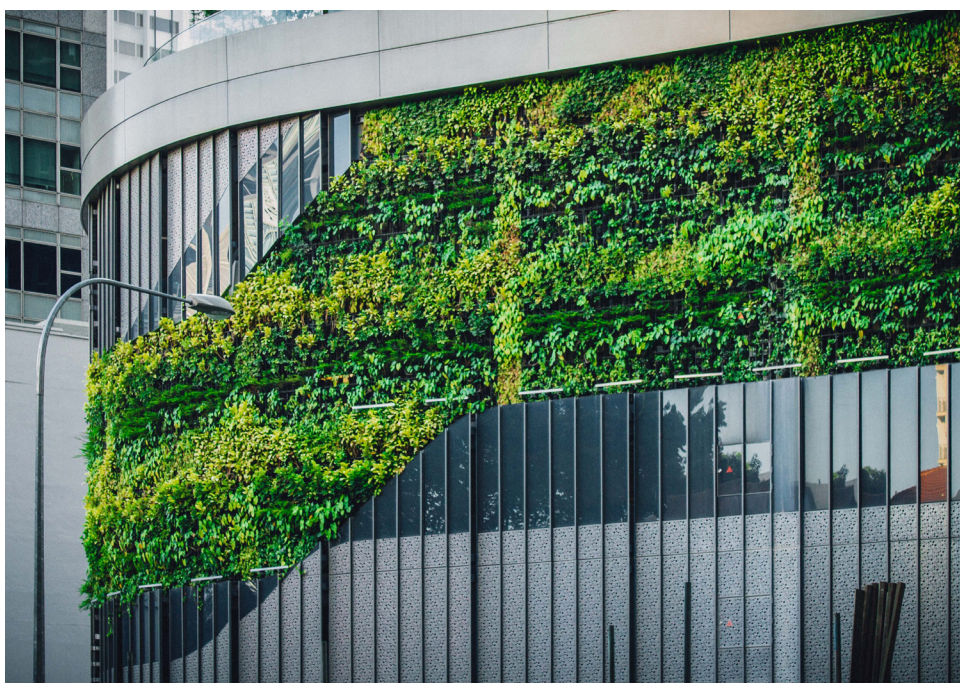
Increasingly, achieving a better built environment is synonymous with a more sustainable one. Shaping a sustainable and inclusive built environment is essential for society both now and in the future. As such, UCEM must act as a vital custodian of the built environment by developing the skills and the professional people needed.

UCEM's vision for a sustainable built environment is driven by the United Nations (UN) definition of sustainability: "meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."<sup>1</sup>

**UCEM's sustainability strategy is aligned to the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals**

The current lack of necessary skills and competencies must be overcome to deliver a sustainable built environment, and UCEM aims to offer a unique and wholistic vision for sustainability and how to approach the education and research which helps to achieve it. In 2022 UCEM revised its core purpose to ensure it reflected the important emphasis on sustainability:

to provide truly accessible, relevant and cost-effective education, which enhances careers, increases professionalism and contributes to a sustainable built environment.



With sustainability now central to our purpose and the scale of the challenge so significant, UCEM has set the ambitious aspiration to embed sustainability across all institutional dimensions.

**To become the world's most sustainable university UCEM will ensure its approach is:**



## Wholistic

Sustainability is central to everything UCEM does and the way we operate, with a culture of sustainability throughout our trustees, staff, students and alumni.



## Broad

Aligning with each of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs), ensuring a social and environmental approach to our ambition combined with international reach through our students.



## Leading

Being a leader in sustainability through our teaching, operations, research and influence.



## Effective

Able to measure and demonstrate the impact of our sustainability activities including contribution to the UN SDGs.



## Expert

Considered as a credible and important authority on built environment sustainability.



Our approach

Sustainability is fully aligned to our well-established values

Our values

UCEM's approach to sustainability is fully aligned to its well-established values: passion, integrity, excellence and support.



Passion

We are passionate about the planet, and we are determined to do everything that we can to solve the challenges it faces and support our students to contribute to a sustainable built environment.



Integrity

We will be an example of a sustainable organisation, with our actions reflecting our advocacy and fulfilling our commitments.



Excellence

We aim to deliver the maximum impact we can achieve on the UN SDGs and on a sustainable built environment, going further and faster than expected of us.



Support

We will support staff, those that we work with and our wider networks to be as sustainable as possible, sharing our knowledge and working together to deliver change.





# The dimensions to our ambition



UCEM is taking a whole institution approach to delivering our sustainability aims, through five dimensions which collectively form our Globe programme.



## What we teach

Delivering teaching and research which provides new and established professionals with the knowledge and skills to deliver a sustainable built environment, working with employers, government agencies and professional bodies.



## The way we teach

Ensuring teaching is student centred, flexible and enables greater access, equal opportunity and diversity through innovative development and delivery of our education.



## Leadership and governance

Embedding sustainability as the strategic driver for UCEM, central to the institution's purpose, and at the heart of our culture, decision-making, leadership and management.



## How we operate

Demonstrating leadership in sustainable business operations, acting as a model of best practice for the industry with sustainable operations in both physical and digital estates.



## Who we influence

Influencing and inspiring our far-reaching, diverse global community to amplify our impact on shaping a sustainable built environment and higher education sector through engagement, education and collaboration.





# Our sustainability aspirations

## What we teach



Delivering teaching and research which provides new and established professionals with the knowledge and skills to deliver a sustainable built environment, working with employers, government agencies and professional bodies.

We will be the leading provider of the knowledge and skills needed to deliver sustainable cities and communities. Our portfolio of programmes and learning products will be grounded in the latest research and we will actively contribute to that body of knowledge, supporting the built environment sector to meet the challenge of the climate emergency.

In being viewed as the leaders of quality education for a sustainable built environment, we will be the partner of choice for key industry, government and professional bodies. What we teach will support built environment professionals to achieve and generate decent work and economic growth in the sector and wider communities.

### Our aspirations:

- **Global leadership**  
Being recognised as a global leader in education and research for a sustainable built environment.
- **Skilled graduates**  
Developing students and graduates who are equipped with a clear vision for creating a sustainable built environment, as well as the knowledge, skills and mindset to achieve it.
- **Innovative learning products**  
Providing sustainable education products and programmes that enable built environment professionals access to relevant, expert knowledge, including academic awards, apprenticeships and CPD.
- **Integrated knowledge**  
Embedding and integrating knowledge of relevant UN SDGs in all modules and academic programmes.
- **Preferred partner**  
Becoming the education partner of choice for industry, government and professional bodies for the teaching of sustainability in the built environment.



## The way we teach



Ensuring teaching is student-centred, flexible, and enables greater access, equal opportunity and diversity through innovative development and delivery of our education.

Through the way we teach, we will continue to enhance our education model to be inclusive, sustainable and enable global students to access high quality education and transformative learning.

The way we teach will be accessible and flexible to provide the knowledge and skills for a sustainable built environment. UCEM will champion the delivery of sustainable online

education, where students will be able to tailor the way they study. UCEM students will be part of a global student community who are at the forefront of developing a sustainable built environment for future generations, with the aim of reduced inequalities (including gender equality).

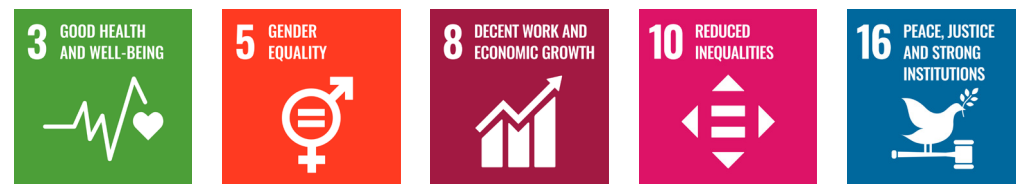
### Our aspirations:

- **Sustainable education model**  
Developing our sustainable education model so it is flexible and enables students to have transformative learning experiences. Ensuring our industry has the skills and knowledge to overcome the challenges we face as well as the mindset to innovate.
- **Diverse and inclusive industry**  
Inspiring a diverse student population to take up learning and professional pathways in the built environment. Promoting inclusion and diversity in all aspects of our offer, continuing to break down barriers to engagement and ensuring successful outcomes.
- **Flexible lifelong learning**  
Allowing our students to have flexibility in how they learn, so their path to success is free from barriers and promotes lifelong learning.





## Leadership and governance



Embedding sustainability as the strategic driver for UCEM, central to the institution's purpose, and at the heart of our culture, decision making, leadership and management.

To be the world's most sustainable university, sustainability must be at the heart of UCEM and embedded in how we work. Sustainability will be at the centre of UCEM's core purpose as an institution.

We will be a transparent and accountable institution, with sustainability driving our strategy and decision-making. Our staff will be knowledgeable in the sustainability

agenda and understand their contribution. All in our sphere of influence will be enabled and encouraged to work and live sustainably and with good health and wellbeing. We will be an institution for which equality and diversity are a given, and our leadership will reflect the communities we serve through our mission to deliver a sustainable built environment.

### Our aspirations:

- **Strategic focus**  
Ensuring sustainability is central to UCEM's core purpose and integral to our strategic ambitions.
- **Culture of sustainability**  
Supporting and encouraging staff to embrace a shift to a more sustainable lifestyle, beyond the scope of just their work environment.
- **Staff inclusivity, diversity and well-being**  
UCEM being seen as an institution that is a leader of inclusivity, diversity and wellbeing.
- **Student voice**  
Enhancing the student voice and input in all aspects of UCEM, including governance structures. Students will be co-creators in organisational development and in the development of education.



## How we operate



Demonstrating leadership in sustainable business operations, acting as a model of best practice for the industry with sustainable operations in both physical and digital estates.

UCEM will lead the built environment industry and higher education sector by acting as a model of operational sustainability. We will take all reasonable steps to minimise our environmental impact and to promote good environmental practice. Sustainability will underpin all activities and decisions that are made by UCEM in relation to our operations.

Our physical estates will showcase best practice for water and sanitation, life on land and clean energy. More broadly, climate action, responsible consumption and production will be at the heart of our operations, ensuring that our processes, systems and modes of delivery are sustainable and ultimately contribute to UCEM's physical and digital estates achieving net zero.

### Our aspirations:

- **Net zero**  
Achieving net zero for Scope 1 & 2 emissions for our estate, and reducing Scope 3 as far as practicable.
- **Recognition and credibility**  
Our estate operations being recognised as achieving international standards, demonstrated through accreditations such as ISO: 14001, 50001, BREEAM In-Use and The Well Building Standard.
- **Responsible and ethical procurement**  
Having responsible procurement in all aspects of the University's activities – incorporating sustainability, social value, responsible sourcing and supply chain transparency.





## Who we influence



**Influencing and inspiring our far-reaching, diverse global community to amplify our impact on shaping a sustainable Built Environment and Higher Education sector through engagement, education and collaboration.**

UCEM will have a positive effect on shaping the built environment and higher education sector through engagement, education and collaborative partnerships which encourage innovation.

We will support, connect and interact with a wide variety of stakeholders, promoting sustainability as a core value, to

actively influence (and be influenced by) our communities, so as to catalyse the transformational changes needed to impact current and future generations.

### Our aspirations:

- Business and industry interface**  
 Leading industry, professional and other partners to build capacity for knowledge exchange and research, to progressing sustainability in higher education and the built environment.
- Lifelong influencers**  
 Developing alumni and students who are lifelong ambassadors and influencers for sustainability in the built environment and beyond.
- Community outreach and public engagement**  
 Delivering a positive impact in the field of sustainability as a local and global civic institution by participating in meaningful outreach activities and partnerships.
- Sustainability driven communications**  
 Through our communications, marketing and brand, raising awareness and demonstrating that sustainability is a core institutional value.

## Review of this sustainability strategy



- The Sustainability Strategy will be approved by the UCEM Executive and student representatives.
- On an annual basis progress against the strategy will be reported to the Board of Trustees.
- The Sustainability Strategy will be reviewed every three years.
- Funding and resource to implement this strategy will be reviewed annually by the Executive.





[ucem.ac.uk](http://ucem.ac.uk)

To provide truly accessible, relevant and cost effective education, which enhances careers, increases professionalism and contributes to a sustainable built environment.

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