



Welcome to this month's Sustainability Bulletin

November 2025



It has been a busy time of year for sustainability at The OU. We submitted an update paper to Council this month (thank you to all who contributed and who work to deliver our three institutional KPIs on sustainability). We responded to mandatory climate reporting for Northern Ireland (for the first time) and Scotland (for the tenth time) and very much appreciate the engagement from teams in the nations. Colleagues attended the FE / HE sector EAUC Green Gown Awards - congratulations to the teams who received two highly commended prizes! The Business Development Unit featured sustainability and inclusion in the annual Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) conference.

We continued to learn from other universities, participating in discussions with Worcester University and key stakeholders on the challenge of Net Zero skills provision, and to find out how the campus hosts the busy Worcester Repair Cafe and Pets as Therapy sessions to enhance wellbeing on campus. On the global stage, COP30 is in the news with concerns that the process is hampered by fossil fuel interests and will once again fail to deliver the urgent transition to a low carbon and renewable energy economy that could secure climate safety. Drafted at the scientific meetings of the Global Tipping Points Conference on 30

June to 3 July, The Dartington Declaration calls on experts in Earth systems, climate, natural and social sciences (PhD qualified or above) to sign The Dartington Declaration. Those who do not fit these criteria and wish to endorse the declaration can email: tippingpoints@exeter.ac.uk

The Global Tipping Points report consolidated contributions from 160 authors, representing 87 institutions, across 23 countries, including our own Dr Ivan Sudakow! Ivan is a lecturer in Applied Mathematics in the School of Mathematics and Statistics in STEM and has brought his expertise in mathematics and climate change together in his research. He is also our SPARK lead and recently updated the Sustainability Coordination Group on work underway to embed sustainability in the maths modules.

The Global Tipping Points report consolidates the world's 'knowledge on how to govern Earth system tipping points, the risks they pose and opportunities from understanding and acting on positive tipping points. It covers the cryosphere (frozen areas), the biosphere (the living world), the circulations of the ocean and atmosphere, and the interactions between these. It warns that warm water coral reefs have already crossed a climate tipping threshold, while other major Earth systems, including ice sheets and the Amazon rainforest, are approaching points of irreversible change. This sobering report encourages us all to act now, and to embed sustainability in our personal and professional activities to enable the systems change that is needed to enable Earth's natural ecosystems to rebalance. We know that when Governments make policies to enable action, and the private and public sector collaborate to act together, we can transform at scale. We also know that education has a critical role to play in upskilling and reskilling us all for a sustainable future.

With continued optimism,

Victoria, Klaus-Dieter, Gabriella and Avril

Dates for your green diary



Global Development Annual Lecture – 20 November

In the second annual lecture in the series, Professor Olivier De Schutter, United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights will address the theme: Eradicating poverty without growth: can it be done?

Thursday **20 November, 16:00-17:00**, Berrill Lecture Theatre, MK Campus and online. [Find out more and register](#)



COP-30 From the Global South – 24 November

The 2025 United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Conference (COP-30 for short) is taking place in Belém, Pará, Brazil from 10 to 21 November 2025. Brazil is positioning COP-30 as a turning point for global climate action. Join us for the panel discussion on Monday **24 November, 14:00–16:00**, and listen to the perspectives on COP-30 from the Global South. The panel will reflect on the happenings at the conference over the previous two weeks and analyse what the decisions taken at COP-30 mean for countries in the Global South.

[Find out more and register](#)

Delivering sustainability – your say on the new OU strategy

Run by the Sustainability Office, this is your chance to feed into the new OU Strategy and how we deliver sustainability across the OU. The Strategy Office will consider all suggestions. Please do join us, we welcome your suggestions for practical actions to deliver sustainability.

Monday, **24 November** 2025, 10:00 – 12:00 online only. [Register here](#).

Wednesday, **3 December** 2025, 09:30 – 12:00, MK Campus. [Register here](#).

Wednesday, **10 December** 2025, 09:30 – 12:00, MK Campus. [Register here](#)

Ask your MP to attend a national emergency briefing 27 November

Do you feel your elected officials understand the science of climate change? There is a lot of cognitive dissonance surrounding sustainability – we know what we need to do to secure an ethical, sustainable, climate safe society, yet the latest scientific reports show that we are simply not doing this. There is still time to prioritise the natural world upon which our economy and society depends. Check if your MP is attending the [emergency briefing](#). Chaired by Mike Berners Lee (also author of the book 'How Bad are Bananas?' which inspired the climate conversations game of the same name that we play at The OU). [National Emergency Briefing on climate & nature](#)

EAUC events

[EAUC](#) is the leading body for sustainability in the post-16 education sector in the UK and Republic of Ireland. The OU has an institutional membership which means that all staff and students can attend EAUC events and benefit from the

resources on offer, or share our own resources with others (please let the Sustainability Office know first). If you would like to be part of this collaborative community to learn and exchange with your counterparts in other universities, please do [sign up here](#). If you have students who would find this useful, please let them know by sharing [this page](#) with them. Upcoming events:

- [Offsetting – community of practice meeting](#), 26 November, 11:00– 12:00 (online)
- [Biodiversity – community of practice meeting](#), 1 December, 11:00 – 12:30 (online)
- [EAUC Scotland winter forum](#) – 11 December, 14:00–16:00 (online)
- [Wales branch meeting](#), 14 January, 11:00– 12:30 (online)
- [Midlands regional meeting](#), 20 January, 10:00 – 13:00 (online)

Go Green: EDI & Sustainability – 2 December

Join us on **2 December, 10:00–11:30** for this session, exploring the synergies and connections between EDI and sustainability and hear our proposal on how we might begin to practice the skills required to reimagine our ways of relating.

[Please sign up via Microsoft Forms with your OU email address where possible](#) and we will send a Microsoft Teams link nearer the time. There will also be time for Q&A.



Carbon Literacy Training dates for 2026

The Carbon Literacy Training dates for 2026 have just been released. Available to all OU students and staff, the training gives us all a solid awareness of climate change and the climate impacts of our everyday actions. It allows us to map our own carbon footprint and gain an understanding and the motivation to reduce personal and work-place emissions. [You can register for any of these dates, or for the last training of the year 26 November here.](#)

News, resources & engagement opportunities

OU Curriculum Mapping Tool

Ahead of our second Responsible Futures audit in summer 2026, we revisited our first curriculum mapping findings and a range of resources, thanks to colleagues in LDS! This new interactive [tool](#) provides results from the audit and links to resources to encourage module teams to challenge themselves to embed sustainability.

As part of the Net Zero Wales project in 2022, 91 Open University students were paid to train and then map our curriculum against five key sustainability measures. Together, the students mapped 467 undergraduate and postgraduate module, short course and microcredential descriptors, providing a snapshot in time to inform module teams. Some module teams have worked hard to build on this initial snapshot, for instance Martin Braun in The School of Physical Sciences has led a scholarship project on this topic.

Academics can find out how to integrate a range of sustainability content using resources such as:

- The 17 Sustainability Development Goals with learning outcomes suggested;
- A range of sustainability methods –such as case studies, simulations, problem-based learning, experiential project work or stimulus activities;
- Sustainability pedagogies –such as understanding, ethics and values, critical thinking, big picture thinking, collaborative problem solving, or challenging business as usual;
- The Five Ways of Working for sustainability – thinking long-term, preventing unintended consequences, collaboration, involving a diversity of stakeholders, and integration.
- The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015 seven wellbeing goals. These are recognised as desirable in society and are incorporated in a wide range of public and institutional policies. Ensuring our graduates understand what enables society to achieve these wellbeing goals is a critical enabler to making them happen: prosperity, equality, community cohesion, resilience, health, globally responsible, vibrant culture and thriving language.

Just click on the Resources button on the top left to explore more. The tool can be searched by module code. We hope this will encourage module teams to further integrate sustainability into teaching and learning during cyclical review and new module development.

If you have any updates we can use for evidence, any questions or comments, please email sustainability@open.ac.uk

LDS also have sustainability resources available and you can book into speak to a member of the team.

The UK's first Solar Powered fishing boat – The One Show

People have been catching fish for centuries. As well as providing nutrition and livelihoods for people all over the world, fishing is also a source of pride and identity for the people and places involved in the fishing industry. But as our climate shifts and biodiversity comes under pressure, how we fish will need to change. In this short-film for The One Show, co-produced by The Open

Higher Education for Sustainability: Leadership, Learning and the Development of Senior Teams

[A new analytical report](#) by Professor Daniella Tilbury for the European Commission's Expert Network on Economics and Sociology of Education and Training (ENESET) critically examines higher education for sustainability, with a particular focus on the learning and development of senior leadership teams within the sector. Drawing on published research and expert assessment, the study explores the complex terrain senior leaders must navigate in responding to urgent global challenges.



Supporting the digital energy transition

Through its Institute of Educational Technology (IET), The Open University contributes to the Europe-wide [Every1 project](#), developing [free learning resources](#) to support the digital energy transition. As part of the project, the team have recently released a new [Digital Energy Essentials suite](#) of 12 free, short online courses (each just 30 minutes) covering key topics:

- What is the digital energy transition?
- Why digitalise energy?
- Clean energy for households
- Energy information and critical literacy and more.

Help us share your positive news

Green Gown Awards

The Green Gown Awards 2025 were held at Birmingham Library in early November. With two OU projects shortlisted, it was an exciting evening. [Take Five to Age Well](#) was Highly Commended award in the category for Benefitting Society.

The initiative engaged over 5000 people in healthy ageing actions over the last three years and this award is a wonderful recognition of this



achievements. Take Five is only possible due to the countless partners, particularly Age UK and Age Scotland, Ambassadors and supporters and of course The Open University. Massive thanks to everyone involved and roll on the next one!

Open SU Sustainability Volunteers

Open SU are recruiting for [Sustainability Volunteers](#) to join our Environment and Sustainability Working Group. This is a fantastic opportunity to collaborate with fellow students and staff to address environmental, social and economic issues and promote sustainability within the student union and the University. Please do pass on to any students who might be interested.

Developing greener habits with Library resources

At the end of October, libraries across the UK celebrated [Green Libraries Week](#) – a national initiative led by [CILIP](#) (the UK's library and information association) that showcases how libraries are helping communities take action on climate and sustainability.

Here at the OU Library, we're proud to support this focus through our curated [Sustainability](#) and [Green Skills](#) resource lists – designed to help you understand the issues and take meaningful steps toward a greener future.

Both lists are continually updated, and we'd love to hear your [suggestions for new additions](#). Start exploring the resource lists via the links above and join us in supporting a more sustainable future.

Futureproofing business with sustainable and inclusive growth

The OU's Business Development Unit coordinated attendance at the annual conference of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development held in Manchester earlier this month. The sustainability session explored how leaders can balance growth priorities with inclusion and sustainability – a challenge facing many organisations today. A report summarising these insights was shared with attendees, [read the full article here](#).

Sustainability is Everyone's job



Daily working practices for sustainability

Many of us choose to prioritise sustainability in our daily lives and have asked for guidance on how we could make an impact by changing our daily working practices. We all use a device and the internet to do our work so this seems an obvious place to start. Now thanks to our colleague Wendy Newman, Digital Development Editor in LDS, we can all benefit from some inspiration and good practice. Following her Carbon Literacy training Wendy saw the opportunity to research and compile a list to enable us all to make a difference.

These ideas for simple actions can help to reduce environmental impacts and embed sustainable working practices: [Sustainable energy and data storage for editors](#).

Contact sustainability@open.ac.uk if you have anything to add to the list or have other ways we can help OU colleagues to understand that sustainability really is everyone's job.

How Bad Are Bananas? – Festive edition

Please join us on Wednesday **10 December at 14:30–15:00** at the [Go Green Centre](#) for a festive game of 'How Bad are Bananas?! [Please sign up to take part here](#). A great way to get ready for the impending celebrations and start those seasonal carbon conversations.

The Sustainability Office has been training facilitators for the game across the University, including all nations. If would like to invite one of our trained OU facilitators to play the game as part of your event, or if you want to learn to facilitate the game yourself, please email sustainability.



Reverse Advent Appeal



With Christmas fast approaching, you can donate some Christmas fare in line with the [MK Food Bank's Reverse Advent Appeal](#) throughout November at The Hub, MK Campus.

In addition to the usual essentials listed [here](#), donations of **small chocolates & sweets, Christmassy snacks, Mini Christmas cakes and Crisps/Nuts** would be greatly appreciated. There is a collection basket by the entrance lobby of the Hub.

Get involved



Become an EAUC Member

To access resources and invites to regional meetings

HOW BAD ARE BANANAS?

The Carbon Footprint Games



LinkedIn

Join The Open University's Sustainability LinkedIn Group.



Go Green

Join our Go Green network and workshops.

Carbon Literacy Training

Upskill, resell and make a pledge to take workplace action.



Responsible Futures

A framework to embed sustainability in the curriculum

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