



**Sustainability in the Curriculum at the  
Royal Agricultural University:  
2017-18 Review**

**November 2018**



## **Sustainability in the Curriculum at the RAU: Our 2016-2021 Strategy**

In 2016, we set out a new '2016-21 Strategy for Sustainability in the Curriculum at the Royal Agricultural University'. This builds on our previous 'Environmental Action Plan 2014-16', and is underpinned by the aspiration that all of our graduates leave the RAU 'sustainability literate' and equipped with the knowledge, skills and attributes to make a positive contribution to working and living in a world where sustainability is increasingly important. It encompasses, therefore, both teaching and learning *about*, and *for* sustainable development – and therefore underpins not only the content of what is taught, but also how students learn, and the skills they develop whilst at the RAU.

The '2016-2021 Strategy' sets out a number of targets and actions. Below we report on what actions we have taken against these in the 2017-18 year. This builds on our previous report about actions undertaken in the 2016-17 year (and this document should therefore should be read alongside the '2016-2021 Strategy' itself and our 2016-17 review).

### **2017-18 Progress Against The 2016-2021 Strategy Targets and Actions**

*2017-18 actions are shown in italics (2016-17 actions are also included for ease of reference).*

Objective: To embed sustainability throughout the curriculum across each of the schools of study

#### Targets:

- All RAU programmes to support the development of sustainability literate graduates by 2021.
- Encourage, support and provide opportunities for all academic staff to engage with, and develop their practice, in Education for Sustainable Development (EfSD) over the five year period to 2021.
- Continue to review and enhance our existing system of monitoring the impact of the RAU's EfSD activities on students, further testing our baseline data, and establishing, by 2019, a numerical target for increased student impact based on baseline data collected over the previous five years.
- Continue to encourage student engagement with our operational environmental management by maintaining our 'Green RAU' pages on the virtual learning environment, and supporting at least three RAU students per annum to do dissertation projects from the RAU 'Environmental Project Bank'.

#### Actions:

- We will continue to ensure that all RAU programmes being validated and/or revalidated demonstrate how they are supporting the development of sustainability literate graduates, as appropriate to their subject. By the end of the five year validation cycle to 2021 all programmes will therefore demonstrate this.  
*2016-17: All programmes that went through the validation/re-validation during this period were required to demonstrate how they supported the development of sustainability literate graduates.*  
*2017-18: Curriculum review of internal RAU programmes being undertaken in 2018-19; this will continue to embed a requirement that all programmes support sustainability literacy. Therefore, we remain on target for all programmes to embed sustainability literacy by 2021.*

- We will monitor, annually, how programme teams have approached the incorporation of sustainability literacy into their programmes at validations / re-validations and will use this to share good practice, and inform future staff development.  
**2016-17:** Review completed July 2017  
**2017-18:** Curriculum review taking place 2018-19, including embedding sustainability literacy
- We will continue to ensure that our RAU Academic Staff Development Programme incorporates EfSD, and will run at least two 'sharing and developing good practice' workshops on EfSD per annum over the five year period which will be open and advertised to all academic staff. We will also monitor staff engagement with these events.  
**2016-17:** Staff training/workshops in EfSD offered to all academic staff through Green Impact scheme (17% of academic staff participated). Voluntary EfSD workshop, open and advertised to all academic staff, also run August 2016 (7% of academic staff participated). EfSD to be embedded into compulsory staff development workshops which all academic staff will be required to attend from September 2017.  
**2017-18:** Sustainability in the curriculum incorporated into institution-wide academic staff development workshops (3 workshops took place during the academic year: 91 % of RAU academic staff attended in addition to a number of academic staff from partner colleges). Academic staff group again participated in NUS Green Impact Scheme (11% of academic staff participated 2017-18).  
Awareness raising of UN Sustainable Development Goals through internal campaign to encourage academic staff to pledge to include them within teaching as part of the NUS Sustainable Development Goals Teach-in (Feb 2018): RAU in first place nationally for percentage of students reached.
- We will continue to engage with external networks to share good practice, for example, EAUC and UNU RCE Severn.  
**2016-17:** Sustainability Officer continues as south-west EAUC Convenor; Academic Lead continues as member of UNU RCE Severn Steering Group  
**2017-18:** Sustainability Officer continued as south-west EAUC Convenor until autumn 2017. RAU remains as member of EAUC.  
Academic Lead continued as member of UNU RCE Severn Steering Group until end of term in January 2018; Academic Lead remains actively engaged with UNU RCE Severn.
- We will improve, by the end of 2016, the signposting to our EfSD support materials within our academic staff induction system.  
**2016-17:** New compulsory staff training for new academic staff launching autumn 2017 and will incorporate EfSD training and support.  
**2017-18:** New staff training incorporated within the institution-wide academic staff training; ongoing process of developing wider academic staff development activities will continue into academic year 2018-19.
- We will continue to maintain our 'Green RAU' pages on the virtual learning environment with up to date information about our environmental performance, and will support at least three RAU students per annum to do dissertation projects from the RAU 'Environmental Project Bank'.  
**2016-17:** 'Green RAU' pages continue to be maintained, and are used by students (for example, in a coursework project undertaken by BSc (Hons) International Business Management students). Continued focus on 'Living Lab' projects – for example, waste management project detailed in 2016-17 review. One student worked with Sustainability Officer on dissertation in 2016-17 year – increased focus will be placed on marketing this opportunity to all students in year 2017-18.  
**2017-18:** Information continues to be available to students on the 'Green RAU' pages of the intranet. Living Lab projects again offered to students in year 2017-18. Concept will be re-launched 2018-19 as take-up in 2017-18 not at target levels.

- We will continue to collect data on students' dissertation choices and library borrowings on a biennial basis in order to monitor the impacts of our EfSD activities, and will also investigate, during the academic year 2016-17, other methods of assessing impact, for example, through student survey data. By 2019, having collected baseline data for five years, we will set a numerical target for future quantitative increases in student impact.  
***2016-17:** Dissertation choices and library borrowings data collected 2016 – due to be collected again 2018. New internal student survey incorporating EfSD questions conducted spring 2017 with results being used to inform staff development and ongoing EfSD strategy.*  
***2017-18:** RAU adopted voluntary sustainability question from the optional bank of questions from the National Student Survey. Collection of other library-based data due to be undertaken autumn 2018.*