

Handout 3. Definitions and descriptions of good practice – Leadership

A strategic commitment at all levels within the university is a fundamental prerequisite for an institution to be successful in achieving true cultural change towards sustainability. All research on the implementation of sustainability has told the same story: the commitment of the leaders within the organisation is critical as is encouraging and supporting staff at all levels to be leaders. This framework aims to support not only the strategic commitment of the university but also support ways to embed sustainability into the systems and processes that allow the university to function in such a way as to take account of issues which are material to business performance.

	Policy and Strategy	Action Planning	Stakeholder Engagement	Measurement
Activity Area Description	A university-wide strategic commitment to social responsibility and sustainability is in place. There are clear reporting lines into formal university management structures.	Action Plans, which incorporate objectives and associated targets, drive the cycles of activity across the university, demonstrating how sustainability is being embedded throughout core business.	Key stakeholders (including staff and students) review the activity associated with Policy and Strategy and Action Planning and shape its development.	The impacts and benefits of the university's commitments are routinely monitored and evaluated as part of existing university practice. There is evidence of continual improvement and feedback loops.
What does good practice look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The university's commitments are captured clearly and articulate university direction. There may be evidence of prioritisation of activities and the commitments are explicitly linked to relevant strategies and policies. A well-articulated commitment will include analysis of issues specific to the university and a focus that is relevant and appropriate. Links to broader relevant government policies and plans should be obvious within strategic documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are clear links between the university's sustainability commitments and business planning processes. Clear actions and objectives are evident and the university can trace these objectives and targets through its planning system. It is clear to staff and stakeholders where sustainability links with the business of the university. Actions are prescribed through various levels including senior management, divulging through to as many areas of the institution as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal and external stakeholder views are sought, captured and responded to throughout strategy development and review processes. Clear communication links are established with a variety of stakeholders, in a meaningful two-way dialogue. Links between social responsibility and sustainability and wider university activities, policy and strategy are clearly defined and published. The leadership role played by the university in bringing together the community and maintaining good stakeholder relationships is clear. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A commitment to measuring the impact and benefit of the university's sustainability commitments is embedded into policy, strategy and action plans. There is careful consideration of the reach of the activities undertaken and the university is not afraid to review activities that are not working to ensure that resources are not wasted but redirected to worthwhile activity. The university actively encourages feedback from stakeholders as part of the process and shares the good and not-so-good outcomes with the broader community. Not only are impacts measured, but the benefits to staff, students and broader community relationships are monitored and captured.
	Communications	Training and Support	Implementation	Links to curriculum
Activity Area Description	University commitments to sustainability are in the public domain. There is a planned approach to communicating the commitments and their implications to relevant stakeholders. A senior Champion or Sponsor is clearly identified as supporting the agenda.	Commitments and/or targets are linked to named senior individuals or teams within the university. Staff have either appropriate sustainability skills and knowledge, or opportunities to develop them through access to specialist support.	The university is stimulating, recognising and rewarding leadership and achieving social responsibility and sustainability outcomes throughout the university's activities, and throughout the local community in which it takes a leading role.	The key themes and priorities in the university's commitments to social responsibility and sustainability are evident throughout formal and informal curricula and the broader student experience.
What does good practice look like?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Strategy(s) is in the public domain. A co-ordinated approach to communicating the strategies and associated actions to appropriate audiences will be evident. Importantly, it should be evident how the institution is working in a leadership capacity within the surrounding community to build sustainable learning and practices. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Action Plans that are linked to wider university strategies include named individuals or groups who have clearly defined responsibility for implementation. There is a clear mechanism for identifying training needs and delivering that training, guidance and support for those responsible for senior strategic engagement on sustainability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flourishing networks of those involved in sustainability might organically develop across a range of interest areas. Stakeholders within the university begin to identify how their activity can be enhanced to capitalise on or benefit the activities of others and they see clear linkages between their role, social responsibility and sustainable development. The university has systems and programs in place to capture and reward good practice, reinforcing the university's commitment to sustainability. Importantly, it is visible that implementation does not rest with one person or one office, but across the institution and with various people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal and informal curriculum activity relating to social responsibility and sustainability is identified. Support is available for curriculum leads on how sustainability feeds into the student experience and explicit links are made between sustainable development, employability and the student experience. These links are supported by processes which ensure they are optimised for the benefit of the university, its students and its stakeholders. Linking curriculum to campus and/or community through a Living Laboratory approach greatly benefits student learning and campus operations.