

Queen's University Belfast's 'Green New Deal'

Proposed by QUBSU Climate Action Group

We demand:

- Queen's University Belfast to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency.
- QUB to act upon this declaration by agreeing to the below "QUB Green New Deal" with an aim to be net zero carbon by 2030.

(This date is founded in the spirit of the NUS SOS Carbon Target Methodology

<https://www.carbontargets.uk/methodology>)

We propose:

Changes across campus to cancel out the University's carbon footprint, combined with essential changes to our education system to prepare our students for the future of work, alongside educating them to become ecologically conscious and active citizens:

1. Educational and curriculum reform:

- a) Changes to our current education system at Queen's will be shaped through the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
 - b) Introduction of an incentivised (degree plus etc.) pathway that students of any discipline can take with modules based on the SDG's. Students and staff should have access to this upon registering for the year- ensuring this is critical and transformative to the way we teach at Queen's.
 - c) Introducing new degree pathways i.e. offering 'Sustainability' as a Minor with various degrees.
 - d) Sustainability to become embedded in a manner relevant to each subject through both the content of the curriculum and how it is taught. This should be a core aspect of the University's teachings. The climate crisis is relevant to every subject in individual ways, for example, in medicine, its impact on global health, and this should be recognised.
2. At last count in 2015, the University invested £6 million in companies involved in the production of fossil fuels. After the Fossil Free QUB campaign, an agreement was made that Queen's would divest from these companies over a period of 10 years. This has not happened. The University needs to divest this money rapidly, with a clear and transparent plan on this process.
 3. All new and existing buildings owned by the university should be upgraded in line with the RIBA 2030 challenge targets. <https://www.architecture.com/about/policy/climate-action/2030-climate-challenge>
 4. Queen's should switch to a green energy provider – a consultation to take place to review departing from current energy contract as soon as possible. Wherever possible, Queen's should provide its own energy through solar panels and other methods.

5. Queen's will produce and follow a new procurement policy, applying to every department at Queen's and across campus. This will ensure that any procurement of goods, buildings or services will be environmentally, sustainably and ethically achieved.
6. Queen's will review their travel policy aimed towards University Staff, reviewing the University's role in paying for long-haul flights for staff and offsetting the greenhouse gas emissions these journeys produce.
7. Queen's commercial services will review their menus to become more sustainable and locally sourced where possible. This supports local farmers and businesses, as well as cutting food miles whilst decreasing greenhouse gas emissions from imports.
8. A review will take place on the use of single-use plastics (including in both commercial and educational/research settings) and action will immediately be taken to replace with suitable reusable alternatives.
9. A move is to be made to complete organic, chemical-free gardening across campus, with the identification of more green spaces on land that Queen's owns to be set aside for natural carbon absorption.
10. Increased funding will go into the University's current 'Green Fund', to fund student efforts on environmental initiatives and campaigns.
11. A review of how offices within the University operate e.g. reviewing office printers, use of paper, ensuring sensor lights are in every office etc.
12. An introduction of more recycling facilities across campus, with an effort to change the culture of waste on campus.
13. Every new Queen's student will have the opportunity to collect a reusable plastic water bottle, and a reusable coffee cup upon registering with the University. The majority of current reusable water bottles are imported and are non-recyclable. Queen's will ensure these bottles and cups are ethically sourced and recyclable in line with their updated procurement policies.
14. Investment into a number of new water fountains across campus ensuring students can effectively use their reusable water bottles.
15. The University should take a leading role in lobbying government, local organisations, and secondary schools into following their lead in cutting their carbon footprint entirely.
16. Queen's is a key partner in the 'Belfast Region City Deal', which Belfast City Council has stated aims at 'creating up to 20,000 new and better jobs alongside delivering a 10-year programme of inclusive economic growth'. Queen's will play a leading role in shaping this deal to ensure this money is invested sustainably & creation of new jobs are focused towards a 'just transition' of workers in a post-growth, sustainable economy.

17. Queen's will adapt a strategy in dealing with climate resilience. Whilst we aim to be a leader in becoming net zero carbon, many effects of climate change cannot be reversed and a strategy to support areas and people affected already is essential.

Accountability and Overview:

We require a cross-University working group, with SU and student representation, to devise and monitor progress on an action plan to deliver our aim to be net zero carbon by 2030.

Glossary of Terms:

Net Zero Carbon: A net zero organisation will set and pursue an ambitious 1.5 °C aligned science-based target for its full value-chain emissions. Any remaining hard-to-decarbonise emissions can be compensated using certified greenhouse gas removal.

(Source: <https://www.carbontargets.uk/glossary>)

Carbon neutral: A carbon neutral footprint is one where the sum of the greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂e) produced is offset by natural carbon sinks and/or carbon credits.

(Source: <https://www.carbontargets.uk/glossary>)

Offsetting: A way of compensating for emissions by participating in, or funding, efforts to take them out of the atmosphere. Offsetting often involves paying another party, somewhere else, to save emissions equivalent to those produced by your activity.

(Source: <https://www.carbontargets.uk/glossary>)

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's): The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the Global Goals, were adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

(Source: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/sustainable-development-goals.html>)

Divestment from Fossil Fuels: Divestment is the opposite of an investment – it simply means getting rid of stocks, bonds, or investment funds that are unethical or morally ambiguous. Divestment from Fossil Fuels generally means (although local context should be considered) an immediate freeze on any new investment in fossil fuel companies, divesting from direct ownership and any commingled funds that include fossil fuel public equities and corporate bonds, and finally, an end to fossil fuels sponsorship.

(Source: <https://gofossilfree.org/divestment/what-is-fossil-fuel-divestment/>)

Food Miles: An expression to capture the distance food has travelled from the place it was produced to where it is consumed. *Flying in food typically creates around 10 times more carbon emissions than road transport and around 50 times more than shipping.*

(Source: https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/the_mayors_food_strategy_2006.pdf)

