

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE

I'm delighted to take my turn to write the foreword to this month's Sustainability bulletin as Executive Dean of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS). My focus is on how we can all start to become climate activists.

We know climate change action is urgent and we must all engage in some way. Whether as professionals in our work at the OU to deliver our Learn and Live goal on sustainability, or simply as (global) citizens who recognise how our choices and behaviours are interconnected and have wider environmental and social impacts. We also have the power to enhance our positive impacts closer to home, as parent, carer, relative or friend.



Sustainability is a big subject and can easily feel overwhelming. Where do you start? I would like to share this beautifully-made and insightful BBC Ideas animation - [How to talk to children about climate change](#) - developed with my WELS colleagues and those from Broadcast and Partnerships. It is just four minutes long, so please do view it.

Whilst its target audience is parents and teachers, I think there are important learnings in the animation for all of us, particularly around the need to be open, have proactive conversations and being prepared to say, 'I don't have all the answers but I'm open to learn'. That's a good start by any measure.

Speaking of learning, in WELS we have been harnessing our strength as 'educators of educators' to develop tools to show how teachers can act to help their students grow the skills and understanding to sustain a future in which all life can thrive. Developed with colleagues across all four faculties and nations, and targeted at educators of learners at any age, the [Sustainable Pedagogies course on OpenLearn](#) is a great example of how we can use the OU's free learning platform to activate change beyond our own direct impacts.

Klaus-Dieter Rossade, Executive Dean, Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies

**OU and OUSA achieve first
Responsible Futures**

Accreditation

Thanks to all involved in securing the OU and OUSA's first [Responsible Futures](#)

accreditation demonstrating work across the four faculties to embed sustainability in our curriculum. Responsible Futures is an externally assessed accreditation mark (audited by our own students) to ensure our students gain the skills and experience needed to thrive as global citizens.

The Auditors complemented the partnership between the OU and OUSA for its broad range of informal and formal interventions embedding sustainability in learning, and innovative pedagogical practices.

More information will be available in the Autumn when we receive the audit report. Visit our [Responsible Futures Intranet page](#) for updates and to join us to be part of our next audit in 2026!

Chris Packham at OUSA Conference

The [OU Students Association Conference](#) was held on June 15 and included two sustainability-themed sessions learning about the carbon impacts of everyday actions and an inspirational and authentic conversation with Chris Packham on 'Love and Rage - how to change your mind to make a difference'.

Lou Robinson, VP Student Engagement, who has championed sustainability during her two-year term, shared the below post. We'd like to thank Lou for her efforts to champion sustainability throughout her tenure.

The 'How Bad are Bananas?'

game is part of our Carbon Literacy training and is ideal for team building, ice breaking and other interactive team sessions. We compare the carbon impact of everyday items - like a tomato and a banana! Thanks for dressing the part Nichola and Lou!



If you would like to invite one of our trained OU facilitators to play the 'How Bad are Bananas?' game as part of your event, or if you want to learn to facilitate the game yourself, please email sustainability@open.ac.uk

SPARKs of inspiration

We are pleased to share how units across the OU are using [SPARK](#) (Sustainability Planning, Action and Reporting Kit) to embed action for sustainability. This bulletin we share the new Sustainability page on the [MarComms intranet](#) which features the Sustainability MarComms action plan. All units are expected to have a plan to show how the Learn and Live goal of sustainability is being delivered and to gather evidence of progress

for external reporting, such as the [People & Planet League](#). If you want to feature in the Sustainability Bulletin, please be in touch.

Delivering Integrated Climate Education, Skills and Professional Standards

A new report has been published following a consultation event at St George's House, Windsor Castle in February 2024. Representatives from Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs), young people, education institutions and employers came together to explore ways to improve sustainability education for students across all disciplines. The report presents a common, achievable sustainability ambition, alongside guidance for actions to support the transition to sustainable practices across the education sector and society.

The report, with a forward by Baroness Martha Lane-Fox, Chancellor of the Open University, can be [read on the St George's House website](#).

The work undertaken to date has been funded by The Open University, The University of Edinburgh and The University of Southampton, and delivered collaboratively by Students Organising for Sustainability UK (SOS-UK) and The Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC).

Net Zero Week

The OU sponsors Net Zero Week (6-12 July) and is hosting an event 'Driving change: Imagining a different transport future'. The panel session will envision how emerging technologies may provide the foundation for more sustainable and inclusive transport futures.



The session is open to all and will be held on 9th July 2-3pm. For more details and to register [visit the Net Zero Week website](#).

Good Education in a Fragile World - Seminar series

A seminar series based on the book [Good Education in Fragile World: The Value of a Collaborative and Contextualised Approach to Sustainability in Higher Education](#).

All seminars are online between 13:00 - 14:00

Thursday 27th June:

Pedagogies of (re)connection considers what human learning interconnected in an ecological, social, historical and spiritual world might be. To book your place please register [here](#).

Thursday 18th July:

Education as if the world matters questions past educational philosophy and structures to imagine a more 'truthful' and agentic 'good education'. To book your place please register [here](#).

**Carbon
Literacy
Training**

**SPARK Lunch
& Learn
recordings**

**Warp-It
information
and sign-up**

**LinkedIn OU
Sustainability
Network**

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