

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

JUNE 2024

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Chair of Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Committee

The Royal Academy of Music moves music forward by inspiring successive generations of musicians to connect, collaborate and create.
Charity number 310007
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**UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON**

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CONTEXT

This Environment and Sustainability Policy sets out our commitment and objectives across key areas to ensure an Academy-wide approach.

Our Environmental and Sustainability Policy also aligns with our [Strategic Plan 2023-2026](#) across the themes of Education, Engagement, People and Resources. A core strategic aim is **to develop environmentally sustainable policies and practices**.

This policy and action plan will be monitored and progressed by the Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Committee in collaboration with staff and students across the Academy.

Our overarching environmental and sustainability strategy continue to be informed by research, developments, and projects in this area at a local, national, and international level including:

UN Sustainable Development Goals

The 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) form the core commitment and blueprint agreed by world leaders to tackle poverty and deprivation, tackle climate change and work to preserve our oceans and forests.

The Academy supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals which have been adopted as the structure and themes for progressing and monitoring ESG matters, alongside our Strategic Plan.



OUR COMMITMENT

The Governing Body, Principal and Senior Management Team are fully committed to measuring and improving environmental performance, providing the resources for effective environmental management, and communicating the necessity for action. This includes supporting the Environment, Social and Governance Committee, which is dedicated to ensuring progress towards and achievement of our objectives.

We will:

1. Ensure compliance with all applicable legal and other requirements.
2. Engage with key parties to raise awareness of environmental issues and identify and address opportunities to improve our credentials.
3. Reduce our carbon footprint and use of fossil fuels.

4. Engage students and staff in measures to reduce our impact on the environment and to set an example for other universities to follow.
5. Share lessons learnt with key parties and consider their feedback in the setting of new objectives and targets.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of our community have a role to play in developing and contributing to environmentally sustainable practices in support of the objectives of this policy.

Senior Management Lead for Environmental and Sustainability is Catherine Jury who is Chair of the Academy's Environment, Social and Governance (ESG) Committee. The designated ESG coordinator is Jayan Gunasekera who works alongside the committee's ESG sub-groups and the Academy's Estates Department.

Environment, Social and Governance Committee is a cross-departmental group of 16 staff members and representatives from the Student Union who are involved in furthering sustainability issues, raising awareness, and delivering actions and projects in line with the objectives of this policy. RAM Student's Union further environmental and sustainability initiatives through the ESG student group at Freshers' Fayre, talks and awareness raising activities.

All staff are invited to participate in ESG initiatives including new staff inductions, awareness days such as Great Big Green Week, and to undertake a climate change awareness module (LearnUpon) so far completed by over 60% of staff (2025).

OBJECTIVES

Our overarching environmental and sustainability objectives across all key areas are:

1. Estate: Ensure that this policy and strategic aims are at the heart of all estate projects including renovation and construction work, development, and tender processes.
2. Emissions: Measure and reduce our carbon emissions, taking into consideration science-based targets and evaluate the feasibility of setting a net zero target by a stated timeline.
3. Community: Encourage an Academy-wide approach to environmental and sustainability practices, raise awareness of environmental issues and encompass the objectives of this policy across a range of media, including concerts and events, and via staff training and induction.
4. Biodiversity: Protect and promote local, national, and international biodiversity.
5. Waste Management: work with partners, contractors, and members of the Academy community to reduce the impact of waste, increase recycling, promote sustainable alternatives, and maintain our achievement of zero waste to landfill.
6. Travel and Transport: Encourage responsible air travel, hold meetings online to reduce unnecessary travel, and encourage use of public transport, walking or cycling, which can also boost mental and physical wellbeing.

7. Sustainable Procurement: Source environmentally and socially responsible products and services.
8. Water: Consider water efficiency across the estate, reduce waste, encourage sustainable use of water, provide clean drinking water to reduce one-time plastic waste.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Environment, Social and Governance Committee, and senior management and is available to staff, students, suppliers, and other interested parties.

ESTATES AND UTILITIES

We are committed to sustainability and responsible management across our Estate.

We aim to ensure that we minimise usage of our energy and water resources by introducing eco-efficiency measures and reducing wastage wherever possible.

We will:

- Prioritise sustainability, energy and water efficiency in all future infrastructure projects and refurbishments.
- Select green tariff utilities.
- Increase engagement with and promote awareness of energy efficiency among staff and students.
- Ensure that all development, construction, infrastructure, and refurbishment projects, adopt environmentally sustainable practices to reduce environmental impact and waste, utilise sustainable products and services, and reduce emissions.

BIODIVERSITY

The Academy recognises the importance of biodiversity conservation and the role it plays in promoting a sustainable future. We are committed to integrating biodiversity considerations into all aspects of our operations.

Our objective is to promote, protect, conserve, and support the sustainable use of ecosystems and habitats within the Academy's campus.

Due to our relatively small size, bounded on each side by roads and other premises, we have a limited amount of outdoor space of only 500m², and the Academy's listed buildings place further constraints on the use of our spaces. As a result, we intend to make best use of the area we have in the most efficient way, ensuring it adds to the overall wellbeing of the Academy.

We will:

- Incorporate biodiversity considerations when planning changes to our buildings and outdoor spaces.
- Promote biodiversity awareness within our community and make changes to existing behaviour wherever possible to reduce our impact on the local habitat.

- Adopt green infrastructure practices where practical.
- Make the most of the outdoor space we have by implementing green projects, for example protecting and retaining green areas, and the introduction of a beehive on the roof.
- Minimise the use of harmful pesticides and chemical fertilisers and work in partnership with our landscaper to increase biodiversity-positive practices across the site.

TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT

Transport is a key contributor to carbon emissions.

The Academy is situated in an area of London with excellent public transport links. We have a very small number of parking spaces controlled by pre-booked parking permits, where priority is given to members of our community with disabilities and where transportation by vehicle is absolutely necessary.

Our objectives for short-distance travel are to:

- Promote the use of public transport.
- Encourage walking and cycling wherever possible and increase the number of bicycle racks available for staff, students and visitors to the Academy.
- Promote the Cycle to Work scheme to staff.
- Minimise reliance on taxis and select electric vehicles where possible.
- Promote alternatives to travel where possible, through online meetings and conferences.

Our measures to reduce long-distance travel are to:

- Promote online meetings and conference attendance where possible.
- Encourage multi-activity travel, for instance engaging visiting artists when they have other engagements in London and the UK.
- Promote the use of public transport wherever possible, for instance train rather than car or air travel.
- First round video auditions for prospective students.

SUSTAINABLE FOOD POLICY

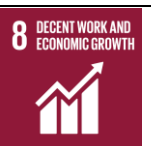
The Academy is committed to ensuring that food provisions and services support our strategic vision around sustainability, health, and reduction of environmental impact.

Our key objectives are to ensure that food, suppliers, and catering services support and further our commitments through a framework that involves:

1. Sustainable operations
2. High quality and healthy food
3. Food sourced from sustainable and ethical sources
4. Value for money
5. Waste and environmental impact is minimised.

Our approach, strategy and actions in food sustainability continue to be informed by research, developments, and projects in this area at a local, national, and international level.

We have identified the following UN SDGs 10 goals as directly relevant to underpinning our commitment in the area of food sustainability and our role in contributing to a sustainable future:

		• Ensure that members of our community are not hungry (informed by Goal 1 No poverty). • Provide healthy food options, promote wellbeing, and raise awareness to support healthy lives at all ages.
		• Contribute to inclusive and equitable education, life-long learning, and • Further sustainable economic and employment opportunities that support our environmental and sustainability objectives.
		• Ensure access to clean drinking water that reduces environmental impact and waste, • Promote sustainable practices in water use, • Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
		• Prioritise urgent actions that support our role in combatting climate change. • Ensure sustainable choices are taken that conserve our oceans and marine resources.
		• Ensure sustainable choices are taken to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of land and resources. • Prioritise partnerships that support and strengthen our sustainability commitments including catering providers and contractors.

National Food Strategy Recommendations

The National Food Strategy, a recent independent review of England's food system, sets out 14 recommendations and interventions at all levels of our food system ([The National Food Strategy - The Plan](#)).

The strategy highlights the environmental damage that food production causes, such as biodiversity loss, deforestation and impact on freshwater.

The recommendations are contained in four categories:

1. Escape the junk food cycle and protect the NHS
2. Reduce diet-related inequality
3. Make the best use of our land
4. Create a long-term shift in our food culture

Food for Life, Soil Association and Food Made Good, Sustainable Restaurant Association

Sustainability in the catering sector is also informed by frameworks designed to support, inspire, and accredit sustainable food services and institutions, and this policy draws from best practice in this area.

Environment and Sustainability Framework: Food

Our framework has been developed to promote and encourage a common approach to food sustainability in consideration of tender processes, business partnerships and to inform future decision-making. We recognise that in order to meet our commitments and objectives, this should extend to our service providers, suppliers, and other stakeholders.

1. SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

Sustainable operations are a key component in selecting and appointing partners, contractors and agencies, and are embedded in our tender processes.

The Academy has one catering outlet, Soundbites Canteen, which is located onsite and operated by an external catering partner, Absolute Taste.

In 2023, Absolute Taste were awarded the Academy's multi-year catering contract in part due to their innovative, sustainable, and forward-thinking approach to food. The Academy is working in partnership with Absolute Taste to develop and deliver ongoing enhancements in sustainability and ethical matters linked to our four core objectives and informed by advancements in the sector.

2. HIGH QUALITY AND HEALTHY FOOD

We expect consistently high quality and healthy food that meets the sustainability and ethical demands set out in this policy. Part of the Academy's commitment is to ensure that local growers and producers are supported, food is as fresh as possible, and food miles are kept to a minimum.

Our catering partner is expected to use fresh, seasonally available ingredients, which are produced and sourced locally, and, where this is not possible, steps are taken to minimise energy used in production, transportation, and storage.

We are committed to actively encouraging our staff, students and visitors to adopt a healthy lifestyle and we work in partnership with Absolute Taste to promote this. Our catering partner is required to provide a varied menu comprising healthy eating choices, with vegetarian and vegan options, and which is representative of the various dietary requirements of our staff, students, and visitors. We encourage flexible menus to ensure that food is less likely to remain uneaten, and regular food audits take place to remain responsive to changes in demand.

3. FOOD SOURCED FROM SUSTAINABLE AND ETHICAL SOURCES

Our benchmark is that all food is sourced ethically via supply chains which minimise environmental impact, support local producers, the fair treatment of workers, and meet high standards of food safety.

Our policy and work with our catering partner is informed by local and international guidance, for example the European Commission's **Farm to Fork** strategy, which highlights four key areas of food sustainability:

Sustainable Food Production	Food production, sourcing and delivery reduces the use of fossil fuels, optimises water use, reduces pollution of waterways, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, maintain soils, increase biodiversity, and protect and restores land, water, wetland and forest areas.
Sustainable Food Processing and Distribution	Local produce and support for local farmers and producers, minimisation of transportation and emissions, procure food ingredients from sustainable and certified sources, farm-to-fork transparency, elimination of products that contribute to deforestation and destruction of wildlife and habitats, processing, and distribution

Sustainable food consumption	Ensure food consumption is sustainable and empowers consumers to make healthy choices.
Food Loss and Waste Prevention	Use of environmentally friendly food packaging, reduce impact and recycle materials. Food labelling strategies to prevent wastage. Reduce waste sent to landfill (e.g., food recycling plants, donate excess food to local charities, use as animal feed). Unavoidable waste must be disposed of responsibly.

Our catering partner is expected to procure certified produce where feasible, for instance Red Tractor, Freedom Food, Lead or Soil Association, RSPCA Assured, organic, Fairtrade, Rainforest Alliance, and Marine Stewardship Council.

Animal welfare is important:

- Meat must be procured from local or regional suppliers where possible and comply with high standards of ethical and welfare standards.
- Eggs must be of UK origin and be free-range or organic.
- Fish should be sourced from sustainable sources only, as identified by the Marine Stewardship Council.

4. VALUE FOR MONEY

The Office for Students mandates that Higher Education Providers deliver value for money across all provision. Our catering partner is expected to consider and deliver value for money in food sourcing and delivery.

The wellbeing of our students and staff is important; on presentation of their Academy ID, students are entitled to a discount of 25% and staff to 20% discount on all food and drink served in Soundbites.

In support of our commitment to preventing hunger, supporting healthy choices, and promoting wellbeing, our staff and student support teams in partnership with RAM SU and our catering partners, provide options for members of our community in times of need.

5. WASTE AND ENVIRONMENTAL

We are committed to assessing and minimising our waste and environmental impact in partnership with our catering partner Absolute Taste and waste provider Grundon.

We expect our catering partner to audit food waste and consumption levels at least weekly to respond to changes in demand and minimise food waste and environmental impact wherever possible including:

- Proactively look for opportunities to minimise and eliminate waste.
- Assessing demand and portion sizes to reduce food waste.
- Supporting schemes where food excess is discounted or donated.
- Using food waste bins to minimise food in landfills.
- Reduce and remove single-use packaging where possible.
- Using sustainable packaging sources, biodegradable or recyclable materials.
- Promoting environmental and sustainability options wherever possible to empower consumers to make positive choices.
- Ensuring that suppliers and producers demonstrate sustainable practices.

6. CATERING PARTNER EXPECTATIONS

We expect and our catering partner to meet and exceed all legal requirements and industry standards, our catering partner must have robust and embedded policies on sustainability, local procurement, and community links, and be proactive in environmental sustainability and recycling. Our catering partner is expected to minimise food waste, manage waste streams, and reduce their carbon footprint as much as is practical.

7. MEASURING COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABLE CATERING

In partnership with our catering partner, we are committed to regularly assessing and measuring achievement in relation to the objectives of this policy and identifying improvements including achieving externally assessed sustainability accreditation.