



Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education Students and Leaders

Terms of Reference

Background

On 1st May 2019 MPs declared a climate and environment emergency which is being adopted by an ever-increasing number of universities, colleges, sector agencies and bodies. The UK government has legislated to achieve net zero emissions on all Green House Gas emissions by 2050 under the 2008 Climate Change Act.

We are therefore launching a Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education to catalyse action to create real impact and drive change.

What is the Climate Commission?

The Climate Commission is a partnership of Association of Colleges, EAUC, GuildHE and Universities UK. Senior executive-level representatives from each organisation will make up the Commissioners with one chairing the Commission. EAUC will provide a secretariat function. The Commission will be UK wide. Commissioners will provide direction and leadership to the Commission's work, act as the visible face of the Commission and play a role in building engagement and consensus within the sectors involved. The Commissioners will work with a wider Council that will advise and support their work.

The Council will be made up of Students, Vice Chancellors or Principals from institutions that have agreed to be part of and contribute to the Commission. We seek to ensure this groups reflects sector diversity. Students will have a strong voice and input throughout the work of the Commission and we will work closely with your Student Voice Partners to ensure this.

The short term Climate Commission will develop an Action Plan in response to the government's stated climate emergency and draw together a strategic sector-wide approach to the Climate Framework.

As well as being supported by the Council, the Commissioners will seek advice from Expert Witnesses, Sustainability Professionals and Observers to inform their activities. The partnership between the Commissioners and the Council will develop a sector-wide consensus for action. This will cover leadership and governance; estates and operations; learning and teaching; research, partnerships and engagement. The Climate Framework will guide and support all UK and Ireland universities and colleges to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest.

Sector professional bodies and other bodies will form Expert Witnesses for the Commission to call upon to feed into their work.

The Commission will seek Observers to attend the Commission meetings. These will be sector funding agencies and relevant government departments. It is important for the Commission to keep all stakeholders informed of activities.



A Think Tank of sector-wide sustainability professionals has been formed and will be a resource to address technical challenges identified by the Commission and to implement and scale Commission output.

The Commission will provide updates to all institutions through our partners – AoC, EAUC, GuildHE & UUK.

Commissioners

- Steve Frampton, AoC President, AoC representative
- Professor James Longhurst, Assistant Vice Chancellor, University of the West of England & EAUC Trustee
- Professor Joy Carter CBE DL, Vice Chancellor, University of Winchester & GuildHE representative
- Professor Judith Petts CBE, Vice Chancellor, University of Plymouth & UUK representative

Steering Group

The Steering Group is made up of executive staff from the Commission partner organisations:

- Ian Munro, Director, Association of Colleges
- Iain Patton, CEO, EAUC
- Alex Bols, Deputy Chief Executive, GuildHE
- Christopher Hale, Director of Policy, Universities UK

Climate Commission Launch Event

We will be launching the Climate Commission at Ravensbourne University London on 13th November 2019. With students, sector institutions and associated sector body leaders and government departments invited, this is an opportunity to establish and demonstrate your commitment to sector emissions reduction and the climate emergency. Chair of the Committee on Climate Change, The Rt Hon. the Lord Deben (John Gummer), has agreed to speak at the launch. Our Keynote Speakers are Lizzy Houghton, Students' Union Activities and Development Officer, University of Manchester and Amy Brazier, Student, Portsmouth College.

Glasgow COP26

The UK has won the bid to host the 26th Conference of the Parties, known as COP26, with up to 30,000 delegates expected to attend the event at Glasgow's Scottish Events Campus (SEC) in November 2020. The UK is leading the world in tackling climate change, being the first major economy to pass laws to end the UK's contribution to global warming. Designed to produce an international response to the climate emergency, the Climate Commission will report their work to COP26 which is a huge opportunity to profile UK universities and colleges and showcase our global education and sustainability leadership.

Update: COP26 has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Below is a statement by the Commission, recognising the importance of lessening the pandemic's impact and emphasising its continued commitment to tackling the climate crisis:

“Rightly, as the world unites to save lives and fight COVID-19, the decision has been taken by the UN to reschedule COP26. Scheduled for Glasgow this November, it will now happen sometime in 2021.

While a setback for the work of the Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education



Students and Leaders, our commitment and workplan remains unchanged as Climate Commission partners will continue working tirelessly across the sector to deliver the ambition, momentum and agreement needed to tackle the climate crisis which remains at the highest priority for universities and colleges and their 4.5 million students and 549,000 staff in this unprecedented year”

- Climate Commission Partners – Association of Colleges, EAUC, Guild HE & Universities UK

The Climate Commission for UK Higher and Further Education Students and Leaders will continue to work toward presenting its work in November 2020 despite the postponement of COP26. More details will follow.

Terms of Reference:

- The Climate Commission Partner Organisations are AoC, EAUC, GuildHE and Universities UK.
- The Climate Commission is made up of one nominated representative from each Partner Organisation. These will be known as Commissioners. From AoC, EAUC, Guild HE and UUK we seek a well regarded Vice Chancellor or Principal to establish that the Commission is aimed at institution leaders.
- We will seek strong representation for the student voice throughout the Commission through students’ unions and youth and student activist networks who are our Student Voice Partners.
- A Climate Commission Council will be established and will be open to all UK university and college Students, Vice Chancellor or Principal. The Climate Commission Council will meet several times during the year, including at the EAUC Annual Conference in June 2020.
- The Climate Commissioners will agree on a Chair. The Chair will be a credible voice to ensure involvement from across the tertiary education sector and will be agreed by the Partner Organisations. It may be decided to have 2 Co-Chairs – 1 representing institutions and 1 representing student voice.
- The Climate Commission Secretariat will be made of executive representatives from each Partner Organisation.
- The Climate Commission Partners will seek opportunity to seek engagement and promote the work of the Commission widely across the sector.
- The Climate Commission Secretariat will advise and provide operational support to the Commissioners.
- The Climate Commission will be launched on 13th November 2019 and will run until November 2020. If a longer term is required this will be agreed by the Partner Organisations.
- The results/recommendations from the Climate Commission will be presented at COP26 in Glasgow, November 2020.
- In these Climate Commission Meetings, the Commissioners will invite guests from the Climate Commission Council or Expert Witnesses or Observers as required.
- The Climate Commission will meet up to 3 times in person and meet up to 6 times virtually to gain insight as required or as decided by the Commissioners.
- Each Partner Organisation is responsible for meeting any expenses incurred by their nominated Commissioners or Secretariat representatives.
- Time provided to the Climate Commission is pro bono.



Climate Commission Organogram

