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Writing sample

University of York briefing on sustainable development (extracts)

Sustainable development is a priority for the University of York.

This leaflet describes some of the actions we are already taking so that the University develops in an environmentally sustainable way. It outlines our plans for future development and how we will make sure these, too, are sustainable. Finally, it also contains some tips about the contribution you can make to protecting our future.

What is 'sustainable development'?

At its heart, sustainable development is about meeting the needs of the present without compromising the future.

In the past, this has not always been the case. Until recently, human society has developed without paying proper attention to the impact of this development on the environment. As a result, we now have greenhouse gases, climate change, and entire ecosystems under threat.

In recent years, governments and organisations around the world have recognised that we need to act urgently to protect our world for our children and grandchildren.

Today, the University of York has ambitious development plans. We are already one of the best universities in the UK, and we need to grow in order to maintain our position. We also need to make sure that we offer the best possible facilities to our staff and students for research, learning and teaching.

But we are equally determined to make sure that this development happens in a sustainable way. We want to balance our commitment to improving ourselves today - socially, economically and environmentally - with our responsibility to create a better world for future generations to enjoy.

[snip]

What more can we do?

The University is committed to doing even more to make sure that we develop in a sustainable way in the future.

In 2004, we asked an external organisation to assess how well we were putting this policy into practice. The results of this assessment were very encouraging. It showed that we were already acting sustainably in many areas. It also suggested things we could do to improve our sustainability even further.

We have drawn up a formal policy on Sustainable Development. Under this policy, we are committed to developing in a way which balances our three key principles:

- making sure that the University continues to be financially viable in the future;
- providing genuine environmental benefits (and if a situation arises where environmental damage is unavoidable, minimising this as much as possible);
- recognising our responsibilities to all our stakeholders, including ... *[snip]*