

HKMU Sustainability Report

1. Background

The University takes its environmental and social responsibilities seriously and aims to manage its operations in ways that are environmentally sustainable, economically feasible and socially responsible. It pursues the principles of sustainable development and social responsibility both in the management of its internal operations and in its engagement with external stakeholders. It works towards the common goals of protecting the environment, minimising the impact of its operations on the environment and contributing to the wellbeing of the communities in which it operates.

The University has developed various Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policies and Guidelines, which set out its aims and objectives for working towards environmental sustainability and acting with greater ethical and social responsibility.

Table 1: Sustainability and Social Responsibility Policies and Guidelines

Sustainability	Social Responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sustainability Policy• Sustainable Procurement Guide• Sustainable Food Guide• Sustainable Travel Guide• Sustainable Event Guide• Thermal Comfort Guide• Sustainable Printing Guide• Waste Management Guide• Sustainable Building Guide• Sustainable Investment Guide (included in the Investment Policy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Responsibility Policy• Policy on Equal Opportunities• Anti-bribery and Corruption Policy (included in the Procurement Policy)

2. Report Scope

This report outlines the University's sustainability performance and reviews selected sustainability and social responsibility initiatives and achievements over the past few years.

3. Research, Education and Community Engagement

3.1 Research

The University has nine Research Institutes and Centers in Hong Kong and Mainland China, including the Institute for Research in Innovative Technology & Sustainability (IRITS) and the Centre for Research in Environmental Science (CRES). Their research endeavours emphasise the positive impact on the community and have resulted in significant research developments in a number of strategic areas uniquely relevant and beneficial to the development of Hong Kong and the region.

Recent research achievements in the areas of sustainable development and social responsibility include:

- Microfluidics for real-time monitoring of the metabolic activity of food waste and sewage sludge anaerobic co-digestion to boost the generation of renewable energy (Dec 2023);
- Enhanced thermoelectric generators for sustainable waste heat recovery (Oct 2023);
- Cutting-edge microfluidics device for monitoring the co-digestion of food waste and sewage sludge to generate renewable energy (Sep 2023);
- Research on dementia risks to encourage a healthy diet among lower-educated groups and enhance public education (Aug 2023);
- Development of eco-friendly materials for seawalls to provide solutions for enhancing the city's marine biodiversity (Jul 2023);
- Research on the effectiveness of Jockey Club Support Service for the Children of Disabled Parents Scheme 2.0 (Jun 2023); and
- A novel soil-plant system amendment method to reduce antibiotic resistance genes in soil to address global environmental and public health challenges (Apr 2023).

3.2 Education

The University offers students the opportunity to study environmental sustainability and social responsibility, either within or outside the examined curriculum. Through teaching and learning, our students will develop a positive mindset regarding the impact of sustainability on the world outside the University.

As a graduation requirement, every undergraduate student is required to complete four University Core Value courses, two of which are related to sustainability:

- Social Responsibility, and
- Entrepreneurial Mindset and Leadership for Sustainability.

The University also offers dedicated degree programmes in environmental- and sustainability-related matters:

- BBA (Hons) in Corporate Governance and Sustainability,
- BBA (Hons) in Hotel and Sustainable Tourism Management,
- BBA (Hons) in Sustainable Tourism and Hospitality Management,
- BSc (Hons) in Environmental Science and Green Management,
- MSc in Chinese Environmental Studies,
- BEng (Hons) in Building Services Engineering and Sustainable Development,
- MBA in Sustainability Transformation, and
- MSc in Global Environmental Management for Sustainable Development.

The University also promotes public sustainability education and awareness by producing a 10-episode “Sustainability in Action” TV programme series jointly with the Office for Advancement of Learning and Teaching. This series, which is broadcast on Sundays on TVB Pearl through the University’s “Knowledge for All” programme, invites distinguished business leaders to share their insights on implementing sustainability in their respective sectors, including the clothing, food, transportation, energy, buildings, leisure and lifestyle, and investment sectors.

3.3 Community Engagement

The University hosts a diverse array of community-engagement activities to enhance sustainability and social responsibility awareness among its students and staff and the wider community. Prominent examples include:

- “City Companion Community Alliance on Promoting Mental Health” to strengthen mental health support in Kowloon City District (April 2024);
- “Home Safety for the Elderly” to provide health screening services and conduct home fall-prevention assessments for about 300 elderly people (April 2024);
- “Health Expo” to provide featured health screening services and promote community health awareness (Mar 2024);
- “HA Go Ambassador Service Programme” to encourage patients to install the mobile app “HA Go” to manage their personal health (Jan 2024);
- “HKMU Vaccination Days” to protect the health of the community and respond to the winter influenza peak (Nov 2023);
- “Health Expo” to provide a wide range of community health services to approximately 250 individuals (Oct 2023);
- “Parenting Seminar Series” for families living in transitional housing (Aug 2023); and
- “HKMU Best Buddies Programme” to create opportunities for friendships between 30 student volunteers and 18 people with intellectual disabilities (May 2023).

4. Campus Operations

4.1 Energy Reduction

The University signed up to the “Energy Saving Charter”, which was co-launched by the Environment and Ecology Bureau and the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department. By signing the Charter, the University is committed to:

- Maintaining an average indoor temperature of between 24 and 26°C during the summer,
- Switching off electrical appliances and systems when not in use and procuring energy-efficient appliances and systems,
- Engaging students and staff to adopt the above energy-saving practices together, and
- Promoting building energy-saving retrofits.

In addition, the University has planned or taken the following initiatives to promote green energy and energy saving:

- Installing solar panels on the HKMU Jockey Club Institute of Healthcare (IOH) campus,
- Upgrading in-row coolers for higher energy efficiency,
- Upgrading chiller plants to improve energy performance,
- Replacing fluorescent lighting with LEDs in all campuses in phases,
- Installing motion sensor light switches to conserve energy, and
- Replacing traditional window type / split type air conditioning units with variable speed drive units to improve energy efficiency.

4.2 Sustainable Procurement

The University pursues a sustainable procurement strategy that considers full life-cycle cost, value for money, and other related social and environmental impacts. It promotes sustainable resource management practices and supports the purchase of energy- and cost-efficient products and services that positively affect energy performance. Special emphasis is placed on the following principles:

- Opting for durable, reusable or refillable products when feasible,
- Using biodegradable, phosphate-free and citrus-based cleaning solvents, and
- Using paint, carpeting, adhesives, furniture and casework with the lowest-possible amount of volatile organic compounds, highest recycled content and low formaldehyde, where practical.

4.3 Sustainable Food

The University actively engages in sustainability practices and works towards achieving a sustainable food framework by providing good value, healthy and sustainable food that meets dietary needs and enhances the wellbeing of staff and students. It has implemented the following practices in collaboration with the caterers on campus:

- Making healthy and sustainable choices in product ranges,
- Reducing oil consumption in cooking, and using healthier and more sustainable oils,
- Promoting food with a safe amount of monosodium glutamate, salt and sugar,
- Reducing portion sizes at the customer's request,
- Providing incentives and promotion for "less rice" or smaller portion options, and
- Offering financial incentives to customers who bring their own utensils.

4.4 Sustainable Travel and Transport

The University encourages the adoption of sustainable travel practices by staff, students and visitors travelling to and from the University campus to positively contribute to protecting the environment. In particular, it has adopted the following practices:

- Encouraging sustainable modes of transportation, including public transportation,
- Considering video conferencing as an alternative to travel,
- Pilot testing "working from home" to eliminate the need for daily commutes,
- Enforcing the "no engine running" requirement when vehicles are waiting for passengers or loading / unloading on campuses,
- Replacing conventional vehicles with electric vehicles for the University's fleet,
- Providing electric vehicle charging stations in campus parking, and
- Ensuring a sustainable travel infrastructure is built into all new buildings.

4.5 Using less paper

The University strives to be a good steward of natural resources by using less paper through smart decisions, including the use of electronic communication and e-document handling and coming up with IT-related solutions to eliminate the use of paper in some workflows and processes. It is committed to the following practices:

- Increasing the use of digital study materials,
- Sending meeting agendas, papers and minutes by email or posting them online, and
- Implementing e-Workflow, e-MPF, e-Tendering, e-Timesheet, and e-Claims in phases to reduce paper use.

4.6 Waste Management

The University is committed to following the principles of waste-management hierarchy and implementing initiatives that encourage waste producers to reduce overall waste and prevent waste production whenever possible. Emphasis is put on the following practices:

- Providing 40 recycle bins on campuses to collect paper, aluminium, plastic, glass bottles, etc.,
- Phasing out plastic bottled water on campus,
- Prohibiting the use of disposable plastic tableware in the catering outlets, and
- Installing oil interceptors and grease traps to prevent the discharge of oily materials from catering outlets into the municipal waste system.

4.7 Sustainable Buildings

The University is committed to managing the design, construction, refurbishment and post-completion occupancy of its buildings in ways that reduce the environmental impact, enhance the wellbeing of staff and student users of the buildings, minimise operating costs and comply with all relevant sustainable building legislation, standards, regulations and codes of practice. It has adopted the following principles:

- Applying sustainability principles in the design, construction, refurbishment and operation of its buildings and management of its campuses,
- Considering the life cycle costs for mechanical, electrical and building design, including the use of sustainable technology and renewable energy options, and
- Aiming to achieve the highest green standard rating (such as BEAM Plus Platinum) for all new building projects, including the Slope Site Campus Development Project.

Sustainable Buildings in Action

Completed in September 2020, the IOH Campus was accredited with the BEAM Plus Platinum rating by the Hong Kong Green Building Council for its green campus design, with a rainwater harvesting system for irrigation, water efficient fixtures and air quality enhancement devices. The campus also has energy-efficient light fittings and renewable energy devices, such as a rooftop solar energy system.

HKMU's Jockey Club Campus was also accredited with the BEAM Plus Platinum rating in 2015, demonstrating the University's determination to promote sustainable development.

5. Responsible Investments

The University recognizes that Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) criteria are important in determining whether investment in a particular business entity is desirable in terms of its ethical impact and sustainable practices. When making investment decisions, it gives preference to investments aligned with ESG values without compromising returns or diversification.

In 2023/24, the University invested in an ESG fund that targets companies with sustainable returns, strong ESG characteristics and attractive valuations.

6. Mental Health and Wellbeing

In addition to promoting physical wellbeing, the University offers on-campus mental health support. The Student Counselling Services provide professional counselling for students in need. Our team of Psychological Counsellors is dedicated to assisting students who may be grappling with emotional distress or any other concerns related to their mental wellbeing.

To strengthen mental health support for students, the University earmarked over \$10 million in a three-year university-wide scheme to enhance student mental health. Under the scheme, all first-year undergraduate students are required to enrol in a mandatory 12-hour “mental health first aid” course, whose aim is to equip them with the knowledge to identify early symptoms of mental health problems and proactively seek help before their situation deteriorates. Mental health training is also extended to faculty and staff, who will become qualified “mental health first aid” instructors after training to provide initial support, signposting and advice to students experiencing mental health difficulties.

The University also formed an Alliance with the Auxiliary Medical Service, Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service, Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service, SideBySide, and the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong to provide a range of mental health support services to enhance understanding and awareness among residents in the district of mental health issues.

7. Awards

The University has been striving for excellence in building a sustainable campus and has dedicated relentless efforts to protecting the environment. Over the years, our efforts have been recognized by numerous awards for our outstanding performance in this area. Following is a list of ESG awards in recent years:

Table 2: ESG Awards

Awards	Organizer	Date
Sustainable Development and Environmental Excellence		
Hong Kong Smoke-free Leading Company Awards	Hong Kong Council on Smoking and Health	Mar 2024
Hong Kong Green Organization – Certificate of Appreciation	Energy Campaign Committee	Dec 2023
ESG Pledge Scheme	The Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong	Jul 2023
Hong Kong Awards for Environmental Excellence	Hong Kong Awards for Environmental Excellence	Nov 2022
Quality Water Scheme for Buildings – Fresh Water (Management System) (Gold)	Water Supplies Department	Jun 2022
Energy Saving Charter	Environment Bureau	Since 2018
Energy Savings		
Hong Kong Green Organization Certification – Energwi\$e Certificate (Excellent Level)	Energy Campaign Committee	May 2024
Charter on External Lighting	Environment Bureau	Feb 2023
Energy Saving Charter on “No ILB”	Environment Bureau	Feb 2023
Waste Management		
Peach Blossom Trees Recycling Programme – Certificate of Appreciation	Environmental Protection Department	Apr 2024
Natural Christmas Trees Recycling Programme – Certificate of Appreciation	Environmental Protection Department	Apr 2024
Hong Kong Green Organization Certification – Wastewi\$e Certificate (Excellent Level)	Energy Campaign Committee	Jan 2024
Silver Award of the Commendation Scheme on Source Separation Commercial and Industrial Waste	Environmental Protection Department	Jan 2022

8. Conclusion

The University is committed to protecting the environment and providing a sustainable campus to advance its educational and research mission. The progress that the University has made as shown in this report indicates the extent to which environmental considerations are embedded throughout our day-to-day operations and decisions. Our staff and students have played a key role in driving forward environmental sustainability and social responsibility, and we thank them for their ideas, passion and hard work.