



Green Travel Plan Strategy



Queen Margaret University

EDINBURGH

2016 - 2020



Introduction

Queen Margaret University (QMU) as a signatory of the University Climate Change Commitment for Scotland ([UCCCfS](#)) is committed to promoting sustainable travel and is dedicated to reducing the detrimental effects of greenhouse gas emissions causing climate change.

QMU aims to promote and incorporate sustainable practices into its activities in order to be at the forefront of sustainable practice and provide an exemplar for other organisations.

At present, the transport sector accounts for just over one quarter of all UK carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions excluding international aviation ([DfT, 2015](#)). There is a significant focus from government on reducing the contribution of transport to greenhouse gas emissions both at present and for the foreseeable future.

In order to achieve the goals of the UCCCfS, QMU will carefully consider all relevant operational aspects related to travel and transport and to set objectives for limiting the impact that they have on climate change.

Context

The university campus is situated at the boundary of the East Lothian Council to the south west of Musselburgh, 8 miles from Edinburgh city centre. Due to its relatively recent construction, QMU was designed and constructed to a very high sustainability standard, taking advantage of being located immediately south of Musselburgh railway station and approximately half a mile west of Newcraighall railway station, and connected to several regular bus routes, thus ensuring opportunities for sustainable transport were maximised.

The campus itself is designed to maximise the utilisation of space and minimise energy use. It was intended that by 2017, the university would be able to accommodate up to 8,000 students and staff by using co-ordinated timetabling techniques. The on-site student accommodation can house 800 students and the university building is open seven days a week from 7am until late.

Professional independent assessments were undertaken on the design and construction of the campus achieving CEEQUAL and BREEAM Excellent status, indicating exemplary environmental performance. The QMU campus implements many highly sustainable features including encouraging biodiversity to flourish and maintaining special wildlife corridors mitigate potential conflict between wildlife and human traffic, and provision has been made to continue to add ecological value as the site develops.

Aim

QMU has committed to reducing their carbon footprint in adopting the UCCCfS and by producing a Climate Change Action Plan (CCAP). QMU aims to achieve this in the travel and transport areas of its operations by employing several techniques which target the reduction of travel-related emissions that could be linked to staff and students of the university.

Through the implementation of a 'Green Travel Plan' (GTP) Strategy, the University aims to develop itself as an organisation which considers sustainability as a core aspect to all transport-related issues.



Objectives

Climate Change

The Scottish Government's "Climate Change Delivery Plan" states that we require; "Almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050 with significant progress by 2030 through wholesale adoption of electric cars and vans, and significant decarbonisation of rail by 2050. ", QMU endeavours to promote a similar message and aims to continue to reduce single occupancy car trips. The university has implemented electric vehicle charging points and will maintain promotion of these spaces and the availability of hybrid and electric vehicles for staff use travelling for business.

The University CCAP recognises the contribution of commuter traffic as being a large factor in the potential carbon reductions QMU can directly influence. This Green Travel Plan Strategy supports the same goals with the aspiration to further promote and implement measures for improving access by walking, cycling, shared vehicles and public transport to and between sites and reduce the need for single occupancy car journeys by increasing the following:

- Availability
- Connectivity
- Fare integration
- Capacity

Health Matters

QMU places a great deal of importance on the health of both its staff and students. Health and Rehabilitation is one of the university's flagship areas of expertise academically with research demonstrating links between physical exercise and both physical and mental health. One of the benefits of the green travel is in supporting an environment in which walking and cycling not just as a means of transport, but also as a form of exercise and relaxation. QMU are committed to encouraging staff and students to use active travel modes to get to and from campus such as cycling and walking. The University has invested in cycling storage, maintenance and changing facilities with the objective to continue to expand and improve these facilities, promoting walking and cycling as an attractive option thus encouraging a modal shift from private vehicle use.

Green Travel Plan

From 2007 the university introduced a *Green Travel Plan (GTP)* to manage the travel demand to and from the campus with particular focus on more sustainable travel options and limiting single occupancy vehicle trips. The GTP provides an action plan for evaluating, controlling and promoting all travel modes for staff and students at the university. The University will produce a GTP annually, setting out targeted and specific areas as part of a delivery plan and will include monitoring of the previous years modal split and travel mode specific questions as a performance indicators for each year, derived from an annual travel survey.

The GTP is the blueprint for how the university manages travel and should be developed with aspirations for each year on potential new infrastructure, travel schemes and promotion of the universities sustainable travel ethos. The GTP will support the maximisation of the opportunities for travel and transport related external funding.



Strategic Engagement

Establishing key links to major stakeholders within the local and regional area and service providers to the university is fundamental in ensuring a collaborative approach to achieving more sustainable travel. The University will aim to regularly meet with East Lothian Council to influence infrastructure development around the campus such as the national cycle path, walking routes and controlled parking areas. Similarly public transport providers will be engaged such as below;

- Lothian Buses
- First bus
- Horsburgh
- Prentice
- Abellio Scotrail

The ongoing collaboration with these providers can ensure the existing services are being efficiently utilised however the University aims to influence improvement to the existing services by adding extra capacity and the implementation of an integrated ticketing system.

Strategic engagement shall also consider the role the University plays in the wider community, encouraging the use of the campus facilities to the local area. Community engagement not only enhances the universities connections to the local area but also fulfils obligations when applying for future grant funding for travel and transport purposes.

Grey Fleet/Business Travel

The University aims to minimise where possible car journeys made by staff and will continue to encourage staff to use public transport for work related journeys. Promoting alternative methods is vital to ensure these trip numbers are minimised and utilise the most sustainable methods. There is no current formal policy for business travel locally and internationally however it is proposed that this should be addressed giving alternatives and means of recording the journeys made in order to measure the University's travel and transport carbon emissions and set future targets.

Measures that the university will promote are in line with the following;

- Conference call utilisation
- Public Transport options
- Electric vehicle from city car club
- Active travel (walking and cycling)

All journeys should be recorded by staff with the origin, destination and mode choice. Asking staff to record journeys more thoroughly allows the University to influence the decision making of staff when travelling for business. Continued promotion of electric vehicle use will be pursued by the University due to the City Car Club resource on campus which will significantly reduce carbon emission levels for business use. International travel is understandably unavoidable in certain situations although where possible staff should be encouraged to use conference or video calling facilities where possible.

Use of the University travel bureau service to manage bookings and capture carbon emissions should be promoted and encouraged.



Procurement

The university procurement strategy states, “Procurement at Queen Margaret University will demonstrate value for money and sustainability.” This Green Travel Plan Strategy aims to support this objective.

Delivery options and travel requirements can be difficult to influence although the University promotes this and the inclusion of environmental criteria in purchase and supply contracts which measure this will be encouraged.

Targets

Within the annual GTP, QMU will set out targets to be achieved on an annual basis which will aim to build on achievement in the preceding years and which are recorded and measured.

Monitoring & Reporting

Monitoring of trends and achievement of objectives will be undertaken on an annual basis and will be reported on annually to the Sustainability Committee as a constituent part of the Climate Change Action Plan.

The travel choices we make as individuals have a cumulative impact on carbon emissions and the environment. Let's think about our travel more sustainably.