



Sustainable Imperial

July 2026



Science for humanity

How we shape the future – for our students, our community, our planet and everyone who calls it home.

Sustainable Imperial

A core initiative in our
Science for humanity strategy



Our goal:

We will set a global benchmark for university sustainability, nurturing graduates who understand and advocate for climate science, supporting our researchers to investigate and respond to planetary challenges and lead by example in our activities and on our campuses.

imperial.ac.uk/strategy



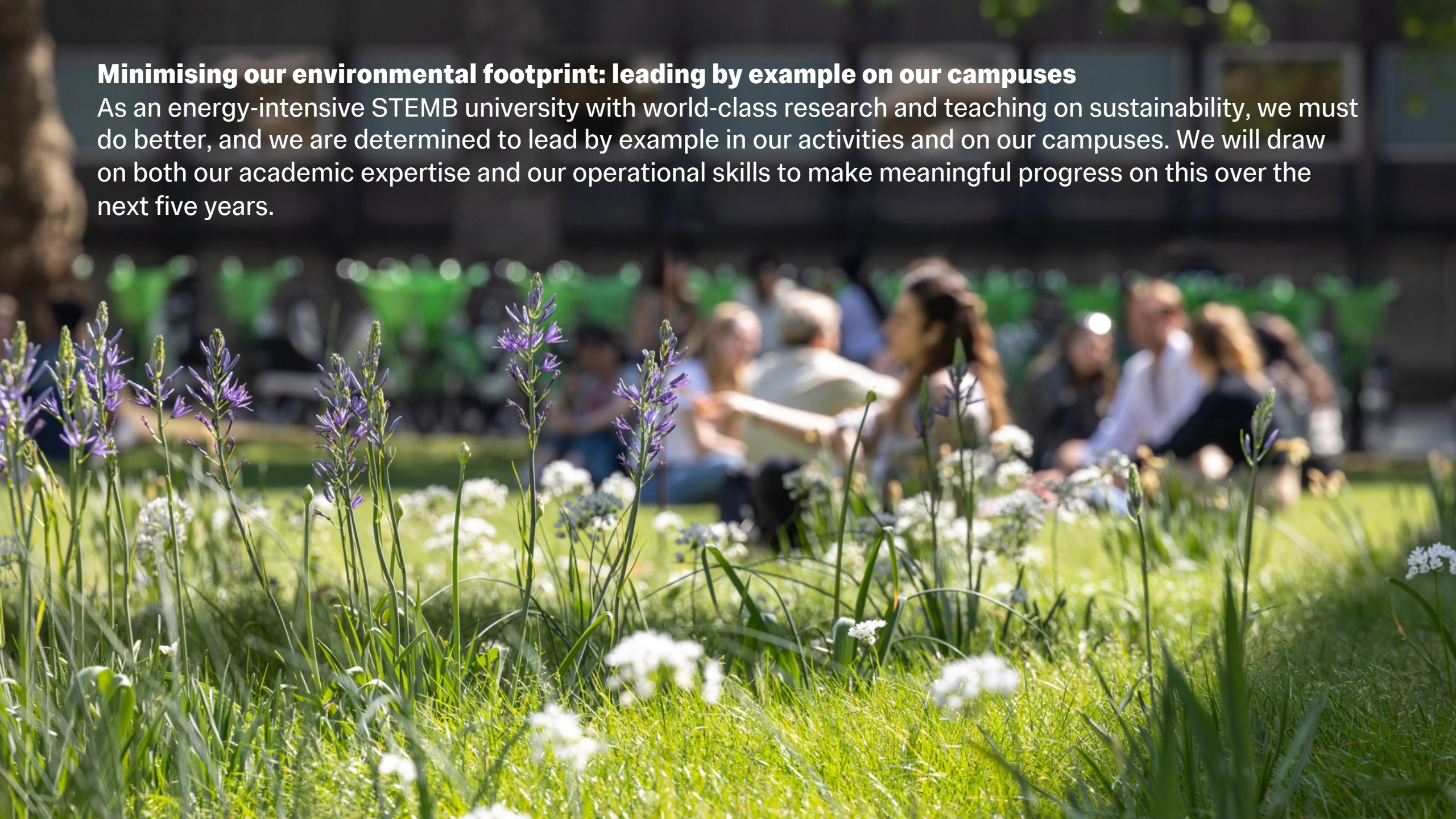
Our ambition over the
next five years

**We will minimise our
environmental footprint
as far as possible and
maximise our positive
handprint** on the wider
world through our
academic mission and our
partnerships

What does the new strategy include?



- Ambitious yet practical **plans** and **SMART targets** to strive for net zero carbon campuses by 2040 and embed good practice on sustainability
- Supporting sustainability through our **research** and **partnerships**, strengthening our multi-disciplinary approach to global problem-solving
- Providing global sustainability **skills** and **leadership** through our graduates, for a more sustainable future
- **Inviting** all our colleagues, students, visitors, collaborators, suppliers and wider community to come on that journey with us



Minimising our environmental footprint: leading by example on our campuses

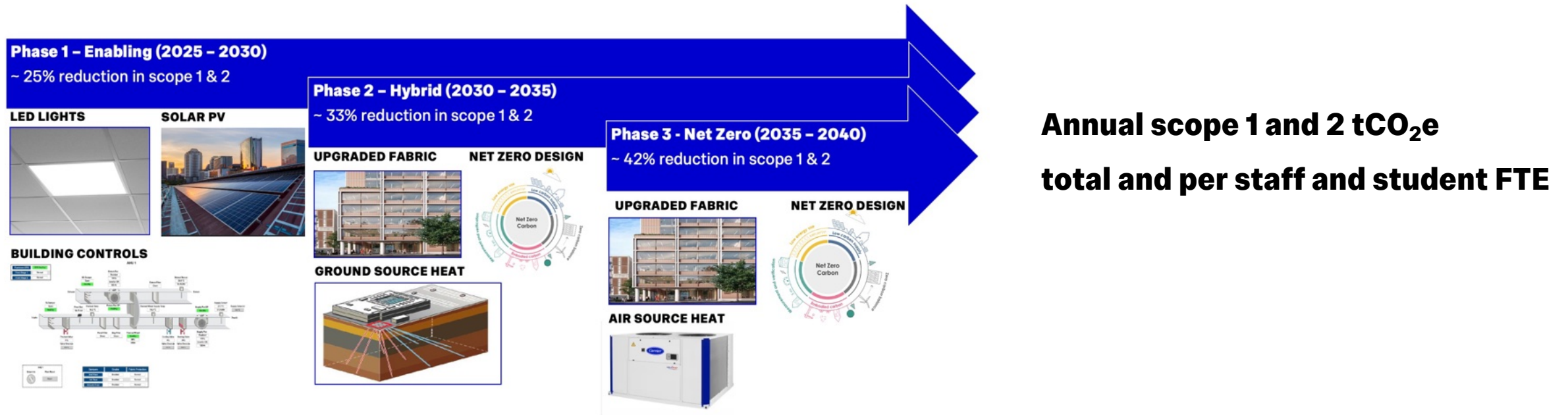
As an energy-intensive STEMB university with world-class research and teaching on sustainability, we must do better, and we are determined to lead by example in our activities and on our campuses. We will draw on both our academic expertise and our operational skills to make meaningful progress on this over the next five years.

Campus carbon and energy

We will strive for net-zero carbon campuses by 2040 for our direct (scope 1 and 2) carbon emissions, the emissions over which we have most control.

We will continue at pace with our campus energy efficiency and decarbonisation plan.

This will be supported by substantial investment and an ambitious delivery programme, as part of our wider integrated transformation plan for our campuses.



Buildings and construction



Design, operate, and maintain buildings that reduce our environmental impact and are comfortable to work and study in

BREEAM Excellent for all new build projects

At least **BREEAM Very Good** for major refurbishment projects (£5m<)

Band B London Energy Transformation Initiative for all new builds

Whole Life Carbon assessments for all projects £5m<

B Energy Performance Certificate rating for all properties in our investment portfolio by 2031

Establish **green leases policy** for commercial partnerships and leases

Procurement

reduce consumption
purchase goods and services that are
manufactured, used, and disposed of
in an environmentally responsible way



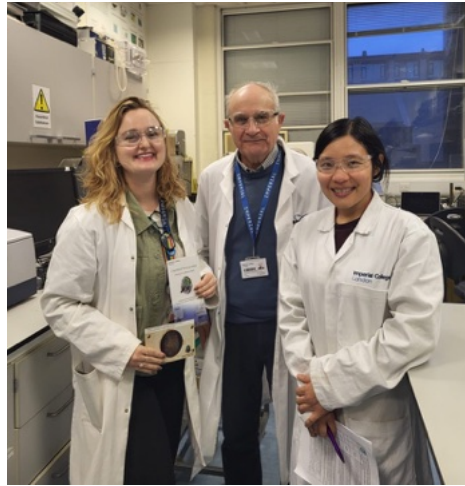
80% of our top 250 suppliers by contract value assessed
through the Net Zero Carbon Supplier Tool or similar platform

80% of our top 250 suppliers by contract value directly
engage with Imperial's sustainable procurement ambitions

100% of tenders over £100k incorporate our 20%
sustainability weighting

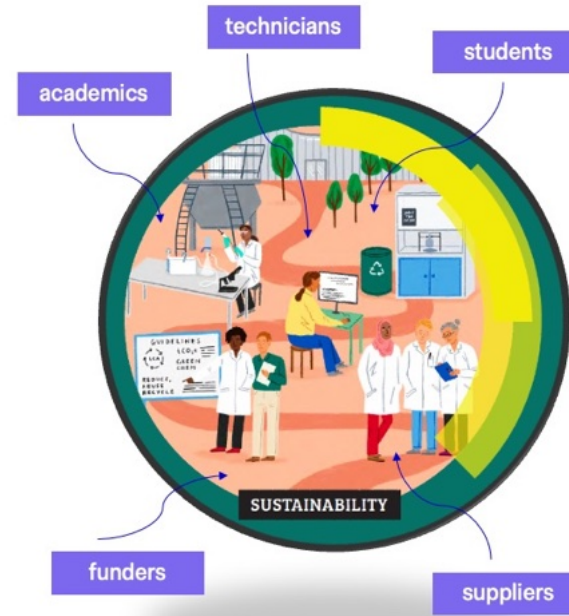


Laboratories



Vibrational Spectroscopy & Chemical Imaging

Design, operate, and maintain buildings that reduce our environmental impact as well as being more comfortable to work in, in line with leading sustainability standards



All labs to achieve relevant sustainability certification
Establish a suitable sustainability assessment method for dry labs and workshops
Establish sustainable lab guidance for design and operations

of labs achieving bronze, silver or gold LEAF

% sign up to relevant sustainability scheme

ICT

integrate sustainable practices
across all ICT operations



Full ICT emission and ICT waste baseline by Sept 2027

ICT sustainability certification (Green DiSC Silver) for all central functions by 2028

5y warranty for all Imperial laptops, investigation into refurbishing laptops before disposal by 2028

Sustainability guidance for computational research by 2028

Understanding of our AI emissions and impacts



CO₂e from purchased hardware, owned and collocated data centres, cloud use and other purchases

Travel

climate conscious and
environmentally responsible
travel among staff and students
for university-related travel

a sustained 30% reduction on business travel carbon footprint per FTE by 2030-31 compared to 2022-23.

Engage with staff and students to understand travel habits and support adjustments where possible

Acquire more robust data to improve benchmarking and develop SMART targets and goals for student travel



Annual tCO₂e per FTE for business travel

Annual tCO₂e per student for university-related travel



Water

efficient water management through
targeted infrastructure upgrades and
operational improvements

10% reduction in consumption for Imperial-operated buildings
5% reduction in consumption for third-party managed buildings
both by 2030-31 against the baseline year 2024-25



Residual carbon emissions and offsetting

Experiment with practical approaches to carbon removals and
carbon pricing, through pilot projects and schemes to test and learn
Explore what is an appropriate in principle approach through wide
engagement with staff and students

Biodiversity



expand the diversity of plants, trees and hedgerows and promote staff and student engagement in biodiversity action and greenspace satisfaction

% biodiversity net gain per project from the SK Campus transformation plan

improvements in quantitative biodiversity metrics and habitat improvements since the 2021 baseline

repeat and assess the green satisfaction survey every 2 years



Food and drink

implement our new Sustainable Food and Drink Policy 2026–31

10% increase in plant-based options annually to reach 40% by 2031

No beef served in outsourced outlets by 2031

75% reduction in **plastic containing takeaway boxes** by 2031.

Benchmark our suppliers against internal guidelines and engage with them on change

Reduce by over 50% the CO₂e of our assets through **equipment replacements** in outlets and **electrification**

10% reduction of **edible food waste** by 2026, a further 2% by end of 2027 and set further SMART targets



SCR Restaurant



Chemistry cafe



Waste

decrease the overall amount of day-to-day, non-hazardous waste we generate through tailored options focused on reduced consumption and resource optimisation

>10% reduction of total waste per FTE

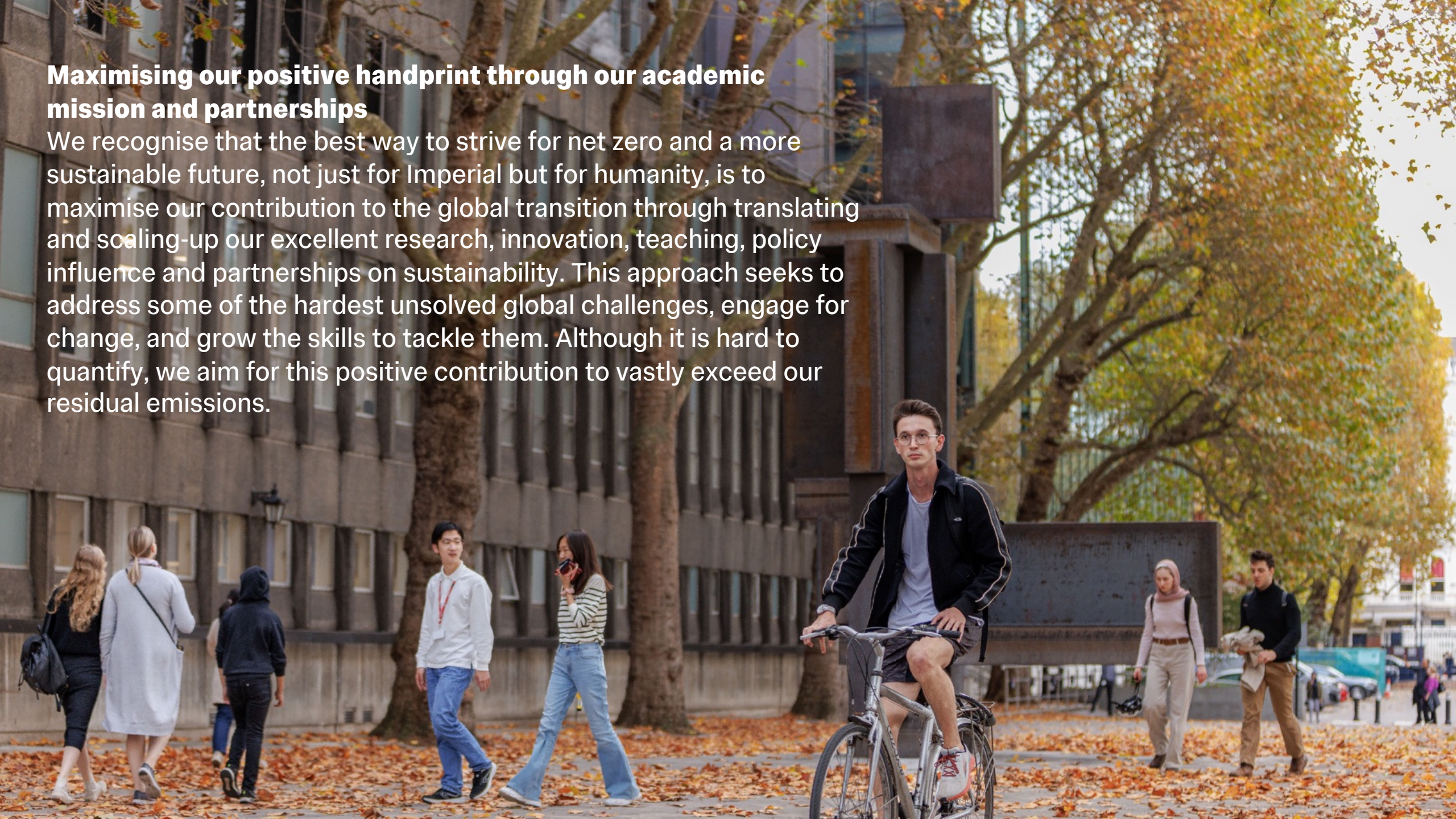
>20% reduction of general waste per FTE

by 2031



Maximising our positive handprint through our academic mission and partnerships

We recognise that the best way to strive for net zero and a more sustainable future, not just for Imperial but for humanity, is to maximise our contribution to the global transition through translating and scaling-up our excellent research, innovation, teaching, policy influence and partnerships on sustainability. This approach seeks to address some of the hardest unsolved global challenges, engage for change, and grow the skills to tackle them. Although it is hard to quantify, we aim for this positive contribution to vastly exceed our residual emissions.



Nurturing graduates on sustainability

The **Imperial Class of 2030 programme** will equip all our graduates with the climate and environmental science literacy, skills and confidence to advocate, influence and lead in the fight against climate change and environmental degradation.

We will endeavour to embed **climate and sustainability education** into our formal teaching through the curriculum, whilst scaling up online training opportunities and offering lifelong learning on sustainability to those already in the workforce.

Additionally, we will develop a pipeline of **project opportunities for students** to develop deeper insight and cultivate understanding of real-world situations, as well as interlinking with extracurricular opportunities driven by the student community.



Beyond Imperial: partnerships for sustainability

Imperial's mission is 'to be useful', which is why we are growing our collaborations with a wide range of partners on sustainability.

Imperial's **policy engagement programme** will use the latest evidence from our world-leading academics to inform the policy conversations that really matter.

Our investments and research partnerships in energy are guided by the **Imperial Zero Index**.

We are also **collaborating with the higher education sector** and our neighbours to develop and implement good sustainability practices.

IMPERIAL ZERO INDEX: ENGAGEMENT FOR CHANGE



Imperial Zero Index 2026 Outcomes

In future, Imperial will work only with companies that meet our criteria as measured by the IZI, and then only on projects which support the transition. At the current time, we have determined that the following existing partners meet our criteria for continued academic engagement:

- **bp**
- **Equinor**
- **ExxonMobil**
- **Petronas**
- **Shell**
- **TotalEnergies**

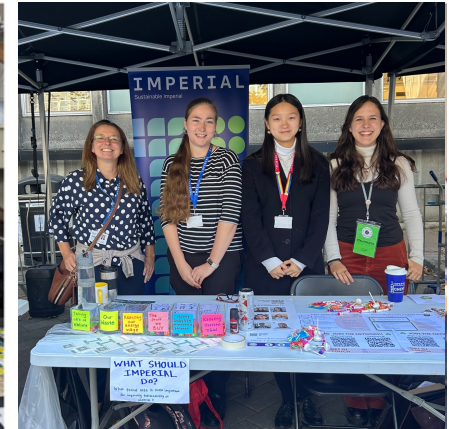
We will encourage a culture for staff and students to act sustainably in their everyday decisions across our campuses.

Get involved in a variety of sustainability activities themed around creativity, community, and challenge.

Activities include:

- Eco Arts Fair
- Climate Research Showcase
- Sustainable lab tours
- Make Do & Mend workshop
- Staff Climate Literacy session
- Social Media challenge

imperial.ac.uk/sustainability-month/



New: Imperial Sustainability Sandbox

Opportunities for staff and students



A new collaborative approach between academic staff, students and professional services teams



Drawing on the skills, knowledge and talents of our community, feeding into our research and education on sustainability to support stronger operational sustainability practices



Explore potential on-campus built-environment projects to research, study, improve, test and visibly demonstrate sustainable practice on our campuses

To celebrate the launch of the Sustainable Imperial Strategy 2026-2031, Sustainability Projects Officer Stav Friedman wrote a poem – [Together We Can](#) – that captures the spirit of our ambition, and how we can achieve it by working together as a community.

Learn more about our mission to create a global benchmark for university sustainability

[Read the full Sustainable Imperial Strategy 2026-2031](#)

