

Northumbria University Corporate Responsibility (CR) Statement March 2013

Northumbria University is committed to being an ethical and sustainable organisation. By its very nature, Northumbria is a socially responsible organisation, with its key corporate aim being to create and apply knowledge for the benefit of individuals, communities and the economy.¹

The University also holds charitable status as an 'exempt charity'², with the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) as principal regulator. As an exempt charity, Northumbria University is committed to making details of its constitution, trustees and annual accounts publicly available.

The purpose of this statement is to demonstrate to Northumbria University's stakeholders what is meant by CR. It will set a standard for how the University carries out its business and illustrate how it proposes to operate to uphold these standards.

1. Business conduct and ethics

Northumbria University aims to ensure that CR is embedded into all its business practices, practising ethical, consistent and responsible behaviour and promoting a culture of honesty and transparency through its initiatives and processes. This will be achieved by:

- Behaving with honesty, transparency and fairness in all its activities and relationships with others;
- Operating in a way that safeguards against unfair business practices;
- Developing clear contracts that set out the agreed terms, conditions and the basis for relationships;
- Sharing and declaring information on conflicts of interest;
- Maintaining internal controls to ensure standards are reviewed and met.

2. Research

Northumbria University strives to uphold the highest standards of ethical practice in research and academic integrity. It also aspires to apply knowledge created through its research to make a positive impact on society. The University will meet these standards by:

- Encouraging and empowering staff to undertake research that creates social and economic impact and is engaged with the public, and expressing its strategic commitment to public engagement via the *Manifesto for Public Engagement*;
- Engaging the public in, and communicating the outcomes of, academic research through knowledge transfer partnerships and events such as the British Science Festival;
- Celebrating and sharing best practice nationally and internationally with other universities and research institutes via the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement;
- Embedding a robust ethics structure, as outlined in the University's *Research Ethics and Governance Handbook*³, as an integral part of research practice at Northumbria University.

¹ Northumbria University Corporate Strategy (2009-14).

² As defined in the Charities Act 1993 and amended by the Charities Act 1996.

³ Northumbria University Research Ethics and Governance Handbook:
<http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/research/reghandbook.pdf>

3. Environment

Northumbria University recognises the key role it has to play in caring for the environment and raising awareness of sustainable working practices. It is committed to improving its environmental performance across all of its activities by:

- Reducing the amount of waste generated and disposed to landfill, and re-using and recycling waste wherever possible⁴;
- Identifying and implementing measures to reduce energy and water consumption;
- Identifying and implementing measures to reduce carbon emissions⁵;
- Promoting and incentivising sustainable modes of transport to staff and students;
- Managing construction projects and development work in a sustainable manner and in consultation with local communities wherever possible;
- Managing the University's estates and activities in a way that safeguards and enhances biodiversity⁶;
- Raising awareness of environmental issues with staff and students and encouraging sustainable working, living and travel practices.

4. Procurement

A key objective of the University is to continually improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the community through its procurement activities. Northumbria University aims to ensure that its procurement practices deliver value for money whilst making due consideration for ethical trading, sustainability and community relations. The University will achieve this by:

- Proactively encouraging business from a wide range of organisations including SMEs and the regional supply chain;
- Continuing to trade ethically and maintaining its Fairtrade status by upholding the commitments outlined in the University's Fairtrade Policy⁷;
- Actively encouraging its business partners to adopt and embed principles of equality and diversity and to engage in sustainable business practices in conjunction with the Sustainable Procurement Centre of Excellence for Higher Education (SPCE).

5. Equality and diversity

Northumbria University is committed to providing an environment in which diversity is valued and encouraged, where there is equality of access to opportunities and services and in which all prospective and existing students and staff are treated fairly, with equity, dignity and mutual respect⁸. The University will achieve this by:

- Ensuring equality of access for all potential students and staff;

⁴ Details of targets and initiatives relating to waste management can be found in Northumbria University's *Waste Management Policy*: <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/estpdf/wastepol2011.pdf>

⁵ Details of targets and initiatives relating to carbon management can be found in Northumbria University's *Carbon Management Plan 2010-2020*: http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/estpdf/carbon_man.pdf

⁶ Northumbria University Biodiversity Policy: <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/estpdf/biodivpol.pdf>

⁷ Northumbria University Fairtrade Policy: http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/static/5007/finpdf/fairtrade_policy.pdf

⁸ Northumbria University Equality and Diversity Policy: <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/hr/guidance/azpolicy/EDPolicyStatement/>. More information can be found in Northumbria University's Equality and Diversity webpages: <http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/eqdiv/>

- Promoting the spirit of equal opportunity, ensuring that members of the University community act respectfully towards each individual and group;
- Ensuring that effective systems for the monitoring and evaluation of equality and diversity are in place;
- Working proactively towards eliminating discrimination, harassment and bullying on the grounds of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any other inappropriate or irrelevant criteria or distinction;
- Raising awareness of, aspiration to, and fair access to higher education in local schools and colleges through a range of on and off campus events and activities;
- Ensuring fair access to Northumbria University through the provision of bursaries and access to financial advice and support;
- Providing advice, support and access routes into higher education for mature students;
- Offering equal opportunities to all employees in their recruitment, training and career development.

6. Community

Northumbria University seeks to play a leading role in the North East region, contributing to its culture and success as a civic society and sharing its knowledge and facilities with the local community⁹. The University will achieve this by:

- Exploring and creating opportunities to engage with the public through public lectures, events and exhibitions;
- Providing two-way communication channels between the University and the local community, and utilising existing community forums to improve local links;
- Providing the community with access to University facilities where appropriate and utilising communication channels and community forums to promote these opportunities;
- Understanding and respecting the needs of the community and endeavouring to work in consultation with them wherever appropriate.

7. Evaluation and monitoring

Compliance with this statement will be continuously monitored and subject to review by the Region, Engagement and Partnerships Committee. Detailed targets and methods will be provided in the Northumbria University CR Strategy, which will be published later this year.

⁹ For the purpose of this statement, the local community is defined as members of the public living on or near the University campuses or in areas with a significant population of students living in residential accommodation.