

# Declaring a climate and nature emergency

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### The Union notes:

- The urgent and escalating global climate crisis poses a significant threat to the physical and mental well-being of current and future generations.  
[https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_SYR\\_SPM.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/syr/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_SYR_SPM.pdf)
- Biodiversity loss and environmental degradation are reaching critical tipping points, with severe consequences for ecosystems and human societies.  
<https://doi.org/10.1126/science.abn7950>
- The Global South, people of colour, women, children, the elderly, those with low incomes and below the poverty line, those with pre-existing health conditions, and other marginalised groups are more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, which is expected to exacerbate socio-economic inequalities across the world and in the UK.  
[https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGII\\_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGII_SummaryForPolicymakers.pdf)
- Students and young people worldwide are calling for decisive action to address the climate and nature emergency. [https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/rcpch\\_preserving\\_the\\_world\\_for\\_future\\_generations\\_executive\\_summary.pdf](https://www.rcpch.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2023-11/rcpch_preserving_the_world_for_future_generations_executive_summary.pdf)
- 89% of UK students agree their place of study should actively incorporate and promote sustainable development, as of 2023. [https://assets-global.website-files.com/6008334066c47be740656954/651d7ed9dca42698cee12509\\_20230928%20Sustainability%20Skills%20Survey%20Final-%20HE%20only.pdf](https://assets-global.website-files.com/6008334066c47be740656954/651d7ed9dca42698cee12509_20230928%20Sustainability%20Skills%20Survey%20Final-%20HE%20only.pdf)

**The Union believes:**

- The scientific consensus highlights the need for immediate and comprehensive action to mitigate the causes and impacts of climate change and to protect biodiversity.
- It is the duty of the Universities of Exeter and Falmouth, in partnership with the SU, to equip students with knowledge of the causes of the climate and nature crisis and the implications for society, and with the mindsets and skills necessary to address this crisis and work for a sustainable and just present and future.
- The SU has a responsibility to lead by example in promoting sustainability, environmental stewardship, and social justice.
- The climate and nature crises are caused by colonialism. Acknowledging the intersectionality of the climate and nature crisis is crucial for social justice and a sustainable future.
- Empowering students to take action on the climate and nature crisis is good for their wellbeing and mental health.
- The Union should encourage civic engagement in raising awareness of climate change and biodiversity, and work towards solutions in partnership with local stakeholders.

## The Union resolves:

- To make a public declaration of the Climate and Nature Emergency, accessible to all on the website.
- To convene a working group and develop an action plan on the SU's climate and nature emergency response.
- To hold the University of Exeter to account as a supportive challenger, in upholding their commitment that [Scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions will have reached net zero status](#) by 2030, and their other commitments outlined in their [Environment and Climate Emergency policy statement](#).
- To hold Falmouth University to account as a supportive challenger, in upholding their [commitments](#) that Scope 1 and 2 emissions will be cut by 50% by 2025, 75% by 2030, to be carbon neutral by 2040, and to reach net zero (including scope 3 emissions) by 2050, in addition to other commitments outlined in their [sustainability policy](#).
- To hold FXPlus to account as a supportive challenger, in upholding their commitment to reach [net zero carbon emissions for Scope 1, 2 and 3](#) by 2050, and their other commitments outlined in their [sustainability policy](#).
- To allocate suitable resources to provide adequate training and support to SU sabbatical officers and student leaders, to fulfil the actions in this motion and related objectives.
- To assign responsibility to the sabbatical officers to continuously engage with all partner institutions in holding their sustainability strategies and climate commitments to account. These responsibilities include taking a lead in raising awareness of environmental justice as an intersectional issue, acknowledging the disproportionate impact of climate change on young people, marginalised groups, people of colour, and women, and the role of colonialism in environmental degradation.
- To assign responsibility to the Students Union elected representatives to raise awareness of the causes of the climate and nature crisis and the threats it poses to humanity, acknowledging the disproportionate impacts on young people, marginalised groups, people of colour, and women, and the role of colonialism in environmental degradation. In doing so, elected representatives should also build the confidence of student leaders to take similar action.
- To create a space and hold regular events to give students a voice on the climate and nature crisis and related issues, working to platform their ideas, opinions and worries in a participatory democratic manner.
- To engage with all students, enabling them to realise their agency both inside and outside of the university community, equipping them with the tools to respond to urgent and severe impacts of the climate crisis, some of which international students are already facing. This includes the offering of further educational and practical opportunities.
- To support student health and wellbeing where this is impacted by the climate and nature crisis, acknowledging the gravity of climate anxiety and emotional distress found most often in young people, and those facing the most immediate and severe impacts of the climate and nature crises.
- To support within reasonable means, and proactively engage with our students who are involved in grassroots youth climate action groups and other protest groups engaged in nonviolent direct action for a just response to the climate and nature crisis.
- To support students to engage with the local community in proactively working towards solutions to the climate and nature crises as equal partners. This will include, but not be limited to, active engagement into decolonial work and campaigns on campus and in the local community.