



Environmental Sustainability Policy

Institutional Manual

Approving Authority: President and Vice-Chancellor

Established: February 6, 2025

Date of Last Review/Revision: N/A

Office of Accountability: Executive Director, Finance and Administration

Administrative Responsibility: Chair, Sustainability Advisory Committee

1. Policy Statement

St. Jerome's University (St. Jerome's or the University) is committed to environmental stewardship and sustainable development, as demonstrated through its implementation of an Environmental Management System (EMS) compliant with ISO 14001:2015 standards. This Policy supports the EMS and sets forth the University's commitment to reducing its environmental footprint and promoting sustainability across all operations.

2. Scope

Overall, St. Jerome's EMS represents a structured and dynamic approach to environmental management, reflecting the University's dedication to sustainability and responsible environmental practices. Continuous improvement is to be embedded in the University's EMS through a rigorous review and improvement process. Regular internal audits, performance evaluations, and management reviews are conducted to ensure the system remains effective and aligned with the University's environmental objectives. Feedback from stakeholders will be actively sought and used to drive enhancements, fostering a culture of ongoing environmental excellence.

3. Definitions

In this policy, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

"Environmental Sustainability" means pursuing strategies and activities that minimize adverse environmental impacts, enhance and protect the natural environment, and meet the needs of students, employees, alumni, the communities in which St. Jerome's operates, and other relevant stakeholders.

4. Responsibility

The President and Vice-Chancellor provides project sponsorship and senior level support to elucidate the University's visions, beliefs, and aims regarding its environmental performance and how it should be managed.

The Chair, Sustainability Advisory Committee, provides leadership by guiding the committee, setting strategic direction, and facilitating committee communication and cohesion. The Chair commits to continuous, durable improvement of environmental performance and attaining or surpassing legislative and performance requirements.

The Sustainability Advisory Committee provides advice and expertise for the development and implementation of meaningful and lasting environmental sustainability initiatives as they relate to St. Jerome's mission and vision as

articulated in the 2022 Strategic Plan; the Committee highlights social responsibility when considering renewal, reuse and reduction or substitution initiatives; the Committee raises awareness and communicates environmental sustainability issues as they impact the University with the goal of carrying over and acting on that awareness in other facets of life beyond SJU, recognizing that many of the issues are within the context of regional concerns, national platforms, or global systems.

The Committee's efforts include environmental audits, central monitoring, recording and reporting progress on environmental protection issues, developing training to the campus community and serving as the central information source about current and anticipated legislation applicable to the University as well as providing linkages for sustainable development efforts.

Key stakeholders include faculty and staff who are directly affected by and contribute to the University's environmental initiatives. Their engagement and participation are essential for fostering a culture of sustainability on campus. These groups provide valuable insights, support, and oversight, ensuring the University's activities align with broader environmental and social expectations.

Transparent communication, active engagement, and continuous feedback from all stakeholders will ensure the EMS reflects their needs and expectations, driving collective action towards sustainability goals at St. Jerome's.

5. Principles and Practices

The University will uphold the following core commitments as critical to building an environmentally sustainable campus:

- 5.1. **Compliance:** That the University will meet or exceed all applicable local, provincial, and national environmental standards and regulations;
- 5.2. **Accountability:** That the University will establish and maintain at all times an environmental sustainability strategy with measurable goals across all scope areas of this policy;
- 5.3. **Transparency:** That the University will report annually on its progress towards achieving its goals, including information about environmental impacts and initiatives taken;
- 5.4. **Future-focused:** That the University will continue to integrate lifecycle cost and impact analysis into its ongoing infrastructure, capital planning, and campus master planning decisions;

In addition, the University will uphold the following guiding principles to support an environmentally sustainable campus:

- 5.5. **Institutional Ecology:** That the University will enact practices and processes to reduce consumption of resources, minimize output of waste, and mitigate upstream and downstream environmental impacts from campus operations;
- 5.6. **Performance:** That the University will continue to provide infrastructure that supports quality research and teaching, and enables an appropriate working and living environment;
- 5.7. **Education:** That the University, recognizing its role as an institution of higher education, will ensure students and employees are informed to live sustainably and understand sustainability issues and concepts relevant for their careers;
- 5.8. **Collaboration:** That the University will develop clear mechanisms to engage appropriate stakeholders in the design of sustainability initiatives and objectives;

- 5.9. **Innovation:** That the University will develop processes for the development, evaluation, and, where feasible, implementation of new on-campus technologies, strategies, policies, and procedures developed by members of the campus community that advance the sustainability strategy;
- 5.10. **Community:** That the University will create positive benefits to the natural environment for the local and global communities in which it operates; and
- 5.11. **Leadership:** That the University will demonstrate leadership by aiming towards ambitious standards and outcomes, such as carbon neutrality, zero waste, net positive, integration into campus decision-making, investing in sustainability, and institutional prioritization.

6. Accountability

The St. Jerome's Sustainability Advisory Committee shall be responsible for the ongoing maintenance and review of this policy.

All related departments, faculties, and committees within the University will be responsible for the implementation of provisions within this policy according to existing mandates and processes. For example, changes to student learning would advance through current avenues and committees for curriculum review, and operational authorities will continue to monitor compliance and implementation within their relevant responsibilities.

7. Legal Framework

The policy will be construed in accordance with applicable law, such as:

- O. Reg. 397/11-Energy and Conservation Demand Management
- O. Reg. 102/94- Waste Audits and Waste Reduction Plans
- O. Reg. 103/94 - Industrial, Commercial and Institutional Source Separation Programs
- O. Reg. 386/16-Blue Box Waste
- O. Reg. 452/09 - Greenhouse Gas Emission Reporting

If any of these legal provisions are modified, abrogated, superseded, or added to, the policy will be interpreted in accordance with the new legal framework.

References:

Saalim, M. (2024). *Development, Definition and Deployment of St. Jerome's University's Environmental Management System*. St. Jerome's University. Waterloo, Ont.

University of Waterloo. (2024). *Policy 53—Environmental Sustainability*. Retrieved from [Policy 53 - Environmental Sustainability | Secretariat | University of Waterloo](https://policy.universityofwaterloo.ca/policy/53-environmental-sustainability)