



## RCE Severn Terms of Reference

### Introduction

RCE Severn is one of the designated Regional Centres of Expertise in Sustainability Education (RCEs). The RCE global network is co-ordinated by the Global RCE Service Centre, headquartered at the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) in Japan.

UNU-IAS established the RCE movement in 2003 in response to the UN resolution on the Decade for Education for Sustainable Development. The RCE network has now evolved to facilitate learning and change towards the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through collaborative partnerships acting at local and regional levels. Its focus is on education and learning for sustainability to directly support the implementation of the UN Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

RCE Severn is hosted by the University of Gloucestershire, which acts as the base location for the RCE and provides staffing to co-ordinate the activities of the RCE, through the University's Sustainability Team. The University operates the RCE as part of its strategic commitments to sustainability and public outreach.

### Vision and Purpose

RCE Severn seeks to assist the West Midlands region in moving towards sustainable development through transformative learning, participatory engagement and collaborative partnerships.

The purpose of the RCE is to bring together individuals and organisations from different sectors to:

- i. Develop a cross-sectoral and cross-regional collaboration platform focused on learning and change for sustainability that adds value to existing initiatives.
- ii. Facilitate shared learning, develop projects, and exchange best practice to build capacity and make tangible contributions to long-term change for sustainability.
- iii. Create opportunities for people to gain practical experience in sustainability through voluntary activities and professional opportunities.
- iv. Broker collaboration and seek resources to develop transformative learning projects and applied research for sustainability.
- v. Engage with local, national and international partners to build collaboration and to influence strategies and policies that impact on the work of RCE partners.

RCE Severn implements its vision by working towards strategic goals that are integrated into the University of Gloucestershire's Sustainability Strategy 2017-2022. It is also part of the University's wider public engagement activity and the partnerships goal of its Strategic Plan 2017-2022: *"To build partnerships which create opportunity, innovation and mutual benefit for the communities we serve"*.

The work of the RCE is aligned to the 3 ambitions of the Engagement and Partnerships goal of this strategy:

- “collaboration is extended with educational partners regionally, nationally and globally, aligned with wider sustainability agenda and our international academic activities”
- “we contribute to sustainability goals through student-community and academic-industry partnerships, using applied research, professional training and knowledge exchange”
- “civic and community collaboration on sustainability increases with RCE Severn, including new alliances in arenas such as youth, interfaith, wellbeing, justice and social enterprise”

The capacity development actions and defined targets for the activity of the RCE are reported through the University’s Annual Sustainability Report as well as annual reporting to the UNU. They include:

- Delivery of at least one new community-facing ESD project annually
- At least 2 trainings/seminars offered annually to external stakeholders
- Record of partnership development linked to sustainability
- Record of impact for community partners to support their sustainability goals

## **Governance and Structure**

The RCE is committed to ensuring responsible leadership and management through its core Advisory Group. It does this by alignment with the protocols of the UNU regarding the operations of RCEs and through the University’s oversight of its sustainability strategy and programme.

### 1. UNU relationship with RCE Severn:

- 1.1 The RCE maintains its public web portal through the University website and its profile on the UNU RCE international web portal.
- 1.2 The RCE abides by the policy for appropriate activities, communications, representation and logo use as specified by the UNU.
- 1.3 The RCE provides a public statement of its goals and makes an annual report to the UNU RCE Service centre detailing its activities and achievements.

### 2. University of Gloucestershire role:

- 2.1 The University provides an office base and staffing resource for RCE Severn and maintains its public presence via communications, website and social media.
- 2.2 The RCE Director is responsible for the overall performance of the RCE and brokers relations with the international RCE community.
- 2.3 The RCE Co-ordinator acts as a central point for communications, meetings and activities among the RCE Severn network, including the operations of the RCE Advisory Group.

### 3. RCE Advisory Group role:

- 3.1 The Advisory Group supports development of the RCE, advising on its strategic direction, core activities and liaison with RCE partners involved in the delivery of its projects.
- 3.2 The Advisory Group consists of 6-10 individuals nominated by the RCE Director to represent different sectors of the RCE network (see Appendix 1) and to serve for a term of two years.
- 3.3 The RCE Director will publicise vacancies in the Advisory Group membership and invite suitable nominations from members of the network interested in taking up these roles.
- 3.4 The RCE Co-ordinator will seek to rotate meeting venues and chairing duties to help provide a broad, independent steer for the RCE and to enable balanced participation in meetings.
- 3.5 The Advisory Group will review the Terms of Reference for the RCE annually at the meeting held as part of the RCE Forum.

## Membership and Participation

In line with its aims, RCE Severn engages with individuals and organisations across its region, which reaches from the local area around the University of Gloucestershire, to the wider South West and Midlands region.

Participation in the activity of the RCE is open to any person who shares and embraces the vision of RCE Severn. Participation is free of charge and can be at two levels:

- **RCE Member** – an individual or organisation that wishes to:
  - Receive newsletters and communications related to RCE Severn
  - Participate in events, trainings and projects offered by the RCE and its Partners
  - Offer relevant activities and items to RCE Severn newsletters and communications
  - Contribute to consultations, dialogues and proposals developed through the RCE
  - Join the Advisory Group where vacancies arise in their area of experience
  
- **RCE Partner\*** – an individual or organisation that in addition to being a Member, wishes to:
  - Actively lead or help to deliver core projects attached to RCE Severn
  - Establish collaborations and activities that meet the objectives of RCE Severn
  - Apply for free hire of University rooms to conduct RCE project meetings
  - Propose submissions for global RCE awards that match the UNU award criteria

\* RCE Partners may seek to adopt the RCE logo for RCE Severn projects or events that fit UNU guidance on appropriate use. The RCE Co-ordinator is able to advise on the criteria and/or seek permission from UNU.

## Activities and Conduct

### 1. RCE Core Activities

- **Newsletter and communications** – sent to all RCE Members with news and opportunities in sustainability education from the University, wider RCE Severn region and global RCE network. All members are invited to contribute relevant content and follow RCE Severn on social media.
- **Collaborative projects** – involving one or more RCE Partners working with the University, RCE projects strive to implement and develop transformative learning and practice in sustainability that contributes to the realisation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Events and seminars** – offered to all members to facilitate learning and development as well as sharing of good practice in sustainability. Events may be hosted at the University or at other venues and may be organised in collaboration with or led by RCE Partners.
- **Professional development** – facilitated through the University's Sustainability Team and aligned to its employability service. Professional experiences help RCE Partners to build capacity to achieve sustainability goals and offer students real-world experience of sustainability.
- **RCE Severn meetings** – including meetings of the RCE Advisory Group and the annual RCE Severn Forum, which is open to all members to shape the ongoing direction of the RCE.

### 2. RCE Advisory Group meetings

- The Advisory Group aims to hold an annual RCE Forum event plus additional 1-2 meetings each year, which may be held virtually through the use of online technology or teleconference facilities.

- Face-to-face meetings may be hosted by RCE Partners provided they can offer fully accessible venues in easy reach of the public transport network and offer refreshments.
- The quorate for decision-making is 5 Advisory Group members, including 2 external to the University. Decisions will be taken on the basis of consensus, or in the absence of consensus, by majority vote.
- Meeting agendas and papers will be sent out 5 working days before each meeting. Items can be tabled by prior agreement with the Chair.
- Minutes will normally be issued to the Advisory Group members within 2 weeks of the meeting and any corrections to should be lodged within 14 days of receipt. Minutes will then be made available to all RCE Members on the RCE Severn webpages.

### **3. Code of Conduct**

All Members and Partners of RCE Severn should be able and willing to:

- Share experiences and good practice in sustainability education with the wider RCE network.
- Understand and support the achievements of the UN SDGs within their local context and as appropriate by connecting with actors at the international level.
- Promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person, and by treating people with respect, regardless of their race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or disability.

RCE Partners and Advisory Group members also agree to:

- Represent the RCE mission and objectives as stated in these Terms of Reference, to support its objectives for learning and change in sustainability.
- Use their expertise to generate and as appropriate lead new projects, drawing on the experience and capacity of the RCE network and seeking funding and resources to support delivery.
- Be open, transparent and accountable for their activities through the RCE, serving only the public interest and never improperly showing advantage or disadvantage to any person.
- Respect the sovereignty of particular agencies, particularly where that agency has clear and/or formal responsibility for delivering particular services.
- Observe good practices in sustainability in the conduct of RCE activities, in the provision of catering, choice of suppliers and materials, and promotion of sustainable travel options.

### **4. Information and Data Protection**

Contact information for RCE Members is held within the University's secure server environment and protected by its central policies for data protection, including GDPR.

Information provided by Members related to the work of the RCE will be treated in confidence but shared appropriately amongst the network to progress towards the vision and goals of RCE Severn. Consent will be sought prior to public dissemination of key projects and activities that involve the work of RCE Partners.

## Appendix 1

### RCE Severn Advisory Group Membership

<b>Sectors/Stakeholder Groups</b>	<b>Current Representative</b>	<b>Role/Organisation/Network</b>
1. RCE Director	Dr Alex Ryan	Director of Sustainability, University of Gloucestershire
2. RCE Co-ordinator and Youth Representative	Miriam Webb	Sustainability Engagement Manager, University of Gloucestershire
3. Third Sector	Lorna Fox	Head of Community Programmes Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust
4. Public Sector	TBC	TBC
5. Private Sector	Sarah Fish	Managing Consultant Atkins
6. Compulsory Education	Ann Finlayson	CEO, Sustainability and Environmental Education (SEEd)
7. Tertiary Education	Katy Boom	Director of Sustainability, University of Worcester
8. University Academic Staff	Dr Louise Livesey	Academic Course Leader – Criminology, University of Gloucestershire