



University Climate Report

Report Scope

This report is team based, wherein teams may be inter-university. There are two types of projects, problem-based projects and explanatory-based projects – prompts can be selected from the list in the application form. In problem-based projects your team researches different solutions to a problem, the viability of each one, and concludes on the overall feasibility of solving the problem (see [problem list](#) - and suggest your own in the form that others can join).

For example, a team identified that fishing boats habitually toss their plastic nets overboard, responsible for around 10% of microplastic generation in the sea (Osman et al. 2023), and found that of all possible solutions, an RFID tag government policy would be the most feasible way to combat this problem. Explanatory-based projects intuitively describe a topic from the ground up, in a manner that is engaging even for those with limited prior knowledge; examples would be fusion, fission and transistors; though it would eventually take a similar form to a problem-based project, as there would be multiple types of fusion that would be compared in terms of their feasibility.

It is also great to make the article exciting for the reader, for instance if your team was doing an explanatory article on fission, you could have a section on the Chernobyl Meltdown, and explain exactly why it happened.

It is important to know that in your team's assessment of a technology as a potential solution, not just technical considerations should be made. For power generation, a meltdown-resistant small modular fission reactor with layers of redundancy to ensure no failure is a great choice, and technically possible given current technology, but we must appreciate that legally this will not be possible for the foreseeable future, nor financially in many settings.

It is alright if your team is working on the same project prompt as another team, as the prompt can easily be split between teams; for the first bit of work you work independently and come up with preliminary arguments, you then meet with the other team to see where you agree and do not agree, and then form a joint-argument based on consensus – this co-validation is incredibly key to the final quality of the report. After this discussion, you split up the topic and continue as normal, which ensures that there is no redundant work (i.e. if there are 4 solutions you are investigating and 2 teams, 2 per team). Another important reason for allowing more than one team to work on a project is it gives more people access to work on the topic they are interested in. Even still, the number of teams per prompt will be limited mostly to 2, to ensure that each team has enough to work on.

Previous reports (see the USI website) have been requested by the UK Government (specifically DESNZ), so this project has a high opportunity for impact, as well as learning.



Mandatory Requirements

Requirement 1 – A real problem, and the people who own it

1.1 Every team must be working on a problem that someone actually has, and that the team is genuinely interested in. The prompt list in the application form is a starting point rather than a constraint: if your team wants to work on something that is not on it, put it through the Project Addition Form and it will be considered. A topic picked because it looked easy to write about is not acceptable.

1.2 By 3 November 2026 each team submits a one-page problem statement and stakeholder map. The problem statement says what the problem is, who suffers from it, and what a good answer would change. The stakeholder map names the specific organisations and roles that own the problem – the operator, the regulator, the manufacturer, the funder, the community affected – and which of them the team needs to speak to.

1.3 Stakeholder contact is mandatory rather than optional colour. Each team must hold at least 3 substantive conversations with people outside the team – industry, government, academia, or the affected community – before the first draft on 13 February 2027. Substantive means a call or a meeting, not a form response.

1.4 Every conversation is recorded in the appendix: date, name, role, organisation, and, most importantly, what the team changed as a result. A stakeholder conversation that changed nothing in the report is either a conversation that went badly or one that was not listened to; say which.

1.5 The feasibility assessment must reflect what those stakeholders told you. Technical merit is one axis of several – cost, regulation, procurement, and who would actually have to say yes are all in scope, and the people we introduce you to are the ones who know those answers.

Requirement 2 – You have USI's support, and the network behind it

2.1 When you approach someone, you approach them as part of the University Sustainability Initiative rather than as an individual student sending a cold email, and you may say so. USI is a multi-university network of more than 1,000 members, and our projects have run with Rolls-Royce, Siemens, Octopus Energy, and the UK Government (DESNZ).

2.2 Where the contact already exists in the network, the committee makes the introduction. Do not spend 3 weeks failing to reach someone we can reach in a day – ask.

2.3 Where a team needs something formal – a letter from USI, an interview request made on



the organisation's terms, or a data request to a company or a public body – the committee writes it. Ask for it early rather than at the point the deadline has already made it useless.

2.4 Teams also have access to the academic mentors and to the partners on the other 26/27 USI projects, several of whom work directly on the technologies this report covers.

Requirement 3 – If the right person is not in the network, we will go and find them

3.1 The network is not fixed. If the person your team needs is someone we do not already know, tell the committee who they are and we will go and get them; sourcing new contacts on behalf of teams is part of what this project is for.

3.2 Ask specifically. Someone in carbon capture is not an actionable request; the person responsible for permitting at a UK CCS cluster is.

3.3 The committee will also connect teams to each other, and to people outside USI who are interested in the same problem – other societies, researchers, and companies who want the answer your team is producing. Say early if your problem overlaps another team's, or another project's.

3.4 Ask early. Introductions take weeks rather than days: a request made in November can be arranged in time to shape the co-team discussion, whereas the same request made in February usually cannot.

Timeline

This report has two phases: the first ends at the end of November, wherein each team presents their preliminary arguments to the other team on the prompt, the joint-argument is formed, then work is split and team work continues.

Stakeholder introductions are arranged from the problem statement and stakeholder map submitted at the start of November. That deadline sits deliberately early in the year: the committee needs time to reach people, and what comes back should shape the team's argument rather than decorate a finished one.

The first draft is submitted in February and the final report is published in March. Teams write into the Climate Report template, reference in IEEE format, and record every stakeholder conversation in the appendix.

6 October 2026	Applications Open
----------------	-------------------



25 October 2026	Applications Close
20 October 2026	Teams formed
3 November 2026	Problem statement and stakeholder map submitted
24-28 November 2026	co-Team Discussion (final argument formed and work split)
13 February 2027	1st draft submitted
20 March 2027	Final Report Published