

## SECOND PARTY OPINION (SPO)

### Sustainability Quality of the Issuer and Sustainable Finance Framework

Unite Students

11 April 2024

#### VERIFICATION PARAMETERS

Type(s) of instruments contemplated

- Sustainable Financing Transactions<sup>1</sup>
- Green Bond Principles, as administered by the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) (as of June 2021 with June 2022 Appendix 1)
- Social Bond Principles (SBP), as administered by the ICMA (as of June 2023 with June 2023 Appendix 1)

Relevant standards

- Sustainability Bond Guidelines (SBG), as administered by the ICMA (as of June 2021)
- Green Loan Principles (GLP) and Social Loan Principles (SLP) as administered by the Loan Market Association (LMA) (as of February 2023)

Scope of verification

- Unite Students Sustainable Finance Framework (as of April 10, 2024)
- Unite Students Eligibility Criteria (as of April 10, 2024)

Lifecycle

- Pre-issuance verification

Validity

- Valid as long as the cited Framework remains unchanged

<sup>1</sup> Sustainable Financing Transactions include bonds, loans and other financing products where proceeds are allocated to eligible green and/or social projects.

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## SCOPE OF WORK

Unite Students (“the Issuer”, “the Company”, or “Unite”) commissioned ISS Corporate Solutions (ISS-Corporate) to assist with its Sustainable Finance Framework by assessing three core elements to determine the sustainability quality of the instruments:

1. Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework (as of April 10, 2024) – benchmarked against the International Capital Market Association’s (ICMA) Green Bond Principles (GBP), ICMA’s Social Bond Principles (SBP), ICMA’s Sustainability Bond Guidelines, and against the Loan Market Association’s (LMA) Green Loan Principles (GLP) and Social Loan Principles (SLP).
2. The Eligibility Criteria – whether the project categories contribute positively to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and how they perform against proprietary issuance-specific key performance indicators (KPIs) (See Annex 1).
3. Consistency of Sustainable Finance Framework with Unite’s Sustainability Strategy – drawing on the key sustainability objectives and priorities defined by the Issuer.

## UNITE STUDENTS OVERVIEW

The Unite Group Plc engages in the development and management of student accommodation. It operates through the Operations and Property segments. The Operations segment manages rental properties, owned directly by the Group or by joint ventures. The Property segment includes development management fees earned from joint ventures.

The company was founded in 1991 and is headquartered in Bristol, the United Kingdom.

### *ESG risks associated with the Issuer Industry*



Unite is classified in the Real Estate industry, as per ISS ESG's sector classification. Key sustainability issues faced by companies<sup>2</sup> in this industry are: occupational health and safety, environmental and social aspects in site selection, climate protection, energy efficiency and renewables, and green buildings considerations.

This report focuses on the sustainability credentials of the issuance. Part III. of this report assesses the consistency between the issuance and the Issuer's overall sustainability strategy.

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<sup>2</sup> Please note, that this is not a company specific assessment but areas that are of particular relevance for companies within that industry.

## ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

SPO SECTION	SUMMARY	EVALUATION <sup>3</sup>
<p><b>Part I:</b></p> <p><b>Alignment with GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP</b></p>	<p>The Issuer has defined a formal concept for its Sustainable Financing Transactions regarding use of proceeds, processes for project evaluation and selection, management of proceeds and reporting. This concept is in line with the GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP.</p>	<p><b>Aligned</b></p>
<p><b>Part II:</b></p> <p><b>Sustainability quality of the Eligibility Criteria</b></p>	<p>The Sustainable Financing Transactions will (re)finance eligible asset categories which include:</p> <p>Green categories: Renewable Energy, Green Buildings, and Clean Transportation.</p> <p>Social categories: Affordable Housing, and Socio-Economic Advancement &amp; Empowerment.</p> <p>Product and/or service-related use of proceeds categories<sup>4</sup> individually contribute to one or more of the following SDGs:</p>  <p>Process-related use of proceeds categories<sup>5</sup> individually improve (i) the Issuer’s operational impacts and (ii) mitigate potential negative externalities of the Issuer’s sector on one or more of the following SDGs:</p> 	<p><b>Positive</b></p>

<sup>3</sup> The evaluation is based on Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework (April 10, 2024 version), on the analysed Selection Criteria as received on April 10, 2024.

<sup>4</sup> Renewable Energy, Green Buildings, Clean Transportation, Affordable Housing, and Socio-Economic Advancement & Empowerment.

<sup>5</sup> Green Buildings, Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation, and Renewable Energy.

	The environmental and social risks associated with those use of proceeds categories are managed.	
<b>Part III: Consistency of Sustainable Financing Transactions with Unite's Sustainability Strategy</b>	The key sustainability objectives and the rationale for issuing Sustainable Financing Transactions are clearly described by the Issuer. All project categories considered are in line with the sustainability objectives of the Issuer.	<b>Consistent with Issuer's sustainability strategy</b>

## SPO ASSESSMENT

### PART I: ALIGNMENT WITH GREEN BOND PRINCIPLES, SOCIAL BOND PRINCIPLES, SUSTAINABILITY BOND GUIDELINES, GREEN LOAN PRINCIPLES AND SOCIAL LOAN PRINCIPLES

This section evaluates the alignment of Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework (as of April 10, 2024) with the Green Bond Principles, Social Bond Principles, Sustainability Bond Guidelines, Green Loan Principles, and Social Loan Principles.

GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/S LP	ALIGNMENT	OPINION
<p><b>1. Use of Proceeds</b></p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The Use of Proceeds description provided by Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework is <b>aligned</b> with the GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP.</p> <p>The Issuer’s green and social categories align with the project categories as proposed by the GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP. Criteria are defined in a clear and transparent manner. Disclosure of an allocation period and commitment to report by project category has been provided and environmental and social benefits are described and quantified.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Issuer defines a look-back period of 36 months, in line with best market practice.</p>
<p><b>2. Process for Project Evaluation and Selection</b></p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The Process for Project Evaluation and Selection description provided by Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework is <b>aligned</b> with the GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP.</p> <p>The project selection process is defined and structured in a congruous manner. ESG risks associated with the project categories are identified and managed through an appropriate process. Moreover, the projects selected show alignment with the sustainability strategy of the Issuer and clearly show the intended benefit to the relevant population.</p>

		<p>Moreover, the Issuer clearly defines responsibilities in the process for project evaluation and selection, involves various stakeholders in the process, and is transparent about it, in line with best market practice.</p>
<p><b>3. Management of Proceeds</b></p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The Management of Proceeds provided by Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework is <b>aligned</b> with the GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP.</p> <p>The net proceeds collected will be equal to the amount allocated to eligible projects, with no exceptions. The net proceeds are tracked in an appropriate manner. The net proceeds are managed on an aggregated basis for multiple Green/Social Bonds/Loans (portfolio approach). Unite confirms to have a monitoring system in place to avoid double counting risk and commits not to finance the same eligible expenditure under this framework with multiple Sustainable Financing Transactions.</p> <p>Moreover, the Issuer discloses the temporary investment instruments for unallocated proceeds.</p>
<p><b>4. Reporting</b></p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>The allocation and impact reporting provided by Unite’s Sustainable Finance Framework is <b>aligned</b> with the GBP/SBP/SBG/GLP/SLP.</p> <p>The Issuer commits to disclose the allocation of proceeds transparently and to report in an appropriate frequency. The reporting will be publicly available on the Issuer’s website. Unite has disclosed the type of information that will be reported and explains that the level of expected reporting will be at portfolio level. Moreover, the Issuer commits to report annually, until maturity date.</p> <p>The Issuer further defines the scope and frequency of the impact reporting, in line with best market practice.</p> <p>Furthermore, the Issuer discloses roles and responsibilities in the monitoring and reporting</p>



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		<p>process, as well as the location and link of the report(s), in line with best market practice.</p> <p>Finally, the Issuer commits to get the allocation report audited by an external party, in line with best market practices.</p>
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## PART II: SUSTAINABILITY QUALITY OF THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

### A. CONTRIBUTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING TRANSACTIONS TO THE UN SDGs<sup>6</sup>

Companies can contribute to the achievement of the SDGs by providing specific services/products which help address global sustainability challenges, and by being responsible corporate actors, working to minimize negative externalities in their operations along the entire value chain. The aim of this section is to assess the SDG impact of the UoP categories financed by the Issuer in two different ways, depending on whether the proceeds are used to (re)finance:

- specific products/services,
- improvements of operational performance.


#### 1. Products and services

The assessment of UoP categories for (re)financing products and services is based on a variety of internal and external sources, such as the ISS ESG SDG Solutions Assessment (SDGA), a proprietary methodology designed to assess the impact of an Issuer's products or services on the UN SDGs, as well as other ESG benchmarks (the EU Taxonomy Climate Delegated Acts, the ICMA Green and/or Social Bond Principles and other regional taxonomies, standards and sustainability criteria).

The assessment of UoP categories for (re)financing specific products and services is displayed on a 3-point scale:



Each of the Sustainable Financing Transactions' Use of Proceeds categories has been assessed for its contribution to, or obstruction of, the SDGs:

USE OF PROCEEDS (PRODUCTS/SERVICES)	CONTRIBUTION OR OBSTRUCTION	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
<p><b>Green Buildings</b></p> <p><i>Projects aimed at financing the construction of BREEAM Excellent or above developments: development of direct-let and university partnered purpose-built student accommodation properties.</i></p>	<b>Contribution</b>	

<sup>6</sup> The impact of the UoP categories on UN Sustainable Development Goals is assessed with proprietary methodology and may therefore differ from the Issuer's description in the framework.

**Green Buildings**

*Projects aimed at financing the construction of EPC A or above developments: development of direct-let and university partnered purpose-built student accommodation properties.*

**Clean Transport**

*Projects aimed at supporting decarbonization of transport infrastructure such as electric vehicle infrastructure.<sup>7</sup>*

**Affordable Housing**

- *Projects aimed at financing the construction of affordable student accommodation: Bedrooms provided at a rental cost that is equal to or below a fixed percentage of the maintenance loan for a full-time student living away from home.*
- *Projects aimed at supporting students through the cost-of-living crisis and other hardships.<sup>8</sup>*
- *Accommodation scholarships and other support for young people attending university from the most challenging circumstances, such as care experience or family estrangement, delivered through the Unite Foundation, a registered charity in England and Wales.*

*Target population is Students, including those from care experience or family estrangement backgrounds.*

**Contribution**



**Contribution**



**Contribution**



<sup>7</sup> The assessment is limited to the example outlined in the framework.

<sup>8</sup> These projects provide direct financial support to students.

**Affordable Housing**

Projects aimed at supporting creation of affordable<sup>9</sup> non-student housing for local communities.<sup>10</sup>

**Socio-Economic Advancement & Empowerment**

Projects aimed at widening aspiration for and participation in education post 18 years of age, including initiatives focused on the transition from school to higher or further education:<sup>11</sup>

- Support the Unite Foundation: the Unite Foundation awards 80-100 new scholarships each year, thus supporting around 200 students per year, financing accommodation for students without family support.

**Socio-Economic Advancement & Empowerment**

Projects aimed at widening aspiration for and participation in education post 18 years of age, including initiatives focused on the transition from school to higher or further education:<sup>12</sup>

- Support to Stay programme: programme aimed to support student wellbeing and mental health through helpline.

**Socio-Economic Advancement & Empowerment**

Community support schemes and projects: Initiatives that benefit the local community & improve engagement and relations with students living in our buildings e.g., provision of access and

**Contribution**

**Contribution**

**Contribution**

**Contribution**



<sup>9</sup> For the definition of “affordable”, the Issuer will make sure that each project is aligned with the relevant applicable definition based on the type of housing projects (e.g. social housing, Purpose Built Students Accommodation).

<sup>10</sup> The Issuer confirmed that the rent is below market rate.

<sup>11</sup> The assessment is limited to the example outlined in the framework.

<sup>12</sup> The assessment is limited to the example outlined in the framework.

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*use of facilities to pro bono local  
charities.<sup>1314</sup>*



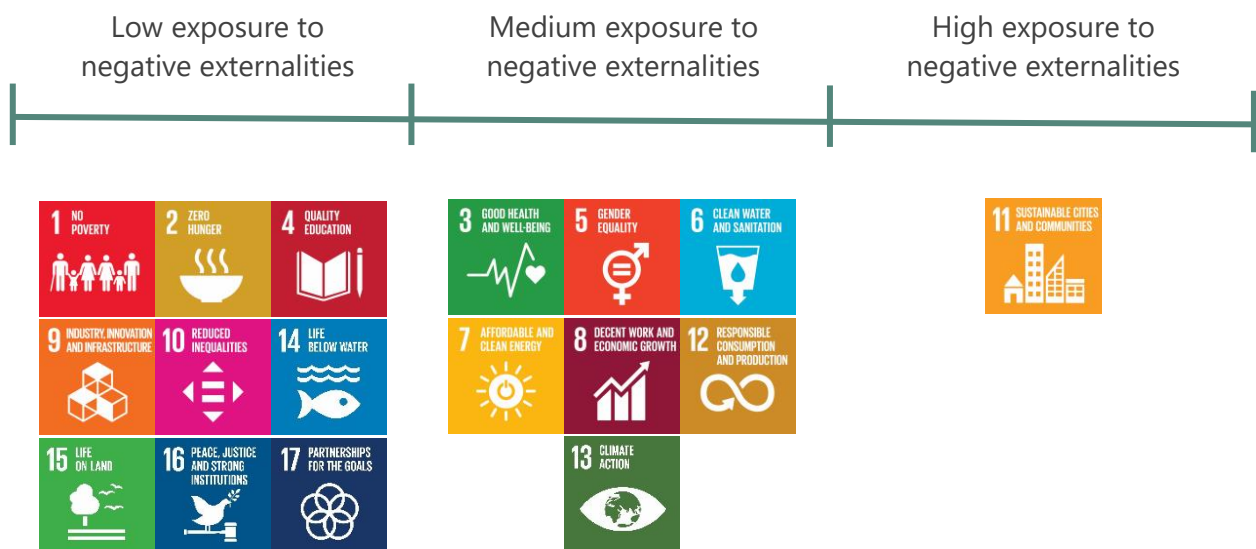
<sup>13</sup> The assessment is limited to the example outlined in the framework.

<sup>14</sup> Charities are non-profit organizations.


**2. Improvements of operational performance (processes)**

The below assessment aims at qualifying the direction of change (or “operational impact improvement”) resulting from the operational performance projects (re)financed by the UoP categories, as well as related UN SDGs impacted. The assessment displays how the UoP categories are mitigating the exposure to the negative externalities relevant to the business model and the sector of the Issuer.

According to ISS ESG SDG Impact Rating methodology, potential impacts on the SDGs related to negative operational externalities<sup>15</sup> in the Real Estate industry (to which Unite belongs) are the following:



The table below aims at displaying the direction of change resulting from the operational performance improvement projects. The outcome displayed does not correspond to an absolute or net assessment of the operational performance.

USE OF PROCEEDS (PROCESSES)	OPERATIONAL IMPACT IMPROVEMENT <sup>16</sup>	SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
<p><b>Green Buildings</b></p> <p><i>Re-financing of operational assets of BREEAM Very Good or above or EPC B or above.</i></p>	<p>✓</p>	

<sup>15</sup> Please, note that the impact of the Issuer’s products and services resulting from operations and processes is displayed in section 3.B of the SPO.

<sup>16</sup> Limited information is available on the scale of the improvement as no threshold is provided. Only the direction of change is displayed.

**Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation**

Financing or re-financing of projects aimed at improving the energy efficiency of our buildings:

- At least a 30% improvement in expected energy efficiency; or
- Two notch improvement in EPC rating or to an A if property is already C or higher.



**Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation**

Projects aimed at integrating energy efficiency measures such as low-carbon energy systems into operational assets in order to reduce the carbon footprint, such as retrofit of heat pumps to replace existing direct electric or gas hot water and/or heating.<sup>1718</sup>



**Renewable Energy**

- Projects aimed at integrating renewables energy systems into operational assets: Installation of on-site solar PV panels.
- Sourcing of renewable energy, including on-site or off-site corporate PPA contracts: long term contractual arrangement to purchase renewable electricity.<sup>19</sup>
- Projects using energy storage to maximise utilisation of renewable energy and support wider grid decarbonisation, e.g. onsite or offsite battery storage to maximise useful output of renewable energy assets.



<sup>17</sup> All renewable energy installations will be designed, specified and installed in line with relevant UK legislation, including waste management, waste electrical and electronic equipment, hazardous substances, health & safety, and the construction design and management regulations.

<sup>18</sup> The assessment is limited to the examples outlined in the framework.

<sup>19</sup> From 100% renewable sources potentially including solar, wind, hydropower and biomass. REGO backed.

**B. MANAGEMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL & SOCIAL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

The table below evaluates the eligibility criteria against issuance-specific KPIs. All of the assets are/will be located in the United Kingdom.

<b>ASSESSMENT AGAINST KPIs</b>	
<b>Labour, Health, and Safety</b>	
<b>All</b>	
✓	Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework are located in the UK where high labour, health, and safety standards are in place (e.g. ILO core conventions).
✓	Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework require high social standards. Unite’s suppliers must have a Social Management System in place. Moreover, the Issuer’s Sustainable Procurement Policy outlines that all suppliers must respect the core ILO rights (freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining; the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour; the effective abolition of child labour; and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation).
<b>Conservation and Biodiversity Management</b>	
<b>Green Buildings</b>	
✓	Unite confirms that all projects are located in the UK where Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) <sup>20</sup> is mandatory from February 2024. BNG is an approach to development that makes sure that habitats for wildlife are left in a measurably better state than they were before the development. To achieve BNG, site selection and layout is a fundamental step for developers as they must deliver at least 10% BNG as measured by the statutory biodiversity metric. All Unite’s buildings comply with the BNG requirements. Any new development would include an assessment of impact on biodiversity and nature and would target the biodiversity targets set out in Unite’s Sustainable Construction Framework, specifically a >25% improvement in BNG and an Urban Greening factor of 0.4 or better. As Unite operates solely in the UK, all its activities, including development, are subject to UK laws and regulations including very tight planning and environmental protection laws; these effectively prevent development of protected sites. The nature of buildings, i.e. student

<sup>20</sup> Biodiversity Net Gain: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/biodiversity-net-gain>



accommodation in city centre locations, means the Issuer typically undertake development on “brownfield” sites.

### **Environmental Aspects of Construction (or production and operation)**

#### **Energy Efficiency and PPAs**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework require high environmental standards. Unite’s suppliers must have an Environmental Management System in place and the Issuer targets ISO 14001 for its suppliers.
- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework require reduction of waste. Suppliers have to minimize or eliminate packaging, and packaging must be reusable. Moreover, Unite aims to procure products with the largest circular economy potential and favors suppliers that offer collection services for the purpose of reuse and recycling. WEE recycling follows the same procedure.

#### **Green Buildings**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework have sustainable procurement guidelines for construction materials. Unite discloses procurement guidelines regarding renewable content, recycled content, embodied energy, re-usability, durability, maintainability, third party certification such as FSC, and material origin.

#### **Renewable Energy Components**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework have a life-cycle-assessment conducted. Where a full LCA is not available, the supplier should share further data with Unite to allow a carbon footprint calculation.
- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework feature take back and recycling at end-of-life. WEEE is dealt with at end of life in a way that is compliant and minimizes environmental damage. The Issuer confirms that they expect suppliers of EEE in their supply chain to be fully compliant with the WEEE Regulations 2013<sup>21</sup> that outline the obligation for producers and distributors of EEE to collect and transport WEEE in a way that optimizes reuse and recycling of that equipment or of components of that equipment. Unite is also fully compliant with the Environmental Protection Act 1990<sup>22</sup> which sets out the law around management of waste, including the legal Duty of Care for “Waste Holders”.

<sup>21</sup> United Kingdom WEEE regulations 2013: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/3113/contents/made>

<sup>22</sup> Environmental Protection Act 1990: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice#scope-of-the-duty-of-care>

- Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework provide for some policies for environmental management. The Environmental Management System is not ISO 14001 certified but follows its core principles.

**Rooftop Solar Panels on Residential Buildings**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework are able to be recycled at the end of their lives. WEEE is dealt with at end of life in a way that is compliant and minimizes environmental damage. The Issuer confirms that they expect suppliers of EEE in their supply chain to be fully compliant with the WEEE Regulations 2013<sup>23</sup> that outline the obligation for producers and distributors of EEE to collect and transport WEEE in a way that optimizes reuse and recycling of that equipment or of components of that equipment. Unite is also fully compliant with the Environmental Protection Act 1990<sup>24</sup> which sets out the law around management of waste, including the legal Duty of Care for “Waste Holders”.

**Inclusion**

**Affordable Housing and Student Housing**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework have policies in place providing inclusion and non-discriminatory access. The grounds for discriminations are gender, race, sexual orientation, religion, etc. Unite has launched a three-year strategy targeting Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging and Wellbeing. Moreover, the Issuer offers fixed prices and financial support to students who need the support. The Unite Foundation also offers a nationwide scholarship scheme providing students with a rent-free home at university.

**Safety of users/consumers**

**Affordable Housing, Green Buildings, Student Housing**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework are located in the UK where national legislations provide for high safety standards.

**Site Location**

**Green Buildings**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework are located within a maximum of 1 km from one or more modalities of public transport.

<sup>23</sup> United Kingdom WEEE regulations 2013: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/3113/contents/made>

<sup>24</sup> Environmental Protection Act 1990: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice/waste-duty-of-care-code-of-practice#scope-of-the-duty-of-care>

**Water**

**Green Buildings**

- ✓ Unite confirms that all projects financed under this framework provide for water use reduction measures. The Issuer uses the BREEAM Wat 01 tool to determine water consumption at design stage and actual performance against targets will be reviewed through metered data. Unite's action plan to reduce water is based on Active Systems for water efficiency (e.g., limiting flow and flush rates), Regenerative Design for water reuse (e.g., grey water recycling and rainwater harvesting), for sustainable urban drainage, and for xeriscaping. The Issuer set a target to reduce potable water consumption through water efficiency, and increase water and rainwater harvesting to <75 L/P day by 2030.

## PART III: CONSISTENCY OF SUSTAINABLE FINANCING TRANSACTIONS WITH UNITE’S SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY

*Key sustainability objectives and priorities defined by the Issuer*

TOPIC	ISSUER APPROACH
<b>Strategic ESG topics</b>	<p>The Issuer focuses on four topics: employees, local communities, students and young people, and the environment. These sustainability pillars have been defined through a sustainability materiality assessment.</p>
<b>ESG goals/targets</b>	<p>To achieve its strategic ESG topics, the Issuer has set eight goals related to its four key topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Giving opportunities for people to develop and grow.</li> <li>▪ Guarantee wellbeing.</li> <li>▪ Guarantee diversity, equity and inclusion.</li> <li>▪ Guarantee health and safety.</li> <li>▪ Have a positive impact on communities.</li> <li>▪ Develop more sustainable buildings.</li> <li>▪ Using resources responsibly.</li> <li>▪ Reach net zero by 2030.</li> </ul> <p>The goals are published on the annual sustainability report.<sup>25</sup></p>
<b>Action plan</b>	<p>The Issuer has different measures in place to achieve its goals, such as programs for learning and development, employee engagement forum, provide support to students throughout their studies, the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Belonging (DEIB) and wellbeing strategy, and support to grant health and safety for students and employee. Unite has a £12m CapEx budget for energy/carbon reduction in 2024.</p>
<b>Climate Transition Strategy</b>	<p>The Issuer has set net-zero carbon targets by 2030. In existing properties, Unite completed detailed site surveys and modelling of every property in the estate, creating building specific Asset Transition Plans that set out the measures needed to deliver the required</p>

<sup>25</sup> Unite Annual Report: <https://www.unitegroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Unite-AR23-Web-Ready-PDF.pdf>

	energy, carbon and EPC improvements. For new developments, the Issuer has used an in-house modelling using the OneClick LCA (life cycle assessment) software package to understand the embodied carbon and the options to reduce it.
<b>ESG Risk and Sustainability Strategy Management</b>	All sustainability related risks including any associated with the projects in scope of this framework are identified, tracked, and managed by the relevant functions and owners, and overseen by the Unite Group Board Sustainability Committee or Group Risk Committee as appropriate. The Audit and Risk committees are also involved.
<b>Top three areas of breaches of international norms and ESG controversies in the industry<sup>26</sup></b>	Accounting / disclosure standards, Unspecified pollution, Strike action.
<b>Breaches of international norms and ESG controversies by the Issuer</b>	At the date of publication and leveraging ISS ESG Research, no controversy in which the Issuer would be involved has been identified.
<b>Sustainability Reporting</b>	The Issuer reports on its ESG performance and initiatives on annual basis. The report is prepared in line with the European Public Real Estate (EPRA) Sustainability Best Practices Recommendations (sBPR) and Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) guidelines.
<b>Industry associations, Collective commitments</b>	The Issuer is a member of Real Living Wage Foundation and RE 100.
<b>Previous sustainable/sustainability-linked issuances or transactions and publication of sustainable financing framework</b>	Unite Students has issued a Sustainable Bond Framework in 2021. The Framework covered Green Buildings, Energy Efficiency, Renewable Energy, Affordable Housing, and Socio-economic Advancement and Empowerment. Unite has not issued a bond under the 2021 Sustainable Bond Framework.

<sup>26</sup> Based on a review of controversies identified by ISS ESG over a 2-year period, the top three issues that have been reported against companies within the Real Estate industry are displayed above. Please note that this is not a company specific assessment but areas that can be of particular relevance for companies within that industry.

*Rationale for issuance*

This Sustainable Finance Framework allows Unite to align its financing strategy with its wider sustainability objectives, including the transition to net zero carbon operations and development by 2030. The Issuer seeks to attract investors who are supportive of these goals.

**Opinion:** *The key sustainability objectives and the rationale for issuing Green Bonds are clearly described by the Issuer. All the project categories financed are in line with the sustainability objectives of the Issuer.*

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1. Validity of the External Review (“External Review”): Valid as long as the cited Framework remains unchanged.
2. ISS Corporate Solutions, Inc. (“ISS-Corporate”), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. (“ISS”), sells, prepares, and issues External Reviews, on the basis of ISS-Corporate’s proprietary methodology. In doing so, ISS-Corporate adheres to standardized procedures designed to ensure consistent quality.
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## **ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY**

The ISS-Corporate SPO provides an assessment of labelled transactions against international standards using ISS-Corporate proprietary methodology.



## ANNEX 2: QUALITY MANAGEMENT PROCESSES

### SCOPE

Unite Student commissioned ISS-Corporate to compile a Sustainable Financing Transactions SPO. The Second Party Opinion process includes verifying whether the Sustainable Finance Framework aligns with the Green Bond Principles, Social Bond Principles, Sustainable Bond Guidelines, Green Loan Principles, and Social Loan Principles and to assess the sustainability credentials of its Sustainable Financing Transactions, as well as the Issuer's sustainability strategy.

### CRITERIA

Relevant Standards for this Second Party Opinion:

- Green Bond Principles, as administered by the International Capital Market Association (ICMA) (as of June 2021 with June 2022 Appendix 1)
- Social Bond Principles (SBP), as administered by the ICMA (as of June 2023 with June 2023 Appendix 1)
- Sustainability Bond Guidelines (SBG), as administered by the ICMA (as of June 2021)
- Green Loan Principles (GLP) and Social Loan Principles (SLP) as administered by the Loan Market Association (LMA) (as of February 2023)

### ISSUER'S RESPONSIBILITY

Unite's responsibility was to provide information and documentation on:

- Framework
- Selection criteria
- Documentation of ESG risks management at the asset level

### ISS-CORPORATE'S VERIFICATION PROCESS

Since 2014, ISS Group, of which ISS-Corporate is a part of, has built up a reputation as a highly-reputed thought leader in the green and social bond market and has become one of the first CBI approved verifiers.

This independent Second Party Opinion of the Sustainable Financing Transactions to be issued by Unite has been conducted based on a proprietary methodology and in line with the ICMA Green Bond Principles, Social Bond Principles, Sustainable Bond Guidelines, and LMA Green Loan Principles, and Social Loan Principles

The engagement with Unite took place from February to April 2024.

### ISS-CORPORATE'S BUSINESS PRACTICES

ISS-Corporate has conducted this verification in strict compliance with the ISS Group Code of Ethics, which lays out detailed requirements in integrity, transparency, professional competence and due care, professional behavior and objectivity for the ISS business and team members. It is designed to ensure that the verification is conducted independently and without any conflicts of interest with other parts of the ISS Group.

## About this SPO

Companies turn to ISS-Corporate for expertise in designing and managing governance, compensation, sustainability and cyber risk programs that align with company goals, reduce risk, and manage the needs of a diverse shareholder base by delivering best-in-class data, tools, and advisory services.

We assess alignment with external principles (e.g. the ICMA Green / Social Bond Principles), analyse the sustainability quality of the assets and review the sustainability performance of the Issuer themselves. Following these three steps, we draw up an independent SPO so that investors are as well informed as possible about the quality of the bond / loan from a sustainability perspective.

Learn more: <https://www.iss-corporate.com/solutions/sustainable-finance/bond-issuers/>

For more information on SPO services, please contact: [SPOsales@iss-corporate.com](mailto:SPOsales@iss-corporate.com)

### Project team

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