



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

UFV 2018/1045

Action Plan for Sustainable Development 2019–2021

Approved by the Vice-Chancellor, 20 November 2018

Background, starting points and purpose

The Higher Education Act (1992:1434) requires Uppsala University to “promote sustainable development to assure for present and future generations a sound and healthy environment, economic and social welfare, and justice” (Chapter 1, Section 5).

Uppsala University’s mission is to gain and disseminate knowledge for the benefit of humankind and for a better world (*Uppsala University: Mission and Core Values*, UFV 2013/110). The responsibility to promote sustainable development falls under this overarching mission. The University is well positioned to be a driving force in this area through its great breadth of disciplines and knowledge, and its goal of conducting world-leading research and first-class education.

The Action Plan for Sustainable Development and the Programme for Sustainable Development are the University’s common and strategic statements of goals and strategies for its work on sustainable development.

The Action Plan for Sustainable Development aims to encourage engagement, initiative and innovation in the field of sustainability within the University and in its external partnerships. The Action Plan will help to increase knowledge and awareness of the challenges in the field of sustainability and to encourage accountability at all levels within the University.

The Environmental Objectives and Action Plan for Environmental Work (UFV 2018/1649) contains objectives and measures for the University’s work on the environmental impact of its own activities. The measures focus on three areas: sustainable campus environments, travel, and purchases and recycling.

Since the University Board adopted the Programme for Sustainable Development in September 2015, a number of organisational initiatives have been taken to prioritise University-wide sustainability issues. The Vice-Chancellor has appointed an Adviser to the Vice-Chancellor and an Advisory Board for Sustainability to work on strategic and University-wide issues of relevance to sustainable development and to strengthen and support cooperation between the disciplinary domains. In research, several new research initiatives have been launched and others are planned by the University’s faculties and disciplinary domains. In December 2017, the Vice-Chancellor decided to launch Uppsala University Sustainability Initiatives (UUSI), aimed at strengthening the University’s research environments in sustainable development by encouraging boundary-crossing research cooperation and by supporting and developing a number of limited-duration research initiatives focusing on sustainable development. In 2017, the Swedish Higher Education Authority conducted a national evaluation of the education in sustainable development provided by higher education institutions in Sweden. It found that Uppsala University had well-developed procedures for its work on sustainable development in education. The University received the highest grade possible in all three evaluation categories. The Centre for Environment and Development Studies (CEMUS) has received a new, clearer mandate and cooperation with the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU) has been strengthened.

World-leading research

The long-term goal is for research at Uppsala University to contribute to sustainable development and a better world. Researchers at Uppsala University should be able to place their research in a societal context when relevant and in this way reflect on their research from a sustainability perspective. Research specialising and achieving excellence in the field of sustainability will be reflected in degree programmes with an explicit focus on sustainability. The following strategies will be used to achieve this goal:

- Support the dissemination of knowledge and research findings focusing on sustainable development
- Encourage University researchers to explore new pathways to interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary perspectives that may contribute to sustainable development
- Support collaboration and interdisciplinary work, especially in areas strongly linked to key issues in sustainable development
- Encourage and support doctoral students and early career researchers to integrate a sustainability perspective into their research

1. HOLD A CONFERENCE FOCUSING ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT EVERY OTHER YEAR

To raise the visibility of current research relevant to sustainable development and to enhance the internal exchange of information and knowledge at the University, an international conference will be organised every other year. Specific themes for the conference should be defined in consultation with current initiatives at the University. The conference will highlight leading sustainability research and create networks for doctoral students and early career researchers.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainable Development and Adviser to the Vice-Chancellor on Campus Gotland.

Timeframe: The first conference will be held in 2020.

2. RAISE THE SUSTAINABILITY PROFILE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN ITS RELATIONS WITH RESEARCH FUNDING BODIES IN SWEDEN AND INTERNATIONALLY

Extensive research is conducted at the University in a range of fields that are relevant to sustainable development. By identifying thematic areas in which the University is a national and international leader, we can strengthen this research and make important research at the University more visible. Research is primarily developed internally, but also through dialogue with research funding bodies and we aim to raise the University's sustainability profile in our relations with research funding bodies.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainability in dialogue with the Advisory Board for Research Infrastructure and the University Director (Research Support Division).

Timeframe: Begins in 2019.

First-class education

The long-term goal is to give all Uppsala University students the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills that equip them to contribute to sustainable development and a better world. The following strategies will be used to achieve this goal:

- Support and disseminate information about educational programmes focusing on sustainable development
- Ensure that the sustainability perspective is integrated into educational programmes
- Support teachers in integrating sustainable development in their teaching
- Give students the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills in sustainable development into practice
- Encourage students at all levels to include courses related to sustainable development in their education and make it easier for them to do so
- Support increased awareness among study and career counsellors about opportunities to include sustainable development in educational programmes

3. SUPPORT COLLABORATION BETWEEN MASTER'S PROGRAMMES WITH A SUSTAINABILITY FOCUS

The University's faculties and disciplinary domains offer numerous Master's programmes focusing on various aspects of sustainable development. Increased collaboration is proposed to extend and strengthen these programmes. The proposed measures include: 1) identifying administrative problems and opportunities for increased collaboration on courses, the preparation of development plans and action plans; 2) enhancing the visibility of the breadth of courses and programmes offered by the University; and 3) supporting meetings between programme coordinators.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainability in dialogue with chairs of disciplinary domain boards/faculty boards.

Timeframe: Begins in 2019.

4. MAKE METHODS, TOOLS AND GOOD PRACTICES AVAILABLE IN THE UNIVERSITY

Various organisations and networks have developed and presented a variety of tools and methods for education in sustainable development. These should be easily available to teachers and students. Teachers and students at the University should also have easy-to-use opportunities personally to contribute suggestions and good practices. The ambition is to inspire teachers and make it easier for them to integrate sustainable development into their courses and programmes. The most appropriate methods may vary between different parts of the University. One possible example is a subject-specific introductory lecture. Other possibilities are the inclusion of a special course on sustainable development and elements of sustainable development throughout the programme.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainability and University Director (Division for Quality Enhancement).

Timeframe: To be completed in 2020.

Attaining excellence and benefiting society

The long-term goal is for Uppsala University to be a committed partner in the field of sustainability at local, national, regional and global levels. The following strategies will be used to achieve this goal:

- Facilitate outreach activities to highlight the University's work for a better world
- Feature and promote collaborative initiatives and reward innovation, perseverance and results in sustainable development
- Create opportunities for society outreach on current sustainable development issues
- Contribute to higher levels of education and expertise in sustainable development in the University and in society locally, nationally, regionally and globally

5. GREEN OFFICE

A Green Office is a physical meeting place where students, staff and the public can take up ideas and projects associated with the University's work on environmental issues and sustainability. A Green Office can play a University-wide role, serving as a gathering node for different types of environmental and sustainability initiatives. A Green Office can harness the interest and commitment that exist in this area, not least among students. The ambition is to give students and staff the opportunity to work on practical solutions and ideas in the area of the environment and sustainability. A study will be conducted to explore possibilities and expected outcomes, organisational solutions and resources required.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainability and University Director (Buildings Division).

Timeframe: The study will be conducted in 2019.

6. DEVELOP INTERNAL COMMUNICATION OF WORK ON SUSTAINABILITY

The aim is to highlight and communicate good examples of boundary-crossing educational and research initiatives and collaborative projects in sustainable development. It should be easy for students and members of staff to gain an overview of the University's work on sustainable development. The goal is to provide inspiring examples of current activities at existing units that work well.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainability and University Director (Communications Division).

Timeframe: Begins in 2019.

7. DEVELOP EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION OF WORK ON SUSTAINABILITY

The aim is to highlight and communicate good examples of boundary-crossing educational and research initiatives and collaborative projects in sustainable development. It should be easy for external partners and visitors to find information about and gain an overview of the University's work on sustainable development. The goal is to provide a comprehensive, up-to-date picture of the University's contributions to a better world.

Responsibility: Advisory Board for Sustainability and University Director (Communications Division).

Timeframe: Begins in 2019.

Appendix. The University's governance documents

Uppsala University's governance documents are drawn up for various purposes and provide varying degrees of governance and detail. The governance documents adopted by the Vice-Chancellor and/or the University Board are divided into statements of goals and strategies and regulatory documents.

The statements of goals and strategies are always based on *Uppsala University: Mission and Core Values* and consist of policy programmes and plans of action. Policy programmes are adopted by the University Board and apply throughout the University until further notice. Policy programmes lay down the direction and structure of systematic work done by the University in a specific area. Uppsala University has policy programmes for internationalisation, quality management, equal opportunities and collaboration, for example. Plans of action are based on the policy programmes and are limited in duration (often 2–3 years). They are adopted by the Vice-Chancellor and go into considerably more detail. Their purpose is to attain specific objectives and to designate the individuals or organisational units responsible for the measures. In addition, there are other statements of goals and strategies that form part of the University's regular operational planning and that are important for the University's long-term development. Some of the most important such documents are the annual budget documentation submitted to the government, internal operational plans at various levels, and the University's more forward-looking research strategies.

Regulatory documents are usually based on external provisions (laws, ordinances and so on) adopted by the Swedish government, the Riksdag (parliament) and other government authorities. The regulatory documents include the Appointment Regulations and the Rules of Procedure for Uppsala University, as well as regulations governing admission to study programmes at all levels within the University.

Implementation and follow-up

Subordinate statements of goals and strategies are based on and informed by the considerations and priorities laid out in *Uppsala University: Mission and Core Values* and the *Programme for Sustainable Development*.

As is the case with regular operations, the *Action Plan for Sustainable Development* will be continuously followed up and open to continuous re-evaluation and reprioritisation.