

Sustainable Development Strategy of the UHK until 2030



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MISSION

*On a **journey** together for the future, for even the journey can be the **destination**.*

VISION

*The University of Hradec Králové will become a natural regional centre that actively promotes sustainability, integrates its principles into the UHK's daily operations and spreads awareness of environmental and social responsibility. Research and education at the University of Hradec Králové will play a key role in implementing the ideas of sustainable development into life (not only) in the academia. An inspiring internal culture will stimulate the commitment of staff and students to become part of a university community that is actively committed to minimising the ecological **footprint** of the UHK as well as to promoting systematically appropriate solutions in the field of environmental, social and economic sustainability.*

GENESIS

The terms sustainability, climate change, environmental responsibility or *green office* have been used in society and the university environment for a long time. They are therefore also becoming part of university policies. The University of Hradec Králové is just at the beginning of the systematic development of the sustainable development agenda. It is therefore an ideal opportunity to implement procedures and solutions that can also be based on numerous examples of good practice implemented at similar institutions.

At the beginning of our **journey**, there was the creation of a working group for social responsibility and sustainable development which was established in October 2021 by the Rector of the University of Hradec Králové. This step was fully in line with the [Code of Ethics of the University of Hradec Králové](#) which includes the consideration of the principles of social responsibility and sustainable development as one of the commitments. After a few months of the group's activity, it was already evident that there was interest in its activities and outputs within the UHK. However, a more intensive development of activities leading to a more effective implementation of the UHK's Sustainable Development Strategy required a more appropriate organisational background and staff and financial support. This was provided to the University through the Centralised Development Projects of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports called UNILEAD I and UNILEAD II. These projects have enabled public higher education institutions in the Czech Republic to work together to develop the topics of sustainable principles and integrate them naturally into the life of university communities.

The first step was to monitor the individual areas where sustainability is taken into account consistently in the development of the university and to identify their needs. Naturally, science and research, education, infrastructure, governance and social action (not only in the third role) are the core areas for implementing sustainability principles. The University has consequently chosen an appropriate strategy to meet the gradually set goals. The setting up of an appropriate communication platform that will enable the involvement of as many staff and students as possible in the sub-processes and that will provide methodological support and consultation to the end users will be a crucial element for the future.

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO ADDRESS SUSTAINABILITY

Talking about sustainability is more necessary today than ever. We live in an era when our planet is struggling with many challenges and threats, such as climate change, the depletion of natural resources and the loss of biodiversity. These problems not only threaten our current way of life, but will also have long-term effects on future generations.

Sustainability is not just a fashion trend, it is a necessity. It is an approach to life and development that respects the needs of both current and future generations. If we do not act now, we will face even bigger problems later. The sustainability debate is leading us to rethink our consumption habits, promote renewable energy sources, minimise the use of plastics and other non-renewable materials and take action to protect biodiversity.

Sustainability is not just about protecting the environment. It is also about social aspects, such as ensuring fair working conditions, reducing inequality or promoting health and education for all. It is our *journey* to create a better and more balanced world for everyone on our planet.

It is important to remember that each of us can contribute to a more sustainable world. Every small *step*, every decision we make in favour of sustainability makes a difference. That's why it is essential to talk about sustainability, to create awareness and to inspire others to act responsibly. Only by working together can we achieve the positive changes our planet so desperately needs.

WE ARE NOT ALONE ON THIS JOURNEY

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are considered global guidelines for achieving sustainable development and addressing global challenges. They are built on the belief that social and economic development is based on the principles of environmental sustainability, social justice and economic efficiency.

The Agenda was officially endorsed by the United Nations (UN) Summit on 25 September 2015 in New York in the document *Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* which includes the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>.

This document in Czech can be found, for example, here:

<https://osn.cz/osn/hlavni-temata/cile-udrzitelneho-rozvoje-sdgs/>.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



HOW WE HAVE SET THE COURSE

We have set the right course for our sustainability *journey* by carefully mapping the areas where sustainability is a consideration and identifying their needs. At the same time, we have identified key areas for the implementation of sustainability principles, such as science and research, education, infrastructure, governance and the social impact of the University.

In doing so, we have taken inspiration from some public plans and our own commitments.

- [Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030](#)
- [Implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development \(SDGs\) in the Czech Republic](#)
- [Strategic Plan of the UHK for the period from 2021 onwards](#)

This approach has given us a clear picture of where we are going, enabling us to choose appropriate strategies and approaches on our *journey* towards *our shared* sustainability goals.

WHAT CHALLENGES LIE AHEAD?

- 1) *We want to optimize our behaviours and outputs with an impact on the sustainability of the University's development in order to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as defined by the United Nations.*
- 2) *We want to move towards carbon neutrality according to the commitments of the Green Deal for Europe in line with the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030.*
- 3) *We want to build awareness of the importance of the role of the committed individual on the path to a sustainable university where everyone can contribute to a positive impact on sustainable development through their actions and behaviour.*

FIVE PILLARS FOR OUR WORK BY 2030

- Pillar I. Education and values
- Pillar II. Science and research
- Pillar III. Governance
- Pillar IV. Infrastructure
- Pillar V. Dialogue and external relations

Pillar I. Education and values



Our goals:

- Incorporation of the topic of sustainability into existing study programmes and creation of an educational offer in this field for Czech and international students through other activities (summer schools, internships, lifelong learning programmes, etc.).
- Established system of offering further sustainability education for the UHK employees according to their job positions.
- A built awareness of the importance of the role of a committed individual in the way towards a sustainable university and embedded values of social responsibility (ethical principles, gender equality, equal opportunities for all, etc.) within the community that are reflected in academic work, research, study and personal lives of its members.
- Increasing the availability and quality of education at the UHK.

Measures:

- We will carry out a detailed analysis of the current state of sustainability education at individual faculties of the UHK and, on the basis of this analysis, we will prepare proposals for incorporating and strengthening the topic of sustainability in existing Bachelor and Master study programmes.
- We will prepare educational activities focused on sustainability for the UHK employees.
- Within the UHK Summer Schools, we will look for ways to incorporate sustainability topics in line with the focus of the event.
- During their time at the UHK, we will train students in the priority topics of the Erasmus+ programme (i.e., sustainability, inclusion, democratic values, and digitalization), for example, in the form of introductory courses on sustainable or ecological behaviour or cyber security, etc.
- In order to improve the quality of education, we will support the strengthening of feedback from students and graduates.

Indicators:

- The number of sustainability courses offered in undergraduate and graduate study programmes and the number of students enrolled in these courses.
- The number of training or information campaigns on sustainability for staff and students.
- The number of UHK students who have completed internships organized by the University.
- The number of people at the UHK using international mobility programmes (Erasmus+, etc.).
- The number of respondents in evaluations of educational activities at UHK.

Pillar II. Science and research



Our goals:

- Cooperation in the field of sustainability with domestic and international scientific and research institutions.
- Improvement of research, development and knowledge transfer at the UHK.
- Creating and ensuring the availability of scientific and research results for the university community in accordance with the principles of Open Science and environmental responsibility.
- Strengthening interdisciplinary dialogue to help identify needs and find new solutions for sustainable development.

Measures:

- We will actively search for adequate calls and will support the preparation of project and grant applications focused on sustainable development and cooperation with relevant scientific and research institutions.
- We will actively disseminate scientific knowledge on sustainability to the public. To this end, we will organise lectures, conferences and exhibitions on related topics, aimed not only at professionals but also at the wider public in the context of fulfilling the third role of the university.
- In our activities, we will reflect the latest scientific knowledge in the field of sustainable development and, at the same time, we will strengthen the international use of the UHK's scientific knowledge in the field of sustainable development through effective data management.
- We will promote the publication of e-publications and electronic versions of textbooks that will be available through the university library. In this way, we will ensure easier accessibility of resources for learners, academics and researchers.
- We will increase the availability of open data in line with Open Science principles to promote the sharing of scientific knowledge.
- We will support interdisciplinary collaboration and the transfer of innovative knowledge related to current societal challenges into practice.
- We will emphasize sustainability topics within the university-wide research.

Indicators:

- The number of grants and projects submitted and received in the field of sustainable development.
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- The number of external entities (local, national, international) involved in scientific and research projects related to sustainability.
- The number of UHK publications on sustainability according to the monitoring of the *Scopus database – Sustainable Development Goals*.
- The number of organised professional events (lectures, conferences, and exhibitions) focused on sustainability.
- The number of published e-books, e-journals and e-textbooks available through the university library and Open Access.
- The number of applied research projects leading to sustainable solutions.

Pillar III. Governance



Our goals:

- Established functional organizational structure, staffing and professionalization in activities related to social responsibility and sustainability at the UHK.
- Balanced development of the sustainability area in accordance with the [*Implementation Plan of the Strategic Plan of the UHK*](#).
- Set processes and recommendations to support the sustainability of individual activities.
- Involvement in (inter)national networks on sustainable development.

Measures:

- We will staff the sustainability agenda at the UHK and support the activities of the Working Group on Social Responsibility and Sustainable Development at the UHK.
- We will develop an annual plan to implement this strategy and will evaluate it regularly.
- In organizing individual activities, we will proceed in accordance with the [*Implementation Plan of the Strategic Plan of the UHK*](#).
- We will ensure regular updates and promotion of the results of international comparisons of universities in rankings such as UI GreenMetric.
- We will follow the principles of the equal opportunities policy and continue to implement the principles set out in the [*UHK Gender Equality Plan*](#).
- In line with the HR Award, we will care for the quality of life of individuals in the university community.
- We will follow a responsible procurement and responsible purchasing strategy.
- We will actively seek opportunities for the UHK's involvement in (inter)national networks focused on social responsibility and sustainability.

Indicators:

- Regular report on the sustainability of the UHK.
- Ranking in UI GreenMetric World University Ranking.
- The number of newly introduced tools in the framework of digitalization of administrative processes.
- Regular monitoring of the [*Gender Equality Plan*](#) implementation.
- The number of benefits offered and activities implemented to support the wellbeing of employees or students.

Pillar IV. Infrastructure



Our goals:

- Optimising the carbon footprint of the campus and other university buildings, including achieving carbon neutrality by setting up and promoting mechanisms to reduce overall consumption and efficient use of renewable resources.
- Taking into account the principles of *green building* in case of further development of the campus and the implementation of possible modifications to the existing infrastructure according to the same principles.
- Taking into account the principles of sustainability in transport and catering.
- Setting up an optimal form of sustainable infrastructure for health care and quality of life for learners and employees, including people with special needs.

Measures:

- We will seek an independent assessment and proposal to optimise the energy management of the campus.
- We will map the waste stream at the UHK and based on the findings, we will propose processes for waste prevention and more efficient waste treatment (*zero-waste* concept).
- We will seek to expand filtered water facilities in all units of the University.
- We will promote the principles of sustainable transport across all forms of travelling and will motivate students and staff to travel in environmentally and cost-effective ways.
- We will provide the necessary infrastructure to enable the priority choice of *soft transport modes*.
- We will focus on identifying opportunities to use development projects for landscaping around the campus or rest areas inside the buildings.
- We will continue to use electric vehicles within our UHK fleet.
- We will prioritize solutions that take into account the principles of sustainable development in new construction or reconstruction of the UHK buildings.

- We will ensure sufficient infrastructure to optimise waste sorting or re-use and to meet the targets, including effective education.
- We will promote biodiversity in the spaces of the university buildings, plant greenery and ensure adequate care of it.
- We will learn and follow the principles of effective environmental management within the circular economy model.
- Within the catering facilities at the UHK, we will encourage supply and demand leading to healthy eating and waste management that takes into account the principles of sustainability.
- When selecting caterers, we will give preference to suppliers that take into account the principles of sustainability.
- We will invest part of the proceeds from parking fees within the UHK campus in environmentally beneficial activities.
- We will set up charging stations for electric vehicles in selected parking spaces at the UHK.
- We will support the operation of infrastructure that cares for the health and wellbeing of the community.
- We will ensure accessibility, safety and barrier-free movement of people with disabilities within all university buildings.
- As part of building a sustainable IT infrastructure, we will promote the maximum possible digitisation of internal processes.
- We will actively promote the reduction of disposable packaging during the UHK events and within the normal UHK operation.
- As part of our efforts to save energy, we will promote effective tools to reduce consumption and evaluate consumption regularly.

Indicators:

- We will use international indicators within the UI GreenMetric.
- The number of students and staff using sustainable modes of mobility to school/employment (year-on-year comparison of trends).
- Monitoring mobility patterns for study/work trips.
- The amount of funding generated from parking within the UHK that has been invested in sustainable development.
- The number of students using the services offered by the UHK Point.
- The number of cases handled by the university ombudsman.
- The number of newly introduced tools as part of digitalization of administrative processes.
- Energy consumption (water consumption in m³ per person in the university community, energy consumption per person in the university community).

Pillar V. Dialogue and external relations



Our goals:

- Broad involvement of students, staff and interested members of the public in sustainable activities of the UHK.
- Popularization of the topic of sustainability at the UHK and in society through social networks, media and PR communication.
- Establishing a functioning student association focused on sustainability.
- Extensive cooperation in the field of sustainability with domestic universities and universities abroad, public and private sector institutions.

Measures:

- We will create a strategy and communication plans for sustainable development of the UHK, the implementation of which will be evaluated annually.
- We will use the existing and set up new communication channels to ensure the community's awareness of the University's activities in the field of implementing the principles of sustainable development in academic life, to enable an effective flow of information related to sustainability at the UHK, including the popularization of its relevant scientific and research activities.
- We will be looking for organic or locally sourced options as promotional items on offer at the UHK.
- We will actively search for ways to cooperate in the field of sustainability and social responsibility in the Czech Republic and abroad, both with strategic partners of the UHK and with relevant entities of state and local government, companies, etc.
- We will support the establishment and activities of a student association focused on sustainability that will be linked to the activities of the Working Group on Social Responsibility and Sustainability at the UHK and that will contribute to the involvement of students in the implementation of these activities.
- We will organize or co-organize themed events and collaborate with non-profit organizations.

Indicators:

- The number of media outputs dedicated to sustainability at the UHK per year.
- The number of events focused on sustainability issues.
- The number of sustainability-focused student association meetings per year.

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