



**UNIVERSITY
OF TURKU**

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SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS LIFE

Action Plan 2022–2025



Action Plan for Sustainable Campus Life 2022–2025

In autumn 2020, the Steering Group for Sustainable Development appointed a Working Group for Sustainable Campus Life to plan and coordinate the implementation of sustainable everyday life solutions at the campus. The Working Group has drafted an Action Plan with the aim of developing everyday life at the campuses of the University of Turku so that by 2025, it is compliant with the principles of sustainable development.

The Action Plan will be implemented in 2022–2025 through a separate action programme and its concrete actions, and their realisation will be monitored through criteria applicable to the actions. The actions aiming for sustainable campus life will be developed in co-operation with the University community.

This Action Plan for Sustainable Campus Life examines campus life in particular from the perspectives of ecological and economic sustainability. Themes of social sustainability, such as the well-being, non-discrimination and equality of the members of the community, are excluded from the scope of sustainable campus life examination in this document.

Campus life refers to the activities of both the University as an organisation and the members of the University community at the campuses of Turku and Rauma, the University Consortium of Pori, and other facilities and areas used by the University. In addition to these, the concept of sustainable campus life also involves commute to and from the campus as well as, where applicable, remote studying and work. The members of the



VISION 2025 FOR SUSTAINABLE CAMPUS LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

In its everyday campus life, the community at the University of Turku is committed to the principles and actions for building a sustainable future.

Sustainable campus life is a natural part of the teaching, research, and service activities of the members of the University community.

The sustainability of campus life is advanced both within the community and in co-operation with higher education institutions, property owners, and other partners.

University community are encouraged to realise sustainable everyday actions also in their activities outside the University.

In its work, the Working Group for Sustainable Campus Life has utilised e.g. the outcomes from the work of the University's Working Group for Carbon Neutrality and the Environmental Wing of the Student Union, internal experts, and the results of the Viima survey on sustainable development implemented in spring 2020. The Viima survey resulted in altogether 77 ideas related to different themes and a multitude of comments elaborating them.

Like many other Finnish universities, the University of Turku has already made rather good progress in its work towards campus life activities that are in line with the principles of sustainable development. The campuses of the University of Turku have tight-knit structures that allow efficient use of the facilities and easy travel between buildings. The energy-efficiency of the buildings is on a good level, the services that are central to the University's operations and the IT and AV equipment that serve its needs can be found on the campus, and the campus areas are pleasant with their meeting places and green spaces as well as bike and car parking places. However, plenty of possible actions remain to be done to advance the sustainability of campus life at the University of Turku and, for example, the biodiversity of the campus areas.

In addition to organisational measures, this work also requires actions from the members of the University community. Actions that advance sustainability can be planned e.g. with the help of the following principles of sustainable everyday life:



PRINCIPLES OF SUSTAINABLE EVERYDAY LIFE

reduce your consumption

do not waste food

choose vegetarian or locally produced food

support circular economy and recycle

use muscle power for commuting

create ideas for new initiatives

share your knowledge with others while also respecting others' views

Main Focus Areas of the Action Plan 2022–2025

The University's Working Group for Sustainable Campus Life has selected the following main focus areas for the Action Plan for the term 2022–2025:

- Observing the principles of sustainable development and the life cycle impacts of products in procurements.
- Realising sustainable solutions in the planning of facility projects and the usage of facilities.
- Encouraging the members of the University community in different ways to commute to and from work and otherwise travel during work, studies, or free time in a manner that is environmentally friendly and supports well-being.
- Implementing campus meals and restaurant services as well as event production in collaboration with partners according to the principles of sustainable development.
- Advancing circular economy in materials choices, usage and re-usage of products, and waste management.
- Selecting external services and developing the internal services observing the principles of sustainable development throughout the entire life cycle of the service requirement.

As the nature of sustainable development is multidimensional, the main focus areas also overlap with each other at places and impact each other. More detailed description of the main focus areas can be found below.

The parties responsible for planning and implementing the actions of the main focus areas are mentioned under the description of each focus area. The monitoring of the Action Plan as a whole is the responsibility of the Financial and Facility Services under University Services.

Procurements and Logistics

According to the Procurement Regulations, procurement activities should be arranged in an as economic and deliberate manner as possible and as appropriate entities. For the efficient and cost-effective planning of procurements, the profit centres must compile an infrastructure plan for the 5-year term in connection to annual planning, with evaluation of the unit's operational environment, facilities, and investment requirements, including equipment and research data.

The University aims at realising circular economy approach in its procurements. The premise of this approach is to acquire products that can potentially also be utilised in other ways after or on the side of their primary usage. In these cases, the acquisition cost of the product may be higher than for other product options, but spread over the product's whole life cycle, the cost will be lower.

In the University's purchases, sustainability is particularly advanced through the following methods:

- **Public competitive tendering and small-scale tendering of purchases:**
Incorporating sustainability in the purchase criteria either through a point system or as other kind of requirement, thus seeking alternatives for the purchase option with the lowest total costs.
- **Responsibility in contract management:**
Committing the suppliers of the University's products and services to comply with the University's principles related to responsibility and sustainable everyday life through contract management and monitoring the suppliers' sustainability actions through methods described in the contracts. At the same time, supporting and encouraging the suppliers' sustainability efforts by allowing them to realise responsibility in their own way, within the parameters of the University's policies.
- **Predictability and deliberateness of purchases:**
Incorporating the responsibility and life cycle of purchases in the internal annual planning process, quality system, and risk management.
- **Collecting and analysing procurement data:**
During the tendering process, the suppliers are requested to provide reports on the responsibility of the products' selected criteria. Utilising the data collected on the University's operations when planning purchases and allocating resources to them.

- **Procurement policy:**
Compiling a procurement policy that includes considerations of not only the Procurement Regulations, guidelines, and laws, but also sustainable campus life and operative solutions supporting it. Assessing the procurement practices to enable joint purchases and orders, decreasing the amount of product variations in standard products, and ensuring efficient usage of the purchases. Incorporating broad evaluations of life cycles in purchases by e.g. assessing possible options for purchases in the form of e.g. leasing practices and purchased services.

Responsible parties: Financial Services, heads of unit, student organisations

Facility Projects and Usage of Facilities

New construction and renovation projects comply with the principles of the life cycle approach in such way that all facility solutions realised in the projects help extend the facilities' lifetime as long as possible. The costs of the solutions must be assessed primarily through the perspective of life cycle approach.

New construction projects of the University Properties of Finland Ltd (SYK) are certified with the BREEAM sustainability certification. To achieve carbon neutrality, SYK compensates the emissions caused by new building projects (Gold Standard certification).

In its roles as facility tenant and property owner, the University promotes sustainable campus life through the following measures:

- **Compiling a Facility Programme:**
Making facility solutions that support an inspiring environment enabling diverse work and study practices. Assigning activities in the facilities in a deliberate manner, thus minimising unnecessary moving traffic. Planning concepts for facility solutions and creating standard operational models within the concepts. Setting criteria for the efficiency of space use.
- **Usage/management of facilities:**
Implementing environmentally friendly solutions in building services engineering and equipment with initiative from the property owners or the University. Creating shared facilities for broad usage: staff, students, companies, and citizens. Utilising facility data in the planning of activities. Using spaces in an as efficient manner as possible by e.g. realising certain facility solutions in only a part of the buildings and directing the activities of the whole campus to those parts. Using fixed-structure laboratory devices for their entire life cycle.
- **Usage of outside areas:**
Supporting functional yard areas around the facilities



All of the campuses of the University of Turku are located in the vicinity of city centres and are well-suited to walking, riding a bicycle, or other environmentally friendly forms of commute.

(parking places for bicycles, usage of the outside spaces in the University's activities), increasing the attractiveness of the outside and campus areas and diversifying their usage. Developing green spaces with emphasis on solutions that support biodiversity.

➤ **Materials of facilities and furniture:**

Selecting environmentally friendly and non-harmful materials and taking advantage of recycled products and materials in the University's own facilities and jointly used buildings.

Responsible parties: Facility Services, heads of unit, facility users

Travelling and Commute to and from Work

Student mobility as well as work and conference trips within Finland and abroad are an integral part of the University's activities, and it is not purposeful to abandon them. However, the community can aim to decrease them, and when travel does take place, seek to make choices that have less harmful impact on the environment. The University's Travel Regulations encourages the members of the University community engaging in work trips to consider the principles of sustainable development.

Regular commute between home and campus also pose opportunities to advance sustainability. Moreover, all of the campuses of the University of Turku are located in the vicinity of city centres and are well-suited to walking, riding a bicycle, or other environmentally friendly forms of commute.

The University encourages the members of the University

community to increasingly choose the more sustainable options for environment and health through the sustainable campus life actions:

➤ **Evaluating the necessity of the trip:**

An increasing number of work meetings or conferences can be organised without physically travelling to the location. When leaving on a work trip, the members of the University community evaluate the travel options including their carbon footprint and, when possible, choose the option which causes least burden to nature. The University monitors the University-level carbon footprint of the travel options that have been used.

➤ **Travelling within Finland and abroad:**

We assess sustainable options for travelling within Finland. Choosing direct flights when possible and travelling by train in trips of less than 400km within Finland. Integrating sustainability as one of the criteria in the overall cost effectiveness of travel and accommodation options. In accommodations within Finland, outside the city centres of Turku and Helsinki, selecting those hotels of the Hansel tendering agreement that have an environmental certificate.

➤ **Commute between home and the campus:**

The University encourages the members of the community to choose sustainable forms of work commute, such as riding a bicycle or using public transportation. In the development of the outside areas of the campus, the University considers the safety and smoothness of walking and riding a bicycle and develops the campus area and commute modes together with the City of Turku and the regional actors. We also assess the possibilities of supporting the students' use of the city bicycles and participate in regional co-operation to develop the bicycle and pedestrian traffic and public



Everyone can impact sustainability through their own choices by choosing more sustainable options.

transportation in the region. In building projects, we aim to increase the number of bicycle parking places and changing rooms in the campus area and build electric vehicle charging stations.

- **Commute during the work or study day:**
The close-knit campus structures usually allow commute by foot from one place to another during the day. The University increases the number of campus bicycles offered for the staff and encourages the staff to use the shared cars.

Responsible parties: Financial Services, Facility Services, work commuters, heads of unit, student organisations, members of the community

Meals

Campus meals should support the students' and staff's health, well-being, and coping with everyday life by offering healthy and diverse food in pleasant surroundings. The University promotes the climate-friendliness and responsibility of campus meals and catering services together with its partners through concrete actions and by offering information and support for making sustainable choices, but does not interfere in anyone's personal dietary choices.

The University community improves the sustainability of campus meals as follows:

- **Co-operation with campus restaurants:**
The University promotes the ideas of sustainable development together with Unica and other student restaurants in the region in terms of e.g. food waste, more sustainable meal options, and decreasing the use of disposable containers.

- **Sustainable meal options:**

Everyone can impact sustainability through their own choices by choosing more sustainable options, such as vegetarian food or local food, in lunch restaurants or packed lunches and snacks. The University shares information and good practices and implements campaigns to distribute knowledge and encourage people to have more environmentally friendly and responsible meals.

- **Decreasing food waste:**

Together with the campus restaurants, the University agrees on means for decreasing food waste and biodegradable waste. We also pay attention to the biodegradable waste caused by the University's own activities and the packed lunches and snacks of the staff.

- **Supporting locally produced food:**

We aim to select food produced by local producers whenever it is possible, and thus support the regional economy.

- **Food and refreshments offered in events and meetings:**

We emphasise environmental impact, responsibility, and local production when choosing event facilities, offered food and refreshments, or other services for events. The use of disposable containers is gradually abandoned or minimised, and options made of recycled materials and suited for recycling are favoured. We aim to choose vegetarian options when offering food.

Responsible parties: Facility Services, Financial Services, heads of unit, student organisations, event organisers, members of the community

Circular Economy

Circular economy seeks to minimise the use of energy and materials and keep the materials and products in circulation as long as possible by lengthening the service life of products at different stages of the life cycle. The basic principle is to buy less new products and, when making purchases, put less emphasis on owning products and more on sharing services and products. The lifespan and usage rate of products can be grown and the amount of waste can be decreased by increasing the sharing, leasing, renting, repairing, renovating, and recycling of products. In sharing economy, people acquire the right to use products and services without owning them.

Circular economy is visible in the University's activities for example in the following ways:

- > **Waste sorting in facilities:**
The University evaluates the waste sorting in its facilities. We review the coverage, consistency, and appropriateness of sorting units and the re-use of waste in the operations of the waste management provider. We aim to decrease the amount of hazardous waste produced in laboratories and ensure their proper handling.
- > **Life cycle approach in purchases:**
The possibilities for recycling and further usage within the University's own, internal activities will be made more efficient, and the products will be utilised within the University as extensively as possible. After this, the products can be offered for purchasing for the members of the University community or possibly used in the activities of the University or its partners in other usages than their original purpose. In some cases, the products may also be resold. This prospect is evaluated at least in terms of IT equipment, furniture, and laboratory devices.
- > **Sharing economy:**
When sharing e.g. facilities with other units or actors, we increase their usage rate to use resources more efficiently. We seek sharing economy solutions (exchanging, recycling and borrowing) and increase the joint use of products and devices between e.g. different units. We increase the use of "products as services" purchases in those categories where it is purposeful in terms of sustainability and costs. We encourage the members of the community to use shared commute modes such as car-pooling or shared cars.

Responsible parties: Financial and Facility Services, responsible persons of laboratories, heads of unit, student organisations, members of the community

Internal Services, Regional Co-operation and Communications on Sustainable Everyday Life

There are multiple different ways to promote sustainable campus life through the other internal services produced for the University community. The efforts for a more sustainable everyday life are primarily taking place within the regular activities of the different units of University Services. When developing the services, we seek to hear the opinions of the University community either in a targeted manner or via broader questionnaires implemented on electronic platforms or through brainstorming platforms.

Quite often, sustainable campus life does not require major changes or investments, but takes place through minor, even everyday changes in working methods. As an example of sustainable campus life efforts, practical guidelines have been developed for promoting sustainability in the laboratories of the University of Turku.

Sustainable campus life also involves the matters of campus facilities and yard areas with as barrier-free passages as possible and accessible, non-discriminatory services as well as developing these together with the University community.

Promoting digitalisation, developing the IT services for research and education, and evaluating IT purchases have broad impact on sustainable campus life. In the University's Digital Services, sustainability is advanced by evaluating e.g. the following topics:

- > energy efficiency of server rooms,
- > development of communication networks,
- > software production,
- > lifespan of devices,
- > procurement practices,
- > sustainability of the chains of production and logistics,
- > remote work tools, and
- > real-time joint use of documents.

The promotion of activities related to sustainable campus life also involves the integral aspects of learning from our partners' good practices and creating sustainability-related ideas together. The collaboration networks of the University include e.g. the other higher education institutions in the region and, on a national level, cities and municipalities, research institutes, contract partners, and product suppliers. In the development of sustainable campus life, the University utilises the existing expertise of its networks. The shared development is supported by open internal and external communications on campus life as well as events and information-sharing related to sustainable campus life.

Responsible parties: University Services



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