



**Sustainability**

**Report**

**2021**



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## Note From the Rector

The publication of the University of Iceland's sustainability report is an important step in the university's focused efforts to become sustainable on all levels. The report provides valuable insights into the multitude of activities ongoing at the university every day: in research, innovation, teaching, student affairs, and in sharing the results of academic work with the public. Furthermore, the report highlights numerous opportunities in the field of sustainability, so we can join hands to make our good university even better - and ensure its leading role in this field into the future.

Sustainability and diversity form one of the four main priorities of the university's strategy for the period 2021-2026, UI26. This means that the university intends to lead in the field of sustainability in its teaching, research, the creation of knowledge. Furthermore, the university will assume a leadership role in sustainable operations and set clear goals concerning carbon neutrality.

The strategy and operations of the University of Iceland are to a large degree based on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The SDGs focus on the main challenges humankind faces. These are challenges that will impact life on Earth far into the future. The SDGs are also in the forefront when it comes to the university's international cooperation. The university currently leads Aurora, a dynamic network of universities deeply committed to the SDGs.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jón Atli Benediktsson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



# The University of Iceland and the Sustainable Development Goals



## Sustainability and Sustainable Development

Sustainability and sustainable development are central concepts of our times. These concepts guide our thinking as we work towards solving global challenges relating to social justice and equity, poverty, energy security, climate change and biodiversity loss. These concepts also serve to understand the modern world as a complex interaction of social, environmental, economic, and political systems. *Sustainability*, as we consider it today, was first brought to forefront of the global conversation at the UN Conference on the Human Development in Stockholm in 1972. The Club of Rome published the book *Limits to Growth* arguing that continued economic growth would ultimately collide with Earth's finite resources, leading to a future collapse and overshoot of resources<sup>1</sup>. Eight years later, in 1980, the phrase sustainable development was introduced in the leading publication *World Conservation Strategy: Living Resource Conservation for Sustainable Development*. The term sustainable development was later popularised in the report *Our Common Future*, by the United Nations Commission on Environment and Development (also known as the Brundtland Report). In the report, the classic definition of the concept was given as "Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

The definition of sustainable development evolved over time to focus more on a holistic approach comprising environmental, social, and economic dimensions. Linking environmental protection, social development and economic development, and these three Components of sustainable development are emphasised in the outcome document of the Rio+20 Summit in 2012, entitled *The future we want* at the Rio+20 Summit, and put this way in paragraph 4<sup>2</sup>: "We also reaffirm the need to achieve sustainable development by promoting sustained, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, and promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems that supports, inter alia, economic,

social and human development while facilitating ecosystem conservation, regeneration and restoration and resilience in the face of new and emerging challenges."

## Sustainable Development Goals

In *The future we want*, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) were called for, based on the three part framework of biosphere, society and economy and their interlinkages. The SDGs were adapted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – a shared masterplan for prosperity and peace for people and the planet, now and into the future. The 17 SDGs with 169 targets map the most significant challenges facing humankind. They are an urgent call for action, global in nature, aiming to improve education and health, end poverty and social injustice, and promote economic growth, while addressing the climate crisis and preserving and restoring our ecosystems. The 17 SDGs are interlinked and integrated and action in one area will affect outcomes in other. It is thus important to understand how the goals interact to maximise synergies and minimise trade-offs.

## UI26 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

Higher education institutions have an important role in creating the societal change so urgently needed. As breeding grounds for the world's future workforce and thought-leaders, universities have a special responsibility to encourage stewardship and work towards creating a conscious citizenry. A new way of thinking is urgently needed to tackle the global challenges the world is facing, and universities, as influential institutions in our societies, are central in guiding those changes. UI has taken several steps towards becoming a leading force in tackling these global challenges, for example by incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals in UI's Strategy for the years 2021–2026 (UI26). Sustainability and diversity form one of the four main pillars of UI26.

# Sustainability and Diversity Goals of UI26:

## KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTING TO A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

The University will lead the way in sustainability through teaching, research, and knowledge creation.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The University will lead the way in sustainable development by setting measurable targets for carbon neutrality during the strategic period, based on national targets.

## A DIVERSE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

The University will be an even better workplace, ensuring equality and attracting students and staff from diverse backgrounds. Students with immigrant backgrounds will receive special support, and an emphasis will be placed on diversity in the student body.

## WORKING TOGETHER WITH SOCIETY

The University's impact on society will be increased with an action plan for improved support and direct dialogue between researchers and stakeholders, in order to combat fake news, reinforce trust in science, and lay the groundwork for public policy.

UI aims to become a leader in the field of sustainability through teaching, research, and knowledge creation. Moreover, UI will lead the way in sustainable operations and carbon neutrality.

Teaching, research, and knowledge creation at UI have a broad impact and are utilised to promote quality, improve public health, tackle climate change, foster prosperous development of society, ensure sustainable economic stability, and support innovation in all areas of society and industry. The university community thereby makes an invaluable contribution to the advancement of the SDGs.

UI, in cooperation with international partner universities, has begun to systematically map the ways in which research and teaching contribute to the SDGs. The findings will be presented on dashboards that provide a clear picture of the university's extensive contribution to these pressing challenges and will be used to support further development of UI's operations towards achieving the SDGs.

International rankings of higher education institutions are increasingly taking into account the societal impact of universities. In 2021, for the third consecutive year, UI was included in the Times Higher Education University Impact Rankings, a list of the world's top performing universities for social and economic impact with respect to the SDGs. The list ranks universities based on their performance against indicators of global social and economic impact and advancement of the SDGs.

The new UI strategy sets ambitious goals for the advancement of teaching, research, innovation, and other activities. The strategy enables the university to strengthen its position as a leader in sustainable development in the spirit of the SDGs, in collaboration with the media, society, industry and government, for the benefit of Icelandic society and the global community.

## Implementation of UI26

UI26 is implemented through different work programmes. Below is the implementation plan for *Sustainability in Teaching, Research and University Management*

- » Raise awareness and understanding of sustainability through presentations and workshops as well as through sustainability research and education dashboards
- » Focus on sustainability in teaching and learning by increasing the number of courses and support for teachers. Make study programmes and courses related to sustainability available for students from all disciplines
- » Work towards making the University carbon neutral by mapping emissions and introducing countermeasures
- » Evaluate whether sustainability and interdisciplinary should be taken into account when allocating grants from the University's competitive funds

<sup>1</sup> Sachs, J. D. (2015). The age of sustainable development. Columbia University Press.

<sup>2</sup> United Nations General Assembly, 66th Session. (2012).

The Future We Want (A/RES/66/288). New York.

# The Aurora Cooperation and Sustainability

**Aurora is made up of nine European universities that are all deeply committed to the social impact of their activities. Aurora members aim to harness academic excellence to influence societal change through research and educational activities.**

Aurora activities, projects, and priorities have all been designed with sustainability in mind. Aurora contributes to all three pillars of sustainability (environment, society, economy) with a special focus on the social pillar through research and education activities as part of its commitment to making lasting societal impact. Moreover, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) serve as a compass for Aurora, guiding the activities of the consortium.

UI plays a leading role in Aurora. The Rector of UI, Jón Atli Benediktsson, serves as President of Aurora, and Alma Ágústsdóttir, the University of Iceland Student Council International Officer, is the President of the Aurora Student Council.

## **Aurora Alliance**

In 2020, Aurora was selected as one of the European University Alliances and was awarded funding to support collaborative innovation in teaching and learning, student engagement, diversity and inclusion initiatives, and societal impact.

*Sustainability Pioneers* is one of the work packages within the Aurora Alliance. Its objective is to change educational practices so that students acquire skills and knowledge for demonstrable and tangible social impacts. This includes the SDG Research Dashboard, the SDG Education Dashboard, and the Sustainable Campus Action Plan.

## **Aurora SDG Research Dashboard**

The SDG Research Dashboard is designed to assess how the research output of Aurora members links to the SDGs. It shows the research contribution in specific societal challenges and how policymakers have used the available research to address these

challenges. The aim is to turn SDGs into a leading narrative for research at Aurora universities, and eventually make this tool available for the public.

## **Aurora SDG Education Dashboard**

The SDG Education Dashboard aims to raise awareness and knowledge about the SDGs and their connection to higher education. The Dashboard will allow students to search courses by the SDGs. Information on each course, including whether it is onsite, online or hybrid, and methods of assessment are displayed. The work so far has been in two phases, the preparation phase (finishing in May 2022), and the pilot-phase (finishing in November 2022).

## **Aurora Sustainable Campus**

The Sustainable Campus Guide is another example of Aurora's commitment to sustainability. This is an ongoing project with the objective of producing an official memorandum signed by all Aurora members. Each of the campuses strives to become more sustainable, and this is supported by the joint Aurora sustainability effort. The expected outputs are annual sustainability reports, and a regularly updated and enforced sustainability strategy.

## **AURORA Research and Innovation for Societal Impact**

In 2021, Aurora received additional funding from the European Commission (Horizon 2020), to start the project AURORA Research and Innovation (RI). AURORA RI aims at enhancing research support services across the universities and strengthening opportunities for collaboration between scientists, researchers, innovators, entrepreneurs, and civil society.

Several deliverables in AURORA RI relate to sustainability, including an action plan for equality, diversity, and inclusiveness as well as an open science function to the SDG Research Dashboard.



# APPROACH

This is the first sustainability report published by the University of Iceland (UI). The Institute for Sustainable Studies (ISS) created the report upon request from UI's Sustainability Committee and the Rector. This work was undertaken from August to October 2022, though the reference year for the report was 2021, with few exceptions (otherwise stated). Research projects mentioned in the report were either in progress or completed in 2021. Doctoral projects mentioned in the report all culminated with a doctoral defence in 2021.

As this is the first report of its kind, it was decided to map UI's work addressing the UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs) through five main areas: research, teaching and learning, community outreach and partnerships, operations, and student initiatives. Under each SDG chapter, activities are identified as relating to biosphere, society, or economy, as shown in the SDG wedding cake (Fig. 1), where the biosphere is the basis of the SDGs and the foundation of economies and societies.

## Call for Information

Gathering information about the comprehensive work that is conducted within UI was a challenging task, and the authors used several channels to collect information. Deans of all five schools, as well as Directors of Research within each school were asked to send information regarding research projects and courses related to sustainability within their respective schools. The Student Council of UI was asked to provide a summary of students' initiatives related to the SDGs. Research projects of undergraduate and graduate students were not in the scope of this report, simply due to lack of time and for the sake of simplicity. However, students have an important voice when it comes to sustainability, both within the university and in society, and their impact and relation to the SDGs is significant.

A survey, both in Icelandic and English, was sent out to all UI's staff members and doctoral students. In the survey, participants were asked to provide information on diverse topics related to sustainability and the SDGs. These topics include, for example, research teaching and learning, community engagement, and collaboration. Participants were asked to identify where UI is excelling in relation to sustainability, and to state opportunities for improvements. This provides valuable data for UI's top management to improve upon existing initiatives and fill gaps in the university's portfolio of sustainability work. The Rector sent a reminder about the survey to all UI's staff, while deans and faculty heads were asked to encourage their staff members to complete the survey.

## Collecting Information

When mapping courses in relation to the SDGs, data was used from research conducted by Auður Pálsdóttir, Associate Professor at School of Education and Lára Jóhannsdóttir, Professor at School of Engineering and Natural Sciences, Signs of the United Nations SDGs in University Curriculum: The Case of the University of Iceland. The

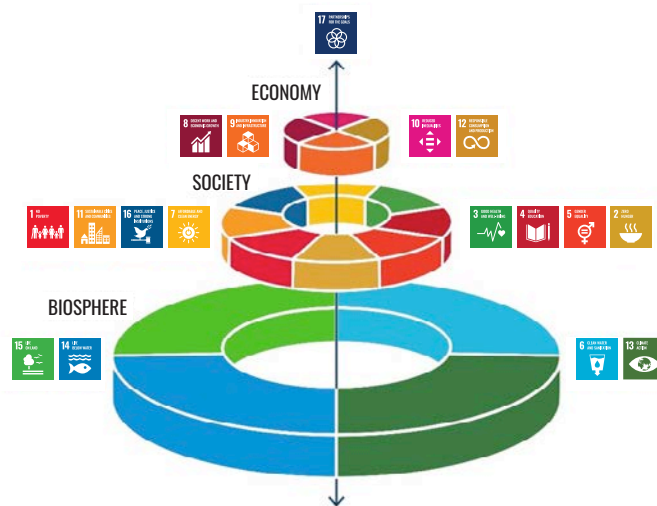


Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals grouped into biosphere, societal, and economical goals, where the biosphere is the foundation of economies and societies. Source: Azote Images for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University.

data was based on an analysis of course descriptions and learning outcomes for all courses listed in UI's course catalogue for the academic year 2019–2020. Since such a thorough analysis was done on UI course catalogue for 2019/20, it was decided to use that data in this report since no major changes were assumed to have taken place for UI's course catalogue in 2021. Thus, if some new courses were taught for the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 they are not in the data used in this report.

Information from published peer-reviewed articles relating to the SDGs was gathered from Scopus, the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. In the Scopus database, articles in Icelandic are not included, though it is estimated that around 75% of all published peer-reviewed articles of UI are in the Scopus database. Therefore, it can be assumed that the number of articles with relation to SDGs from UI may be higher than stated in this report.

All information regarding environmental performance of UI's operation (e.g. waste, electricity, water usage, and carbon emissions) came from UI's Division of Resource and Operations. Data is compiled annually through the initiative Green Accounting, that is submitted to the Environmental Agency of Iceland on behalf of UI.

## Mapping

Information on research, teaching and learning, community outreach and partnership, students' initiatives, and operation were mapped in accordance with each of the 17 SDGs. Some topics had clear connection to a certain SDG, while others had several connections to different SDGs. These are indicated in the report.

The webpage of a recent project on Societal Impact of Research within the UI asked researchers to connect their work to an SDG and wider societal impact. This webpage was a valuable tool for the team in identifying research projects for this report. The authors of the report also went through all news and events series posted on the UI's webpage from 2021 for data collection. All doctoral defences from 2021 were also analysed.

The authors of this report received valuable contributions, many of which made their way to the final report. We wish to extend a special thanks to all participants that took the time to send in their suggestions, without your assistance, this report would not have shed light to the incredible work and diverse research projects and courses at UI.



**SOCIETY**

**End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

**Þjóðarspejillinn**

Since 2003, the University of Iceland has hosted *Þjóðarspejillinn*, an annual conference in Social Sciences which is free and open to all. The conference is not only a platform for academics, but also encourages active dialogue between the social sciences and wider society. Rather than focusing on one specific topic, the conference emphasises seminars with connections to social sciences. This allows for a vast range of pertinent topics and discussions related to the Sustainable Development Goals. Many seminars at the online 2021 conference focused on inequality, social class, poverty and the welfare system.



**European Social Survey (EES)**

Researchers at UI participate in the European Social Survey (EES) which is conducted in over 30 countries on a biannual basis. Sigrún Ólafsdóttir, Professor of Sociology, leads the study in Iceland with Guðbjörg Andrea Jónsdóttir, head of the Social Science Research Institute. The aim is to better map community development in Europe and to determine how and in which ways the social, political, and ethical landscapes in the European nations are changing. One of the main goals of the survey is to increase the quality and reliability of international social surveys, while training European social scientists in designing surveys and analysing comparative data.



**Global Studies**

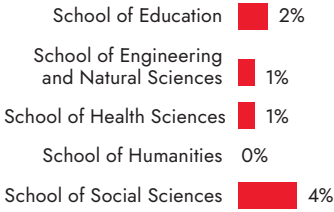
Global Studies is a multi-disciplinary master's program that provides students with theoretical knowledge on various global processes. Students become familiar with research topics such as migration, development, global health, environmental issues and multiculturalism from a global perspective. An emphasis is placed on analysing these topics from various social settings and identities, such as in relation to inequality, gender, class and culture.



**Teaching and learning**

**48** Number of courses with relation to SDG 1

**Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 1**



**Research**

**12** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 1

**34** Number of citations

**Psychological Services**

Psychological services are a part of UI's career and guidance counselling and is free of charge for all students. Short-term (1 to 3 sessions per semester) individual therapy sessions are provided in Icelandic, English, Danish, and German. Other services free of charge for all students include psychoeducation in groups regarding low self-esteem, test-anxiety, CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) and stress regulation. Psychological services are expensive in Iceland and in reference to sub-goal 1.4, that states the equal rights to economic resources as well as access to basic services.



**Free Legal Assistance from Law Students**

*Orator*, the association of law students, provides free legal assistance to the public once per week during the school year. This legal aid service has been operating for years and is under the supervision of practicing lawyers. Once per year, in cooperation with Deloitte, *Orator* also invites individuals to receive free assistance with their tax reports.





## 2 ZERO HUNGER



### SOCIETY

# End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture



### Teaching and learning

**31** Number of courses with relation to SDG 2

### Research

**44** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 2

**267** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 2

School of Education	3%
School of Engineering and Natural Sciences	1%
School of Health Sciences	1%
School of Humanities	0%
School of Social Sciences	0%

## Sustainable Health Diets

The project Sustainable health diets is a multi-disciplinary collaboration between academics from ethnology and environmental economics, agriculture, engineering, natural science, and leading international experts on environmental sustainability, led by Þórhallur Ingi Halldórsson, professor in Faculty of Food Science and nutrition. The main objective of the project is to create a computational platform that allows for simultaneous estimation of nutrient intake and the carbon footprint of Icelanders based on existing National Nutrition Surveys and other population-based surveys. The aim is to identify the areas where innovation and research would provide the most benefits for the Icelandic food industry and promotion of food security. This project directly addresses social, cultural- and political factors influencing consumption while also exploring and considering the social knowledge and innovation that consumers are already in possession of. The sustainable health diets project is funded for 2020–23 by the Icelandic Research Fund.



## Food Science and Nutrition

UI offers undergraduate, master's level, and PhD programmes in food science and nutrition, with specialisations in either food science or nutrition. The Nutrition programme addresses, among other things, the nutritional needs of healthy and sick people, at various stages of life, in developed and developing countries. The food science programme emphasise on the hazards and healthiness of food and food-related substances and the relationship with the environment.



## It is Easy to be Vegan at UI

In recent years, students at UI have advocated for more easily accessible vegan options on campus. The Icelandic Student Service (FS) is a non-profit organisation serving the needs of students of UI. FS's main goal is to offer students at UI quality service at good rates. One of FS's services is *Háma*, the University canteen. *Háma*, provides excellent selection of vegan options, including sandwiches, salads, baked goods and more. Every day, two hot meals are offered, one vegan option is always included.



### 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



#### SOCIETY

## Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages



### Teaching and learning

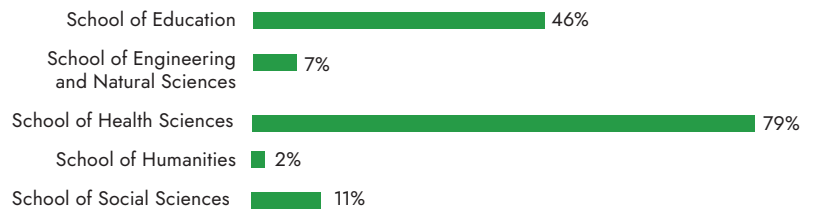
**853** Number of courses with relation to SDG 3

### Research

**224** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 3

**2211** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 3



### Health Behaviour of the Icelandic Youth

The health behaviour of Icelandic Youth research is organised by investigators at the School of Education in collaboration with the City of Reykjavík, the Directorate of Health, the Icelandic Heart Association, and the National Institutes of Health (USA). This is an extensive, long-term research project about the health status of Icelandic youth and their relation to sleep, physical activity and school environment. The overall aim of the research is to investigate the physical health status in a cohort of Icelandic children. Knowledge on various lifestyle factors in adolescence, and their association with daily life, can yield valuable information for health and educational authorities in Iceland and abroad.



### The SAGA Cohort

The SAGA cohort is one of the largest scientific undertakings specifically designed for improved understanding of the impact of trauma on women's health and the potential genetic underpinnings of varying trajectories of health after exposure to such trauma. It is a unique nationwide study on the impact of trauma on the health of women. The target population is all women residing in Iceland who are 18 years or older, with about 30% of participation. The results show how detrimental childhood trauma can be in the long-term for women's health, which illustrates the importance of preventing trauma in childhood and supporting those who are exposed to it. The long-term and ongoing project received funding from the European Research Council (ERC).



### COVID-19; Expertise for Society and Economy During the Pandemic

During the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020-2021, UI played a significant role providing expert knowledge in support of the public and the economy. Researchers at the UI have studied various aspects of the COVID-19 epidemic from all five faculties. One long-term project relates to the COVID-19 national resilience cohort, a study conducted by UI, the Directorate of Health, and the Chief Epidemiologist, with the aim of increasing knowledge about the epidemic's effect on the wellbeing and lifestyle of Icelanders.



### TIMESPAN – the Health Status of Adults with ADHD

The Centre of Public Health Sciences at UI is among the participants in this extensive international research project that aims to create new knowledge about the health status of adults with ADHD. The research is based on extensive surveys of people's wellbeing and health, and these are linked to health data banks from many countries. Modern technology including smart watches and apps, are used to monitor the health of the study participants and promote their treatment adherence.







### Student Psychology Clinic

The Department of Psychology runs a Student Psychology Clinic where post-graduate psychology students offer psychological counselling. This service is provided at a low cost to university students and their children under the supervision of licensed psychologists, as part of their clinical training.



### Rapid Antigen Testing at the University Centre

In 2021, rapid antigen testing was available for UI students and staff at the University Centre, free of charge. Testing was offered in collaboration with the company Arctic Therapeutics, certified by the Icelandic health authorities. By opening a rapid antigen testing site, UI aimed to promote stronger infection control and increase the safety for staff and students on campus during the pandemic. This was also part of UI's contribution to society's efforts to combat the virus.



### Hugrún – Mental Health Organization

*Hugrún* is an organisation for mental health education, established in 2016 by UI's students in nursing, medicine, and psychology. Today, *Hugrún* works in collaboration with other Icelandic universities. The aim of the organisation is to educate young people about mental health, mental disorders, and to increase social awareness of mental health. In parallel, the organisation aims to eliminate prejudice and empowering young people. To achieve this, *Hugrún* has produced educational materials on mental health in plain and accessible language. Each year, *Hugrún* educators travel around Iceland to give lectures on mental health and psychology free of charge. In 2021, *Hugrún* held around 107 lectures in Icelandic high schools. *Hugrún* maintains a webpage, Instagram page and produce the podcast "Hugvarpið" for educational purposes.





## 4 QUALITY EDUCATION



### SOCIETY

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all



### Teaching and learning

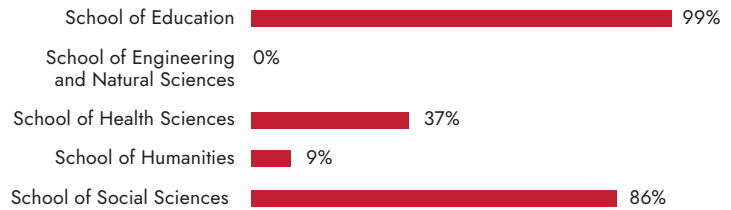
**1348** Number of courses with relation to SDG 4

### Research

**29** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 4

**60** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 4



## Mapping Education for Sustainability in the Nordic Countries

In 2021, the Nordic Council of Ministers published a report mapping sustainability education in the Nordic countries. UI Philosophy professor Ólafur Páll Jónsson led the committee's work in collaboration with professors and graduate students in all the Nordic countries. Part of the project analysed the implementation of the UN SDG goals in the Nordic countries, with focus on subgoal 4.7, related to sustainability education.



## Menntakvika; Research, Innovation and Development

*Menntakvika* is an annual conference of the School of Education (SoEd). Nearly three hundred lectures, many of which have strong reference to the UN SDGs, are held during *Menntakvika* which makes it one of the largest conferences in UI. The purpose of the conference is to introduce and communicate innovations in the field of education. Participants are mostly from the SoEd. Admission to the conference is open to all and free.



## Sprettur

*Sprettur* is a project at the Division of Academic Affairs at UI for college students 18 years or older that aim to go to university. *Sprettur* supports promising youth with immigrant backgrounds who come from families where no one has a university education. The goal of *Sprettur* is to create equal opportunities in education. *Sprettur* does this by preparing participants for further university education. The project has been ongoing for two academic years with around 30 high school students and 15 university students participating.



## UlcelandX

UlcelandX is the University of Iceland's platform for developing and delivering massive open online courses (MOOCs) to a global audience of learners, in collaboration with edX.org. The courses are free and open to everyone.





### University of Youth

The University of Youth (UoY) has taken place each summer since 2004. Knowledge-hungry and energetic youngsters between the ages of 12 and 14, take over the University campus for a few days each June. With UoY, the UI aims to systematically strengthen ties with Icelandic society and promote interest and understanding of science. This is done by offering courses linked to all academic fields of the UI taught by staff, students, and University partner institutions. In the UI21 policy, a special emphasis is placed on ensuring equality and diverse backgrounds of students. UoY aims to provide special support to students of foreign origin, by inviting groups to participate free of charge. In recent years, a special course has been offered at UoY dedicated to the UN SDGs.



### The University of Iceland Knowledge Train

The Knowledge Train travels yearly around Iceland, in close cooperation with local municipalities and schools in each destination. The aim is to give inhabitants in rural areas equal opportunities accessing events of this kind, to spark interest in science, and to support schools and education. On board are courses from the University of Youth and a travelling version of UniSci. Crew members are teachers and students from UI and the courses take place in primary schools. The Knowledge Train has received a unique reception everywhere and has enjoyed great popularity since its journey began on the centenary of UI, 2011. Destinations have been 46 in total, so far. The train is guided by the UN SDGs in all its work.



### The University of Iceland Science Centre – UniSci

UniSci introduces visitors to the wonders of science and technology in an interactive and lively way, through discovery, play and experimentation. The aim is to spark interest in science for both youth and society at large, while giving an insight into the world of science, and support primary school teaching. At its centre, UniSci welcomes school group visits and offers teacher training courses as well. All members of the UniSci are either students or teachers at UI. The number of students and teachers visiting since 2012 is around 28.000. UniSci is guided by the SDGs in all its activities and has received the Icelandic Research Council Award for Science Communication.





**5 GENDER EQUALITY**



**SOCIETY**

**Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**



**Teaching and learning**

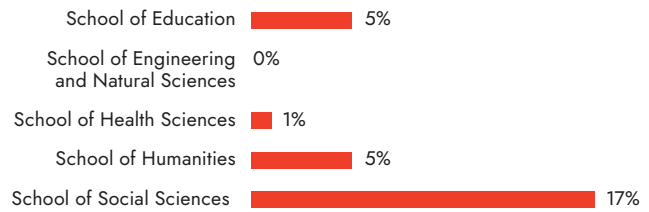
**181** Number of courses with relation to SDG 5

**Research**

**25** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 5

**133** Number of citations

**Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 5**



**Liberalizing Abortion Rights Amidst Global Backlash: Cases from Iceland and Ireland**

Silja Bára Ómarsdóttir, Professor of International Affairs, is the leading researcher for the project *Liberalizing Abortion Rights Amidst Global Backlash: Cases from Iceland and Ireland*. The project focuses on how conservative forces describe sexual and reproductive rights, especially abortion, and how opposition to women’s right to self-determination over their own bodies is used to strengthen opposition or conservative forces.



**Gender Studies**

Gender Studies is an interdisciplinary and applied course of study which is taught at the undergraduate and graduate levels in the Faculty of Political Science. One of the aims of Gender Studies at UI is to support gender equality efforts in the country and meet the demands set by the official regulatory system.



**GRÓ GEST**

The Gender Equality Studies and Training (GRÓ GEST) Programme was established in 2009 at UI. GRÓ GEST is part of GRÓ Centre for Capacity Development, Sustainable Use of Natural Resources and Societal Change which operates under the auspices of UNESCO. The mission of the GRÓ GEST program is to use a multidisciplinary approach to promote gender equality and social justice in low income, conflict and post-conflict countries.



**Academy for Woman Entrepreneurs (AWE) in Iceland**

UI participates in Academy for Woman Entrepreneurs (AWE) in collaboration with the American Embassy in Iceland. The aim of the AWE program is to support women in developing their business ideas, offer education and know-how, and to strengthen social networking. Other collaborators are the Association of Business Women in Iceland (FKA), Young Professional Women (UAK) and Women of Multicultural Ethnicity Network in Iceland (W.O.M.E.N.).







*Proportion of women receiving a degree in 2021: **68%***

*Proportion of senior female academics in 2021: **36%***

## Equality Actions at UI

The UI's first Equal Rights Policy was approved by the University Council in 2000. The current action plan is the sixth iteration of the policy. Discrimination based on gender, gender identity, origin, colour, disability, sexuality, race, body shape, age, health, religion, opinion, place of residence, economy, nationality or culture is not permitted within the UI.

The **Equal Rights Committee** oversees equality issues on behalf of the Rector and the University Council. The committee includes representatives of the equality committees of the schools and central administration within UI, one student representative nominated by the Student Council and a chairman appointed by the rector. The equality officer also attends the committee's meetings.

The **Equality Officer** holds an administrative position within the University and oversees equality-related matters, working alongside the Equal Rights Committee as well as chairing the Council for Disability Rights. Among other things, the role of the Equality Officer is to ensure the implementation of the Equal Rights Policy, provide technical advice on equality-related matters as well as working towards making equality and diversity an established part of the University of Iceland.

The University Council appoints a **Professional Council on Responding to Gender-related and Sexual Harassment**. Harassment, violence, or inappropriate behaviour can be reported on the front page of the *Ugla*, UI's internal network for students and employees. The chair of the UI Professional Council will then contact the complainant. No action will be taken without consulting with the complainant first.

## Equal Pay Certification from 2019

UI is one of the largest institutions in Iceland to receive equal pay certification. The certification follows a detailed review of the school's salary structures, which covered almost five thousand employees.



## Equality Focused Student =rganisations

Students at the University of Iceland are involved with many equality projects. The Student Union has an Equal Rights Committee and Officer, as well as a Student Interests and Loan Officer and an International Committee. Other active students' equality organisations include Q – *Queer Student Association*, who have recently been fighting for non-gendered toilets on campus and the *UI's Feminist Association* which is a cross-political association of university students who fight for gender equality.



## 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION



### BIOSPHERE

# Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

#### Teaching and learning

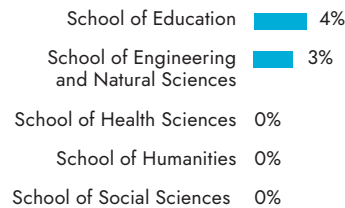
**41** Number of courses with relation to SDG 6

#### Research

**16** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 6

**93** Number of citations

#### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 6



### AccelWater

56% of available water is consumed for industrial and urban use. The AccelWater consortium consists of 18 organizations from five countries. The project's main objective is to optimize freshwater consumption in the food and beverage industry under a water-waste-energy nexus. The Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition at UI is contributing to the project with physicochemical and microbiological analyses of processed water to assess the quality and quantity of valuable ingredients that can be used for new product development and value addition, specifically in the marine and land-based aquaculture sectors.



### Production of Hydrogen Using Seawater

UI is involved in a research project investigating the production of hydrogen using seawater and the future perspectives of developing this idea to supplement diminishing supplies of freshwater. Camila Pia Canales, Doctor in Chemistry, is the leading researcher on this project which includes a group of ten scientists with the support of Molymet, Grein Research, and the Icelandic Marine Research Institute. This project is divided into three main stages: (1) electrocatalytical, (2) chemometrical, and (3) welfare analyses.



### Water Quality, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering

Industrialization and human development have contributed to the degradation of water and soil quality. In the course *Water Quality*, students explore the lifecycle of key pollutants found in surface water, groundwater, and soils. The sources of these key pollutants is explored, as is their fate in the environment, the human exposure pathways, and methods to restore (and treat) water and soils in relation to sustainable development goals.



### The Water and Wastewater Association of Iceland (VAFRÍ)

VAFRÍ is an association of individuals, organizations and companies interested in water and wastewater affairs, founded in 2019. The faculty of civil and environmental engineering plays an important role in VAFRÍ, with a professor from UI, Hrund Andradóttir, serving as president. The main goal of the associations is to promote safe water systems, improve water quality and sustainable wastewater systems. A special focus is also on educating the public on water and wastewater affairs and to assist authorities on law and regulations related to water systems.





## Drinking Water at UI

Still water is not sold in plastic bottles at UI's campus, since the water is clean and safe to consume and is accessible in all university buildings. In Iceland, regular monitoring of the quality of the drinking water is carried out by the local health authorities in accordance with regulation on drinking water (est. 1995).



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*164,069 m<sup>3</sup> of inbound cold water in 2021*

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## 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY



### SOCIETY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all



#### Teaching and learning

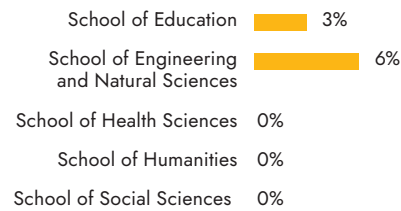
**58** Number of courses with relation to SDG 7

#### Research

**46** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 7

**248** Number of citations

#### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 7



### GECO

GECO is an innovative EU funded research project which aims to provide clean, safe, and cost-effective non-carbon and sulfur-emitting geothermal energy across Europe and the world. The GECO project builds on the recently completed CarbFix project in Iceland, a project that scientists at the UI and Reykjavík Energy, and international partners have been working on for over a decade. The goal is to adapt emission gas reuse schemes which can become a standard in the geothermal power industry worldwide through its application to three new sites across Europe. The GECO project is industry-driven and is coordinated by Reykjavík Energy (OR), the largest and one of the oldest geothermal energy providers in the world. UI is joined in the consortium by 13 research and technology departments located across Europe, and provides state-of-the-art analytical techniques and expertise.

### High-Temperature Geothermal Energy Utilization

Marta Rós Karlsdóttir's doctoral project investigated the ways in which the current EU climate and energy policy supports high-temperature geothermal utilization in future energy systems by comparing life cycle assessment results to the 2030 targets. The overall results showed that life cycle greenhouse gas emissions of high-temperature geothermal utilization are comparable to other renewable energy technologies. However, due to low thermal efficiency of electricity generation from geothermal, its increased use does not result in the desired increased energy efficiency as measured by the EU targets in terms of primary energy demand.



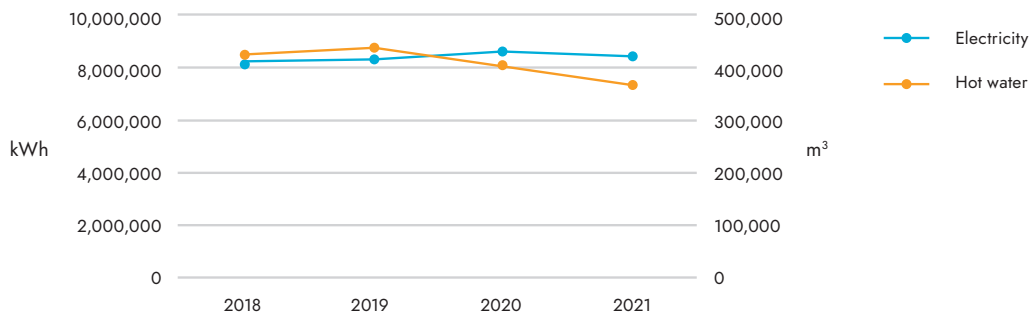
Electricity consumption for 2021 was 8,468,925 kWh.

About 85% of all houses in Iceland are heated with geothermal energy and that is the main source of heating energy for UI.

Hot water usage for space heating for 2021 was 372,332 m<sup>3</sup>



Energy consumption at UI; electricity and hot water



### Are Electric Vehicles the Silver Bullet to a Sustainable Urban Sector?

Kevin Dillman’s doctoral project aimed to address challenging questions regarding Electric Vehicle (EV) integration. In his research, it is suggested that EVs should not be seen as a silver bullet, but rather a single potential solution within a suite of solutions. The thesis can be used to inform policy makers and urban planners of the value of taking balanced supply- and demand-side solution approaches relevant to local context to guide the urban mobility sector towards intergenerational sustainability.



### Renewable Energy

The Renewable Energy Graduate programme provides opportunities for students in engineering, science, and economics of energy resources. The programme offers six study lines in specialisations that include compulsory and elective courses to meet the needs of individual students across UI’s faculties. Energy production in harmony with nature and society is one of the main tasks of this century and the demand for expertise in Energy and Earth resources is growing, and the Graduate programme is well suited for 21st century careers in hydropower, geothermal energy, electrical power, and energy sustainability.



### Energy Consumption at UI

UI’s electricity from HS orka is 100% renewable and is backed with Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin certification



## 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH



### ECONOMY

**Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

#### Teaching and learning

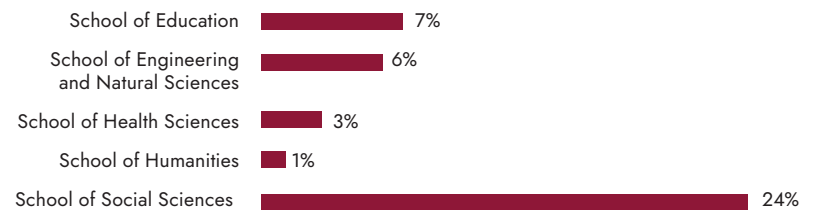
**264** Number of courses with relation to SDG 8

#### Research

**32** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 8

**115** Number of citations

#### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 8



### Partnership for Sustainability: Arctic Tourism in the time of change

Tourism development in the Arctic is uneven. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, many places in the region were struggling to attract tourists and build up viable businesses while others were experiencing a rapid and unsustainable growth in tourist arrivals. The Arctic Tourism Project is a three-year project, funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers. It brings together researchers, students, tourism entrepreneurs and other stakeholders to discuss and work on challenges and opportunities of sustainable tourism development in the Arctic. The UI led the project *Uncertain future? From Overtourism to Re-starting Tourism* in 2021.



### Iceland's Natural Experiment in Mortgage Relief

In this research lead by Gylfi Zoega, Professor in the Faculty of Economics, the data from tax returns in Iceland on assets, liabilities, and incomes are used to calculate the net worth of each taxpayer in the sample. The data are used to map the pattern of saving in Iceland by age, gender, income and family status in an attempt to study the effects of the financial boom and bust in the first decade of the century on the distribution of net worth and to describe the effect of the crisis on the subsequent saving behavior of individuals while testing theories of consumption behavior.



### Applied Economics

This graduate programme at the Faculty of Economics starts with introductory courses in economics and research techniques. These are followed by further courses in economics and econometrics to build on the introductory courses. The programme is organised so that students can take elective courses from the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Business as well as other UI faculties.







## SPECIAL EVENT IN ICELAND

### The Volcanic Eruption at Fagradalsfjall, Reykjanes

The Fagradalsfjall volcano started erupting in March 2021 and erupted for six months. Scientists from the Department of Earth Science and Institute of Earth science were in the front line in connection with both the volcanic eruption and the earthquakes that lasted two months prior. In collaboration with domestic and foreign researchers, UI played an important role in evaluating and interpreting the progress of the eruption and earthquakes in the area as well as communicating their results to the public, almost every day, both for national and foreign media. Students at the department of Earth Science had the unique opportunity of visiting the volcanic eruption site with their teachers, with hands on projects and education. The volcanic eruption was a major attraction for both locals and tourists during the time it erupted.

## Careers Connection

In co-operation with the Careers Connection businesses at large, organisations and official authorities seeking the talents of students at the University of Iceland can advertise job vacancies, internships and other employment-related projects available for students free of charge.



## Working Conditions and Wages at UI

**Wage policy:** UI aims to provide employees with good wages and working conditions in order to be competitive in the domestic and international labour markets in hiring and retaining qualified staff. Wages are determined on the basis of objective and transparent criteria. The wage system guarantees consistency in the determination of wages and fair wage brackets for UI staff. The Wage Policy is consistent with UI's Human Resource Policy. The University Council and Rector, as the highest level of administration, are responsible for the Wage Policy.

**Employment practice union:** Association of University Teachers (Fh) is a trade union for all UI's employees and related institutions of UI. Fh makes wage contracts for its members that consists f.x. of wages tables, the right to sickness leave, vacation, the right for sickness leave for children, sabbatical rights and right for continuing education. Fh is a member of the Association of Academics (BHM). Another related union is the Associations of Professors at state universities. The association's key role is to work on the wages and rights issues of professors and to protect their legal status.



Research



Teaching and learning



Community outreach and partnerships



Operations and governance



Student initiatives



ECONOMY

**Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation**

### Teaching and learning

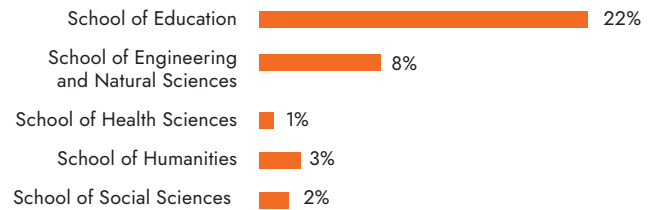
**198** Number of courses with relation to SDG 9

### Research

**31** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 9

**151** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 9



## Children's Taste Buds Training

Sigrún Þorsteinsdóttir, postdoc at the School of Education (SoEd), has dedicated her research to training the taste buds of children and parents. The idea of the project was in collaboration with Anna Sigríður Ólafsdóttir, professor of nutrition at the SoEd. The study is completely innovative and takes the form of a course for children and parents, involving a repeated introduction to all kinds of food. The main emphasis in the taste buds training is the choice of food, fussiness, and wellbeing while using games and joy as a guiding light. Informative technology was used for the benefit of the project, by developing a special app for smartphones to make food registration easier for the participants.



## Innovation and Business Development

The Faculty of Business and the Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science jointly offer a programme in the field of innovation and business development. The programme aims to prepare students for innovation in diverse contexts. The basis of the programme is a course on the implementation of innovation that covers two semesters, where students work together on a large-scale project on product development.



## Snjallræði

*Snjallræði* is a 16-week incubator that supports powerful teams to current challenges and support the UN's SDGs. *Snjallræði* was founded by Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre at the University of Iceland in 2018. The incubator is managed by KLAK, in collaboration with Höfði and MIT designX. It consists of workshops with experts from MIT, UI, Reykjavík University, and the Icelandic University of the Arts. The goal of the incubator is to promote innovation that addresses current challenges and is thus an important platform for social start-ups in Iceland. The focus is on promoting sustainability in innovation and building start-ups that support one or more of the SDGs from the very beginning. Participants have access to education and training from domestic and foreign experts in the field of social affairs and innovation and meetings with experienced mentors.

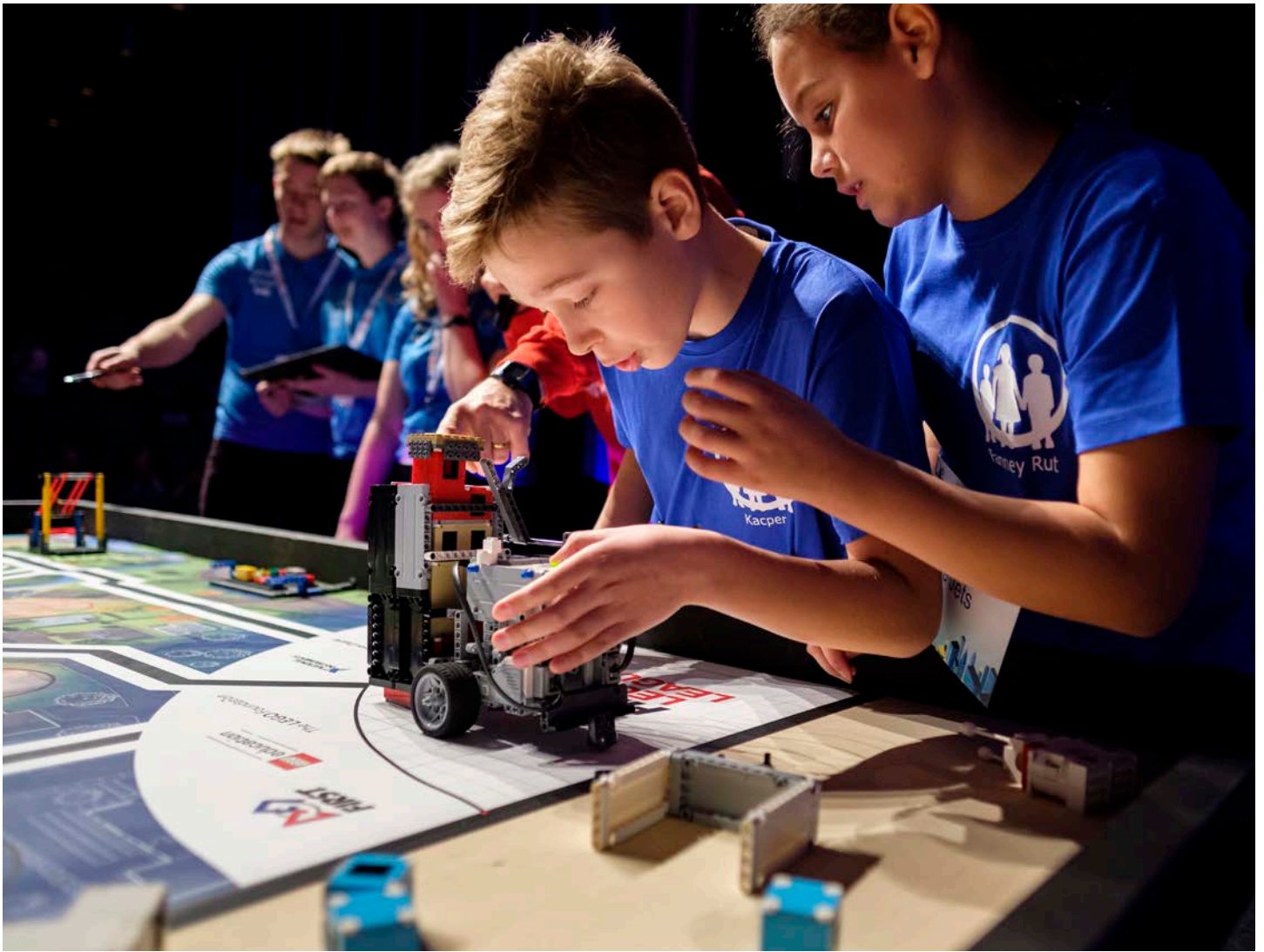


## University of Iceland Science Park

The UI Science Park is a melting pot for innovation and entrepreneurship. Located on UI's campus, the UI Science Park serves as a bridge between the university community and the business world, thus contributing to increased value creation. The UI Science Park was established by the University of Iceland in 2004 and is jointly owned by the UI (95%) and City of Reykjavík City (5%).







**Number of university spin-out companies: 20**

**FIRST® LEGO® League competition**

FIRST® LEGO® League is an international competition inviting primary school students to take part in exciting projects which create skills in science, engineering, technology, and mathematics (STEM). These projects also aim to stimulate innovation and build self-confidence, collaboration, and communication skills. Teams compete in four categories: robotics, programming and design, innovation, and core values. The preparation takes place within primary schools, then culminate in a two-day competition organized and held by UI. Around 200 pupils from all over the country take part each year. Since its inception, around 4000 students have taken part in Iceland. The themes and challenges of the competition are renewed every year and are based on the UN SDGs, the theme for 2021 was SDG 9.



**MEMA Innovation Accelerator**

UI is one of the main sponsors and partners in MEMA; a pre-university programme that harnesses the creativity of young people to tackle the challenges of the future. FabLab Reykjavík leads MEMA, and partners include the City of Reykjavík and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation. Contestants take part in five so-called sprints, creating a prototype of an innovative idea as a final project in their studies. MEMA aims to increase young people’s awareness of using innovation to engage with society and problem-solving, promote technology in education with interdisciplinary collaboration and learning. Since 2018, the number of participants has grown steadily, with 15 high schools currently taking part. Each year brings a new challenge, linked to the UN SDGs, the theme for 2021 was SDG 12.





**10** REDUCED INEQUALITIES



**ECONOMY**

**Reduce inequality within and among countries**



**Teaching and learning**

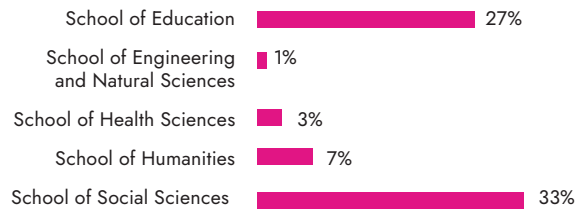
**426** Number of courses with relation to SDG 10

**Research**

**45** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 10

**211** Number of citations

**Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 10**



**Disability in the Times of Pandemic**

Ásta Jóhannsdóttir, assistant professor at the UI School of Education, is currently leading an extensive study in collaboration with Kristín Björnsdóttir, professor at SoEd, entitled *Disability in the Times of Pandemic* which is funded by the Icelandic Centre for Research. A part of the research includes mapping the situation of disabled people in the times of disasters and highlighting pathways to improve their situations. The main principles are to provide an international overview of disasters, responses to them and their consequences for disabled people while analysing the Department of Civil Protection's emergency response plans with a view to disabled people.



**RIKK Institution for Gender, Equality and Differences**

RIKK Institution is an interdisciplinary research institution that has been operating since 1991. The main goal of RIKK is to promote and coordinate equality research and studies while implementing programmes resulting from this research. RIKK shares knowledge by conducting courses, lectures, conferences, and publications. RIKK provides information and advice on women's, gender, and equality research, in collaboration with domestic and foreign researchers to support and strengthen studies on these topics both inside and outside the UI. RIKK participates in European and Nordic projects and networks with a diverse focus.





### Vocational Studies for People with Disabilities, Diploma

The School of Education offers a two-year undergraduate diploma in vocational studies for people with disabilities. The main purpose of the programme is to provide people with opportunities for full social participation. The aim of the programme is to prepare students for work, for example in schools, kindergartens, community centres, and in the field where other people with similar disabilities receive services. The programme is organised in accordance with the International Policy of Inclusion Europe, the UN Human Rights Treaty and the UI26 Policy.



### Equality Days

Equality Days have been held annually every autumn since 2009, and is a joint project of all the universities in Iceland. Equality Days combine various aspects of equality and feminism and focus on diversity, privilege, silencing, power, and discrimination. The focus in 2021 was on Gender, COVID, immigration, and disability. The event was held online due to gathering restrictions. All the events of Equality Days are free and open to the public.



### Council for Disability Rights

The Rector of UI appoints six people to the Council for Disability Rights, in keeping with Article 12 of the Regulation on disability services for study at the UI, no 481/2010. The Equality Officer of UI is the chairperson of the Council. Other members appointed come from the Student Counselling and Careers Centre, the Construction Division of UI, and the University Teachers and Professors Union, who are specialised in the field of disability studies.





**11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**



**SOCIETY**

**Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**



**Teaching and learning**

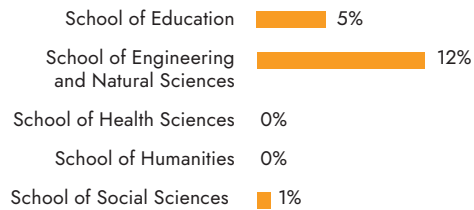
**118** Number of courses with relation to SDG 11

**Research**

**43** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 11

**203** Number of citations

**Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 11**



**GHG Emission from Urban Lifestyles and the Connection to Urban Patterns and Environmental Attitudes**

Compact cities are widely regarded as one of the most environmentally forms of human lifestyles due to lower local travel emission and more efficient housing energy. In Áróra Árnadóttir's doctoral project, environmentally significant behaviour was regarded through spatial distribution, drivers, and barriers to change, with special focus on air travel. An interesting result was that environmental attitudes did not significantly affect how often people travel abroad or whether they use environmentally friendly travel mode to work. Centrally located citizens of Reykjavík capital area pollute less daily by cycling, walking, or taking the bus than people living in suburbs, however, this trend was completely reversed when it comes to air travel abroad.



**Adaptable and Sustainable Ports**

Majid Eskafi, postdoctoral researcher in Environmental Engineering, is conducting a research project looking at ports in collaboration with Icelandic businesses. The goal of the research is to develop an innovative and highly adaptable port plan that guarantees continuous operations in a time of constant change and ensures that all expansion is appropriate for the environment and the community, in the short and long term. The team, which is made up of numerous stakeholders involved with the ports in the Ísafjörður area, is looking at social responsibility in this context.



**Sustainable City**

A course taught at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering under the supervision of Jukka Heinonen, Professor of Civil Engineering, focuses on the different perspectives of sustainability applied to cities and other human settlements, and ultimately to the question of what a sustainable city as a concept means.





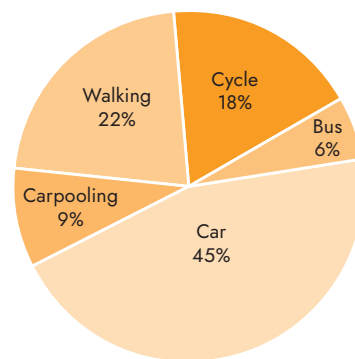


### Electric Car and Bike for UI Staff Members

Staff members of the UI have the option of booking a designated university electrical car to conduct work-related tasks within the greater Reykjavík area. The cars are located in five areas around the campus. There are also two electric bicycles offered to staff members for errands during working hours. These two initiatives are part of the UI's emphasis on promotion of more environmentally friendly modes of transportation.



Staff main mode of travel in 2020



### Biking Initiatives at UI

UI staff members are encouraged to participate in the biking initiative Bike to work that is held annually in May by the National Olympic and Sport Association of Iceland (ÍSí). The main purpose is to encourage active commuting as a healthy, economical, and eco-friendly lifestyle. Participants are encouraged to walk, run, cycle, or use public transport to get to and from work. UI, the Student Council (SHÍ) and ÍSí joined together in 2021 and kickstarted Bike to School, a similar initiative for students at UI.



**9 out of 19 of UI's car fleet were electric vehicles in 2021**

**12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**



**ECONOMY**

**Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

**Teaching and learning**

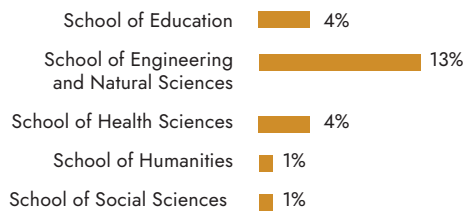
**151** Number of courses with relation to SDG 12

**Research**

**40** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 12

**192** Number of citations

**Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 12**



**BIOZOOSTAIN**

The main objective of BIOZOOSTAIN is to fully process valuable ingredients, such as astaxanthin, chitin, polyunsaturated omega-3 fatty acids, wax-esters and enzymes from marine zooplankton, which are taken ashore as a side-stream material during pelagic fishing. The aim is to develop new high-quality products for the food supplement, cosmetic and nutra-/pharmaceutical markets in a sustainable and ethical way. The BIOZOOSTAIN project is funded through the ERA-NET BlueBio Cofund Call and representative local funds from Iceland, Denmark, Spain and Italy.



**Understanding Food Value Chains and Network Dynamics (VALUMICS)**

The objective of the VALUMICS project is to provide decision makers throughout food value chains with a comprehensive suite of approaches and tools that will enable them to evaluate the impact of strategic and operational policies, and enhance the resilience, integrity and sustainability of food value chains for European countries. The consortium driving this proposal has a core of 19 European partners from 14 countries, and two Asian partners, and was led by scientists and experts from UI.



**Nordic Nutrition Recommendation**

Dr. Birna Þórisdóttir, Research Specialist at Health Science Institute, has worked with Nordic colleges on systematic reviews for the update of the Nordic Nutrition Recommendation (NNR 2022). The NNR 2022 integrates sustainability and environmental issues into the food-based dietary guidelines that help people choose food and drink that promote good health and wellbeing in harmony with the environment. The NNR have a strong social impact, as they are the scientific basis on which Icelandic recommendations on diet and nutrition are based, as well as the recommendations of other Nordic and Baltic countries. They are used when planning menus at all school levels, and in workplaces and nursing homes. They are also the basis for food labels, such as the Nordic Keyhole, the criteria for evaluating the consumption of food and nutrients.



**SMARTCHAIN**

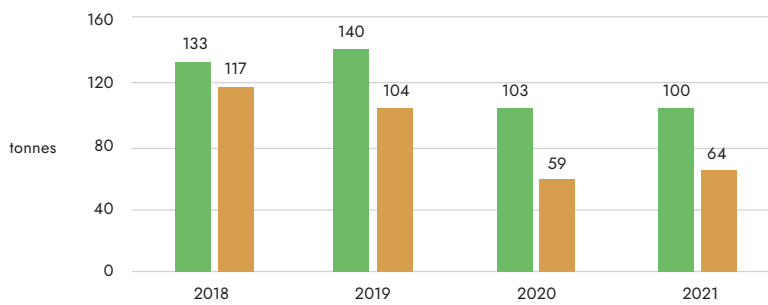
This project aims to develop approaches and tools for sustainable utilisation, production planning, logistics optimisation, and traceability to facilitate transfer of bio-resources from catch/production throughout the value chain of fisheries and aquaculture products. SMARTCHAIN has defined three case studies from aquaculture and fisheries value chains, including Norway, Iceland, Denmark, and Romania. The Icelandic contribution is led by ASCS, the Applied Supply Chain Systems Research Group at UI.







**164 tonnes of waste generated / 100 tonnes recycled / 59% recycling rate**



**Total waste generated at UI**

■ Recycled ■ Landfill

### Environmentally Friendly Food Packaging – UMMAT

One of the simplest ways of reducing the environmental impacts of food is to make the packaging lighter and thus reduce the environmental impact both related to the production of the packaging, its use and transportation. The aim of the project UMMAT is to design and compare newer versions of reusable polyethylene containers and single use expanded polystyrene boxes to existing packaging used for transport of fresh fish. The project is funded by the Icelandic Food Fund in 2021 and is a collaborative project of UI and related associations.



### Specialisation in Textiles and Design

The Specialisation in Textiles and Design is primarily taught by Ásdís Jóelsdóttir, Assistant Professor in Textiles and Design at the School of Education, who has dedicated her research in sustainability in textiles. The aim of this specialisation is to equip students with knowledge and understanding to activate environmentally friendly thinking in action and to link sustainability in textiles to a sustainable and responsible lifestyle.



### ISO 14001 certification

The Laboratory of Pharmacology and Toxicology (RLE) at the School of Health Sciences was the first department in 2021 within the UI that has been ISO 14001 certified for Environmental Management. RLE employs 20 people and conducts a variety of types of forensic research for the police and the judiciary. Implementation of ISO 14001 has started for the Division of Operations and Resources for 2022/23.



### Green Flag

In 2021, the Student Council and the Environment and Transportation and Environmental Affairs Committee received the Green Flag certification for the second time. The Green Flag is awarded as part of the Icelandic Environment Association's Eco-Schools programme which aims to improve environmental and sustainability education and support sustainability strategies in schools. Eco-Schools is an international project which educates millions of students within 67 countries all around the globe about sustainability and protection of the environment. The project is based on demographic education and action-based learning. The main theme is consumption and waste, transportation, education, and climate action countermeasures.







BIOSPHERE

# Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact



### Teaching and learning

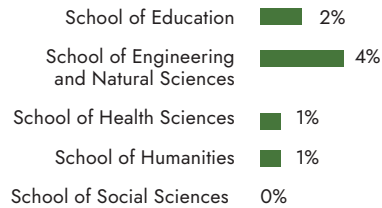
**56** Number of courses with relation to SDG 13

### Research

**55** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 13

**242** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 13



## Visual Research on Glacier Downwasting in Southeast Iceland

Glacier melting (downwasting) is one of the clearest examples of the impacts of global climatic change in present times. The downwasting of glaciers is in a part a visual phenomenon which is very conducive to monitoring and documentation with visual methods; the outputs of such research are readily utilised for science communication purposes. As the Director of the UI Research Centre in Hornafjörður, Þorvarður Árnason leads an interdisciplinary group of researchers, which has been engaged with visual research for over a decade. The team has developed innovative methods to portray the extent of downwasting in the glacial landscapes found in the “backyard” of the Research Centre in Hornafjörður.



## ArtGreenStory: Promoting Greener Schools with Digital Storytelling

Rannveig Björk Þorkelsdóttir and Jóna Guðrún Jónsdóttir at UI’s Faculty of Teacher Education lead an international study on environmental awareness where the aim is to develop course material where digital stories are used to spark students’ interest in climate change. The project focuses on changing students’ attitudes and encouraging them to take radical action against the climate crisis in their own communities whilst networking with other schools abroad.



## 1.5 Degree Compatible Living in the Nordic Conditions

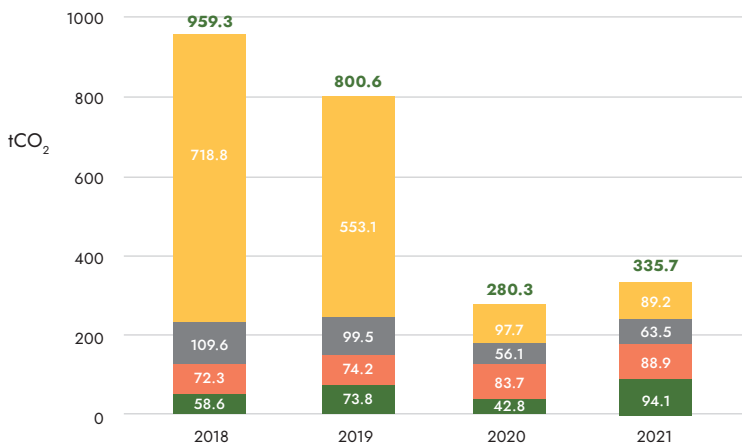
In this project, the carbon footprint of people in the Nordic countries is calculated using the consumption-based method. Nordic countries are often seen as “green” due to their low-carbon energy systems. However, the global climate impacts in the Nordic countries are among the highest when the emissions are allocated based on consumption. The method allocates all the global production chain emission of all the goods and services a user consumes, connected to the global carbon budget for halting global warming to 1.5 degrees. On the project’s webpage users can check their carbon footprint (CF), learn how to reduce it, and contribute to climate change research. The project is funded by the Icelandic Centre for Research, for 2020–2023.



## University of the Arctic (UArctic)

The UArctic is a collaborative network of universities and educational institutions at the university level working on education and research in the Arctic region. A total of 200 universities and institutions around the world are now members of UArctic. The University of Iceland has been part of the partnership network since 2011. In 2021 a conference was held at UI at which a special emphasis was on climate issues and green energy solutions, as well as people in the Arctic, and marine ecosystems in the region.





### Emission from UI's operations

- Business travel (scope 3)
- Waste (scope 3)
- Electricity (scope 2)
- UI's car fleet (scope 1)

## Environment and Natural Resources

The Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) master's programme is a unique interdisciplinary and international programme that provides academic insight into the various aspects of environmental issues and the utilisation of natural resources. ENR is tailored to different students' needs in terms of academic backgrounds and interests. Students choose from one of five specialisations: environment management, science and policy, natural resource management, ocean sustainability, renewable energy, environment, and natural resources.



## Fridays for Future Strike

The Student Council, in collaboration with The National Union of Icelandic Students (LÍS), the Icelandic Youth Environmentalist Association (UU) and The Icelandic Upper Secondary Student Union (SÍF) started the "Fridays for Future" activist protest for climate change in Iceland. The first protest was held in February 2019, continuing every Friday demanding action from political leaders to prevent climate change. The strike has been an important and powerful forum for discussion around climate issues within the university community.

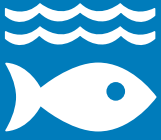


## The Arctic Climate Leadership Training (ACT)

This course combines a challenging expedition through the southern area of Vatnajökull glacier, climate change education and leadership training. Emphasis is placed on the value of cooperation and teamwork. Participants in the course are encouraged to take part in the discussion on the challenges of climate change, and find ways to influence and lead awareness of climate action. The course is led by Hafdís Hanna Ægisdóttir, Director of the Institute for Sustainability Studies, and Vilborg Arna Gissurardóttir advisor and motivational speaker, and Salome Hallfreðsdóttir environmental scientist and educator.







BIOSPHERE

# Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development



### Teaching and learning

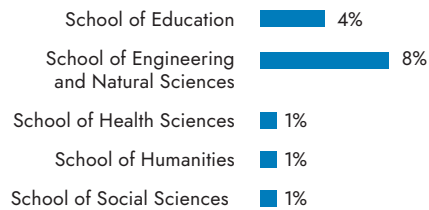
**89** Number of courses with relation to SDG 14

### Research

**36** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 14

**167** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 14



## Research Centre on Ocean, Climate and Society (ROCS)

Six post-doctoral researchers at UI were granted positions at HM Queen Margarethe II's and former president Vigdís Finnbogadóttir's interdisciplinary ROCS Centre. The interdisciplinary Centre focuses on the interaction between climate change and the ocean's ecosystems, and their importance to Icelandic society and culture. The main goal is to study how ecosystems and climate change impact Icelandic environment, both on sea and land, through complex interplay between climate, biosphere and humans.



## The Role of Ecosystem Stability for the Ecological Specialisation of Marine Top Predators

This project, led by the research specialist Filipa Samarra, aims to investigate the role of ecosystem stability in the form of prey availability and reliability in the dietary specialisation of killer whales. Killer whales occupy a variety of marine habitats and exhibit strong ecological specialisation in some populations, making them an ideal species to investigate the effect of ecological conditions on the degree and consistency of diet specialisation. This study will contribute to understanding community dynamics and how environmental changes may affect top marine predators more broadly.







## Suðurnes Research Centre

The Suðurnes Research Centre's research focuses on the marine environment, with an emphasis on ecology and effects of pollutants on marine life. In 2021, the main projects included research on crabs and mussels with emphasis on monitoring, toxicology, and biological parameters in the animals in relation to pollution. The Centre maintains the operation of *Sæmundur Fróði*, an 8 ton boat owned by UI that is used both for teaching and various research projects. The Centre participates in various collaborations, both domestic and international.



## Whales and Dolphins' Responses to Human-Generated Sound

Dr. Paul Wensveen, a research specialist at the Faculty of Life and Environmental science, studies the acoustics and movement behavior of whales and dolphins and their responses to human-generated underwater sound. Ongoing work focuses on the migration movements of northern bottlenose whales and the behavioral impacts of naval sonar on this species and other cetaceans. This research informs assessments of the conservation status of animal populations in the wild and helps navies and other ocean noise producers to reduce the environmental effects of their activities.



## Aquatic Biology and Fisheries

Master's students in Biology at the Faculty of Engineering and Natural science can choose a specialisation in aquatic biology and fisheries, in collaboration with Marine and Freshwater Research Institute, with special emphasis on fisheries and marine and freshwater ecology.



## Green Days – Gaia Event on the Ocean

Green Days is an annual event series organized by students in Environment and Natural Resources (Gaia) and in collaboration with Student Council's Environment and Transport Committee. Green Days events offer a wide range of workshops, lectures, and presentations with insights and solutions to the world's most pressing environmental challenges. Green Days aim to raise awareness of environmental and sustainability issues, both within the university and beyond. The theme for Green Days 2021 was the Ocean. As the Green Days are held university-wide, the main objectives are to invite and engage all students to learn about environmental challenges, share ideas, empower them to act, and foster new collaborations between students and companies and organisations in Iceland.



Research



Teaching and learning



Community outreach and partnerships



Operations and governance



Student initiatives

15 LIFE ON LAND



BIOSPHERE

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss



Teaching and learning

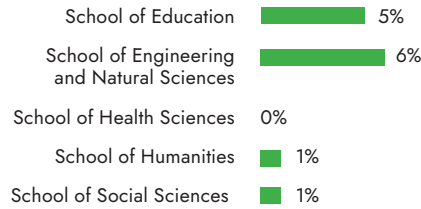
81 Number of courses with relation to SDG 15

Research

16 Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 15

82 Number of citations

Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 15



Research Centre South

At the Research Centre South (RCS), diverse research on land use and ecosystems is conducted. The research done at RCS are among others related to how to predict the effects of diverse types of land use on biodiversity and ecosystems. There is a lack of information on the relationship between land use and nature in Iceland, and such information are important to promote sustainable lifestyles and to fulfil international commitments in the field of recourse utilisation and nature conservation. One of the main objectives of RSC is to strengthen the professional base of nature conservation.



Trapped in a Degraded State? Tundra Ecosystem Responses to Grazing-Cessation

Land degradation, often a consequence of human activities, is a great concern to Iceland and on a global scale. The aim of this project is to investigate ecosystem processes that slow down or prevent recovery of heavily grazed rangelands following grazing-cessation. The focus is on degraded rangeland ecosystems that have not totally collapsed and the role of different plant functional types and soil related processes in retarding or facilitating transition to a healthier state. Understanding which processes trap ecosystems in degraded states is key to sustainable land management plans. The project is a collaboration led by UI and funded in 2021 by the Icelandic Centre for Research.







## BIRKIVIST – Birch Ecosystem Restoration in the 21st Century

BIRKIVIST is interdisciplinary research and development project that aims to develop an efficient way to restore birch forest on a national level in Iceland. In the project, main obstacles and opportunities for the natural colonisation of birch is analysed along with societal factors which may encourage or discourage restoration. BIRKIVIST has multifaceted environmental, social, economic, and cultural reference. The project is a collaboration between UI, the Agricultural University of Iceland, the Soil Conservation Service of Iceland, the Icelandic Forest Service, the Iceland University of the Arts, and the Norsk Institutt for Naturforskning (NINA), and the Institute for Nature (NÍ).



## Ethics of Nature

The Ethics of Nature course is taught at graduate level at Faculty of Philosophy, History and Archaeology and is offered via many departments across the university's schools. The course deals with the connection between Man and Nature from the viewpoint of moral philosophy. It discusses the main proponents of theories within Environmental Ethics and describes the roots of differing views of Nature, as well as different ethical orientations. The course also deals with the integration of environmental and developmental issues, and with the connection between environmentalism and democracy.



## Hiking Trips With Science Tips

*Hiking Trips with Science Tips*, which started in 2011, is series of walks resulting from a collaborative project of UI and the Icelandic Touring Association. During these walks, the experience and knowledge of the Touring Association's guides blend with the knowledge of UI's teachers and researchers. The goal is to raise public interest in education and pursue healthy outdoor activities as well as to increase the number of options for such activities. Participation is open to all and free of charge. In 2021, there were two events held, one with focus on insects and bugs in the Icelandic fauna and the other with focus on mushrooms, by learning to distinguish edible from poisonous ones.





# 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS



## SOCIETY

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels



### Teaching and learning

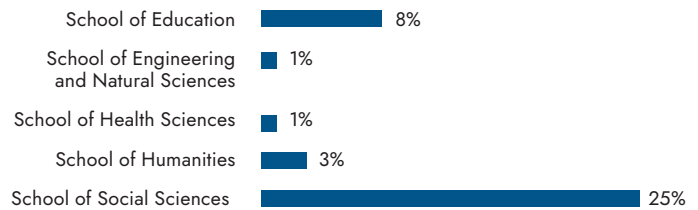
**239** Number of courses with relation to SDG 16

### Research

**25** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 16

**77** Number of citations

### Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 16



## Media Democracy and Fake News in Iceland

Examining Iceland from a comparative perspective, this research explores to what extent economic and technology-related changes are impacting the media's democratic role of providing citizens with important information and acting as a watchdog. Moreover, it studies to what extent the changes are influencing the spread of misinformation and disinformation. The project combines interviews, content analysis of news reports and representative surveys focusing on two case studies: COVID-19 and the 2021 parliamentary elections. The work is led by Jón Gunnar Ólafsson, postdoc in the Faculty of Political Science.



## FEINART Research Project

The project received a Marie Curie grant from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research program. UI and the Iceland University of the Arts are participating in the project along with other universities and art museums, while the University of Wolverhampton is managing the project. Björn Þorsteinsson, Professor of Philosophy, Benedikt Hjartarson, Professor of General Literature and Cultural Studies, and Jón Ólafsson, professor of Cultural Studies, lead the project on behalf of UI. Doctoral students will, among other things, research art that involves participation and direct action, developing ideas about the value of such art and the relationship between art and society, where Iceland will be taken as an example of a peripheral area in Europe.



## Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre

Höfði, the Reykjavík Peace Centre is a collaborative effort of the City of Reykjavík and UI. It is a forum for multidisciplinary cooperation, with an emphasis on the role of small states, cities, and citizens in promoting peace. Höfði is run under the auspices of the Institute of International Affairs (IIA) at the UI. The Centre promotes interdisciplinary and international research in peace and conflict studies, enables informed policy making and provides a platform for discussion and education on peace and conflict. One of the main objectives of Höfði is to assist the City of Reykjavík in formulating its own peace policy and to establish a strong position as a city of peace on the international arena, guided by human rights, democracy, and international cooperation.



## Specialisation: Sociology of Criminology

Criminologists primarily deal with the history and nature of crime in society. The goal of this criminology diploma program is to provide students with theoretical and practical knowledge in the field of crime and deviant behaviour.





## Imagine Forum

Höfði, the Reykjavík Peace Centre holds the annual Imagine Forum in cooperation with the Icelandic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The UI's Institute for Sustainable Studies and GRÓ GEST. The theme for 2021 was Building trust for sustainable peace, as in that year the UN had declared it as the International Year of Trust and Peace, emphasising the importance of reaffirming the UN's role to settle disputes peacefully. Threats of climate change, pandemic, and increased role of non-state actors in conflict are challenges that the international system faces and how the world can work on sustainable solutions without trust in effectiveness of international organizations.



## University Governance

### UI Finances

UI publishes the University financial data each year, accessible to all on the UI's webpage.

### University Council

The University Council for the University of Iceland is appointed according to Act no. 85/2008 on public universities. Representatives of the council comprise of the University Rector and members from the University community; students; Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation; and industry.

### Regulation of UI

UI, as a public higher education institution falls under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture. Two acts in particular cover higher education and the operation of the University; The Higher Education Act, no 63/2006 and the Act on Public Higher Education Institutions, no 85/2008.

### Code of ethics

The Code of ethics of UI encapsulates the main ethical values and responsibilities integral to work and studies at the UI. It lays out standards for the conduct of all members of the university community, on and off campus. The Code of Ethics is presented with reference to the UI's core values, which are professionalism, equality and academic freedom, as well as perspectives on teamwork, integrity and sustainability.





**17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**



**Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

**Teaching and learning**

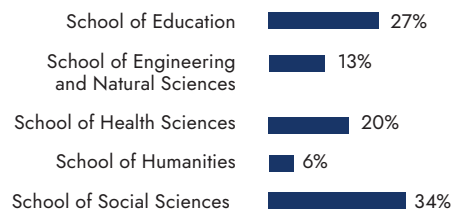
**4342** Number of courses with relation to SDG 1–17

**Research**

**719** Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 1–16

**4486** Number of citations

**Percentage of courses within schools with relation to SDG 1–17**



**Implementation of SDGs in the Nordic Arctic (ISDeGoNA)**

The ISDeGoNA project aimed to generate knowledge on sustainability in the Arctic context, with strong stakeholder involvement. The main output of the project was a report that assessed the status of the implementation of the UN SDGs in the Nordic Arctic. From diverse perspectives, different contexts were thematised, such as SDG awareness, most relevant SDGs, respective achievements and shortcomings, governance processes, as well as essential stakeholders enabling SDG implementation. The project was led by the Norwegian Research Centre NORCE, in collaboration with the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland, Höfði (Reykjavík Peace Centre), and the Centre for Arctic Studies, which led the project on behalf of UI.



**The Institute for Sustainability Studies**

The aim of the Institute for Sustainability Studies (ISS) is to catalyse, facilitate and coordinate interdisciplinary research which promotes sustainable development. This is done in particular with cooperation from the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) programme, but also other schools and faculties within UI. The ISS promotes interdisciplinary research within UI and in collaboration with other parties in Iceland and abroad. The Institute also organises seminars and lectures in the field of sustainability. The ISS belongs to all schools of UI, but is housed at the School of Social Sciences.



**Spark (Kveikja)**

Spark is a course in social innovation and career development based on the UN SDGs. It is organised and developed by Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre, in close collaboration with representatives experts from across the University. Spark is for all students in their third year of their undergraduate studies, from all the five UI faculties. The course structure is threefold; innovation, career development, and the UN SDGs. Participants gain knowledge on today's challenges while working towards joint solutions across disciplines in collaboration with leading supervisors from the UI and the private sector, as gaining a deeper understanding of own strengths and developing innovative thinking. The course was not held in 2021 due to COVID-19 pandemic.



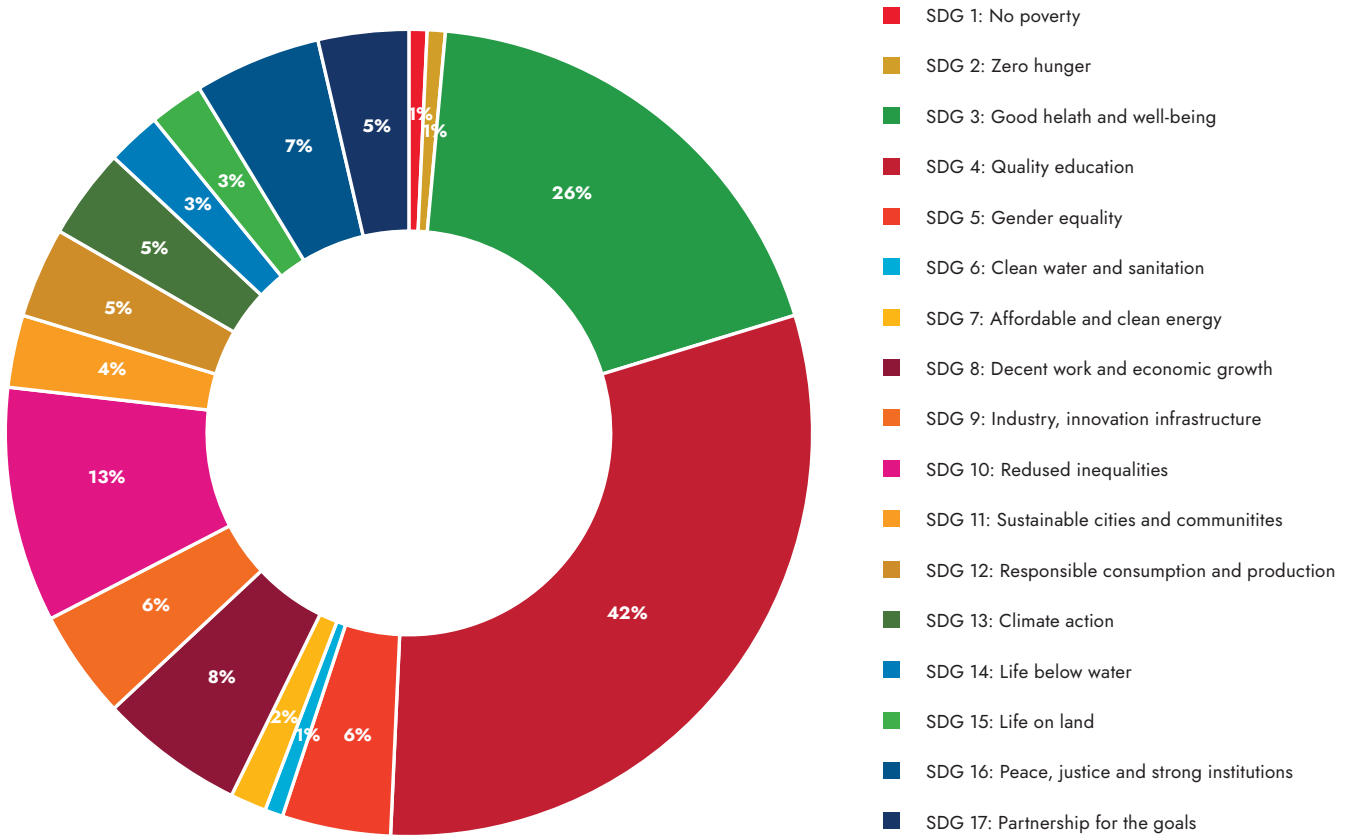
**University Social Responsibility Network (USRN)**

UI was accepted into the University Social Responsibility Network (USRN) in 2021. USRN's goal is to provide a venue for universities to cooperate and share ideas on how to address various current challenges such as equality, peace, sustainability, the environment, health, and universal prosperity. The network is made up of sixteen universities from around the world. USRN's shared vision is to create an improved society and contribute to solutions to global challenges through teaching, research, public service, and education for the public. Participation in USRN is in line with UI26 strategy, emphasising collaboration and dialogue with society, industry, and universities all over the world, as well as sustainability and diversity.

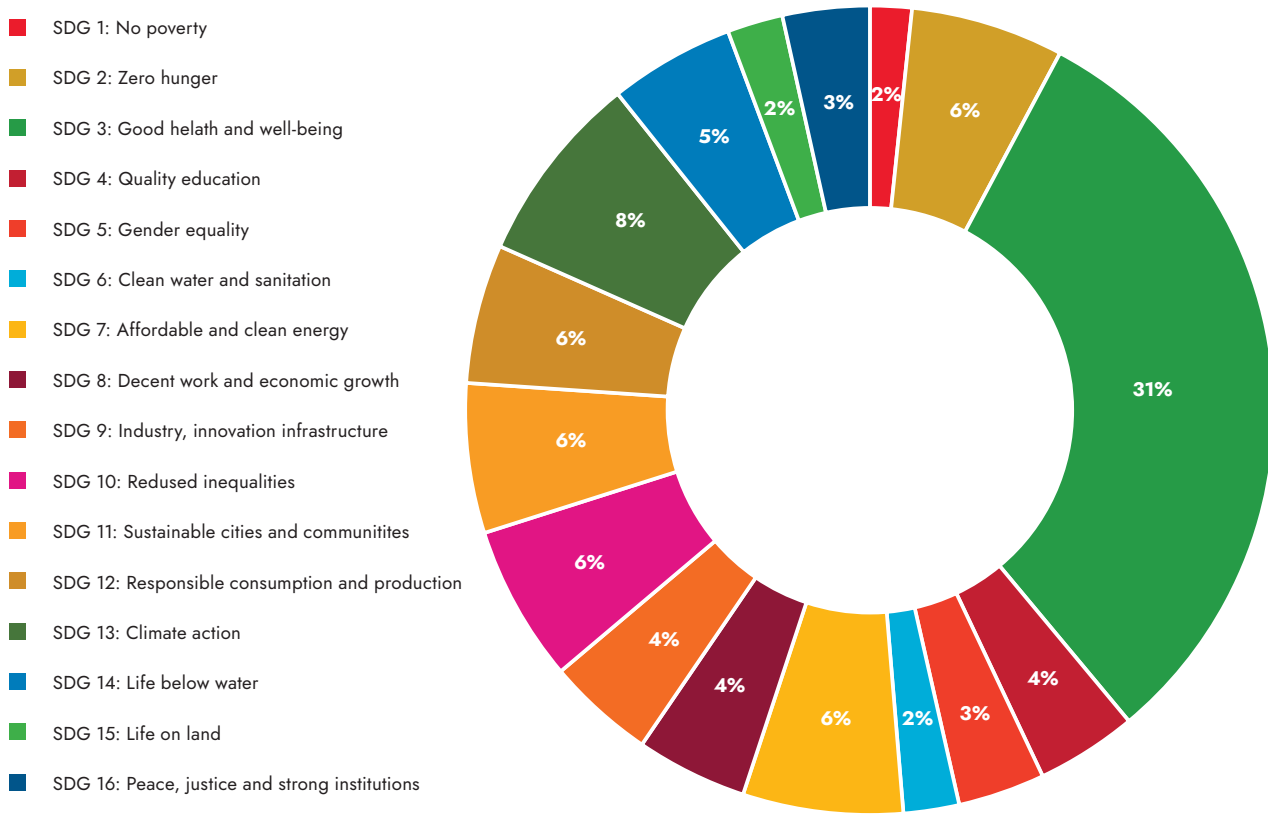




## Proportion of courses taught at UI in relation to SDG 1–17



## Proportion of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 1–16





# Next Steps for Sustainability

The recommendations below are build upon the goals of University of Iceland's strategy for 2021–2026 (UI26) and its Work Programme on *Sustainability in Teaching, Research and University Management*.

To support the execution of these recommendations, a strong support for implementation is needed. Sustainability is neither represented at the UI's leadership nor administration levels. Despite the existence of the Institute for Sustainability Studies, a functional sustainability committee, and the emphasis of sustainability in UI's strategy, there is not a single person or unit that is ultimately responsible for sustainability within UI. Therefore, it is unclear who is responsible for following through on the recommendations.

Cooperation between schools must also be strengthened, and interdisciplinary research must be supported. To facilitate this, the financial environment should be reviewed to prevent obstacles to cooperation between departments and schools within UI.

**Recommendation:** A vice rector and/or a manager in central administration are made responsible for sustainability (and SDG) related issues. This role can be supported by the sustainability committee and the Institute for Sustainability Studies.

The following section includes the four focus areas represented in UI26's Work Programme *Sustainability in Teaching, Research and University Management*. The recommendations are divided into critical, very important and important.

**FOCUS 1: Raise awareness and understanding of sustainability through presentations and workshops as well as through sustainability research and education dashboards.**

**Critical:**

- » In 2023, a presentation about sustainability and the SDGs are held for staff in each school and central administration.
- » Symposium about the findings of the UI's Sustainability report held in early 2023.
- » UI's Sustainability report is produced annually, and the editorial team are given greater time and support when making the report.

**Very Important:**

- » Workshops about sustainability and the SDGs are made available for staff.
- » Work regarding Aurora SDG education dashboard and Aurora SDG research dashboard continue and are disseminated in 2023.

**Important:**

- » In 2023, revive the series of meetings about the university and the SDGs that were suspended because of Covid-19 (the series on the SDGs were held from late 2019 to early 2020).
- » Make the SDGs symbols visible in all events and news at UI's website and inner web Ugla. This makes mapping of events and research related to the SDGs more accessible, and more visible to the UI community. Made available in 2023.

**FOCUS 2: Focus on sustainability in teaching and learning by increasing the number of courses and support for teachers. Make study programmes and courses related to sustainability available for students from all disciplines.**

**Critical:**

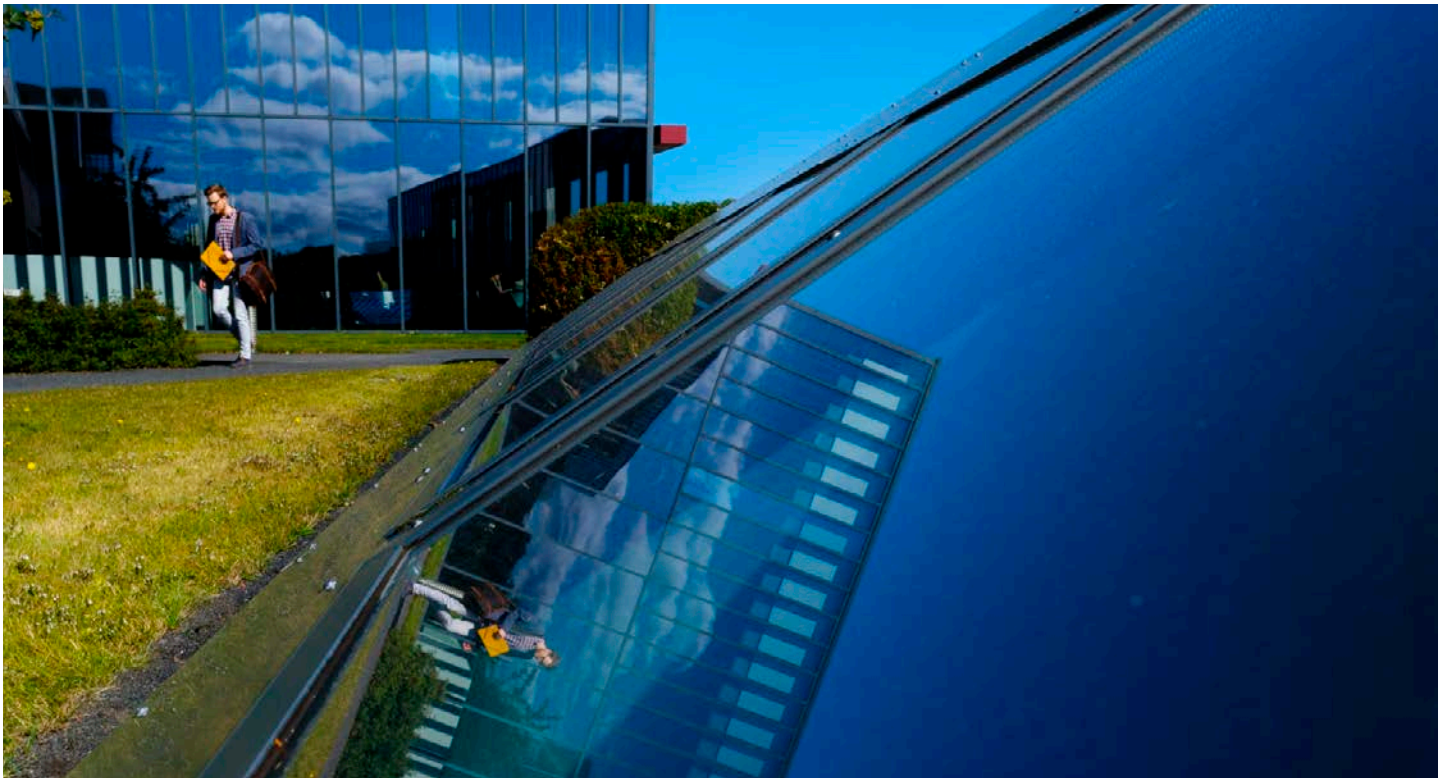
- » A course about sustainability and the SDGs is developed and made available for students from all disciplines in the school year of 2023.

**Very Important:**

- » UI should appoint an SDG specialist, who could support teachers when implementing sustainability/SDGs in courses. This should be done in collaboration between The Division of Academic Affairs, Central administration, and the UI's schools.

**Important:**

- » A continued mapping of the UI's curriculum in relation to sustainability and the SDGs, similar to the work done in 2019/20. Courses should have a clear connection to the SDGs in the curriculum with a visible SDG symbol. Made possible in 2023.



### **FOCUS 3: Work towards making the University carbon neutral by mapping emissions and introducing countermeasures.**

#### **Critical:**

- » UI needs a deeper understanding of the scope of UI's emission from its operations from current status, for example with respect to commuting of staff and students, procurement, new construction, etc.
- » UI sets a climate action plan and policy regarding operation and measurable goals and countermeasures. To achieve carbon neutrality, UI needs to weigh costs and benefits of different options for carbon offsetting for remaining emissions and decide which option to use.

#### **Very Important:**

- » UI sets ambitious goals and a time plan regarding transportation to enable staff and students to commute using environmentally friendly transportation modes by implementing incentive programmes to reduce single-vehicle commuting.
- » The current transportation contract for staff should be revised.
- » The infrastructure for bicycles should be strengthened, e.g., locked bike shelters.
- » Evaluation of expanding the area in which parking fees are applied at campus area should continue.

#### **Important:**

- » UI staff will be encouraged, through various means, to reduce carbon emissions of their air travel, and provided incentives to fly less. This evaluation should start in 2023.
- » A special funding and grants should be made available for online conferences. Better facilities should also be established where people can participate online.

### **FOCUS 4: Evaluate whether sustainability and interdisciplinarity should be taken into account when allocating grants from the University's competitive funds.**

- » Start the evaluation process before spring 2023. The process should be led by the UI's Science Committee. By the end of 2023 the evaluation should be completed.

### **Editorial Team**

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This report was prepared on behalf of UI's sustainability committee and UI rector.





# UNIVERSITY OF ICELAND