

U21: Commitment to Sustainability

Universitas 21 cares deeply about a future that is safer and more sustainable for our students, our staff, alumni, and the wider communities that we serve. We live in a diverse world which is the only one we inhabit; there is no 'Planet B'. A defining characteristic of U21 members is a commitment to strengthening our positive impact in the world, both individually and collectively. In this regard, Universitas 21 is committed to action in support of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015. U21 members aim to advance timely solutions to these integrated environmental, societal and economic global goals.

We recognise that universities and their people play a crucial role across local, regional and international boundaries in creating ideas, fostering innovation, exchanging knowledge, functioning as anchor institutions, and collaborating with businesses, organisations and governments to advance knowledge and seek solutions to current and future challenges. Our students and alumni are important change makers; they are instrumental to seeking and implementing solutions while studying and beyond. We can and want to do more. As individual members, and as a global network, we will champion the following core values and principles relating to sustainability and the environment:

Research towards a more sustainable future

U21 members contribute to a better understanding of the world in which we live, developing solutions that allow for a more sustainable future. We are particularly mindful of the impacts on marginalised communities. Members know that research in support of sustainability takes many forms, including the development of new scientific knowledge as well as transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary research. To better understand and respond to the complexities of different regions around the world, as well as advancing enduring content relating to sustainability, this research needs to be shared and disseminated. We are therefore committed to:

- strengthening high impact research that makes a difference and supports a more sustainable future
- engaging with local, national and international communities in order to advance and strengthen cultures of sustainability
- working with governments and policy agencies to ensure research outcomes are applied to evidence-based solutions for sustainability challenges
- seeking new partnerships that tap into the breadth and depth of the network's research on sustainability

Promoting sustainability through education and engagement

Collectively, members of the U21 network have over 1,200,000 students and 250,000 staff. The influence that this academic community can have as citizens and leaders, now and in the future, is immense. Recognising that universities have a critical educational role, each member is committed to:

- strengthening the range of sustainability-focused experiences open to all students
- engaging sustainability issues through appropriate curricula
- promoting sustainability awareness through network activities
- advancing latest research findings, sharing new ideas, and encouraging discussion on sustainability-related issues through broader engagement with alumni and community groups

Improving our own organisations as exemplars of sustainable practice

Sustainability begins at home. Universities are reflections of the communities they serve, and both are increasingly international in composition and scope. In light of this, U21 members aim to foster intellectual capacity on our campuses which can act as a powerful influence with business, government and civil society leaders. We are committed to lead by example through:

- improving our environmental impact, appropriate to our circumstances, in the quest to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050
- sharing experiences around adopting sustainability principles and practices with other network members
- collectively reviewing our progress and achievements at the U21 AGM in 2025 with regular monitoring beyond 2025