

Mission Statement Sustainability

of the University of Münster

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Sustainable development is one of main challenges of our times and requires fundamental societal change. An innovative contribution to this process by universities is essential as they provide important interfaces and experiential spaces for sustainable action. Both disciplinary as well as inter- and transdisciplinary research approaches help address global challenges such as climate change, mobility and energy transformation, or issues concerning peace and democracy. As educational establishments, universities furthermore play an important role in helping future policymakers acquire sustainability competencies. Lastly, universities themselves are part of the challenge as they, too, consume resources.

The University of Münster is fully aware of its responsibility for the ecological, social and economic dimensions of its actions as well as the resulting implications for intra- and intergenerational justice. Thus it bases its actions in research, teaching, transfer and operations on the principle of ecological and social sustainability. The University considers it as its duty to develop contributions and proposals for solutions and is aware that as a role model it has to put sustainable development into practice within its own areas of responsibility. This, of course, entails supporting staff and students in the endeavour to expand competencies and activities with regard to sustainability.

In its role as both a scientific and educational institution, as well as an integral part of societal life, the University of Münster sees ecological and social sustainability as a responsibility it bears toward the generations of today and tomorrow. As an internationally orientated place of research, study and work, the University of Münster supports sustainability as an expression of its global responsibility with regard to a sustainable organisation of society and the protection of natural foundations of life. The University of Münster employs a comprehensive understanding of sustainability and holds itself accountable to the *Sustainable Development Goals* and the targets of the Paris Agreement. The University therefore intends to include sustainability in its governance structure on a long-term basis. Sustainability will be put into practice in the following fields of action consistently and to a greater extent than required by law.

RESEARCH

With its broad spectrum of subjects from the humanities, social sciences and natural sciences leading to considerable academic versatility, the University of Münster possesses ideal prerequisites for the implementation of sustainability research as an inter- and transdisciplinary cross-sectional task. Addressing the challenges of sustainability is considered a relevant issue for all disciplines and will be supported in a targeted way across the board. To demonstrate its accountability, the University of Münster intends

to create an institutional framework in which established academic structures, processes and practices will be scrutinised with regard to their implications for ecological and social sustainability.

TEACHING

In teaching, too, sustainability is considered a guiding principle and a cross-sectional topic of relevance for all subjects, in particular in the concept of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), which emphasises the importance of teaching and learning focused on the acquisition of skills and the recognition of inter- und trans-disciplinary connections. In the context of Learning through Research, the WWU incorporates sustainability into teaching as an everpresent, continuous component with the aim of furnishing students with strategic problem-solving skills.

TRANSFER

At the WWU, transfer is considered the third core dimension of scientific work next to research and teaching, and this implies taking on responsibility towards civil society. Whether as the subject of participatory projects, as a relevant facet of start-up considerations or as a central aspect of the transfer of knowledge: for the University of Münster, sustainability is a central principle for all activities undertaken as part of this particular core dimension. In this context, transfer is given a broad interpretation concerning the cooperation and communication between science and society. This reaches far beyond the mere economic utilisation of knowledge or technology, and thus is in itself a sustainable resource for a democratic society.

ORGANISATION, FINANCES AND DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

The University of Münster also focuses on sustainability in its day-to-day operations and when making decisions with financial consequences. With regard to the environment, the University of Münster considers itself bound by the target of climate neutrality; a regular scrutiny of how resources are used aims to facilitate a sustainable use of recyclable materials and also reduce their consumption in total. In a social dimension, the University of Münster is committed to equality, diversity and integration as the basis for equitable employment conditions, fair teaching and learning processes, as well as a cooperative working atmosphere.

The University of Münster considers sustainability a central guiding principle that applies to the entire University. Through its commitment to the principles formulated in this *Mission Statement*, their implementation and continuous evaluation, the University intends to play its part in contributing to the societal transformation that is so desperately needed.

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