



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

ACTION PLAN – CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY 2024–2026

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¹ This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

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Description

This action plan contains university-wide objectives and activities for the University's climate and sustainability work during the period 2024–2026. The plan is part of the University's systematic work in accordance with the University's Rule for environmental and sustainability work and the Ordinance on environmental management in government agencies.

Background

The Vision for Umeå University states that one of the University's most vital tasks is to drive the transition towards a sustainable society. As a public authority, the University is expected to contribute towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda, and ensuring that society's climate objectives are met. The University has actively committed to working towards this through the Climate Framework for Higher Education Institutions² and Umeå Municipality's Climate Roadmap.³

In order to draw up proposed activities within this action plan, dialogue has taken place with the University's strategic councils: the Strategic Council for Education, the Strategic Council for Research and Doctoral Education, and the Strategic Council for the Administration. There has also been dialogue with the University Administration's management team, the Healthy Campus reference group, the Umeå Transformation Research Initiative (UTRI) steering group, the student unions and the faculties' directors of studies. Opinions on the plan's content have also been sought from the trade unions within the central collaborative group. Proposed activities are linked to commitments and intentions in collaboration agreements with property owners and municipalities, and to criteria in ranking systems and certifications in which the University participates.

The University has had a carbon budget drawn up so that it can make continuous contributions towards society's climate objectives. This shows climate emissions from external purchases of goods and services, purchased capital goods and business travel, and emissions from waste management, energy consumption and rented premises. The carbon budget shows that from 2022 until 2045, the University will need to reduce its carbon emissions by 19% per year compared with the previous year to be in line with society's climate objectives. The carbon budget will be monitored via annual climate reporting.

1.1 Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the University's climate and sustainability work is to help drive the transition towards a sustainable society and, through the activities included in the plan, the integration of environmental, social and economic sustainability aspects into the University's operations is expected to increase. In particular, the plan will contribute towards reducing the University's negative environmental and climate footprint, and towards developing the work involved with Healthy Campus.⁴ In parallel with this action plan, there are also other university-wide plans and steering

² <https://suhf.se/app/uploads/2022/03/Klimatramverket-for-Sveriges-universitet-och-hogskolor-SUHF-2021.pdf>

³ https://www.umea.se/download/18_5d42dd88183aec45d4d21c4/1665751305603/Ume%C3%A5%20klimat%C3%A4rdplan%202022-10-14.pdf

⁴ <https://www.fisu.net/programmes/healthy-campus/>

documents that aim to promote and strengthen the University's sustainable development work, such as the Gender mainstreaming strategy and the Quality system for education.

The Action plan for climate and sustainability 2024–2026 contains two overarching objectives, 13 targeted goals and around 30 activities. To facilitate communication in connection with the University's climate and sustainability work, the target objectives and activities have been divided up into the following areas:

- Education and students
- Research and utilisation
- Purchasing, procurement and investments
- Property and campus
- Meetings and travels
- Chemicals and waste management.

1.2 Activities and systematic approach

The forms for the University's systematic environmental and sustainability work derive from the Ordinance (2009:907) on environmental management in government agencies, and are described for Umeå University in the Rule for environmental and sustainability work.

The two overarching objectives and the 13 targeted goals relate to both the university-wide sustainability work and the work carried out at faculties, departments and offices. University-wide activities must have the support of the relevant administrative offices or strategic councils, and – as far as possible – must be integrated into regular operational planning. At faculties, departments or offices, the dean, head of department, director or head of office is responsible for ensuring that activities which contribute towards the targeted goals and the overall objectives are carried out. The relevant manager assesses which objectives are appropriate to work with at different faculties, departments and offices. Information about this can be found on the staff website.⁵

Overall climate and sustainable development

Overall objectives

- I. Umeå University must contribute towards achieving the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda.
- II. Umeå University must be climate neutral by 2045.⁶

Activities 2024–2026

- Review and further develop the Environmental policy, including the Meeting and travel policy and other policy documents within the field of sustainability.
- Develop method support for gathering and compiling environmental and climate data, and for preparing annual climate reporting.

⁵ <https://www.aurora.umu.se/organisation-och-styrning/hallbarhet/hallbarhetsarbete-pa-institutioner-och-enheter/>

⁶ Refers to Scope 1, Scope 2 and those parts of Scope 3 for which data can be provided. Calculations and reporting are based on the **Greenhouse Gas Protocol**, the global standard for calculating companies' and organisations' carbon footprints. Scope 1: All direct GHG emissions from a company. Exhaust gases from cars and machines, combustion and any gas leakage within processes. Scope 2: Indirect company GHG emissions from the consumption of purchased electricity, heat or steam. Scope 3: All indirect emissions that occur in the value chain of a company (excluding Scope 2), including both upstream and downstream emissions. Students' travel to and from the University is not included.

- Draw up an action plan containing activities to develop the University's Healthy Campus work, with the ambition that the University should achieve Platinum certification level.
- Hold a series of seminars on the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs to inspire and engage staff and students, and to equip them with tools for transformation.

Education and students

Higher education has an important role to play in providing students with the necessary knowledge and skills to ensure that they can work for sustainable development in their future professional lives. By integrating sustainability aspects into education, students can practise key competences for sustainable development. Through teaching being carried out with student-active, democratic and transformative pedagogical approaches, students are given opportunities to develop the knowledge and skills required to address society's challenges.

In order to teach for and about sustainable development, teaching staff also need to be able to place their subject within a wider perspective.

Students' and staff's knowledge and commitment are also an important resource, and should be used within the University's environmental and sustainability work.

By carrying out activities within the field of Education and students, the University can contribute towards all 17 SDGs.

Targeted goals for 2030

1. Sustainable development is integrated into education at all levels.
2. The knowledge and commitment of students is used to a greater extent in the University's environmental and sustainability work.

Activities 2024–2026

- Collect and share good examples of social activities aimed at new students to prevent ill health and promote a sustainable study life.⁷
- Carry out activities for broader recruitment based on the review carried out by the Swedish Higher Education Authority in 2019–2022.
- Develop further training for teaching staff regarding learning for sustainable development, with the aim of being able to integrate sustainable development into education at all levels.
- Work to draw up joint guidelines for integrating sustainability perspectives into higher education via the University Climate Network.
- Have a dialogue with the student unions at least once a year to take advantage of students' knowledge and involvement in the University's environmental and sustainability work.

Research and utilisation

Together with education, research and collaboration with surrounding society are the University's most important contributions to the transition towards a sustainable society. New knowledge is essential in order to address society's challenges. The University also contributes towards a sustainable transition by developing innovative knowledge-based solutions. The University collaborates

⁷ A sustainable student life in accordance with the intentions of the Work environment and equal opportunities policy, FS 1.1-1526-19.

extensively with companies and organisations, within both long-term partnerships and time-limited projects.

By carrying out activities within the field of Research and utilisation, the University can contribute towards all 17 SDGs.

Targeted goals for 2030

3. The University's research on sustainable development must increase.
4. Researchers' and staff's knowledge is utilised in outreach activities and in the University's environmental sustainability work.

Activities 2024–2026

- Implement the Arctic Graduate School with a Focus on Sustainable Development.
- Devise forms for – and establish – a scientific reference group for the University's sustainability work.
- Participate in bilateral projects, such as the South Africa-Sweden University Forum (SASUF) 2030, Sweden-Korea Education, Research, and Innovation Collaboration (SKERIC) and MIRAI 2.0 (a Swedish-Japanese collaboration that aims to strengthen cooperation within academia and with industry, as well as cooperation within education, research and innovation), in order to develop joint solutions to the challenges addressed by the SDGs via discussion and collaboration within these projects.
- Report sustainability data to QS Sustainability Ranking and the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.
- Umeå University's innovation support develops and works with verification processes to ensure that the SDGs' sustainability perspective permeates its support operations.
- Umeå University Holding AB invests in operations that address one or more of the SDGs.

Purchasing, procurement and investments

Purchasing and procurement are important instruments of control for contributing to the transition towards a sustainable society. By taking into account and setting requirements for environmental, social and employment law considerations, as described in the Swedish Public Procurement Act (2016:1145), the transition towards a sustainable society can be promoted, and the University's negative environmental and sustainability footprint can be reduced. Recycling and extending the lifetime of products can also contribute to this.

The University has a number of restaurant, café and catering operations that offer their services to the University's staff and students, and the University can promote health, the environment and decent employment law conditions by placing requirements on – or engaging in dialogue on – nutritious, fair and climate-smart food and service options.

Umeå University uses donated funds for financing research and education in accordance with the conditions specified by donors. When it comes to the University's own investments, financial management must be sustainable with regard to environmental, social and economic sustainability.

By carrying out activities within the field of Purchasing, procurement and investments, the University can contribute towards several of the SDGs: SDG2 Zero hunger, SDG3 Good health and well-being, SDG8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG12 Responsible consumption and production, SDG13 Climate action, SDG14 Life below water and SDG15 Life on land.

Targeted goals for 2030

5. Requirements for environmental, social and employment law considerations must be imposed when carrying out procurement and purchasing.
6. The selection of nutritious, fair and climate-smart food and service options must increase.
7. The University's foundations and donated funds must be invested with consideration for the environment and sustainability.

Activities 2024–2026

- Develop support and offer training to managers and other relevant functions in relation to sustainable procurement.
- Evaluate a pilot study on digitalising the University's second-hand furniture store, with objectives for implementation.
- Draw up a guide to nutritious, fair and climate-smart food and service options, covering restaurants, cafés, catering and events, that can be used on the University's campus and by the University's operations.
- Update the checklist for sustainable events with Healthy Campus aspects.

Property and campus

The University's operations are extensive, and require appropriate premises which must also facilitate a sustainable working or study life. Rented premises require resources such as fittings and furnishings, energy, water and refrigerants. In order for society's climate objectives to be achieved, energy-saving and energy-efficiency initiatives need to be carried out continuously, while at the same time continuously analysing consumption to promote appropriate, efficient use of premises.

Green spaces and outdoor environments can create a sense of well-being and promote good physical and mental health, as well as acting as carbon sinks which capture carbon dioxide from the air and benefit biodiversity. Together with streams in the University's campus areas, green spaces can act as "green corridors" for natural flows, plants and animals. They can also be used as teaching environments in outdoor education.

By carrying out activities within the field of Property and campus, the University can contribute towards the following SDGs: SDG3 Good health and well-being, SDG4 Quality education, SDG6 Clean water and sanitation, SDG7 Affordable and clean energy, SDG11 Sustainable cities and communities, SDG13 Climate action, SDG14 Life below water and SDG15 Life on land.

Targeted goals for 2030

8. Climate impact from energy use must reduce every year.
9. The University's premises must facilitate a sustainable study and working life, while at the same time premises are used more efficiently.
10. The outdoor spaces in the University's campus areas must contribute towards good health and well-being, while at the same time promoting biodiversity and making outdoor education possible.

Activities 2024–2026

- Investigate energy-saving adjustments for energy-intensive apparatus and equipment within laboratory operations, including low-temperature freezers.

- Develop support to promote sustainable use of premises, as described in the Property management plan 2024–2027.
- Together with property owners, carry out the replacement of halogen compact fluorescent lamps with LED lighting on Campus Umeå and Umeå Arts Campus.
- Together with property owners, the Centre for Educational Development and other relevant actors will investigate the opportunities for establishing an area on Campus Umeå as a kitchen garden for both cultivation and outdoor education.
- Develop the work with outdoor environments to include aquatic systems and endangered species.
- Integrate water consumption and hot water use into the University’s systematic environmental and sustainability work.

Meetings and travels

Meetings are an important part of the University’s operations, and create added value both for us and for our partners. However, it can be challenging to satisfy the need for and the value of meetings without generating emissions that have an impact on the climate. Business travel also accounts for a significant proportion of the University’s climate emissions.

Commuting can have a negative impact on the environment and climate, and the University wants to improve and develop the opportunities for sustainable travel to and from the workplace. Commuting by bike or on foot can also promote good health.

By carrying out activities within the field of Meetings and travels, the University can contribute towards the following SDGs: SDG3 Good health and well-being, SDG11 Sustainable cities and communities, and SDG13 Climate action.

Targeted goals for 2030

11. The climate impact from travels must decrease without having a negative impact on opportunities for a sustainable study and working life.
12. The use of digital meeting technologies to replace business travel must increase.

Activities 2024–2026

- Review the Rules for business travel at Umeå University, with the aim of more clearly promoting environmentally friendly travel choices, while not having a negative impact on opportunities for sustainable working life.
- Develop the campus infrastructure so that it promotes sustainable commuting and sustainable local business travel, based on the results of the 2023 travel habits survey. This includes investigating the possibility of offering employee bicycles and trialling a company bicycle pool.
- Together with property owners, continuously review the need for secure, sheltered bicycle parking.
- Together with property owners, investigate the opportunities for establishing a bicycle service and bicycle recycling on Campus Umeå.

Chemicals and waste management

The University’s operations generate large quantities of waste that could constitute resources in other contexts. Society’s recycling objectives are growing with time, and at the turn of 2023/24, for example, a compulsory requirement for separating food waste was introduced. By improving waste sorting,

recycling more and reducing the quantity of combustible waste, the University's negative environmental and climate footprint can be reduced.

The University has relatively extensive laboratory operations, and avoiding and limiting the spread of hazardous substances is also part of sustainable societal development. By systematically substituting hazardous substances and imposing requirements in terms of the chemical content of goods and products in procurement and purchasing, the risks of negative impacts on the environment and human health can be reduced and the work environment can be improved.

By carrying out activities within the field of Chemicals and waste management, the University can contribute towards the following SDGs: SDG3 Good health and well-being, SDG6 Clean water and sanitation, SDG8 Decent work and economic growth, SDG12 Responsible consumption and production, SDG13 Climate action and SDG14 Life below water.

Targeted goals for 2030

13. The amount of combustible waste and hazardous waste must be reduced.

Activities 2024–2026

- Introduce waste sorting in accordance with legislative requirements throughout the University, in the first instance in kitchen areas, corridors and office floors.
- Draw up university-wide guidance on sustainability, health and safety in laboratories.