

Workinggroup 7; Vision, Values & Priorities

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Summary

VU Amsterdam has made considerable progress in terms of sustainability across its research, operations and curriculum. To build on this progress and ensure coherence, we propose a strategy that is firmly grounded in VU's core values of responsibility, openness and personalisation. This approach prioritises genuine impact over visibility and empowers our community, particularly our students, to be agents of change.

We recommend establishing a cross-sectoral **Sustainability Committee** with representation from students, academic- and operational-staff, as well as executive leadership. This committee should be granted explicit mandates and clear decision-making authority. Guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), the committee will define VU's sustainability focus areas. Through this targeted approach, sustainability becomes embedded in how we operate, teach, and conduct research.

By 2027, all degree programmes must demonstrate how they have integrated sustainability into their curricula in a manner that reflects their respective disciplines and contexts. Departments will use backward planning to define, step by step, how this will be achieved. Programs that are already predominantly sustainability-focused may request exemptions. In order to further embed sustainability in our institutional culture, we propose allocating a minimum percentage of full-time equivalents (FTEs) to sustainability-related initiatives, thereby ensuring that all employees are provided with the opportunity to contribute meaningfully.

Effective sustainability action begins with clarity, which is achieved through transparent data and open dialogue across the university. Therefore, operational actions must be based on publicly available, comprehensive data to ensure decisions are impact-driven. The Sustainability Committee will play a central role in monitoring progress and public reporting.

Decision Points:

1. **Establish a Sustainability Committee with student, academic, and operational staff representation.** This committee will develop a decision-making framework that is aligned with VU's vision and values to guide prioritisation of sustainability goals across all university activities.
2. **Allocate a fixed percentage of staff full-time equivalent (FTE) to sustainability-related work,** ensuring that all employees have time and to contribute meaningfully to



VU's sustainability goals.

3. **Integrate a minimum number of ECTS on sustainability into every curriculum,** tailored to each discipline, to ensure that all students engage with sustainability in ways that are relevant to their studies.
4. **Base operational sustainability decisions on transparent, comprehensive data.** These decisions must be impact-driven and evidence-based, rather than being influenced by external image or superficial optics.