

Working Together For Sustainability¹ — the University of Bonn Mission Statement

As an accredited University of Excellence, we have a particular responsibility to empower future generations to make society fit for the future and treat nature and its resources responsibly. We actively embrace this responsibility by systematically embedding sustainability in all areas of our University—in research, teaching and operations. We include all University members in our whole-of-institution approach, recognizing diversity as an opportunity to shape the process of transforming our University together by harnessing the possibilities and experiences that each one of us brings. This is because we will only be able to live up to our responsibility if everything that the University does is driven by sustainability.

Sustainable development aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Many worrying changes all over the world, most notably those affecting the climate, biodiversity and the consumption of raw materials, demonstrate the need to set sustainability up as the key principle guiding society's actions and seize opportunities for technological and societal advancement. We therefore have a particularly strong commitment to sustainability in order to secure a future worth living in. We want to gradually reduce environmental pollution and resource consumption with the aim of achieving climate neutrality. However, we will be unable to achieve this goal without political support. This is why we are demanding that the state government in North Rhine-Westphalia create the necessary conditions and underlying framework that will enable our University to become climate-neutral and will support it along this journey.

Bonn is home to numerous non-governmental organizations as well as being the German city of the United Nations, whose work prioritizes sustainable development all over the world. This exceptional setting brings a unique advantage to our location and one on which we as a University build in many different ways. In addition, we are expanding our partnerships further so that our commitment to sustainability can have a direct impact on society.

Sustainability in research and teaching

Through its top-level research, the University of Bonn will act as an agent of change, helping to lay the foundations for transformation processes affecting the whole of society. Many of our researchers are studying sustainable development issues, thus establishing a valuable knowledge base for debates, political and personal decision-making, and answering pressing social questions. In particular, we are supporting inter- and transdisciplinary research and promoting the transfer of research findings into day-to-day work and society.

Issues connected with sustainability and sustainability research will also play a key role in teaching. We are developing new learning offerings, which are being incorporated into the various subject curricula. Sustainability is becoming visible as an integral part of degree programs. Our University offers all students various ways in which they can address sustainability issues in an interdisciplinary and practically focused way.

Sustainability in operations

The University of Bonn aims to reduce environmental pollution, cut resource consumption further and protect biodiversity. Our commitment to sustainability, especially in our energy supply, construction, waste management, mobility and procurement, is minimizing the negative impact on

the environment. We are thus making an active contribution to efforts to meet local and national climate action targets.

Participation and student involvement

The behavior and dedication of every individual member of our University are doing as much to support efforts to achieve sustainability targets as our research, teaching and operations. Participation and transparency are thus key guiding principles that we put into action chiefly through our ongoing communications and a wide range of participatory formats. We are creating the necessary organizational framework and, in particular, are bringing students actively on board and incorporating them into our structures in order to embed a sustainability culture at our University together with all its members.

¹Our understanding of sustainability is based on the definition in the Brundtland Report and refers to social development that is environmentally compatible, socially just and economically efficient.