



Sustainability
Week Switzerland

Sustainable HEIs Switzerland

Vision 2030

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Vision 2030: Why it matters.

Sustainability is versatile and complex, and creating a more sustainable education landscape is multi-level, multi-generational task.

Time's up. The time to act is now. In the 2018 IPCC report, the world's leading climate scientists explicitly stressed the need to keep global warming to a maximum of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Exceedance of this limit will have devastating impacts, making the risk of droughts, floods, extreme heat, and poverty for hundreds of millions of people more likely.

According to the World Wildlife Fund, global temperatures have risen over 170 times the background rate in the last 50 years. We must step into action.

Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Switzerland play a crucial role in taking action against the imminent climate breakdown. HEIs are high emitters, through global aviation emissions, carbon inequality, and waste production. But these institutions have an opportunity to become part of the solution.

Our society is dependent on an intact natural environment. Our economy only moves within the boundaries of society and the ecology of our surroundings. Protecting ecosystems, leading the way to a more sustainable society, and engaging sustainably in the economy are no longer wishes; they are necessities.

It is the opportunity and responsibility of Higher Education Institutions in Switzerland to lead the world as a part of the solution. HEIs are role models for institutions everywhere. HEIs have a responsibility to the precious ecology and natural environment of Switzerland. And HEIs are training the leaders of the future, and they must invest time, energy, and money into sustainability to ensure there is a future for them to lead.

Many HEIs profess to operate sustainable campuses and systems, but in practice often fall short. HEIs have an opportunity to pioneer and serve as leaders in sustainability for educational institutions around the world, as well as for society at large. The potential global impact is enormous.

The students of Switzerland call on the Higher Education Institutions to set the basis for a national movement. Academia is a central driver of change in society. We need a national movement of HEI and students to confront the realities of the crises we face.

Vision 2030: What it looks like.

Strategy and Guidance	Every HEI should integrate sustainability into its strategy. Sustainability is institutionally anchored.
Services and Communication	Within the framework of the sustainability strategy, the HEI should regularly communicate about its successes and efforts both internally and externally.
National Influence	HEI acts as a role model in sustainability and innovation towards other HEIs around Switzerland and the world.
Teaching and Research	The HEI management ensures that sustainability is meaningfully integrated into the teaching of all departments and institutes.
Operations	The HEI is a living laboratory and implements sustainability in all operations and on campus.
Finance	The HEI recognizes the necessity of prioritizing sustainability in its financial activities and investments.

Vision 2030: How we get there.

Recommended timetable

Red = urgent, to be done by the end of 2019

Green = urgent, to be done by the end of 2020

Blue = long term, to be done by 2030

1.Strategy & guidance

- Integrating sustainability in a concrete and measurable manner into the strategy and mission statement of HEIs.
- Creating institutional anchoring with sufficient competencies: A sustainability office or council to which students have regular access, staffed by at least one 100% employee.
- Balanced gender distribution in leading bodies.

2.Services

- Transparency: annual sustainability report with measurable targets and indicators, baseline data, timeline and progress reporting.
- Enabling and supporting student initiatives through funding and access (Projects such as urban gardening, information events, sustainability weeks, etc.).

- Student contact person(s) for sustainability (e.g. in the form of a student sustainability commission).

3.National influence

- Sharing of best-practices and increase ambitions in regard to sustainability issues.
- Advocacy as a climate champion through demanding other HEI to follow a zero carbon 2050 and halving 2030 strategy.
- Active engagement in national bodies such as HEIs to push for ambitious climate and sustainability engagement.
- Promote international collaboration, exchange best practices, and serve as role model for institutions around the world.

4.Teaching

- Integrating sustainability into the teaching and curricula of all degree programmes.
- Inter- and transdisciplinary courses to anchor sustainability in all degree programmes.
- For the following topics sustainability should be implemented in greater depth:
 - Economics (e.g. include obligatory courses and research on growth criticism, ecological, plural and heterodox economics)
 - Law (e.g. questions of environmental law)
 - Humanities and social sciences (e.g. global climate policy)
 - Abstract and natural sciences (e.g. resource efficiency)

4.Research

- Active promotion of sustainable innovation (e.g. renewable energies).
- Preferential access to financial resources for sustainable innovation.
- Economical use of resources in research (chemicals, energy, etc.).
- Avoid animal testing as far as possible.
- Transparency in (third-party) financing.
- Promotion of research on social ecological transformation to a sustainable economic system.

6.Operations

6.1.Cafeteria

- Daily offer of attractive vegetarian and vegan menus.
- If meat, then replace meat with high carbon footprint (e.g. substitute beef for chicken meat).
- Regional, seasonal products and products with proven quality label (e.g. Bio-Knospe, Fairtrade).
- Clearly visible product declaration (origin, label, etc.).
- Energy-saving operation (cooling, cooking, lighting, etc.).
- Reasonable prices.
- Avoid food waste as much as possible, but where waste is generated, compost/process into biofuel.
- No disposable tableware and containers.

6.2. Mobility & transport

- Enable climate-friendly travel to all HEI locations (e.g. commitment to safe cycling paths). This includes engagement with the city council to ensure this is taken care of in city planning.
- Sufficient bicycle parking spaces.
- Reduction of flight emissions (concept and implementation).
- No reimbursement of travel expenses for CO2-intensive individual transport (with diesel, petrol).
- Promote and support video conferencing.

6.3. Resources

- 100 % renewable energy (electricity, heating, mobility, etc.).
- Install renewable energy sources (photovoltaic systems, biogas, wind power plants, etc.).
- Economical use of water.
- Save energy and animate building to automatically: turn off lights, turn off heating, turn off beamer, close windows/ventilation.
- Carbon zero (concept and implementation).

6.4. Waste

- Enable recycling (PET, paper, aluminium, etc.).
- Save paper (enabling paperless study, double-sided printing by default, hand dryer instead of paper towels, recycled paper).
- Use environmentally friendly cleaning agents.

6.5. Environment

- Green campus (creating a natural living space on the campus grounds (e.g. not only places with hard surfaces)).
- Original and regionally adapted environment (e.g. native plants).

6.6. Social Sustainability

- Ensure that education is open to all. This includes low financial barriers to studying.
- Promote equitable engagement across marginalized identities such as gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation (at the professor level, student level, staff level).
- Promote diversity among people and act against discrimination.

7. Finance

- Financial investments must be used in such a way that they do not support environmentally and socially harmful business practices. This includes the divestment from fossil fuel companies.
- Transparency of financial support from third parties.
- Conduct portfolio analysis to assess sustainability of current investments.
- Invest according to ESG criteria.
- Invest in sustainable projects both on and off campus.

Annex: Assessment indicators.

Assessment indicators based on the [AASHE STARS program](#).

1.Strategy and Guidance

- HEI integrates sustainability into mission and vision of the institution.
- HEI creates sustainability office with at least one 100% employee.
- HEI covers sustainability topics in new employee orientation and/or in outreach and guidance materials distributed to new employees.

2.Services and Communication

- HEI allocates funding to support sustainability activities of students and staff.
- HEI has student-led sustainability programs and initiatives.
- HEI holds at least one sustainability-related outreach campaign directed at students and/or employees.
- HEI has formally adopted plans that include measurable sustainability objectives.

3.National Influence

- HEI sends at least one staff member to Sustainable University Day each year.
- HEI advocates for public policies that support campus sustainability or that otherwise advance sustainability.
- HEI collaborates with other colleges and universities to support and help build the campus sustainability community through at least 3 meetings each year.

4.Teaching

- HEI conducts inventory to identify sustainability course offerings.
- HEI offers at least one major, minor, or sustainability-focused concentration or degree.
- HEI conducts assessment of sustainability literacy of students.

5.Research

- HEI conducts inventory to identify sustainability research initiatives and activities.
- HEI has program that encourages sustainability research.

6.Operations

- Cafeteria
 - HEI and/or its primary cafeteria contractor conducts an inventory to identify food and beverage purchases that have sustainability attributes.
 - HEI meets checklist requirements above.
- Mobility & transport
 - HEI conducts a survey to gather data about student and employee commuting behavior.
 - HEI has implemented strategies to encourage more sustainable modes of transportation and reduce the impact of student and employee commuting.

- HEI meets checklist requirements above.
- Resources
 - HEI A) generates electricity from clean and renewable energy sources on campus, B) uses renewable sources for non-electric, on-site energy generation, C) catalyzes the development of off-site clean and renewable energy sources, or D) purchases the environmental attributes of electricity in the form of RECs, GOs, or renewable electricity from a certified green power purchasing option.
 - HEI has data on potable water use, total water use (potable and non-potable), numbers of campus users, gross square feet/metres of floor area, and area of vegetated grounds.
- Waste
 - HEI has data on the weight of materials recycled, composted, donated/re-sold, and disposed in a landfill or incinerator; and numbers of campus users.
 - HEI has strategies in place to 1) safely dispose of all hazardous, special (e.g. coal ash), universal, and non-regulated chemical waste and minimize the presence of these materials on campus; and/or 2) recycle, reuse, and/or refurbish electronic waste.
- Environment
 - HEI conducts an assessment to identify endangered and vulnerable species and/or environmentally sensitive areas on institution owned or managed land.
 - HEI integrates green and living species into the campus space.
- Social sustainability
 - HEI 1) has a diversity and equity committee, office and/or officer and/or 2) makes cultural competence and diversity trainings and activities available.
 - HEI 1) has policies and programs in place to make it accessible and affordable to low-income students and/or to support non-traditional students; and/or 2) is able to document its accessibility and affordability to low-income students.
 - HEI has policies, programs or initiatives to support underrepresented groups and foster a more diverse and inclusive campus community.

7.Finance

- HEI has a formally established and active committee on investor responsibility (CIR) or similar body that makes recommendations to fund decision-makers on socially and environmentally responsible investment opportunities across asset classes, including proxy voting (if the institution engages in proxy voting).
- HEI 1) has written policies, guidelines or directives that seek to support sustainable purchasing across commodity categories institution-wide, 2) employs Life Cycle Cost Analysis (LCCA) as a matter of policy and practice when evaluating energy and water using products, systems and building components, or 3) has published sustainability criteria to be applied when evaluating products and services.
- HEI makes a snapshot of its investment holdings available to the public.
- HEI divests from fossil fuels.