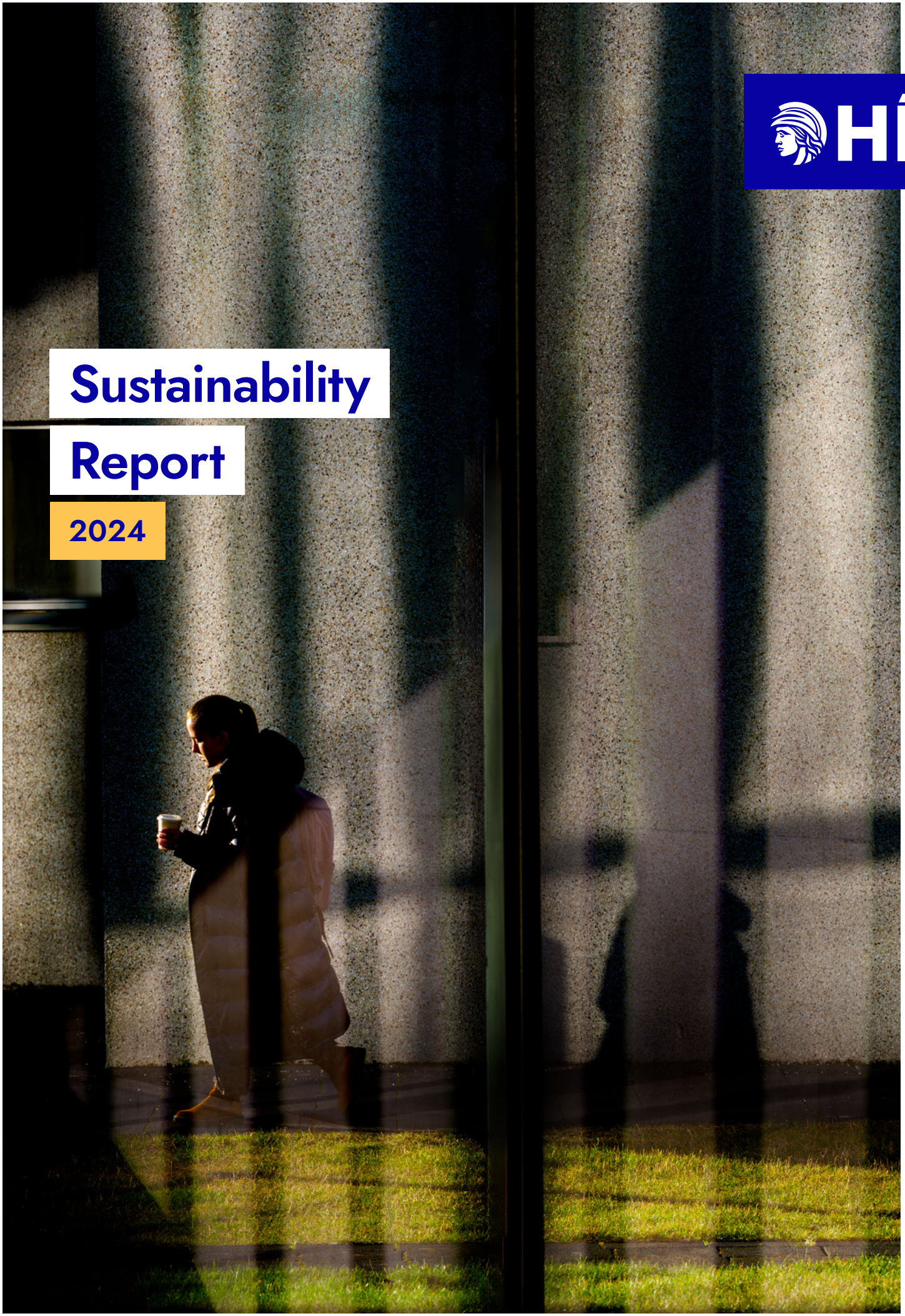

Sustainability Report

2024

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All photographs are by Kristinn Ingvarsson unless otherwise noted.

This report was prepared on behalf of UI's Sustainability Committee.

November 2025.

Sustainability and Diversity Goals of UI26:

KNOWLEDGE CONTRIBUTING TO A SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

The University will lead the way in sustainability through teaching, research, and knowledge creation.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The University will lead the way in sustainable development by setting measurable targets for carbon neutrality during the strategic period, based on national targets.

A DIVERSE UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

The University will be an even better workplace, ensuring equality and attracting students and staff from diverse backgrounds. Students with immigrant backgrounds will receive special support, and an emphasis will be placed on diversity in the student body.

WORKING TOGETHER WITH SOCIETY

The University's impact on society will be increased with an action plan for improved support and direct dialogue between researchers and stakeholders, in order to combat fake news, reinforce trust in science, and lay the groundwork for public policy.

Contents

Note From the Rector

Recent months have brought both surprising and alarming news. Heat records have been broken across the world, US authorities have banned the terms *climate change*, *green* and *sustainable*, and the mosquito – previously absent from Iceland – has now settled in the country. The Gulf Stream, often described as Iceland's lifeline, appears to be weakening and scientists warn that it could collapse if greenhouse gas emissions are not rapidly reduced. Global news has become so troubling that many either avoid it altogether or no longer know which reports to trust, as fake news, misinformation, and polarisation erode public confidence.

Still, amid this confusion, there are reasons for optimism. Earlier this year, renewable energy surpassed coal for the first time as the world's main source of electricity. More than one-third of all energy produced globally now comes from renewable sources. Such progress does not happen by chance; it is the outcome of research, innovation, and university education. This is well illustrated by this year's Nobel Prize in Economics, awarded to scholars who have shown how research, technological progress, and innovation are fundamental drivers of sustained economic growth. Rarely, if ever, has humanity had a stronger need for well-educated innovators.

Researchers from all disciplines at the University of Iceland are working systematically to address the challenges of our time, as reflected in this fourth Sustainability Report of the University. The report also features interviews with academic and administrative staff about research and projects related to each of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It thus illustrates how deeply sustainability is embedded across all areas of scientific work at the University of Iceland and reminds us that the solutions of the future will not emerge from isolated branches of science alone, but from all disciplines addressing nature, human society, and humanity itself.

In its Strategy for 2021–2026 (UI26), the University of Iceland committed to integrating sustainability into its teaching, research, and operations. The progress achieved has placed the University high on the *Times Higher Education* ranking of universities with the greatest social and economic impact, as measured against the UN Sustainable Development Goals. The University now ranks between 201st and 300th among more than 2,300 universities worldwide. During this academic year we will develop a strategy for the coming years, which will prioritise all three pillars of sustainability: environment, society, and economy. It is our duty to ensure that sustainability is reflected not only in research and teaching, but in every aspect of the University's work, including decision-making and governance. This commitment matters deeply to the staff and students at the University of Iceland, both now and in the future.

Silja Bára R. Ómarsdóttir

Note from the President of the Student Council

Most people go to university to study, but also to learn how to make a difference and contribute to society. There is no doubt that one of the noblest contributions to society lies in helping to ensure that those who come after us can live on a planet as good as, or better than, the one we have had the privilege to enjoy. That is why sustainability today is not a hobby project, but a daily test. How do we shape a society where the right choice is the easiest choice?

Although the question is short, the answer is complex. But perhaps it doesn't need to be overcomplicated. Students' vision for the future is clear: we want to belong to a university community that dares to change rules, incentives, and infrastructures in favour of the responsible and sensible use of resources. This vision is not about achieving perfection, but about setting measurable steps, realistic expectations, and following through on them. It doesn't have to be more complicated than that.

The University of Iceland's responsibility in all of this is twofold. On the one hand, it must lead by example in its own operations, with clear and realistic goals, regular measurements, and transparent results. On the other hand, it must share simple, practical solutions that benefit society as a whole, through research, teaching, and collaboration. In this way, the University becomes a bridge between research and action.

We know where we are heading: towards a university that makes the right choice simple and appealing. Now it is time to align our intentions with our actions.

Arent Orri Jónsson Claessen,
President of the Student Council

Executive Summary

This fourth annual sustainability report of the University of Iceland (UI) highlights the University's commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The report provides valuable insights into the wide range of initiatives at UI aligned with the 17 SDGs. The overarching goal is to continuously enhance UI's sustainability efforts, striving to elevate the institution's performance in addressing global challenges and contributing to a more sustainable future. The report was commissioned by UI's Sustainability Committee and prepared by the Sustainability Institute at UI.

Today's societies face deep and complex challenges. Climate change, ecosystem degradation, growing inequality, and weakening democracy all threaten both stability and the future. At the same time, polarisation, conflict, and the spread of misinformation erode trust and weaken society's ability to respond to shared problems.

These are not isolated issues but symptoms of interconnected systems where society, the economy, and the environment are deeply intertwined. Sustainability is not about solving single problems one at a time but about understanding the bigger picture, how different areas affect one another and how today's decisions shape the world of tomorrow.

Sustainable development is about building communities that can thrive over time, where human well-being, environmental protection, and economic stability go hand in hand. Achieving this means respecting the ecological limits of the planet and making decisions with the long term in mind. It requires a new understanding of what we value, greater collaboration across sectors and disciplines, and more holistic thinking in how we plan and act. The SDGs reflect this integrated vision, emphasising well-being, justice, and peace, all within the limits set by nature and Earth's ecosystems.

Universities play a key role in this transformation. They have both the opportunity and the responsibility to expand knowledge, deepen understanding, and help shape a more responsible and collaborative future. Their role goes beyond teaching and research; it includes engaging in public discourse, building ethical and democratic awareness, and supporting long-term solutions.

The University of Iceland has made sustainability one of the cornerstones of its strategy (UI26) and works to integrate it across all aspects of its operations, from governance and teaching to research and community engagement. By making sustainability a guiding principle, the University aims to contribute to a future built on justice, respect, and well-being.

Approach

The work of UI was mapped in relation to the SDGs and categorised into five main areas: research, teaching and learning, community outreach and partnerships, operations, and student initiatives. Various channels were used to gather this information. For example, a call for suggestions was sent to all UI staff and doctoral students, inviting them to provide details on projects, courses, and topics related to sustainability and the SDGs in 2024.

Interviews with individuals involved in sustainability-related research or projects are featured under each SDG. These interviewees were selected based on their work. Additionally, data on peer-reviewed articles related to the SDGs were collected from Scopus, the largest database of abstracts and citations for peer-reviewed literature.

Information about the environmental performance of UI's operations, such as waste management, energy consumption, water use, and carbon emissions, was provided by UI's Division of Resources and Operations. These data are compiled annually through the Green Accounting initiative and submitted to the Icelandic Environment and Energy Agency on behalf of UI.

This report presents a comprehensive mapping of UI's activities in relation to the 17 SDGs. Within each SDG, a diverse range of UI initiatives is highlighted and categorised. For each goal, the number of related peer-reviewed articles is presented, along with their citation counts and field-weighted citation impact. UI's performance in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings for each SDG is also included, offering a thorough overview of the university's contributions to global sustainability.

Opportunities for Improvement

The following recommendations are based on the goals outlined in the University of Iceland's strategy for 2021–2026 (UI26) and its Work Programme on *Sustainability in Teaching, Research and University Management*. These recommendations were first presented in UI's Sustainability Report for 2021, and were categorised into critical, very important and important. The status of each recommendation is indicated on pages 50–51, accompanied by a brief summary of developments in each focus area. The critical recommendations are listed below, with the current status indicated:

- A Pro-Rector and/or a manager in central administration are made responsible for sustainability (and SDGs) related issues. This role can be supported by the Sustainability Committee and the Sustainability Institute.
- In 2023, a presentation about sustainability and the SDGs is held for staff in each school and central administration.
- Symposium about the findings of the UI's Sustainability report held in early 2023.
- UI's Sustainability report is produced annually, and the editorial team are given greater time and support when making the report.
- A course about sustainability and the SDGs is developed and made available for students from all disciplines in the school year of 2023.
- UI develops a deeper understanding of the scope of UI's emission from its operations from current status, for example with respect to commuting of staff and students, procurement, new construction, etc.
- UI sets a climate action plan and policy regarding operation and measurable goals and countermeasures. To achieve carbon neutrality, UI needs to weigh costs and benefits of different options for carbon offsetting for remaining emissions and decide which option to use.

Objective achieved · In progress · In good progress · Little progress

Sustainability in an Interconnected World

Our world is shaped by a range of complex and deeply connected challenges that increasingly threaten the stability of societies. Climate change, the degradation of ecosystems, growing inequality and weakened democratic institutions all pose serious risks to sustainable development. At the same time, we are witnessing a rise in polarisation, conflict, and misinformation, developments that erode public trust and make it harder for communities to respond collectively and effectively.

These are not separate or isolated issues. They are symptoms of interconnected systems where society, the economy, and nature continuously influence and shape one another. Sustainability is not about fixing individual problems one by one, but about understanding how everything is linked, how changes in one area affect others, and how the decisions we make today shape the conditions of the future.

At its heart, sustainable development is about building societies that can thrive over time, where human well-being, a stable economy, and the protection and restoration of nature are inseparable. It means safeguarding quality of life in the present without undermining the opportunities of future generations. To do that, we must respect the boundaries of Earth's ecosystems and climate systems. When we ignore those limits, we threaten the foundations that all life depends on.

In today's world, where the connections between issues are clearer than ever and their effects quickly cross borders, sustainability can't be seen as a side issue. It demands a shift in how we define value, greater collaboration across disciplines and sectors, and long-term thinking in all planning and decision-making.

Education, research and innovation are essential to this transition. They expand our understanding, strengthen our ability to navigate complexity, and help us develop meaningful solutions that are both responsible and future-oriented. Through this, we can shape societies founded on justice, sustainability and lasting well-being.

Sustainability as Strategy, Framework and Guiding Principle

Over the past few years, our understanding of sustainability has grown and evolved. While the concept has always included broad social and economic dimensions, public debate has often focused on environmental concerns. Today, however, sustainability is widely recognised as a holistic approach that views nature, society and the economy as deeply interconnected.

This holistic approach is clearly reflected in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which focus on ensuring human well-being, justice and peace, while staying within the limits of nature and the Earth's ecosystems.

A sustainable future cannot be achieved through a single solution or within one area of expertise. It calls for breaking down traditional silos between academic fields, institutions and sectors, and fostering open and inclusive conversations about the future. Diverse perspectives, knowledge and experience are crucial, as they lay the groundwork for deeper understanding and more resilient solutions that meet the challenges of today and tomorrow.

The University of Iceland as a Leading Force in a Sustainable World

The University of Iceland is the country's largest university and one of its largest workplaces, with around 14,000 students and about 2,000 employees. Lára Jóhannsdóttir, Professor of Environment and Natural Resources and Chair of the University of Iceland Sustainability Committee for the years 2018–2022 and 2024–2025, points out that the university prepares people to work in nearly all sectors of society. It is therefore essential for the university to have a strong sustainability policy that addresses both its diverse activities in teaching, research, innovation, and public engagement, as well as its daily operations. "It is also important that the university serves as a role model for other institutions and companies in society when it comes to sustainability," Lára adds.

Lessons from UI26 and a Vision for the Future

In the current UI26 Strategy, emphasis is placed on ensuring that education and research meet the needs of Icelandic society and industry while contributing to a sustainable world. Lára explains that the goals are twofold. "On one hand, *knowledge in the service of a sustainable society*, meaning that the university should be a leader in sustainability through teaching, research, and knowledge creation, and on the other hand, *sustainable operations*, which aim for the university to lead by example through measurable goals toward carbon neutrality, in line with Iceland's national targets," she explains. Looking ahead to the development of a new strategy, Lára emphasises the need to involve experts from across the university. "In addition, it is important to gather input from students and other stakeholders, since actions, or inaction, in sustainability matters can have significant impacts on their well-being for years to come," she says, noting that the well-being economy could serve as a guiding framework in this work. "It is also essential that responsibility for sustainability be clearly assigned within the university's senior management," she adds.

Progress During the Strategy Period

The Sustainability Committee is responsible for implementing the sustainability priorities of the UI26 strategy. In doing so, the committee addressed both the university's core activities and its day-to-day operations. "Thanks to the committee's efforts, funding was secured for publishing the university's sustainability reports, organising an upcoming sustainability conference, and more," Lára says. Progress can also be seen in incentives for researchers. "Applicants for competitive research grants awarded by the university are now required to describe the sustainability impacts of their research," she adds. Workshops have also been held, for example on assessment scales to evaluate students' competencies to achieve the SDGs, based on the LOUIS competence framework. "Work has also begun on developing sustainability indicators to assess the university's performance," Lára concludes.

The Role of Universities in a Changing World

In a time that demands new ways of thinking and collective action, universities have a vital role to play. They hold unique opportunities and responsibilities to expand knowledge, foster critical discussion, and offer education that equips both students and society for a rapidly changing and complex world.

This role extends beyond conventional teaching and research. It also includes actively contributing to societal development, promoting ethical and democratic awareness, and supporting meaningful change toward a sustainable future. Universities can be leaders in shaping new perspectives and responding with integrity and foresight.

The University of Iceland has taken a clear position on this by identifying sustainability as one of the key pillars in its strategy to 2026, UI26. By integrating sustainability across governance, teaching, research, operations and community partnerships, the university has laid the foundation for making sustainability a core part of its culture, decisions and vision.

By placing sustainability at the centre of its mission, the university creates a space where students, staff and society at large can work together to build a future grounded in responsibility, respect, equity and long-term well-being.

A Future that Calls for New Principles

To respond responsibly to today's challenges and shape a just, healthy, and sustainable society, we must recognise that old solutions are no longer enough. We are at a crossroads that calls for new values, collective effort, and fresh thinking.

The University of Iceland aims to play an active role in this transformation by advancing knowledge, deepening understanding, and supporting solutions that are made to last. Sustainability is not just one area of focus within the university; it's a guiding principle that should be woven into every part of its work.

True progress requires a whole-system approach. We must work towards a society where social justice, economic resilience and care for nature are deeply connected. That means taking action on climate, protecting and restoring ecosystems, and making decisions that account not only for the present, but for generations to come. In this work, universities have a central role. Through education, research and innovation, they can act as engines of transformation, helping to build a future rooted in shared responsibility, integrity and lasting well-being.

Aurora – Growing Research and Innovation Community

Aurora is a network of research-intensive universities in Europe deeply committed to catalysing positive societal impacts by leveraging cutting-edge research and innovative education. Since its inception in 2016, Aurora has been forging a path for transformational change in higher education.

Driven by its vision of matching academic excellence with societal relevance, Aurora aims to address key societal challenges and to contribute to the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Aurora serves as a high-trust platform in which university leaders, academics, students and administrators learn from and with each other how to make their universities more successful in achieving their mission.

Since 2020, Aurora has been a part of the European Universities Initiative funded by the European Commission under the Erasmus+ programme. The University of Iceland is the coordinator in Aurora for the 2nd funding period in the years 2023–2027.

Fostering research actions for societal impact

One of the objectives of Aurora is to create opportunities and incentives for young and established academics to further research cooperation within Aurora. Three key actions have been launched to foster tangible collaborative research actions between Aurora universities to support Aurora's goals of societal impact and sustainability.

Through annual calls, Aurora supports:

1) Exploratory and Collaborative Research Projects, which contribute to increasing knowledge in a specific field, answering societal issues, and developing research communities within Aurora.
2) Thematic Schools are organised for early-stage researchers on a specific research theme for a short period of time.
3) Short-term Research Secondments for Early-stage Researchers (Master, PhD, postdocs) to go on short-term mobility in a research laboratory or unit of an Aurora university.

The first call for Exploratory and Collaborative Research Projects was hosted in 2024, yielding 26 applications from Aurora universities, of which seven were selected for funding. The University of Iceland has representatives in three of them, which are discussed next.

Project MIMIC

Membrane technology has emerged as an alternative solution for advanced wastewater treatment because the excellent physical separation roles of membranes allow achieving superior treated water quality. The aim is to perform a joint project on investigating the mitigation of micropollutants/additives and transport behaviour of microplastic fibres in a decentralised membrane-based wastewater treatment process. UI is the coordinator of the project, carried out in collaboration with the University of Duisburg-Essen, Universitat Rovira i Virgili, and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Project ECODELIB

The objective of the ECODELIB research is to produce disciplinary and interdisciplinary research on deliberative experiments for the ecological transformation of universities belonging to the Aurora alliance. The project aims to facilitate both the practice and understanding of democratic deliberation for sustainability by producing scientific works that contribute to the understanding of the processes involved, their spreading to more universities of the alliance and making the Aurora alliance a model for other European universities to become more ecological through inclusive and democratic mechanisms. UI participates in the project along with Université Paris-Est Créteil (coordinator), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and University of Duisburg-Essen.

Project NUTRIAGE24

The project NUTRIAGE aims to initiate an exploratory study on healthy ageing across geographically, socio-economically and environmentally diverse countries such as the Czech Republic, Iceland, and Spain. By forming an inter-university consortium, NUTRIAGE will analyse how the relationship between nutrition, health and environment/context is articulated in older adults, considering their general living situations and the social determinants that condition access to adequate food. UI participates in the project along with Palacký University Olomouc (coordinator) and Universitat Rovira i Virgili.

APPROACH

This is the fourth sustainability report published by the University of Iceland (UI). The Sustainability Institute at the University of Iceland created the report upon request from UI's Sustainability Committee. This work was undertaken from August to November 2025, with the reference year for the report being 2024, with a few exceptions (otherwise stated). Research projects mentioned in the report were either in progress or completed in 2024. Doctoral projects mentioned in the report all culminated with a doctoral defence in 2024.

The report maps UI's work according to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through five main areas: research, teaching and learning, community outreach and partnerships, operations, and student initiatives. Under each SDG chapter, activities are identified as relating to the biosphere, society, or economy, as illustrated in the SDG "wedding cake" (Fig. 1), where the biosphere is the basis of the SDGs and the foundation of economies and societies.

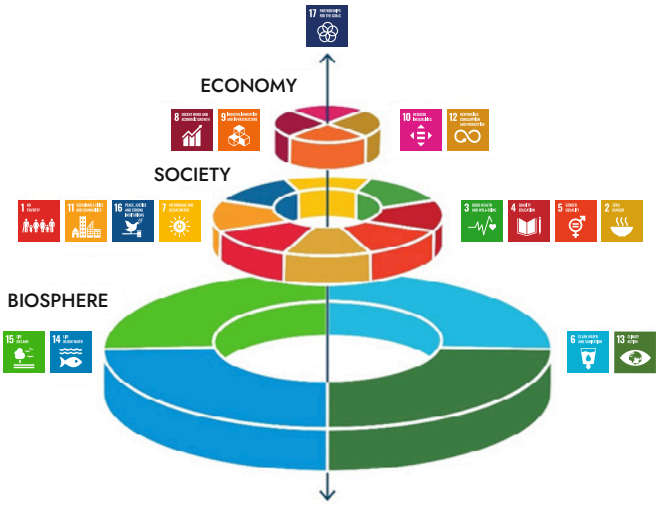


Figure 1: The Sustainable Development Goals grouped into biosphere, societal, and economical goals, where the biosphere is the foundation of economies and societies. Source: Azote Images for Stockholm Resilience Centre, Stockholm University.

Call for Information

Gathering information about the comprehensive work that is conducted within UI was a challenging task, and the authors used several channels to collect information. The main source of information gathering was a call for suggestions, which was sent out to all UI staff members and doctoral students in both Icelandic and English. In the call, participants were asked to provide information on diverse topics, projects and courses related to sustainability and the SDGs in the year 2024. These topics include, for example, research, teaching and learning, community engagement, and collaboration. The call for suggestions was sent out two times, and in addition, the Rector sent a reminder about the call to all UI staff.

In-focus interviews are included under each SDG with individuals who have done comprehensive research or worked on a project related to said SDG. The authors of the report handpicked individuals whom they knew were working on research related to a certain SDG or had received information about from the call for suggestions.

Collecting Information

Information from published peer-reviewed articles relating to the SDGs was gathered from Scopus, the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature. Scopus is a live database where the numbers extracted about the number of UI peer-reviewed articles can change slightly when information is updated or new journals are added to the database. Because of this, numbers can vary slightly between yearly publications of the Sustainability Report. In the Scopus database, articles in Icelandic are not included, though it is estimated that around 75% of all published peer-reviewed articles within UI are in the Scopus database. Therefore, it can be assumed that the number of articles in relation to SDGs from UI is likely higher than stated in this report. Information was gathered for the years 2020–2024 in mid-October 2025. Scopus does not provide specific metrics for SDG 17; instead, the total number of articles across all SDGs for 2020–2024 is reported. Field-weighted citation impact (FWCI) is reported under SDG 1–16 with data obtained from the Scopus database for 2020–2024. FWCI is the citation impact normalised by the field and measures the number of citations received by an article divided by the expected number of citations for similar articles. An FWCI of more than 1 indicates higher than expected citations based on the global average for similar publications.

Results from the Times Higher Education Impact Ranking (THE Impact Ranking) are indicated in the report under each SDG. THE Impact Ranking is an annual ranking assessing universities on their commitment to the SDGs. The rankings are based on universities' teaching, research, outreach, and stewardship. UI hands in data on all 17 SDGs, but in the ranking, universities are assessed on their three highest ranking SDGs, along with SDG 17. The data indicated in the report are the newest results that were published in June 2025, based on data from 2023.

All information regarding the environmental performance of UI's operations, for example, waste, electricity, water usage, and carbon emissions, came from UI's Division of Resource and Operations. Data is compiled annually through the initiative *Green Accounting*, which is submitted to the Icelandic Environment and Energy Agency on behalf of UI. Data from 2018–2024 is indicated under the chapter *Operations*, unless otherwise stated.

Mapping

Information on research, teaching and learning, community outreach and partnership, student initiatives, and operations was mapped in accordance with each of the 17 SDGs. Some topics had a clear connection to a certain SDG, while others had several connections to different SDGs. These are indicated in the report.

The authors of the report examined all news and events series posted on UI's webpage from 2024 for data collection. All doctoral defences from 2024 were also analysed.

The authors of this report received valuable contributions, many of which made their way to the final report. We wish to extend a special thanks to all participants who took the time to send in their suggestions. Without your assistance, this report would not have shed light on the incredible work and diverse research projects and courses at UI.

Sustainability in Operations

The Environmental Policy for Operations for UI is written in accordance with Icelandic law no. 70/2012 law on climate, and adheres to other laws and regulations on environmental issues related to operations. This policy was approved by the University Council in December 2022.

The environmental policy for operations is adapted to UI's strategy that is valid at the time. It puts an emphasis on environmental factors in the operations of UI and defines goals and sets out an action plan in this area. It is the policy of UI to minimise the environmental impact of its operations, protect the environment, prevent pollution, and reduce emissions from its operations by introducing countermeasures.

UI's performance with regard to the environmental impact of operations is specifically monitored and environmental goals are set, and an action plan applies to all staff and students. Information about the transportation habits of students and staff was collected in late 2023, as no information is available for the year 2024. The carbon footprint of UI may vary between years of published sustainability reports due to updates in emission factors. The reference year for monitoring performance is 2018.

Paper consumption

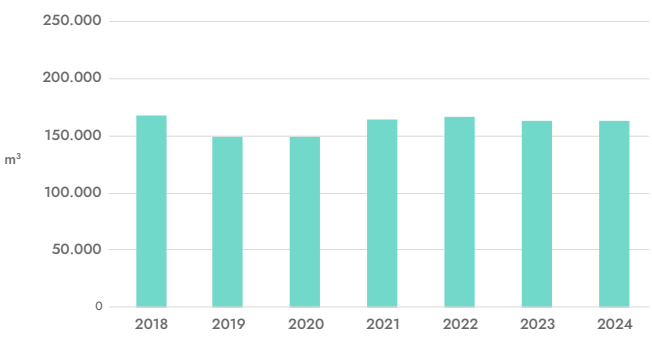
70%
reduction since 2018

99%
of paper materials had certified environmental label in 2024

Water consumption

3%
reduction of cold water usage since 2018

162.709
m^3 of cold water utilised in 2024

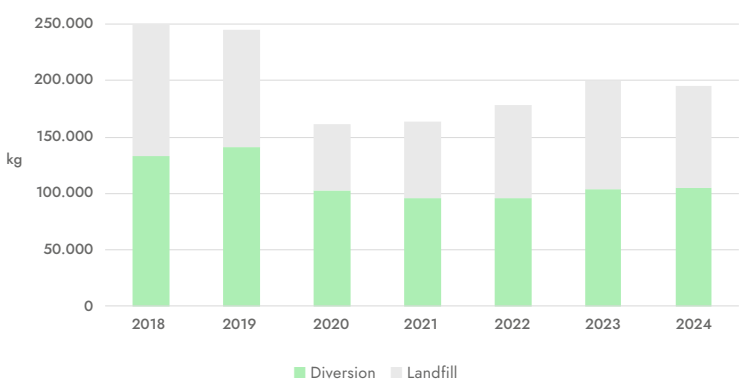


Waste management

54%
of waste recycled in 2024

195 tonnes
of total waste in 2024

22%
reduction in total waste since 2018

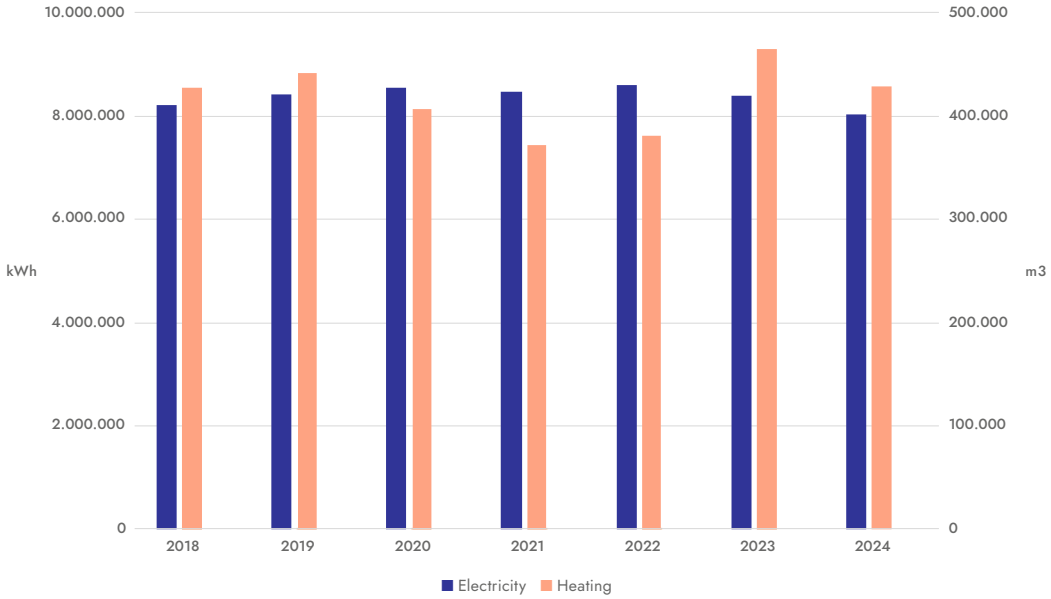


Energy consumption

2%
reduction in electricity consumption since 2018

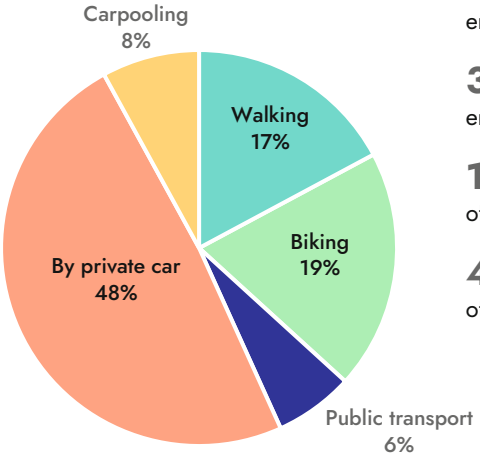
0%
change in hot water consumption since 2018

100%
of UI's electricity is renewable



Transportation

Staff



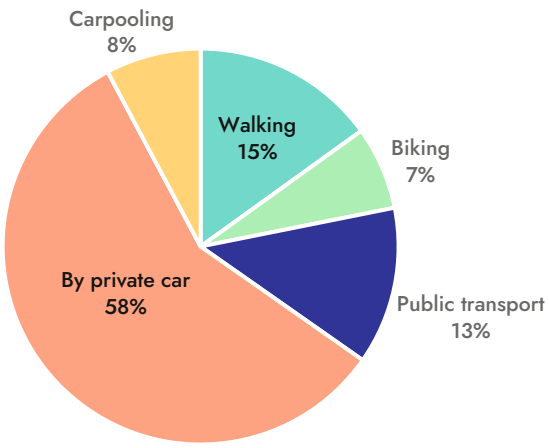
43% of staff commute in an environmentally friendly way in 2023

35% of students commute in an environmentally friendly way in 2023

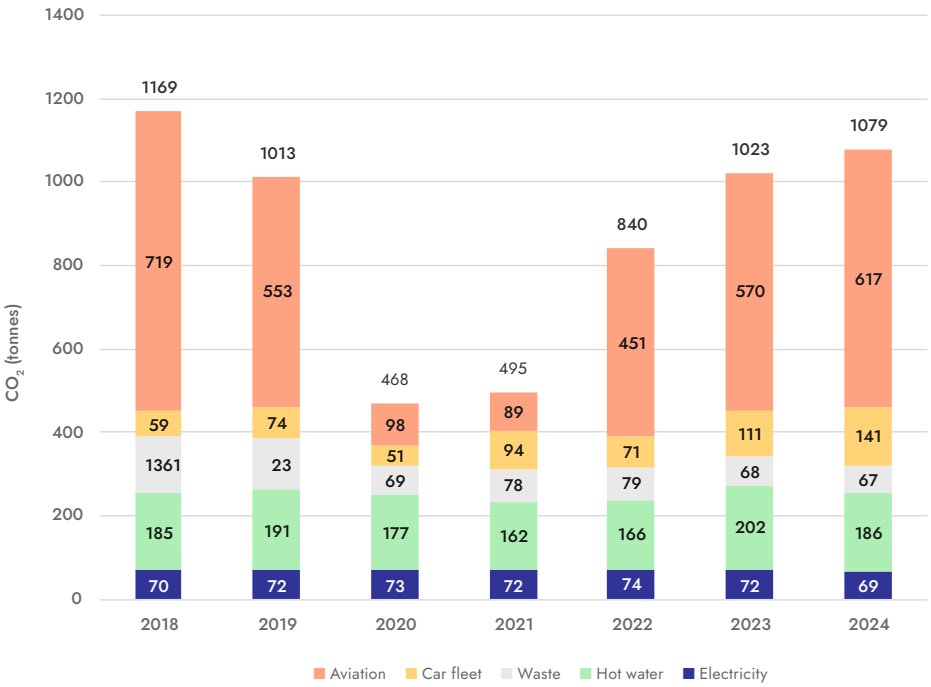
19%
of staff biked to UI in 2023

46%
of UI car fleet are electrical vehicles

Students



Greenhouse gas emissions



8% reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions since 2018*

14% reduction in emissions from aviation since 2018

2% reduction in emissions from electricity since 2018

51% reduction in emissions from waste since 2018**

0% No change in emissions from hot water since 2018***

* of the factors that are monitored

** emissions factor of waste increased in fall 2024 and emissions for prior years were updated

*** hot water was given an emission factor in fall 2024 and emissions from hot water were calculated retroactively

1 NO POVERTY

SOCIETY

End poverty in all its forms everywhere

RESEARCH

51 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 1

433 Number of total citations

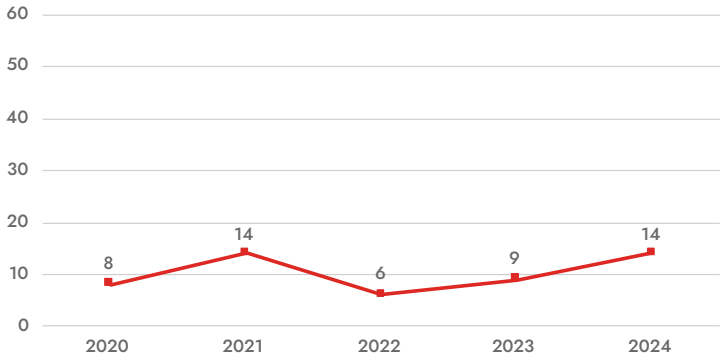
0,96 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

601–800 out of **1267** in the world

73,5 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 1



The Rental Market in Iceland

A study on the rental market in Iceland, led by Már Wolfgang Mixa, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Business Administration, Kristín Loftsdóttir, Professor of Anthropology, and anthropologist Anna Lísa Rúnarsdóttir, focuses on exploring the ambivalent feelings experienced by people in the rental market who live in housing conditions that most Icelanders do not wish to stay in long-term. Despite home ownership being strongly supported by both public opinion and government policy, the number of people on the rental market increased after the financial crisis in 2008. The study investigates why such a large share of the population rents and what measures could reverse this trend. It also addresses the emergence of a "rental generation," often associated with insecurity and discomfort among individuals.

Inequality: Social Status, Gender and Minority Groups

The course *Inequality: Social Status, Gender and Minority Groups* is taught at the undergraduate level at the Faculty of Sociology, Anthropology and Folkloristics. In the course, major theories and research in sociology on inequality are placed in an Icelandic context, as Iceland has often been considered a relatively equal society. Historical reconsiderations have, however, shown that inequality is greater than previously acknowledged. Income inequality has varied over time, and the last decade has been characterised by significant fluctuations in income, wealth, and economic hardship. The course examines what kind of inequality exists in society and whether certain types of inequality will become more significant in the future due to changes in societal and population structures.

Icelanders Value Equality but Capital Concentrates

Inequality has been described as one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. Jón Gunnar Bernburg, Professor of Sociology, has together with Sigrún Ólafsdóttir studied the development of inequality in Iceland in the research project *Inequality in Iceland: Comparison Over Time and Between Regions*. The study, based on survey data from 2009–2010 and 2019–2020, examines changes in Icelandic society between these two periods, with data analysis still ongoing. The research also allows for comparison with over 20 other countries through the international project *International Social Survey Programme*.

Capital Influences Attitudes Toward Inequality

The study delves into how different forms of capital, economic, cultural, and social, affect people's attitudes. The results show clear connections. "Those who are financially better off are less likely to see income inequality as a problem and to believe that the state should reduce such inequality," explains Jón Gunnar. "We also see that those with higher levels of cultural capital, [which involves] taste and participation in so-called high culture, are more likely to view it as unjust that one can buy better healthcare or education," he adds.

Links Between Capital and Influence in Icelandic Society

The researchers have also gained new insights into the psychosocial effects of social comparison, the factors that shape perceptions of status injustice, and the interplay between different forms of capital. "The study has revealed a significant concentration of economic, social, and cultural capital in Icelandic society," says Jón Gunnar. He adds that "individuals with substantial cultural capital, that is, those who have attained higher education and adopted a cultural lifestyle, are more likely to feel that their position gives their voice weight in politics and the media. The same applies to those who have close ties to powerful individuals. Such connections seem to give people a voice in political and media arenas." Despite this, the findings indicate a certain harmony within Icelandic society. "Our research shows that Icelanders wish to live in a relatively equal society, but there are also signs of growing inequality. Data like this can inform policymaking and serve as a guide to the kind of society Icelanders as a whole want," Jón Gunnar concludes.

Social Counselling for University Students

Master's students in the Social Work with Professional Recognition programme offer free counselling to university students and their families on issues such as family matters, parenting, and communication. This initiative trains social work students in providing professional counselling under the guidance of experienced social workers, and supports students facing personal challenges, free of charge.

Public Dental Clinic

The Faculty of Odontology provides dental services to the public. The service is available while teaching is in session. Student dentists provide treatments under the supervision of their instructors in the Faculty of Odontology's clinical teaching facilities. This service is offered at a low cost, and children aged 0–17 can receive free examinations and assessments of their oral health.

Free Legal Assistance from Law Students

Orator, the association of law students, provides free legal assistance to the public once a week during the academic year. This legal aid service is offered under the supervision of practising lawyers.

Psychological Services at UI

» **The Department of Psychology runs a Student Psychology Clinic,** where postgraduate psychology students offer psychological counselling. This service is provided at a low cost to university students and their children, under the supervision of licensed psychologists, as part of the students' clinical training.

» **Psychological services** are offered free of charge to UI students by the UI Student Counselling Centre. Short-term individual therapy, 1 to 3 sessions per semester, is available in Icelandic and English. Other services, including group therapy, are offered to students at a low cost.

Student Fund

The Student Fund is a grant fund for students at UI, managed by the Student Council. The fund offers a maintenance grant, specifically intended for international students at UI who do not receive an Erasmus+ grant and are experiencing financial difficulties, as well as students at UI with a valid disability assessment.

Research · Teaching and learning · Community outreach and partnerships · Operations and governance · Student initiatives

2 ZERO HUNGER

SOCIETY

End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

RESEARCH

73 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 2

1087 Number of total citations

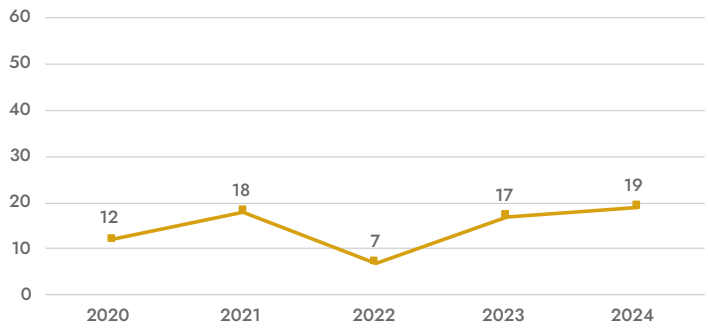
1,57 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

401–600 out of **955** in the world

80,4 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 2



HOMEFOOD

Berglind Soffía Ásbjörnsdóttir's doctoral thesis from the Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition was the project *HOMEFOOD six-month randomised trial* which examined the effects of nutrition therapy combined with home-delivered food for older adults after hospital discharge. Malnutrition is a common issue among older adults, particularly those recently hospitalised. The project aimed to determine whether a longer and more intensive nutritional intervention could produce better outcomes than previous approaches. Participants were randomly assigned to either an intervention or a control group, where the intervention group received dietitian-led nutritional therapy and free deliveries of energy- and protein-rich foods, snacks, and oral nutritional supplements for six months. Results showed a statistically significant increase in body weight, energy intake, and protein intake in the intervention group, while these measures declined in the control group. Moreover, participants in the intervention group demonstrated significant improvements in cognitive and physical function, as well as in self-rated health and quality of life.

Utilisation, Preservation, and Quality of Brown Seaweed

Anna Þóra Hrólfsdóttir's doctoral thesis from the Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition focused on improving the utilisation, preservation, and quality of brown seaweed. The study aimed to explore and enhance seaweed value chains, with a focus on full utilisation during the processing of *Ascophyllum nodosum* into seaweed meal, the preservation of cultivated *Alaria esculenta* and *Saccharina latissima*, and the assessment of multispectral imaging (MSI) as a quality control technology within the seaweed industry. The results show opportunities to increase the value of harvested biomass by modifying the production process. They suggest that acid preservation could be a valuable method for preserving cultivated brown seaweed biomass and that MSI could be used as an effective quality control tool in the seaweed industry.

Malnutrition in Iceland is a Hidden Problem with Far-Reaching Consequences

When discussing SDG 2, which aims to end hunger, attention is often focused on the least developed countries. Ólöf Guðný Geirsdóttir, Professor at the Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition, explains that it is still important to examine the nutrition of vulnerable groups in Iceland. While malnutrition or stunting among children under the age of five is generally not an issue in Iceland, other groups require special attention. "Studies on the diets of Icelandic children and adolescents are around 20 years old, which is concerning because their food environment has changed significantly over the past two decades. In addition, recent studies on the nutritional status and dietary habits of Icelandic expectant mothers have shown that recommendations for prospective parents need considerable improvement to ensure the mental and physical well-being of the unborn child," she adds.

Malnutrition Among the Elderly is a Costly Social Problem

Ólöf Guðný's research has focused on the elderly, as malnutrition is common among frail and ill older adults. "Recent Icelandic studies on inpatients, elderly residents in nursing homes, and older people receiving home care show that this is a vulnerable group at risk of malnutrition," she explains. She points out that international organisations have repeatedly concluded that malnutrition among the elderly is a serious societal issue that must be addressed. It not only harms the individual's health but also increases the burden on relatives and imposes significant financial and logistical strain on social and healthcare systems worldwide. Forecast models indicate that within ten years, we will not be able to adequately serve this growing older population if no action is taken, making it clear that intervention is urgently needed.

Better Nutrition Improves Quality of Life and Reduces Pressure on the Healthcare System

The aim of Ólöf Guðný's research and that of her collaborators is not only to examine the prevalence and risk factors of malnutrition but also to identify solutions and demonstrate the cost-effectiveness of preventing malnutrition among the elderly. "Our research findings show that it is possible to improve individuals' quality of life, well-being, and functionality. Better nutritional status can also reduce hospital visits, shorten hospital stays, and even lower the risk of falls among older adults, which significantly cuts costs within the healthcare system," she explains.

She stresses that the solution lies in broad collaboration, as nutrition concerns everyone working for the well-being of older adults. "Nutritional status affects the outcome of medical treatments, recovery after illness or injury, as well as physical and mental capacity. Therefore, the *SIMPLER* project, an international collaboration between Landspítali University Hospital and the University of Iceland, is built on interdisciplinary cooperation between the older individual, their relatives, and all healthcare professionals. This collaboration is the key to improved nutritional status and more successful outcomes for older individuals," Ólöf Guðný concludes.

Of Microbes and Men: Microbes, Culture, Health, and Environment

The Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition offers the course *Of Microbes and Men* where students explore the symbiotic relationships between microbes and humans from various perspectives, including microbiology, ethnology, food and nutrition sciences, and anthropology. To better understand and address the environmental, health, and social challenges of the 21st century, it is important to study these first organisms and the symbiosis between them and other species, including humans. Special attention is given to the role of microbes in developing and preserving food in human societies, their role in digestion, and how these roles are connected to human mental and physical health. The course also examines how microbes sustain vital nutrient cycles and their ability to transform waste and garbage into healthy soil.

Flexitarian Diet – Healthy Food for Human and Earth Health

In the course *Flexitarian Diet*, taught at the Faculty of Health Promotion, Sports and Leisure Studies, students are introduced to how food choices affect both human and planetary health. The course emphasises that what we eat influences not only our own well-being but also the health of the planet. It covers the basics of a flexitarian diet and explores how we can change our food choices for the benefit of both people and the planet, by reducing the risk of various diseases, producing enough food for everyone, and lowering greenhouse gas emissions.

Vegan Options and Food Waste Reduction at Háma Canteen

Students at UI have advocated for more easily accessible vegan options on campus, and Háma, the university canteen, offers an excellent selection of vegan choices, including sandwiches, salads, baked goods, and more. Every day, two hot meals are served, with one vegan option always included. Háma has also placed strong emphasis on reducing food waste on campus. For example, items not sold within a specific timeframe are offered at a discount the following day, and all products are carefully managed to prevent unnecessary waste. In addition, Háma donates all surplus food and items to Samhjálp, supporting individuals in need who are unable to provide food for themselves.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

SOCIETY

Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

RESEARCH

1258 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 3

37376 Number of total citations

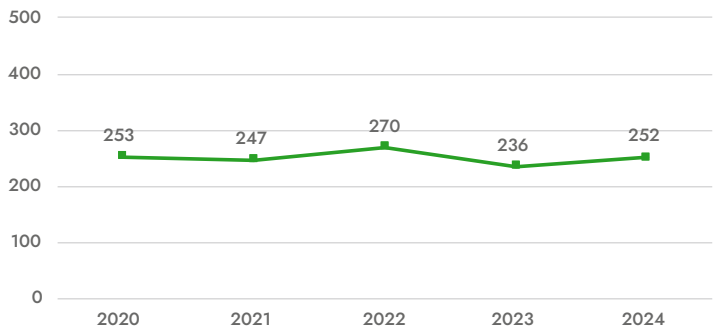
2,42 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

101–200 out of **1788** in the world

73,9 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 3



Impact of Concussion on Female Athletes

A group of female scientists at UI, Reykjavík University, and Landspítali University Hospital have been examining the specific effects of concussion on female athletes. Evidence suggests that women may be more susceptible to the effects of concussion than men. Participants in the study were women in contact sports. In the study, they underwent various psychological and neuropsychological tests, medical examinations and blood tests analysing pituitary axes hormones. The results suggest that a concussion can lead to changes that appear in psychological and neuropsychological tests, and cause dysfunction in the pituitary gland, which can be treated to improve the patient's quality of life. The research was funded in part by the Icelandic Research Fund.

Centre of Gerontology

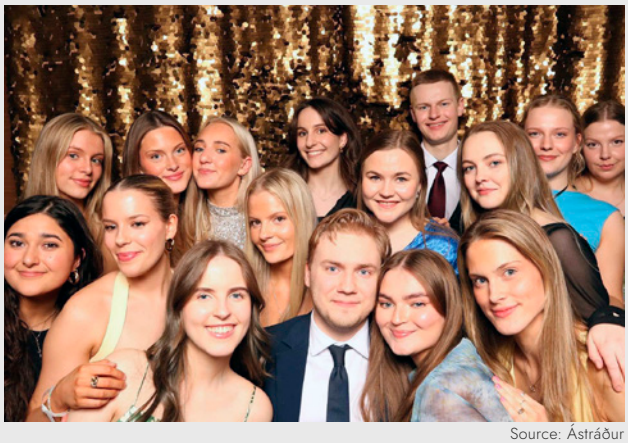
The Centre of Gerontology operates under the Faculty of Health Sciences and works in collaboration with Landspítali University Hospital. Its main objective is to strengthen research and collaboration among universities, academics, associations, and institutions on issues related to older adults, thereby promoting innovation and the development of services for the elderly in Iceland.

Determinants of Health, Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

This graduate-level course, taught at the Faculty of Medicine, provides students with an overview of the main determinants of health in a westernised society and of preventive interventions at different levels. The course focuses on planning, implementing, and documenting the effectiveness of interventions designed to promote general health and support primary prevention. Students also gain practical experience by planning their own preventive interventions.

Alcohol and Drug Abuse Counselling

In this micro-credential programme, offered by the School of Social Sciences, the aim is to meet the demand for specialised knowledge and skills in the field of alcohol and drug abuse counselling. Students acquire both practical and theoretical knowledge about alcohol and drug abuse issues and how addictions affect families and family members.



Source: Ástráður

The Impact of Peer-Led Sexual Education

Ástráður, a sexual education association of medical students that, since the year 2000, has been dedicated to educating young people about sexual and reproductive health and promoting open conversations about this sensitive topic. Birta Hlín Birgisdóttir, chair of the association, explains that the work is extensive: every year, second-year medical students visit all upper secondary schools in the country to give lectures on relationships, consent, sexually transmitted diseases, and contraception. Meanwhile, third-year students provide this education in primary schools and youth centres.

Setting Boundaries and Fostering Healthy Communication

The key to Ástráður's success is its peer education model, where young people receive mentoring from slightly older peers. "This approach makes conversations easier and students are more likely to ask questions that matter to them," explains Birta Hlín. She says the aim goes far beyond preventing disease. "It's important to reach young people at this age because good sexual education isn't just about prevention, it's about empowering them to set their own boundaries, respect others, and fostering healthy communication."

Trust Makes All the Difference

The organisation's work has grown rapidly, and Ástráður now delivers over 170 lectures each year across the country. "The results are reflected in the positive feedback from students, growing demand from schools, and a more open dialogue about sexual and reproductive health," says Birta Hlín. "What has surprised us most, however, is how much young people trust us, both in the questions they ask during lectures and through social media, which highlights the great need for accessible and unprejudiced education," she concludes.

Supporting Employee Health and Wellbeing

UI offers its employees a wide range of services that promote health and wellbeing.

» **Kara Connect – Wellbeing Hub**
UI has an agreement with Kara Connect to make it easier for UI employees to directly access mental health and wellbeing services.

» **Year of Health**
The Year of Health is offered each school year to create a motivational, sustainable, and happy work environment that supports the health and wellbeing of employees. Each period lasts two months and is divided into five themes: physical, professional, mental, personal, and social health.

» **Influenza Vaccination for Staff**
The Division of Human Resources offers employees free annual influenza vaccination.

» **The Blood Donation Bus**
UI has revived the Blood Donation Month from a several-year hiatus, encouraging staff and students to become blood donors. The Blood Donation Bus visited the UI campus in an event organised by the Student Health Association.

Student Community Projects

Students at UI organise numerous projects aimed at raising public awareness of the scientific and research work conducted at the University.

» **Hollráður**
Undergraduate students in physiotherapy have, in recent years, offered upper secondary schools an introduction to physiotherapy along with health-promoting education through a project called Hollráður.

» **Teddy Hospital**
The Public Health Organisation of Medical Students annually invites preschool children to bring their sick or injured teddies to the hospital, helping to reduce fear of healthcare professionals and the hospital environment, while giving medical students valuable experience interacting with children.

» **The Student Council's Sports School**
The Student Council's Sports School offers children aged 2–5 the opportunity to play in obstacle courses to cultivate their connection and to promote their physical and social development.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

SOCIETY

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

RESEARCH

163 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 4

1103 Number of total citations

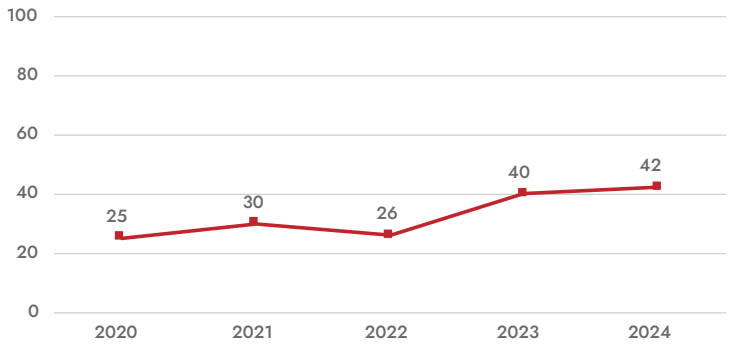
1,10 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

1001–1500 out of **1975** in the world

74,1 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 4



Opportunities for Outdoor Education in Iceland

Jakob Frímann Þorsteinsson's doctoral thesis from the Faculty of Health Promotion, Sport and Leisure Studies, examines outdoor recreation in Iceland and its role in outdoor education, especially for children. It highlights how interaction with nature, social connections, experience, and reflection make outdoor activities a valuable form of general education, with applications in, for example, schools, leisure centres and tourism.

TINK@School

TINK@School is an international research project led by UI that promotes sustainability education in Europe through tinkering, a hands-on learning approach that builds understanding through direct experience. Tinkering encourages creativity, skill-building, and comfort with uncertainty, challenging traditional classroom practices and supporting teachers and schools in their effort to design and apply meaningful interventions on sustainability and climate change topics.

NýMennt

NýMennt, at the School of Education, focuses on social innovation and professional development in collaboration with government authorities, municipalities, educational institutions, and other partners, with children's well-being as its guiding principle. NýMennt offers a wide range of accessible services, including the following:

» Kennarakvikan is a platform where teachers can store, share, and collaborate on teaching materials, from lesson plans and resources to general information. All users can contribute their own content. The project originated as an initiative to strengthen science and technology education.

» Menntahleðslan offers short continuing education courses focused on specific aspects of education and upbringing. The content is designed to meet the needs of a diverse group of professionals working in school services across Iceland.

» Menntamiðjan is an online collaboration platform that brings together information on continuing education, events, and grants for people working in the school system. It provides access to opportunities for professional development, conferences, learning communities, and networks, all in one place.

Making Sustainability Part of Every Student's Learning

Sustainability issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and increasing inequality, are some of the most critical challenges of our time. Karen Elizabeth Jordan, Adjunct Lecturer at the Faculty of Education and Diversity, points out that the university must react accordingly. "The university needs to prepare students with the knowledge, skills and competencies to tackle these challenges," she says. "To do this, it is vital to support teachers of all disciplines to integrate sustainability into their teaching, e.g., by providing training, materials and cross-university support." This was the goal of the *Higher Education for Sustainability*, or HighES, project.

A Project to Support Teachers Across Disciplines

The HighES project was a collaborative initiative designed to help University of Iceland staff bring sustainability into their classrooms. "HighES was a collaboration between the School of Education and the Sustainability Institute," explains Karen. The project, funded by the University Research Fund, began by collecting data from those already doing the work. "Eleven educators from all five schools of the University were interviewed, providing insights into their experiences with sustainability in teaching. These findings informed a workshop where participants explored practical strategies for integrating sustainability into teaching."

Making Sustainability Education More Accessible

Karen has noticed a clear increase in awareness and interest in the topic. "More people are aware of sustainability generally due to the increased visibility of, e.g., climate change disasters, pollution, and rising inequalities." While many educators are keen, and some have already incorporated sustainability into their teaching, she notes that the implementation is not always straightforward. "I think the majority of university teachers are interested; however, some teachers feel apprehensive to tackle sustainability, having little background or expertise in the issue, and also due to the existing pressures of workload and already full syllabuses," she explains. The project aimed to lower this barrier by providing tangible support, particularly by sharing the experiences and practices of other teachers across the university.

Sustainability, Nature and Arts

The undergraduate course *Sustainability, Nature and Art* at the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy focuses on sustainability and sustainability education through children's participation in society and their learning about nature. The course emphasises nature perception and aesthetics and explores ways to integrate nature and sustainability in the visual arts with children.

Keilir Preliminary Studies

Keilir, the Centre for Science, Education and Industry in Reykjanes, collaborates with UI to offer a preliminary studies programme for students who do not meet UI's admission requirements. UI holds the academic responsibility, while Keilir oversees teaching in line with UI's curriculum and standards. Many students have completed the programme, and about 80% have continued their studies at UI.

UI and STEM Iceland

UI and STEM Iceland have signed an agreement to strengthen science and technology education by developing social STEM and STEAM learning ecosystems across the country. The goal is to enhance STEM/STEAM skills nationwide, from preschool to the labour market. The project is supported by the School of Education and the School of Engineering and Natural Sciences at UI, with Nýmennt responsible for its implementation.

Distance Learning at UI

UI offers a wide range of distance learning programmes and courses, continually expanding them with a focus on quality and accessibility. Whether students study from home or alongside work, a flexible online option with strong support and services makes higher education more inclusive, helping to reduce inequalities in access to learning.

Children's Education Community Projects

UI works to strengthen its connection with Icelandic society and foster interest in science. Below are some of its key projects focused on children's education:

- **The University of Iceland Science Centre (UniSci)**
  UniSci showcases science and technology through interactive discovery and experimentation, inspiring curiosity among young people and the wider community while supporting primary education. It offers free school visits and teacher training led by UI students and staff, with all activities aligned with the SDGs.
- **University of Youth (UoY)**
  Each year, UoY welcomes students aged 12–14 to explore science through courses from all UI academic fields, taught by staff, students and partner institutions. UoY promotes equality and diversity, offering free participation and special support for students of foreign origin. The programme has been operating for 20 years.
- **The University of Iceland Knowledge Train**
  The Knowledge Train tours Iceland annually in cooperation with local schools and municipalities, bringing educational events to rural areas. It features UoY courses and travelling versions of *UniSci*, taught by UI teachers and students, and operates in line with the SDGs.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreach and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

5 GENDER EQUALITY

SOCIETY

Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

RESEARCH

159 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 5

1642 Number of total citations

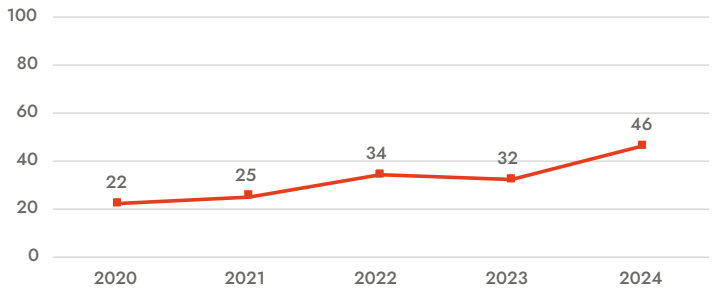
1,48 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

401–600 out of **1559** in the world

79 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 5



Closing the Gender Gap in Leadership and Economic Participation

Although Iceland leads globally in gender equality, it still faces challenges in closing the gender gap in economic participation and leadership. This project seeks to identify and develop strategies to address this gap through qualitative interviews, analysis of the impact of equal pay certification, women's investment behaviour, and the role of policymaking in promoting gender equality. It also aims to create a gender equality database and to compare the impact of gender equality interventions across Nordic and Baltic countries and selected U.S. states. A key outcome is the development and expansion of a transparent platform to measure the impact of gender balance in corporate leadership on financial performance, sustainability, and environmental indicators, applicable to companies worldwide. The project received funding from the Icelandic Research Fund.

Fertility Intentions and Behaviour in Iceland (FIBI)

The FIBI research project is organised to generate knowledge about fertility developments and their potential determinants in Iceland. It is the first comprehensive study of childbearing behaviour in the country, prompted by a drastic decline in fertility rates. The main objective of FIBI is to explore and address potential determinants behind changes in fertility over recent decades and to examine whether differences in childbearing are related to social backgrounds and how parenting culture influences fertility decisions. Special focus is placed on family policies, their impact on fertility decisions, the adequacy of support they provide, and the extent to which they reflect the diversity of Icelandic families. The project received a grant of excellence from the Icelandic Research Fund and is carried out by multi-disciplinary teams led by UI and the University of Akureyri.

Archaeology of Gender

The undergraduate course *Archaeology of Gender*, offered within the Archaeology programme at the School of Humanities, explores the history and development of the field from feminist and post-processual perspectives. The course examines the evolving concept of gender, encompassing research on women, men, children, social groups, and life stages. Archaeological case studies are used to illustrate key theories and methods in the archaeology of gender.

Equality as a Driving Force for Sustainable Development

"The GRÓ Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (GEST) educates and trains people for gender equality work in developing countries and (post-)conflict areas," says Irma Jóhanna Erlingsdóttir, Professor and Director of GRÓ GEST. The programme offers studies in international gender studies, directly contributing to SDG 5 on gender equality. However, as Irma explains, "gender equality is integrated into all 17 SDGs as one of the fundamental pillars of sustainable development." The programme operates under the School of Humanities at the University of Iceland and is part of GRÓ – the International Centre for Capacity Development, and is operated under the auspices of UNESCO. "The programme focuses not only on academic competences but also aims to strengthen critical thinking, interdisciplinary approaches, and ethical responsibility. Participants apply these skills in their professional work, and the training has influenced policymaking, action plans, and awareness-raising in their home countries," Irma adds.

Education that Promotes Gender Equality Worldwide

Irma describes the programme's results as tangible. Since 2009, nearly 270 students from 40 countries have graduated from its postgraduate programme. These graduates have applied their knowledge in diverse roles related to gender equality within government administrations, academia, and grassroots organisations, internationally and in their home countries. She points out that international evaluations confirm the programme's significant impact on the field of gender equality, reaching a large audience through diverse approaches to knowledge-building. Between 2018 and 2023, the programme reached over 20,000 individuals. "This is largely thanks to the open online courses offered at GEST, which many people have attended free of charge in recent years," Irma explains. This blended approach has helped GEST establish a strong international reputation as a leading force in education for gender equality.

The Strengths of Iceland's Societal Consensus on the Importance of Equality

When asked about the advantages of being based in Iceland, Irma emphasises that location matters. "It is both a strength and a unique feature of the programme to be hosted within a globally recognised academic environment in Iceland, where there has long been a societal consensus on the importance of gender equality as public policy. This creates fertile ground for critical development knowledge aimed at driving change in support of equality," she explains. The proximity to all academic disciplines at the University of Iceland, as well as collaboration on online courses through the university's edX platform, has also significantly increased the visibility of the programme, Irma concludes.

Porportion of senior female academics in 2024: ***42%***

Porportion of women receiving a degree in 2024: ***70%***

Male Students in Nursing Education

The Faculty of Nursing and Midwifery at UI, together with the Reform Project, the Research Centre for Men's Studies at the University of Akureyri, and other Nordic partners, collaborated on an evidence-based proposal to increase the number of men studying nursing. The project aimed to identify barriers to male participation, reduce dropout rates, and promote gender equality in healthcare. Through mapping, data collection, and workshops, key challenges were identified, such as negative media portrayals and traditional gender norms. The results emphasised the importance of diversity, supportive work environments, and targeted initiatives to attract and retain more men in nursing. The project was funded by the Nordic Gender Equality Fund (NIKK).

Girls (and Teachers) Calculate – Math Camps

Girls Calculate, launched in 2021, is open to all girls and non-binary students at the upper secondary level who are interested in exploring a wide range of topics within mathematics. Led by Nanna Kristjánsdóttir, a Mathematics graduate from UI, the initiative aims to inspire more teenage girls to pursue their passion for math and to challenge common stereotypes about the field. In 2024, the math camps were held for the fourth time at UI, also offering upper secondary school teachers an opportunity for continuing education and professional dialogue.

UI Receives Jafnvægisvogin Award for the Fifth Time

UI is among the organisations, companies and municipalities that received recognition from Jafnvægisvogin, a gender equality project of the Association of Businesswomen in Iceland (FKA). This marks the fifth time UI has received this recognition. This initiative aims to achieve gender balance in the leadership of companies and institutions. In 2024, UI was among 22 organisations honoured with the award.

Equality Focused Student Organisations

» **Ada – Women and Non-Binary Individuals in Information Technology**

Ada is a platform that empowers women and non-binary individuals pursuing education in tech-related fields at UI. It aims to create a safe environment where women can connect, share experiences, and support one another. Ada also provides information to prospective students about opportunities in technology-related fields, helping to increase the visibility of female role models. In 2024, Ada was nominated for the Nordic Women in Tech Award.

» **The Feminist Organisation of UI**

The Feminist Organisation of UI is open to both students and staff. The organisation is apolitical and advocates for gender equality.

Research · Teaching and learning · Community outreach and partnerships · Operations and governance · Student initiatives

6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION

BIOSPHERE

Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

RESEARCH

95 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 6

2954 Number of total citations

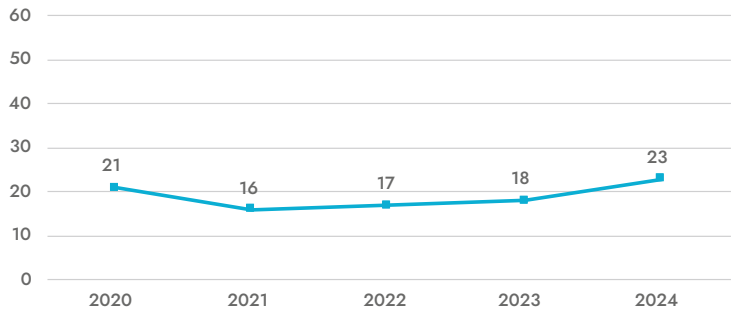
1,94 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

601–800 out of **1042** in the world

75,9 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 6



Microplastic Fibres in Arctic Wastewater

Microplastic pollution in the Arctic has drawn growing attention due to its negative impact on the Arctic food web and global climate change. A key source of this pollution is the release of microplastics from wastewater discharge to the Arctic marine environments, particularly anthropogenic microplastic fibres from greywater and industrial wastewater. This project investigates the transport of microfibres during direct membrane filtration and their effects on separation performance through experimental and numerical analyses. The findings show how microfibres intensify fouling dynamics under varying operating conditions, offering practical insights into the risks they pose in municipal wastewater treatment. The project was funded by the UK-Iceland Arctic Science Partnership Scheme and conducted in collaboration between Prof. Bing Wu's team at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering and the University of Bath.

Wastewater Collection and Urban Drainage

The course *Wastewater Collection and Urban Drainage* is offered at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering. The objective of the course is to provide insight into the collection and transportation of wastewater in urban areas. By the end of the course, students will be able to explain the role of civil and environmental engineers in improving sanitation and climate resilience of cities; describe the key pollution concerns associated with wastewater and indicators of sewage strength; design sanitary sewage and stormwater systems; describe the causes for urban floods in cold climate; and explain climate adaptation through blue-green urban stormwater drainage solutions.

Forever Chemicals Put Water Resources Under the Microscope

Access to safe water is crucial for health, as stated in SDG 6. Fortunately, Iceland has both abundant and clean drinking water. However, various human activities may pollute our precious water resource, and it is therefore vital to assess potential threats. María J. Gunnarsdóttir, Research Scientist at the Institute of Environmental Engineering, Hrund Ó. Andradóttir, Professor of Environmental Engineering, and Kristín Ólafsdóttir, Associate Professor and Director of the Laboratory of Pharmacology and Toxicology, have done exactly that, in strong international collaboration.

Emerging Pollutants Threaten Clean Water

They point out that discussion about so-called emerging pollutants has grown in recent years. "These substances are added to products to enhance their properties but can be harmful to both human health and the environment," they explain. "These chemicals are discharged with municipal wastewater and urban runoff into aquatic ecosystems." These include the so-called forever chemicals or PFAS compounds, once used in Teflon pans, outdoor clothing, and firefighting foam, as well as plastic additives such as bisphenols and flame retardants. "Since Icelanders use these products, it is important to study the chemical characteristics of our water resources in order to ascertain their purity," they add.

Reykjavík's Drinking Water Found to Be Very Clean

In 2022, the group received a research grant from the Reykjavík Energy Research Fund to investigate whether these substances could be detected in drinking water, surface runoff, and wastewater in Reykjavík. Samples were collected during different seasons from the drinking water supply, domestic wastewater, stormwater, ponds, and streams in the capital area and analysed in collaboration with international collaborators. "Overall, our findings indicate that Reykjavík's drinking water is very clean. One of our international collaborators even remarked that the PFAS levels detected in Heiðmörk were so low that the rest of the world could envy us!" they add. However, they also found reason for caution, as the levels of PFAS, flame retardants and bisphenols in wastewater and urban runoff were comparable to those found elsewhere in the world. "We also measured a very high PFAS concentration in a stream flowing from the Reykjavík Airport fire training area, which is consistent with results from similar sites near airports worldwide," they conclude.

Water Quality

The course *Water Quality* is taught at the graduate level at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering. Students explore the lifecycle of key pollutants found in surface water, groundwater, and soils, their sources, fate in the environment, human exposure pathways, and methods for restoring water and soil quality. Emphasis is also placed on discussing water quality in relation to sustainable development policies, such as the SDGs.

Earth Surface Processes

The course is taught at the undergraduate level at the Faculty of Earth Sciences. It focuses on Earth surface processes, particularly those that contribute to the formation of various landforms and landscapes. Topics include the Earth's water cycle and its major role in shaping terrestrial landscapes through weathering, erosion, and the deposition of rock material. The course also covers the role of groundwater in land formation, its importance for drinking water supply, and measures to protect this vital resource.

Rain Gardens Built on UI Campus

Rain gardens have been built on campus as part of research into the multifaceted benefits of blue-green stormwater solutions in urban environments. These solutions mimic the natural water cycle as water percolates through the soil, filtering out pollutants such as heavy metals and oil compounds. The study evaluates the hydrological and ecological performance of the rain gardens over two years using internationally recognised methods, with special attention to winter conditions when the ground freezes and snow covers the surface. Native Icelandic plant species were selected for the gardens, as they can tolerate periodic submersion and help reduce carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. Blue-green infrastructure serves as both a mitigation and adaptation strategy in response to climate change.

Clean Water Access and Sanitation Facilities at UI

Still water is not sold in plastic bottles on UI's campus, as the tap water is clean, safe, and readily available in all university buildings. In 2024, the Student Council received a grant to establish a sanitation facility at Háma Háskólatorg, the university's largest canteen. The facility enables students and staff to wash and reuse their food containers, helping to reduce disposable packaging and improve recycling by allowing people to clean used materials.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreach and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY

SOCIETY

Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

RESEARCH

221 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 7

4227 Number of total citations

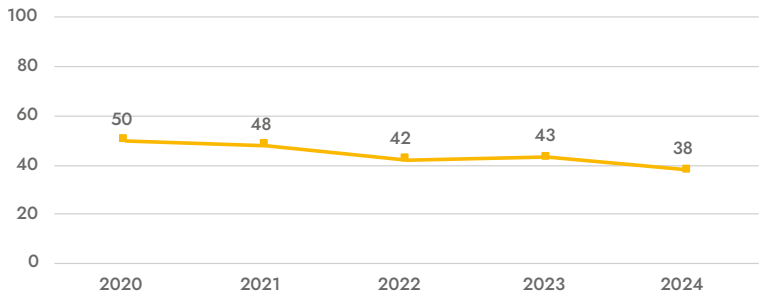
1,25 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

301–400 out of **1181** in the world

64,2 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 7



NEXUS

Gianluca Levi, a postdoctoral chemistry researcher at the Institute of Physical Sciences, together with an international team, has received a grant from the European Research Council for the project *New Excited State Methods for Overcoming Challenges in Sunlight Conversion* (NEXUS). The project focuses on developing new methods to better harness solar energy by studying how molecules behave when they absorb light, similar to photosynthesis in plants. Using advanced theoretical modelling and high-performance computer simulations, the team explores how atoms and electrons move and interact during sunlight conversion, using X-ray techniques to capture snapshots of these ultrafast changes. The results will provide new tools for researchers and may lead to more efficient solar technologies inspired by natural processes.

STORM

The research project *System Transition to Renewable Marine Fuels in the Nordics* (STORM) focuses on analysing the energy transition in marine-related activities in the context of the development of Iceland's energy system and the overall energy transition. The project examines the technical possibilities for shifting to renewable energy, explores domestic production potential for biofuels and electrofuels to support this transition, and assesses scenarios for energy transitions in marine industries with regard to sustainability. The project is led by Brynhildur Davíðsdóttir, Professor of Environment and Natural Resources, in collaboration with Nordic and international partners. STORM is funded by Nordic Energy Research.

Nuclear Energy by Self-Catalysis

Nuclear energy is produced either by nuclear fission or by nuclear fusion. By fusing all the protons found in one litre of water into helium nuclei, it is possible to obtain an amount of energy equivalent to that produced by 10 million litres of oil. The proton is an extremely complex particle, possessing an inner world of millions of short-lived quarks at immense temperatures. Sveinn Ólafsson, Research Professor in Condensed Nuclear Physics at the Science Institute, is investigating new pathways to harness this inner energy to produce renewable electrical power. The project is funded by UI, the Icelandic Research Fund (2021–2024), the Technology Development Fund (2023–2026), and the Energy Fund (2025).

Source: David Cook

Innovation Needed in Sustainable Energy Solutions to Meet Climate Targets

Iceland is a global leader in renewable energy use, but key economic sectors like transportation, fishing, and heavy industry still rely heavily on fossil fuels. This reality makes the pursuit of SDG 7, ensuring access to affordable, reliable, and sustainable energy for all, a critical domestic challenge. David Cook, an Adjunct Lecturer in Environment and Natural Resources, explains that "SDG 7's emphasis on clean energy therefore pushes Iceland to innovate further, such as adopting green hydrogen or biofuels, enabling full alignment with its sustainable energy goals and fulfilment of the nation's pursuit of net-zero carbon emissions and fossil fuel independence by the year 2040."

International Collaboration to Tackle a National Challenge

David's research focuses on finding viable green alternatives for one of Iceland's most crucial industries. "I am currently part of two international research projects on the feasibility of adopting alternative marine fuels in an Icelandic context. These are H2AMN and STORM," he explains. "The aim of both projects is to inform, support and help facilitate the transition to renewable marine fuels in the Nordic region, from a system and supply chain perspective." H2AMN focuses on hydrogen and hydrogen-derived fuels like ammonia and methanol, while STORM addresses the feasibility of expanding the use of biofuels in Iceland.

A Complex Path to a Fossil-Free Fleet

While the research is still in its early stages, the initial findings highlight a complex road ahead in the development and deployment phases of green ammonia and e-methanol in Iceland. David elaborates that "drivers include the potential scalability of green ammonia and Iceland's relatively abundant renewable energy resources. Barriers include high costs, technological immaturity, demand uncertainties, lack of systemic perspective across the value chain, and long timelines, which collectively contribute to a *green hydrogen deadlock*." A recently published H2AMN study proposes a roadmap for policymakers and stakeholders to overcome this deadlock, emphasising the need for coordinated efforts in infrastructure, cost reduction, and demand creation.

Regarding biofuels, the STORM project's early findings have found that in developing biofuels for Iceland's fishing fleet, "two fuels have potential, with Hydrotreated Vegetable Oil (HVO) and Fatty Acid Methyl Esters (FAME) being best suited for near-term goals due to compatibility with existing infrastructure and lower costs," David explains. Other options, like bioethanol and biohydrogen, show high production potential but would require significant long-term investment. "Our analysis underscores the need for tailored policy support (including likely subsidies) to bridge gaps in production scalability and infrastructure, positioning biofuels as a viable short-term decarbonisation strategy for Iceland's fishing fleet," David concludes.

Renewable Energy Graduate Specialisation

The *Renewable Energy* Graduate specialisation offers opportunities for students specialising in the engineering, science, and economics of energy resources. The specialisation is available across six study programmes and is designed to meet the diverse needs of students across UI's faculties. Producing energy in harmony with nature and society is one of the key challenges of the 21st century, and the demand for expertise in energy and earth resources continues to grow. This graduate specialisation is well-suited for careers in hydropower, geothermal energy, electrical power, and energy sustainability.

Sustainable Energy Development: Energy Economics and Policy

The Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences offers the graduate course *Sustainable Energy Development: Energy Economics and Policy*. The course introduces key concepts in energy economics and policy within the context of sustainability. Topics include the role of the economy in sustainable development, and forecasting alternative energy futures through the economics of non-renewable and renewable energy resources (e.g., hydropower, geothermal power, wind and solar). The course also addresses environmental and social impacts. Particular emphasis is placed on energy policy and sustainable energy development, including comparative perspectives on energy policy in Iceland, the EU, and other countries.

GEORG

GEORG, a geothermal research cluster, is a non-profit organisation with the mission of advancing geothermal energy research and sustainable use in Iceland and around the world. UI has led the forum since its inception, providing faculty and students with numerous opportunities in the field. Members of GEORG include engineering firms, universities, research institutions, and energy companies, all committed to contributing to the reduction of fossil fuel use as an energy source.

Energy Consumption at UI

UI's electricity supply from HS Orka is 100% renewable and backed by Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin certification.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreach and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH

ECONOMY

Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

RESEARCH

199 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 8

3339 Number of total citations

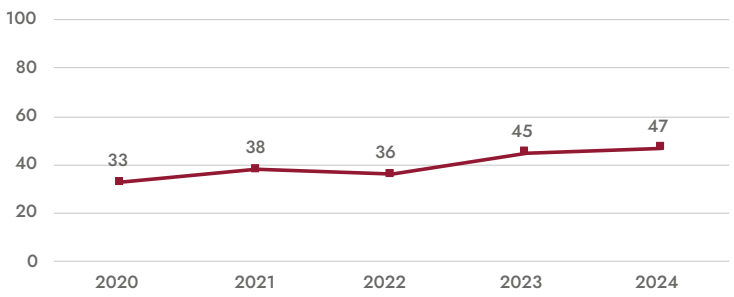
1,62 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

301–400 out of **1350** in the world

86,9 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 8



Income and Welfare: Context, Comparison and Methodology

In Guðrún Svavarsdóttir's doctoral thesis from the Faculty of Economics, complex relationships between income and welfare were examined, as well as the influence of external context and methodology on our understanding of these relationships. Subjective income needs were studied in different social contexts, and the findings were used to compare the economic welfare of individuals both within and between countries. The results emphasise the importance of carefully considering social context and methodology in research on economic welfare and can contribute to more accurate and equitable policymaking, as well as improved methods of data collection and presentation.

Icelandic Tourism Research Centre

The Icelandic Tourism Research Centre (ITRC) is a cooperative project between UI, the University of Akureyri, and Hólar University. The ITRC aims to improve and promote tourism research in Iceland and to strengthen the bonds between industry and research through domestic and international collaborative projects. The ITRC also seeks to enhance research and understanding of the impact that tourism has on the Icelandic economy, society, and environment through cooperation with domestic and foreign universities and the business community.

Sustainable Tourism Development in the Northern Environment

At the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, the course *Sustainable Tourism Development in the Northern Environment* is offered online by the University of Oulu in Finland and is part of the Thematic Network on Northern Tourism. The course examines tourism in the circumpolar North from a societal perspective and presents different views on the phenomenon, its dimensions, resources, and implications for nature, places, and cultures involved. The place of northern tourism in times of globalisation and emerging global issues, such as climate change, is explored along with relevant governance aspects.

Measuring Well-being Beyond Traditional Economic Growth

Traditional economic growth indicators fail to capture factors that often matter most to the public, such as health, safety, environmental quality, and social connections. Tinna Laufey Ásgeirsdóttir, Professor of Economics, leads an international research team from the University of Iceland that applies economic methods to estimate the value of these goods, which generally have no market price. In the ConCIV project, short for Consortium on Compensating Income Variation, the aim is to make this social value visible through data. "By assessing the value of these goods, governments can take them into account when comparing the costs and benefits of proposed actions," explains Tinna.

Making the Value of Health and Safety Visible

The goal is to measure well-being beyond traditional indicators. "Often, government policies and interventions affect not only the measurable economy but also many other factors that are no less important," says Tinna. Results by this research consortium have been published in numerous scientific articles, many of which focus on the value of health, but also on the effects of violence, safety, and social relationships. "These findings can be used to adjust conventional measures such as GDP, which fail to reflect key aspects of quality of life. In this way, national accounts can be adapted to include the value of such goods," she adds.

Better-informed Decisions for Sustainable Growth

By assigning monetary value to environmental impacts, health, safety, and social connections, governments can make better-informed decisions. "This enables policymakers to improve prioritisation and make decisions more transparent," says Tinna. The group builds on established methods from welfare economics while also working to develop and refine them further. Tinna points out that by highlighting job quality and social impacts beyond traditional production figures, ConCIV specifically works towards SDG 8, which focuses on economic growth. "The results can assist public authorities in decision making aimed at increasing productivity and well-being without overexploiting natural resources or diminishing quality of life. That's how economic growth becomes sustainable," Tinna concludes.

Working Conditions and Wages at UI

» **Wage Policy**
UI aims to provide employees with good wages and working conditions to remain competitive in the domestic and international labour markets in hiring and retaining qualified staff. Wages are determined on the basis of objective and transparent criteria. The wage system ensures consistency in wage determination and fair wage brackets for UI staff. The Wage Policy is consistent with UI's Human Resource Policy. The University Council and the Rector are responsible for the Wage Policy.

» **Equal Pay Policy**
UI has an Equal Pay Policy that aims to ensure all staff receive equal pay and the same terms of employment for the same work or work of equal value. The Equal Pay Policy is an integral part of UI's Wage Policy.

» **Employment Practice Union**
The Association of University Teachers (Fh) is a trade union for employees of UI and its related institutions. Fh negotiates wage agreements for its members, which include wage tables, right to sick leave, vacation, sick leave for children, sabbatical leave, and continuing education. Fh is a member of the Association of Academics (BHM). The Association of Professors at State Universities is another trade union representing some UI staff. Its primary role is to address the wages and rights of professors and to protect their legal status.

UI Career Days

UI Career Days were held for the ninth time, aiming to provide students with insights into career development and preparation for the job market. The event was organised by the UI Student Counselling Centre, UI Career Connections, the Financial and Employment Committee of the Student Council (SHÍ), the Graduate School, UI Science Park, and KLAK- Icelandic Startups. This year's event introduced a new approach, featuring different themes each day instead of one central topic. Participation was free and open to all.

UI Career Connections

UI Careers Connections, established in 2016, is a collaborative platform linking UI students and staff with businesses and institutions. The aim is to help the University actively engage with society and the business sector, and it serves as a tool to enhance the employability of UI students while fostering dialogue between them and the business community. On the platform, employers can advertise jobs requiring higher education free of charge.

Collaboration between the Student Council and Viska

A new Labour and Rights Representative position has been established through cooperation between the Student Council (SHÍ) and the Viska trade union, marking the first service of its kind for university students in Iceland. The representative, based at the SHÍ office, provides counselling and raises awareness about students' rights in the labour market.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreac h and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

ECONOMY

Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

RESEARCH

164 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 9

3956 Number of total citations

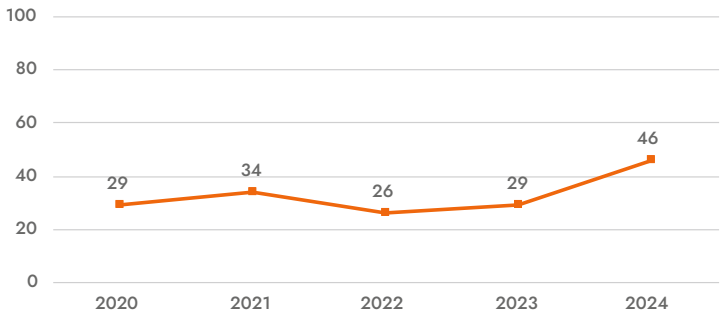
1,81 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

101–200 out of **1156** in the world

56,6 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 9



Rethinking Tourism through Digital Innovation

In Magdalena Falter's doctoral thesis from Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, focus is on digital innovation and the challenges involved in rethinking tourism, with a special emphasis on lifestyle entrepreneurs in rural areas. The project explored discussions around tourism development and the need to reduce the industry's negative impact on destinations, as well as examining the relationship between digital innovation and entrepreneurship in rural Iceland. As part of the project, a solution workshop (hackathon) was organised and used as a case study in user research to highlight how different approaches to applying digitalisation in rural areas manifest in practice.

Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Faculty of Business Administration and the Faculty of Industrial Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Computer Science offer the joint master's programme *Innovation and Entrepreneurship*. The main objective of the programme is to equip students with the skills to develop innovative ideas in a range of contexts, whether by starting their own businesses, working in start-ups or scale-ups, or contributing to development within larger companies.

Innovation Accelerators at UI

UI collaborates on various innovative platforms and accelerators that support entrepreneurs in developing their business ideas.

» **Academy for Women Entrepreneurs (AWE)**
UI and the US Embassy in Iceland collaborate on the Academy for Women Entrepreneurs. The programme aims to support women in developing their business ideas, provide education and strengthen social networks. Emphasis is placed on encouraging women with diverse backgrounds and origins to participate. Other collaborators are the Association of Business Women in Iceland (FKA) and Women of Multicultural Ethnicity Network in Iceland (W.O.M.E.N).

» **Snjallræði – Startup Social**
Snjallræði – Startup Social is a 16-week incubator that supports strong teams passionate about developing solutions to contemporary challenges and advancing the SDGs. The incubator is run in collaboration with MITdesignX, and MIT experts come to Iceland to share their knowledge. Snjallræði is a collaborative initiative between UI, Reykjavík University, and the University of Akureyri.

» **Gulleggið**
Gulleggið is a competition for young entrepreneurs to start realising their ideas, run by KLAK – Icelandic Startups. The competition begins with an open Masterclass aimed at helping participants develop their ideas and create a presentation that enables them to take the next steps. UI is one of the supporters of the competition. In addition, students from the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Committees of UI, Reykjavík University, and the University of Akureyri form the project management team.

Source: Þórey Einarsdóttir

The University of Iceland Science Park Shapes a Platform for Innovation

A science park is an area designed to foster innovation and research, bringing together universities, companies, startups, and research institutions. The University of Iceland Science Park is such a hub, where academia and industry meet to create knowledge and solutions for the future to benefit of society as a whole. The concept originates from Silicon Valley and builds on a successful international model, where close collaboration between universities and businesses has proven to be a driving force for innovation. "The key to success lies in creating ideal conditions for a thriving community and a neutral platform for cooperation," explains Þórey Einarsdóttir, CEO of UI's Science Park.

The University of Iceland as the Scientific Backbone

Collaboration with the University of Iceland is essential, Þórey explains, as the school provides the scientific foundation. The partnership is built on mutual benefit: "On one hand, startups and entrepreneurs gain access to the university's knowledge, equipment, and facilities; on the other hand, students and staff can bring their work to light through the startup and innovation community," Þórey says. This support takes many forms, including Sprotamýri, where students work with early-stage companies; financial backing for PhD projects with technology transfer potential; and partnership with Snjallræði. The Science Park also takes part in international projects, such as AI Factory Antenna with UI's computer science division, on access to European supercomputers.

A Bridge Between Ideas and Value Creation

The Science Park plays a key role in linking innovation and academic knowledge to strengthen the Icelandic economy. "Companies in the Science Park, such as DeCode, Alvotech, and CCP Games, have greatly benefited from their proximity to the university. Likewise, the university has leveraged these ties to enrich education and create career pathways for students," Þórey explains. She compares the founding of Gróska Innovation House to the impact Harpa Concert Hall had on the music scene — elevating the startup community to a larger scale.

Looking ahead, the Science Park is developing Iceland's first Deep Tech Centre, which will be a key factor in the nation's competitiveness in the coming decades. "We are privileged to measure success in decades rather than years or months," Þórey concludes. "Our long-term vision is that innovation and intellect will be Iceland's most valuable resource, and the Science Park the place where the country's best ideas take shape."

Number of University spin-off companies 23

» MenntaMaskína

MenntaMaskína is an innovation accelerator for upper secondary school students in their final year, where they tackle future challenges. UI hosts a knowledge sprint that lays the foundation for the students' creative work. Each year, one of the SDGs is chosen as the main theme of the accelerator, serving as the guiding framework for the project.

FIRST LEGO League

FIRST LEGO League is an international competition where elementary and middle school students are invited to take part in exciting projects that build skills in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). The competition is organised by UI and aims to increase children's interest in technology and science, as well as enhance their skills and solution-oriented thinking. Each year, the theme and challenges are renewed and based on the SDGs. The 2024 theme focused on SDG 14, encouraging participants to explore the ocean floor and discover new ways to promote the sustainability and health of the oceans through LEGO-based technology and innovation.

Sprotamýri – Innovation Centre

Sprotamýri is UI's Entrepreneurship Centre, where students and staff can access facilities and receive support from organisations such as KLAK – Icelandic Startups and the Innovation Hub for Education to develop their ideas free of charge. Sprotamýri is located in Mýrin, the Innovation Centre of the UI Science Park in Gróska, which is home to key players in the Icelandic entrepreneurship sector, as well as several start-ups and entrepreneurs. With this, UI aims to create a supportive and dynamic environment for students and staff to develop their ideas.

The Innovation Competition for Primary Schools (NKS)

The Innovation Competition for Primary Schools (NKS) has been held annually since 1991 in collaboration between UI and the Ministry of Education and Children. Each year, around 40 students in grades 5–7 are given the opportunity to develop their ideas into solutions for real-world challenges, from initial concept to prototype. NKS starts in the autumn and concludes in the spring with a workshop where students work with experts from UI, Reykjavík University, and other partners who provide guidance and support. The process aims to enhance creativity, initiative, and self-confidence among students.

10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES

ECONOMY

Reduce inequality within and among countries

RESEARCH

230 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 10

2046 Number of total citations

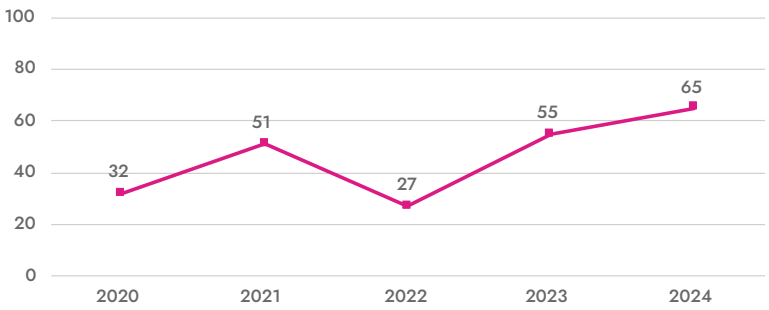
1,33 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

601–800 out of **1261** in the world

78,4 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 10



BIAS – Mitigating Bias of AI in the Labour Market

UI, together with eight other universities, research institutes, and innovative organisations, is part of the European research network *BIAS*. The goal is to explore how AI systems used in management across Europe might introduce or amplify diversity biases. Recognising the different ways AI can lead to discrimination is crucial for shaping technologies that promote fairness in the labour market and ensure that AI systems benefit everyone, regardless of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, or sexuality, rather than perpetuating existing inequalities. The project is funded by the EU's Horizon Europe Research and Innovation programme.

Vocational Studies for People with Disabilities

The School of Education offers a two-year undergraduate diploma in vocational studies for people with disabilities. The main purpose of the programme is to provide people with developmental disabilities with opportunities to become fully engaged members of society and to prepare students for various types of work. The programme is designed to align with international disability rights policies, human rights conventions, and UI's strategy.

Equality and Diversity at UI

UI is committed to promoting equality and diversity in all fields and strives to be at the forefront in every aspect of equality.

» **Equality Action Plan**
UI's first Equality Action Plan was approved by the University Council in 2010. The current plan covers the period 2024–26. It prohibits discrimination based on factors such as sex, gender, skin colour, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, ethnicity, religion, residence status, nationality, race or culture at UI. The Equality Action Plan applies to all students and staff.

» **Equality Officer**
The Equality Officer at UI manages equality-related matters, collaborates with the Equal Rights Committee, co-chairs the Council for Disability Rights, ensures implementation of the Equal Rights Policy, and promotes equality and diversity across the university.

» **Equality Rights Committee**
The Equal Rights Committee at UI oversees equality across the university on behalf of the Rector and the University Council. Each school and the central administration have their own committees, whose chairs, together with a student representative, a Rector-appointed chair, and the Equality Officer, form the central committee.

» **Professional Council on Responding to Gender-Related and Sexual Harassment**
The University Council appoints a Professional Council on Responding to Gender-related and Sexual Harassment and other forms of sexual violence, in accordance with the rules of proce-

Sprettur Cultivates Strengths in a Multicultural University Community

The University of Iceland places strong emphasis on equality and diversity and works systematically to create an environment where all students have the opportunity to thrive. One initiative in this effort is *Sprettur*, a social innovation project aimed at promoting inclusion and mutual integration of immigrants pursuing higher education.

Juan Camilo Roman Estrada, Project Manager of Sprettur and Intercultural Representative at the University of Iceland, explains that the goal is clear: "to increase the participation and academic success of immigrants in higher education. Sprettur seeks to nurture the strengths inherent in a multicultural, multilingual, and interdisciplinary university community." Juan adds that this is particularly important, as research shows that proportionally fewer immigrants graduate from upper secondary school and pursue university studies compared to other young people.

A Strong Support Network is the Key to Success

To address the systemic barriers that may affect the academic progress of students with immigrant backgrounds, Sprettur has built a strong support network and a motivating environment grounded in an intercultural learning community. "Many immigrants want the opportunity to study at university and actively participate in the university community," says Juan. Sprettur provides a platform to support this group by creating networks and offering academic assistance, counselling, and mentorship within an encouraging and creative environment.

The project has shown tangible results since its launch in 2019, and the majority of upper secondary students with immigrant backgrounds who have participated in Sprettur's programs have since begun university studies. One of the project's cornerstones is its strong mentoring system. Students at the University of Iceland can now take the Mentor course through Sprettur, where they can learn and practice how to support immigrants and students of foreign backgrounds through their learning journeys.

A Cultural Bridge Builder Within the University

Juan also serves as the University of Iceland's first Intercultural Representative, a role dedicated to promoting inclusion across all areas of the university. He describes the position as one of bridge-building and fostering understanding. "An intercultural representative is, above all, a cultural bridge builder and liaison who works to strengthen intercultural competence and sensitivity throughout the university," he explains. "The role provides guidance and support for students, teachers, and staff on inclusion, mutual adaptation, and equality for immigrants." In collaboration with the Centre for Teaching and Learning, Juan has also developed educational materials on inclusive teaching and teamwork, introducing diverse methods to enhance collaboration and understanding across cultures.

dure. Harassment, violence, or inappropriate behaviour can be reported through Ugla, UI's internal network for students and staff.

» **Council for Disability Rights**
The Rector appoints the Council for Disability Rights in accordance with Article 12 of the Regulation on disability services for study at the UI, no. 481/2010. The role of the Council is to oversee issues concerning people with disabilities within UI, as well as students with special needs, and to review UI's policies regarding people with disabilities.

» **Name Change for Students**
Students at UI who are unable to change their name legally can request a name change within the University.

Collaborative Project to Increase the Number of Immigrants in Higher Education

The public universities in Iceland have launched a collaborative project on inclusion within the Icelandic university community, funded by the Ministry of Higher Education, Industry and Innovation. The two-year project aims to develop methods that promote greater inclusion in the university community, increase the number of immigrants in higher education, and reduce dropout rates.

Academic Adjustment and Support for Students

Students at UI with disabilities, including those with long-term physical, mental, intellectual, or sensory impairments that may affect their studies, can apply for disability services to receive academic adjustment and support. These are few examples of the available support.

» **Sign language interpretation**
UI provides sign language and written interpretation services upon request.

» **Class notes assistance**
If a student is unable to take notes during lectures due to a disability or illness, they may apply to receive notes from a fellow student.

» **Adaptation of study materials for blind and visually impaired students**
This service is provided in collaboration with the Icelandic National Institute for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Deafblind (Sjónstöðin).

» **Speech synthesiser**
Students who need to use a speech synthesiser or reader to listen to exam questions may apply for this accommodation.

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

SOCIETY

Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

RESEARCH

217 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 11

3347 Number of total citations

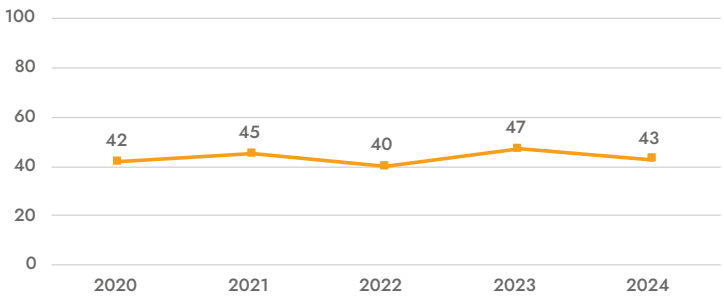
1,39 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

401–600 out of **1154** in the world

75,9 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 11



Multi-Objective Benefits of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems in Cold Climates

Hrund Ó. Andradóttir, Professor at the Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, leads a project on sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS), funded by the Icelandic Research Fund. SUDS have been increasingly implemented as a cost-effective and environmentally friendly solution to counteract the effects of urbanisation and climate change. SUDS provide various benefits, including flood mitigation, water treatment, cooling urban areas, and carbon sequestration. This project aims to assess the multi-objective benefits of SUDS in cold maritime climates, where their performance deteriorates in winter due to frost, vegetation dormancy, and reduced biological activity.

The Relationship Between Urban Mobility, Travel-Related Carbon Footprint, and Well-Being

In Johanna Raudsepp's doctoral thesis in Environmental Studies, the links between urban mobility, travel behaviour, and well-being were examined. Despite the strong position of the Nordic countries in climate matters, the travel footprint of residents exceeds the threshold needed to keep global warming within 1.5 degrees, largely due to leisure travel outside urban areas. Using Reykjavík as a case study, the results showed a correlation between urban mobility and increased domestic leisure travel, along with evidence of a weak public transport system in Reykjavík. The research underscores the need for people-centred urban planning that supports residents' welfare and needs and highlights the urgent need to reduce travel-related emissions in wealthy countries, while ensuring that socially and economically disadvantaged individuals are not left behind in the transition towards sustainability.

Earthquake Engineering Research Centre

The main objective of the Earthquake Engineering Centre is to gain knowledge about the nature and effects of earthquakes. The centre manages the Icelandic Strong-Motion Network (ICESMN), which is distributed widely across the country. The accelerometers record ground motions and vibrations in structures such as buildings, bridges, dams, and power plants. ICESMN is the only strong-motion network in Iceland, and such data are crucial for developing and improving computational models of earthquakes, seismic hazards, and the earthquake resistance of structures.

Environmental Psychology

Environmental psychology is an undergraduate course taught at the Faculty of Psychology, where the interaction between people and their surroundings is discussed, along with the influence of the natural and built environment on health and well-being, and how

Source: Sigurður Stefán Jónsson

The Manuscripts of the North-American Icelandic Community Find a New Home

In the 19th and 20th centuries, an estimated 20% of the Icelandic population emigrated to North America. Though they did not expect to see Iceland again, the immigrants brought with them hundreds of handwritten books to nurture their language and culture. As a result, many Icelandic manuscripts can be found in North America, along with diaries, letters, and various documents written in Icelandic. Katelin Marit Parsons, adjunct lecturer and postdoctoral researcher at the Faculty of Icelandic and Comparative Cultural Studies, has led a project aimed at preserving this valuable heritage, an effort that directly aligns with one of the targets of SDG 11.

A Shared Heritage in Digital Form

The Icelandic Immigrant Literacy Database project seeks to locate, catalogue, and digitise manuscripts, letters, and other Icelandic documents preserved in North America. "This is a shared heritage, so our goal was not to bring the manuscripts back to Iceland but to record and digitise them," explains Katelin. "In most cases, we received permission from the owners to make the digital copies accessible to the public through *the Icelandic Immigrant Literacy Database*. This is a tremendous resource for the academic community and for anyone interested in this history," she adds.

Cultural Heritage Falls Between the Cracks

One of the project's goals is to ensure that this heritage is not lost. "The cultural heritage of immigrants can easily fall between the cracks," says Katelin. "The materials we work with are written in a language that the current owners may not understand, which puts them at great risk of being lost." She points out that the manuscripts are widely dispersed and often located in areas where few people speak Icelandic. It is therefore essential to engage in conversations about the content and value of these manuscripts, and why they are worth preserving.

Inviting the Public into the Attics of the North American Icelanders

Accessibility is key, as preservation alone is not enough. "It's of little use to preserve things if we forget why they matter," says Katelin. By making the materials available online, the project opens a window into the history and lives of these people for future generations on both sides of the Atlantic. "The project offers the public a chance to climb up into the attics of the North American Icelanders and explore the treasures found there," Katelin concludes.

urban design can improve city life. It addresses environmental attitudes and concerns, as well as how a psychological perspective can add value to discussions on sustainability and urban densification. Emphasis is placed on linking the course material to everyday life in Iceland.

Archaeological Field School at Hofsstaðir

UI and Hólar University operate the international Archaeological Field School at Hofsstaðir, in the Mývatn area, in collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Agency of Iceland. The school has been operating since 2024 and provides students with hands-on instruction and experience in Icelandic archaeology and heritage management, including how archaeological heritage can be preserved and utilised as a tourist attraction. This work directly contributes to SDG 11.4, which focuses on protecting the world's cultural and natural heritage.

Campus Master Plan for UI

The UI Planning Committee and the City of Reykjavík have developed a cohesive campus plan that serves as a strategic vision and planning tool for coordinating, designing, and implementing buildings and their surroundings. Emphasising Vatnsmýrin's unique character, the plan enhances environmental values and promotes sustainable mobility through the planned Borgarlína transit line, better cycling and pedestrian routes, and reduced car use. Public spaces are designed to support health, outdoor activity, teaching, and research, benefiting both the university community and city residents. The campus aims to foster a competitive, liveable, and just urban community in line with goals for carbon neutrality, nature conservation, and biodiversity.

Initiatives to Reduce the Use of Private Cars

A significant share of UI's greenhouse gas emissions comes from transportation. The university supports several initiatives to reduce private car use.

- **Shared electric cars**
  UI staff have access to electric vehicles for work-related trips within the capital area.
- **Travel contract**
  Staff have the option to enter a sustainable transport agreement, committing to travel to and from the university using sustainable modes of transport at least twice a week.
- **Biking at UI**
  Bicycle racks are available outside every UI building, and covered bike shelters can be found at Lögberg and VR-II. UI participates in the Bike to Work initiative to raise awareness of active commuting as a cost-effective, healthy, and environmentally friendly mode of transport. Each year, Dr. Bæk visits the campus as part of the cycling initiative to inspect the condition of staff bikes.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreach and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION

ECONOMY

Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

RESEARCH

209 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 12

4694 Number of total citations

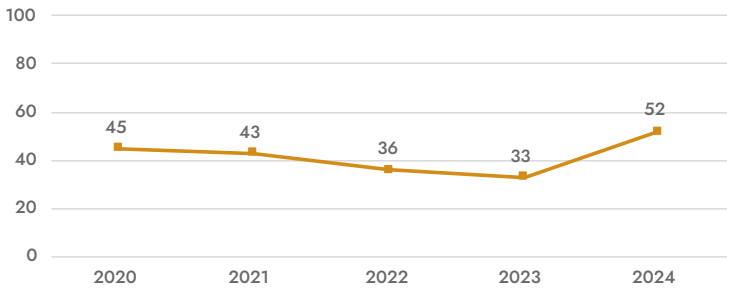
1,61 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

201–300 out of **973** in the world

67,8 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 12



New Approaches to Waste and Energy

Aysan Safavi, a Postdoctoral Researcher in chemical engineering, is developing pyrolysis technology that could potentially transform waste management and energy production in the future. Pyrolysis is a sustainable technique used to produce biofuel. Its main advantage is that it is a low-emission technology, unlike waste incineration and landfilling. Aysan's research results show that pyrolysis reduces toxic emissions of toxic compounds such as dioxins and furans while generating renewable energy. Pyrolysis can enable a waste-free future by supporting the transition to a circular economy and aligns with global goals for carbon-negative energy solutions and sustainable development. The project is funded by UI's Eimskip Fund.

Circular Economy in the Construction Sector

In the course *Circular Economy in the Construction Sector*, master's students in Civil Engineering, Environmental Engineering, and the Environment and Natural Resources programme focus on various aspects of circularity in the construction industry and examine whether a transition to a circular construction sector is possible. A practical approach to this issue is explored, including environmental, legal, political, and economic aspects. The course familiarises students with the current challenges and opportunities related to circular construction in the Icelandic, Nordic, and European contexts.

Reducing the Environmental Impact of Denim Dyeing

Ólafur Ögmundarson, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Food Science and Nutrition, is exploring the production of a new blue pigment in a study led by DTU Biosustain, an interdisciplinary research centre at the Technical University of Denmark. The team has developed a new and more sustainable way to dye denim using the pigment indican, which reacts with either enzymes or sunlight to produce the typical blue colour of jeans. This process eliminates the need for reducing agents and is more energy efficient, two factors that make it more sustainable than traditional indigo dyeing. The method could significantly reduce the environmental impact of denim production, with four billion pairs of jeans sold worldwide each year.

Environmental Geography

Environmental Geography is an undergraduate course offered by the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, where an emphasis is placed on the relation between population and food security, food production, resource use, and environmental stress. Field trips are an essential part of the course, helping students understand organic decomposition and its value. They visit Melta, an innovative start-up that produces fertiliser from food waste and restores land in Rangárþing ytra through local collaboration, and Gaja, Sorpa's gas and composting plant in Álfsnes, where organic waste is turned into compost and methane. Students also conduct an experiment using

Source: Sigrún Hanna Þorgrímsdóttir

Science, Arts and Crafts Meet in the Spirit of Sustainability at Hallormsstaður

In the vibrant environment of East Iceland, a unique study program is offered where science, arts and crafts intertwine. The Creative Sustainability program is a collaborative project between Hallormsstaður School and the University of Iceland. Sigrún Hanna Þorgrímsdóttir, Adjunct in Creative Sustainability, says the program builds on a long tradition while responding to the call of the present. "It is a new program on old foundations, built on the heritage of the home economics programme at Hallormsstaður School from 1930, but it has evolved in step with the questions and challenges of each era," Sigrún explains. "Today, issues of sustainability and sustainable development are at the forefront. The collaboration with the University of Iceland adds academic depth, a broader context, and opportunities for interdisciplinary cooperation."

Craftsmanship as a Key to Responsible Consumption

The program emphasises material knowledge, ecological awareness, and craftsmanship as a way to nurture responsible consumption and production. There is a focus on connections with the local community and local resources, while also thinking outside the box. "Our goal is to be a driving force in the community, to open pathways for underutilised materials and by-products, and above all, to cultivate critical and creative thinking that nourishes the future," says Sigrún. She points out that craftsmanship encompasses not only practical skills but also a mindset that can transform our consumption habits. Craftsmanship, she says, is a key, "a perspective and ethical approach that embodies slowness, attentiveness, and respect for materials, the environment, and society. Learning to work with materials with care is a way to foster responsible consumption, reduce waste, and extend the lifespan of objects," Sigrún explains. Through this approach, cultural heritage and innovation are woven together.

Sustainability as the Interplay of Humans and Nature

Sigrún further notes that sustainability is more than a technical challenge. "It is equally grounded in the creative interplay of the environment, material, culture and community in the search for new ways to find our footing in a dynamic world where everything is in flux," she concludes.

the bokashi method to break down food waste and create fertile soil for tomatoes they grow themselves.

Sustainability in Daily Operations

UI has made various changes in its operations to systematically reduce negative environmental impacts and increase sustainability in daily operations.

» **Digital Examination**
The implementation of digital examinations at UI began in 2019 and has significantly reduced paper usage.

» **Computers**
The Division of Information Technology provides computers to university staff in accordance with the government's framework agreement, which requires environmentally certified equipment. The division also works to extend the lifespan of older computers by offering staff the option to buy their used laptops for a small fee and donating reusable devices to the Red Cross.

» **Environmentally Certified Cleaning Services**
UI requires that cleaning services provided on campus are environmentally certified. This ensures that service providers actively work to reduce their negative environmental impacts.

» **Green Steps**
UI is implementing the Green Steps project into its operations. The project aims to promote eco-friendly practices in a systemic way and make UI's work on sustainability and environmental issues more focused and targeted.

» **Lost-and-Found Gets a New Life**
Once a year, the Service Desk at Háskólatorg sets up an exchange table offering unclaimed lost items free of charge.

» **Greener Laboratories**
The Biomedical Centre has four laboratories participating in the *MyGreenLab Certification programme*, an internationally recognised certification scheme. The project includes streamlining procedures, reducing energy and water consumption of research infrastructure and instruments, and reducing waste.

Green Flag

The Environmental and Transport Committee of the Student Council has held the Green Flag since 2020. This international environmental education initiative, run by Landvernd in Iceland, promotes sustainability in schools. In recent years, students have focused on waste and consumption, organising activities such as a market at Háskólatorg, a recycling campaign, and maintaining a clothes rack outside the University Bookstore for donations and reuse. A cleaning station has also been set up near the main canteen to wash reusable containers and reduce the use of single-use products.

13 CLIMATE ACTION

BIOSPHERE

Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact

RESEARCH

290 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 13

6611 Number of total citations

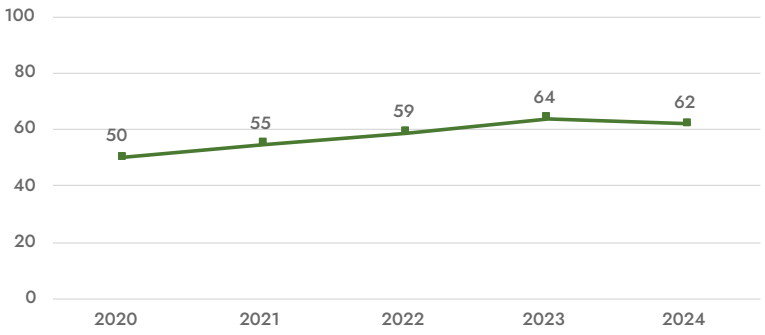
1,67 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

64 out of **1089** in the world

69,8 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 13



Human Rights, Multiculturalism, and Religion in Times of Climate Change (MaFTíL)

MaFTÍL is an interdisciplinary research project within the Faculty of Theology and Religious Studies that highlights the diverse contributions of the humanities and social sciences to addressing the pressing challenges facing humanity in an era of climate change. The project brings together scholars from various disciplines to examine these issues from a wide range of perspectives, theories, and methods. For example, the project explores how human-induced climate change influences human rights, religion, and multiculturalism; how people experience and perceive these changes in an increasingly multicultural context; and what role religious dimensions play in this broader existential challenge.

Lifestyle Within 1.5°C – Compatible Living

Sara Olson's doctoral thesis in Environmental Science examines lifestyles compatible with the 1.5°C warming limit, focusing on consumption-related carbon footprints in the Nordic countries. Changes in lifestyle and consumption habits are necessary to mitigate climate change and to live within the 1.5°C target, but consumption-driven emissions in richer nations far exceed these limits, despite the population's considerable concern about climate issues. Different low-carbon consumption choices in the Nordic context were studied to analyse their impact on individuals' consumption-related carbon footprints and to examine how their concern about climate issues and motivation to reduce personal carbon footprints may influence these footprints.

UI Research Centre in Hornafjörður

The research centre focuses primarily on environmental and climate issues, while also fostering appreciation and knowledge about nature and strengthening culture and community in rural Iceland. It has developed innovative methods for communicating scientific knowledge, particularly on climate change, such as the impacts of glacial retreat.

Environmental Sociology: Climate Change and Societies

The course *Environmental Sociology* is taught at the undergraduate level at the Faculty of Sociology, Anthropology and Folkloristics. It gives students in-depth knowledge of the effects of climate change on humans and other social factors. The social, institutional, and cultural dynamics of environmental issues are given special attention, with an emphasis on examining how societies influence environmental problems and vice versa. Special focus is placed on climate change as a societal challenge and on exploring how these

Building Bridges Between Disciplines to Tackle the Climate Crisis

The climate crisis is not a problem that the natural sciences can solve on their own; it requires a deep understanding of human society, ethics, and values. This is the basis of Ole Martin Sandberg's research as a postdoctoral researcher at the Centre for Ethics. He leads the Climate Crisis and Affect project, describing it as "partially my own research project exploring philosophical aspects of climate change, particularly the connections between ethics, science, society and human thought, and partially a network of scholars working on related topics."

Connecting Researchers to Understand the Human Aspect

Ole notes that the network grew from a practical need to bridge gaps between isolated disciplines. "I am working in environmental humanities and wanted to find people to collaborate with. Much of the research at the university is isolated, and we don't communicate enough between disciplines and institutions," he says. The network therefore aims to connect those in the social sciences and humanities who are working on the crucial human aspects of climate change.

Why Real Climate Action Requires a Shift in Values

The importance of this human-centric work is clear, as scientific data alone has not led to the necessary action, Ole points out. "Scientists know that this is not enough. It is easy to say we need to stop emitting carbon gases, but the tragic truth is that we don't know how to do that. Our society is built on an environmentally destructive model, and that affects our way of life, our politics, economics and cultural values," he explains.

To truly address the crisis, the change required is fundamental. "To stop environmentally destructive activities, we need to change our entire society - including our values and our ideas about what the good life consists of," he says. This is why collaborative work across disciplines is essential. Ole emphasises that the climate crisis is a complex topic, deeply connected to other planetary issues like biodiversity loss and ocean acidification, and that they need to be solved together. "We won't solve them if we ignore social topics like economic and political justice, gender equality, democracy and so on. Everyone has a role to play, and we need more work that creates connections between disciplines, issues and between academia and the public," Ole concludes.

challenges have different effects within and between societies from a sociological perspective.

Sustainability Management and Informatics

A new specialisation in *Sustainability Management and Informatics* is offered in the Environment and Natural Resources master's programme. The focus is on analysing various dimensions of sustainability and the use of large datasets. Students receive training in, among other things, ecological footprint analysis, carbon footprint analysis, and life cycle assessment. Teaching takes place at UI and via distance learning at York University in Canada.

Pilot Cities: Piercing Through the Gridlocks

Pilot Cities: Piercing Through the Gridlocks is a collaborative research and innovation project between the City of Reykjavík and UI. The project focuses on the transportation patterns and recycling challenges of residents in the city and the capital area. It is funded through *NetZeroCities*, a programme that connects 112 "Climate Cities" across Europe. In Reykjavík, road transportation and waste generate over half of the city's emissions. To address this, the project tests and implements practical methods, solutions, and services that promote greener transport and improved recycling, helping to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance Reykjavík City's objective of achieving carbon neutrality by 2030.

Nordic Policy Handbook for Nature-based Solutions

The Sustainability Institute at UI, in cooperation with Nordic collaborators, published a policy handbook for nature-based solutions in 2024. Nature-based solutions (NbS) are an internationally recognised approach to addressing major societal challenges, such as reducing the impacts of climate change and building resilience against its effects. In addition, NbS help reduce environmental degradation and biodiversity loss. They can also be used to tackle social challenges such as disaster risk and preparedness, health, well-being, and social justice. The handbook compiles examples to help Nordic countries learn from one another. The project was financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

UI Signs Climate City Contract

The Reykjavík Climate City Contract is a partnership between the City of Reykjavík and various actors across different sectors to define the actions needed to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, following Reykjavík's selection to become a Climate City, along with over 100 other European cities. The first Climate City Contract was signed in October 2024, with UI among the stakeholders committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and supporting the city's climate goals.

14 LIFE BELOW WATER

BIOSPHERE

Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Source: Michelle Dutro

RESEARCH

178 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 14

2373 Number of total citations

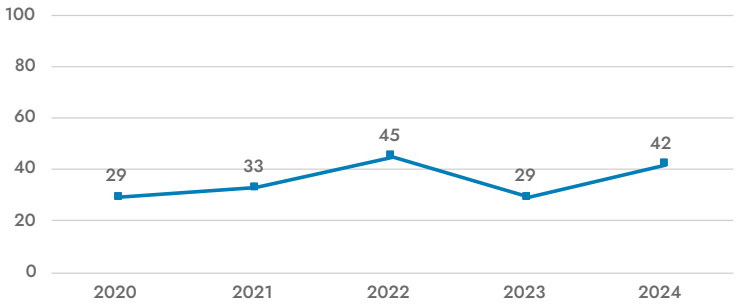
1,24 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

201–300 out of **711** in the world

73,0 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 14



Research Centre on Ocean, Climate and Society (ROCS)

ROCS is a collaboration between the University of Copenhagen and UI that aims to pursue a better understanding of how human communities in Iceland have impacted, and been impacted, by changes in ecosystem services caused by climate change. A recent study conducted by the Centre analysed complex pathways of bottom currents south of Iceland and determined their role in the southward flow of deep water in the North Atlantic, in collaboration with the French Hydrographic and Oceanographic Institute. The results are an important contribution to knowledge in the fields of oceanography and climate and may also shed light on the distribution of benthic organisms along the Icelandic continental shelf. Understanding the currents in this area is important, as the growth of various commercial fish stocks partly takes place on the shelf south of Iceland, and changes in ocean currents around Iceland can have serious global consequences for climate and biodiversity.

Pollution Monitoring Around Iceland

UI's Research Centre in Suðurnes takes part in various projects related to pollution monitoring around Iceland. The centre is responsible for, among other things, the nationwide collection of mussels as part of the AMSUM pollution monitoring program on marine life, run by the Icelandic Environment and Energy Agency. The Research Centre also contributes to ICES/OSPAR monitoring carried out by the same agency, which includes the analysis of imposex in gastropods caused by organotin compounds originating from ships' anti-fouling paint. Additionally, the Centre participates in monitoring projects for various companies, including pollution monitoring for ISAL, the aluminium plant in Straumsvík; pollution monitoring and research for Veitur, related to the main sewage outflow from Reykjavík and Kjalarnes; and pollution monitoring and research for Isavia, related to wastewater discharge from Keflavík International Airport.

Icelandic Orca Project

The Icelandic Orca Project at UI's Research Centre in the Westman Islands is the longest-running orca research initiative in Icelandic waters. The research focuses primarily on the foraging ecology of killer whales and how it relates to the social and communication behaviour of this top predator. Photo-identification is used for population assessment and association studies, alongside biological

Studying the Ocean from the Whale Capital

Marianne Helene Rasmussen, Director of the University of Iceland's Húsavík Research Centre, has dedicated her career to studying marine mammals, with a particular focus on whales and dolphins. "Most research projects are connected to their vocalisation and the sounds they use to navigate or their behaviour," she explains. Beyond that, she is currently the principal investigator of E-whale, a new EU-funded project where Marianne and her team collect water samples from where the whales are diving, known as fluke prints, and investigate the DNA in the water.

A Hub for Students and Local Collaboration

The location of the research centre in Húsavík plays a key role in its success. "Húsavík is also known as the whale watching capital of Europe," Marianne explains, with over 100,000 tourists taking tours annually, making it an excellent spot to study the whales. It should therefore come as no surprise that it has become quite popular among international students. "This year, we have welcomed 30 students from abroad," she says. "They typically stay between 2 and 6 months for a student internship or as part of their final thesis." The students work directly with the local industry and join the whale watching vessels to take photographs for photo-identification of the different species of cetaceans, as well as taking sighting and behaviour information with the Spotter Pro App. The result is a vibrant collaboration between science, education, and local industry. "These students often come back the year after to work as a guide for the local whale watching companies, and the companies in this way benefit from very well-educated guides," Marianne adds.

Educating for a Sustainable Future

In addition to welcoming international students for longer periods, the centre also hosts a 10-day summer course where students from around the world come to Húsavík to learn how to study marine mammals. The centre's mission also extends beyond the university level. "We also develop educational materials for school kids about the whales," says Marianne. This outreach uses modern tools, from virtual reality goggles that let kids get the experience that they were in the water with the whales to an Erasmus+ project developing an online educational platform about the ocean.

Marianne explains that this work is essential for Iceland to meet its conservation goals. "Iceland is currently working towards the 30 x 30 goals and the COP15 goals. To achieve these goals, it is important to have well-educated people working and studying the ocean and all aspects of marine science in Iceland," she concludes.

sampling for diet, genetic, and pollutant analyses, long-term behavioural observations, and acoustic recordings. The aim is to monitor the population, gain a better understanding of its structure, and identify potential threats to support its conservation and protection.

Ocean Sustainability

The course *Ocean Sustainability* is taught at the graduate level in the Environment and Natural Resources (ENR) programme. The course offers a broad and comprehensive overview of the marine environment from a global perspective, in relation to the three pillars of sustainable development, as conservation and sustainable use of the worlds oceans and marine resources is one of the biggest challenges of our time. The course is officially endorsed as an UNESCO Ocean Decade activity, and this recognition highlights the innovative approach of the ENR programme in addressing global ocean challenges and sustainability. This course is set up to be applicable to any university or teaching center, endeavoring to train students in sustainability studies.

SEATALES

Jóna Guðrún Jónsdóttir, Adjunct Professor, and Rannveig Björk Þorkelsdóttir, Associate Professor at UI's Faculty of Teacher Education, lead the international study SEATALES. The project aims to support primary and secondary school teachers in developing the competencies and knowledge needed to integrate ocean literacy education through role-playing activities, introducing students to its concepts and principles to foster a generation of ocean-literate, active, and responsible citizens. The project is funded by the Erasmus+ programme, with participants from four countries.

Visual Storytelling for Ocean Education (ViSOE)

UI's Research Centre in Húsavík has received an Erasmus+ grant to develop an innovative and immersive digital education tool based on visual and personal storytelling from a sailing expedition around the Arctic. The main objective of the project is to increase the number of well-resourced teachers with enhanced knowledge of and engagement with the ocean.

Climate Strike for the Ocean

The Student Council (SHÍ), together with *Climate Strike – Fridays for Future*, organised a large demonstration to raise awareness and present demands to politicians regarding ocean protection, emphasising a ban on deep-sea mining and open-net fish farming, as well as Iceland's responsibilities for sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreach and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

15 LIFE ON LAND

BIOSPHERE

Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reserve land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Source: Jón Örn Guðbjartsson

RESEARCH

101 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 15

1348 Number of total citations

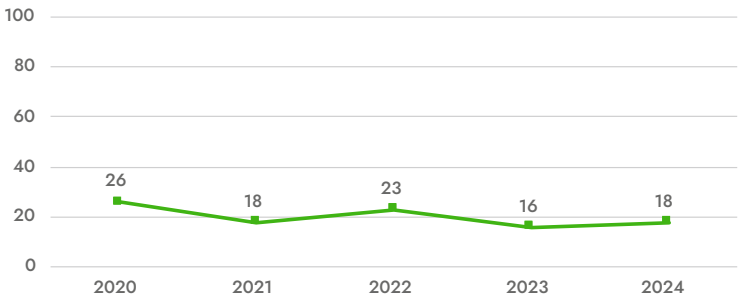
1,47 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

401–600 out of **854** in the world

66,8 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 15



Generational Shifts: The Role of Juvenile Ontogeny in Facilitating Population Responses to Environmental Change

Understanding how biodiversity responds to global environmental change is one of humanity's most pressing challenges. Rapid shifts in species distributions are testing the capacity of protected area networks and management strategies. This project, led by UI's Research Centre in South Iceland, investigates why some species shift their ranges while others do not, focusing on Icelandic waders. Using GPS tracking of juvenile black-tailed godwits, whimbrels, and oystercatchers, which differ in key life-history traits, the study examines how early-life behaviour, migration, and settlement contribute to population-level changes in phenology, demography, and distribution. By linking detailed tracking data with long-term population studies, the project will identify how generational shifts shape species' responses to changing environments and improve predictions for conservation management. The project received a Centre of Excellence grant from the Icelandic Centre of Research.

Conservation Biology

Climate change, human population growth, and globalisation, among other factors, have dramatic effects on plant and animal species, their habitats, and ecosystems. The course, which is taught at both the undergraduate and graduate levels at the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, aims to address the loss of biodiversity by understanding the impact humans have on it and by drawing from multiple fields, such as ecology, evolution, economics, and resource management, to develop conservation solutions. The goal of the course is to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the principles of conservation biology, the value and threats to biodiversity, and the approaches to addressing conservation challenges.

Humanimals: Relations Between Humans and Animals

At the Faculty of Sociology, Anthropology and Folkloristics, the undergraduate course *Humanimals* focuses on the relationships between humans and animals, approached from both academic

Decades of Research on Arctic Biodiversity and Ecosystems

Ingibjörg Svala Jónsdóttir, Professor Emerita at the Faculty of Life and Environmental Sciences, has devoted much of her 45-year career to studying the vast ecosystems of the Arctic. Her research spans a wide range within ecology, or "everything from the life-history adaptations of plants to Arctic conditions, genetic variation within plant populations, diversity in plant communities (vascular plants, mosses, and lichens), herbivores (mammals, birds, insects), and micro-organisms (in soils and on mosses and lichens)," Ingibjörg Svala explains. Through participation in numerous international research expeditions across polar and alpine tundra in Siberia and North America, as well as Svalbard, Iceland, and South Georgia, she has gained valuable insights into the diversity found in these regions.

Conservation of Arctic Ecosystems Has Global Significance

Ingibjörg Svala explains that Arctic ecosystems are unique and play a crucial role in a broader context. "The uniqueness of Arctic ecosystems can be summarised as follows: 1) They are part of the Earth's most extensive pristine wilderness areas. 2) Although there are fewer species than in most other regions of the world, research shows that the variation within species is proportionally high across most organism groups. 3) For millennia, they have stored more organic material in soils and permafrost than they have released, and thus they hold vast amounts of carbon," Ingibjörg Svala explains.

She points out that research on the impacts of climate change and land use is of global importance, as biodiversity in the region is now under threat. "Climate warming is much faster in the Arctic than elsewhere. By participating in international research networks, I have sought to answer questions about the impacts of climate change and herbivory, including livestock grazing, on tundra biodiversity and ecosystems. Much evidence suggests that the balance between carbon storage and release is reversing, with greenhouse gas emissions surpassing storage, which will cause further global warming. It is essential to ensure restoration of degraded tundra ecosystems and their sustainable use."

Education and Training of the Next Generation

Ingibjörg Svala highlights the importance of passing knowledge on to future generations and preparing them to address complex environmental challenges. "In my teaching, I have emphasised providing students with a strong theoretical foundation in ecology and trained them in applying ecological knowledge to solve diverse environmental problems and ensure the sustainable use of natural resources," she concludes.

and artistic perspectives. The course aims to explore urgent questions and current issues concerning human–animal coexistence, climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental sustainability. Students examine how artists, researchers, activists, and museums have engaged with these themes, and are encouraged to work with visual materials, objects, and texts, both online and through visits to museums and exhibitions.

Collaboration Between UI and the Nature Research Centres

Eight Nature Research Centres operate across Iceland. They conduct natural research, data collection, and monitoring of the country's natural environment, among other activities. UI's regional research centres collaborate closely with the Nature Research Centres in their respective regions, often sharing facilities and equipment. UI and the Association of Nature Research Centres also have an agreement to strengthen cooperation in research and teaching in the fields of natural and environmental sciences.

Hiking Trips with Science Tips

Hiking Trips with Science Tips is a series of walks, organised in collaboration between UI and the Icelandic Touring Association (FÍ), running since 2011. The aim is to raise public interest in education and science, and promote healthy outdoor activities, while also highlighting the diverse work of UI and FÍ. In 2024, the programme focused especially on insects and bugs in the Icelandic fauna, mushrooms, birdwatching, and the importance of biodiversity. Participation is free of charge and open to everyone.

Green Areas on the UI Campus

The UI grounds maintenance team manages the green areas on campus and has systematically increased plant species diversity on campus, with more than 60 species of trees and shrubs. Compost from Gaja, a gas and composting plant operated by Sorpa, is used as fertiliser, and the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilisers has been significantly reduced. During the summer season, around 10–12 employees work on maintenance and mowing.

Research | Teaching and learning | Community outreach and partnerships | Operations and governance | Student initiatives

16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS

SOCIETY

Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

RESEARCH

179 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 16

2004 Number of total citations

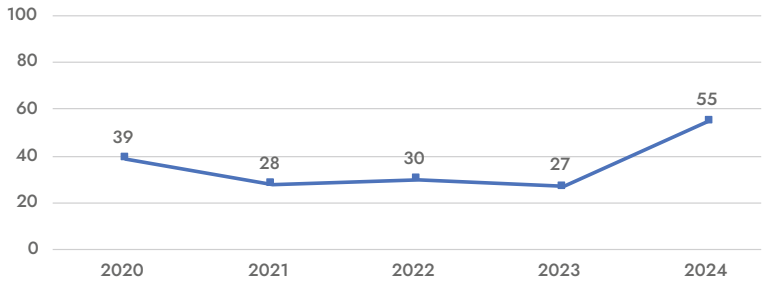
1,45 Field-weighted citation impact

THE Impact Ranking Results

301–400 out of **1265** in the world

80,9 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 16



Iceland's Defence and Security in an Uncertain World (ICEADaS)

ICEADaS is a research project that aims to establish a Centre of Excellence on Security and Defence, bridging the gap between academia and policy. Using a four-strand approach, the project examines Iceland's security environment through the lenses of military defence and national security, cooperative responses to threats, societal and environmental security, and hybrid threats, all considered within gender and climate change perspectives. ICEADaS will fill the knowledge gap about Iceland's security environment, contribute to academic discourse on regional and international security, and inform policy. The project is funded by the Icelandic Centre for Research, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Nordic partners.

Fake News, Information Disorder and Politics

The aim of this undergraduate course, taught at the Faculty of Political Science, is to examine fake news, information disorder, and politics. Different concepts and definitions of fake news, and how they have developed over time, are analysed and discussed. The course explores, among other things, how false and misleading information is spread, particularly via social media, how governments have responded to the increase in such information, and the possible consequences and impacts of fake news and information disorder in modern democracies.

Contemporary Issues in International Affairs: Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution

This course, taught at the Faculty of Political Science, provides undergraduate and graduate students with insight into recent and ongoing conflicts around the world through the lens of peace and conflict studies. Students are introduced to the field of peace and conflict studies, laying the groundwork for analysing current conflicts with the support of guest lecturers who have expertise in the relevant regions. The course concludes with an introduction to conflict resolution and mediation. Subjects such as Ukraine, Israel–Palestine, and Sudan are among those covered in the course.

The Arms Control Negotiation Academy (ACONA)

ACONA is a 12-month, high-level professional development program for a competitively selected cohort of rising international security experts and practitioners. The training curriculum covers critical historical case studies, technological expertise, and advanced negotiation skills in the field of arms control. Participants attend three negotiation boot camps and become part of the ACO-

Post-Truth Politics and the Existential Threat to Democracy

The rise of "post-truth politics" poses a significant challenge to democracies worldwide. Maximilian Conrad, Professor of Political Science, led the multinational RECLAIM project to study this complex issue. "In a nutshell, the RECLAIM project studied the phenomenon of post-truth politics and, more specifically, the impact of this phenomenon on liberal democracies," he explains. The project analysed how post-truth politics affects the public sphere, its connection to the resurgence of authoritarian populism, and the roles played by disruptive technologies, trust and (dis-)trust in journalism, and disinformation from malicious actors. The project then examined what is being done and what could be done better to help citizens of liberal democracies navigate the increasingly manipulative information environment.

Pulling the Factual Rug from Under Our Feet

Conrad argues that the primary danger of disinformation is its fundamental assault on a shared reality, which is a cornerstone of democracy. "For me, the key point here is that disinformation pulls out the factual rug from under our feet," he says. "Meaningful public deliberation becomes impossible if people do not even agree on the facts." He notes this problem is worsening with deliberate attempts to "flood the zone" with false information, as populist politicians openly challenge scientific expertise and authoritarian regimes exploit disinformation to undermine liberal democracies.

A Need for Decisive Action

While the project's findings are extensive, Conrad highlights several key policy recommendations. "It might be worth highlighting that we see a need for more decisive action at the policy level - both at the EU and member states levels - to protect quality journalism and media freedom," he states. Furthermore, he stresses the need to use the tools of citizenship education, in particular critical thinking and media literacy, to empower citizens and for the EU to "flex its regulatory muscle and stand up to the big tech companies that play a key role in all these problems."

The Dangers of Post-Truth Politics

Conrad concludes with a stark warning about the stakes, emphasising that this is not a minor issue but a fundamental crisis. "The point that I would really like to get across is that what we call post-truth politics is not simply a matter of a declining quality of democracy or democratic deliberation, but indeed an existential threat to democracy and all the liberal values underpinning it," he says. "We see this very clearly in the US at the moment, where post-truth politics is very clearly mixed with an authoritarian populism that seeks to undermine the cornerstones of the democratic system," he concludes.

NA network of next-generation arms control negotiators. The in-person ACONA boot camp and the following ACONA conference are held in Reykjavík. ACONA is an international consortium of several academic institutions, led by the Höfði Reykjavík Peace Centre at UI.

The Palestine Project

The Palestine Project aims to raise awareness of the situation in the regions of Gaza and the West Bank, and to promote dialogue on Palestine's history. The objective of the project is to bridge the resources of collaborative institutions and research fields with the local community, while emphasising and examining ethical accountability in academia. The project is funded by the University of Iceland's Social Outreach Grant Scheme and is led by Dr. Þórir Jónsson Hraundal, Lecturer in Middle Eastern Studies, along with Nikkita Hamar Patterson and Hasan Karakilinc, PhD students in the Department of Languages and Culture.

Students for Palestine

Students for Palestine is a movement of university students who stand for a free Palestine and oppose the Israeli occupation. The group has, amongst other activities, organised a strike for Palestine and participated in protests in support for Palestine. Students for Palestine is the student wing of University People for Palestine.

University Governance

» **UI Finances**
UI publishes the University's financial data annually, which is accessible to all on UI's website.

» **University Council**
The University Council of UI is appointed in accordance with Act no. 85/2008 on public universities. The Council is composed of the University Rector and representatives from the University community, students, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, and industry.

» **Regulation of UI**
UI, as a public higher education institution, operates under the auspices of the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation. Two acts in particular govern higher education and the operation of the University: The Higher Education Act, no 63/2006 and the Act on Public Higher Education Institutions, no 85/2008.

» **Code of Ethics**
The Code of Ethics of UI encapsulates the main ethical values and responsibilities integral to work and study at UI. It sets out standards of conduct for all members of the university community, both on and off campus. The Code of Ethics is grounded in reference to UI's core values, which are professionalism, equality and academic freedom, and reflects perspectives on teamwork, integrity, and sustainability.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development

Source: Gunnar Sverrisson

RESEARCH

3787 Number of peer-reviewed articles from 2020–2024 with relation to SDG 1–16

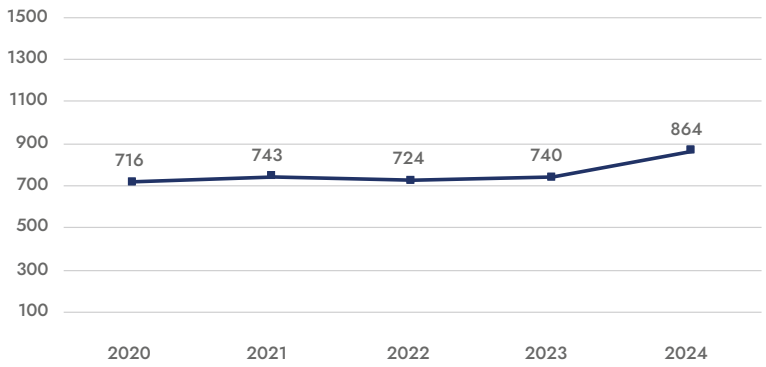
78540 Number of total citations on SDG 1–16

THE Impact Ranking Results

301–400 out of **2389** in the world

71,4 Research score out of **100**

Number of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 1–16



Aurora Alliance

UI is part of the Aurora Alliance, a European University Alliance working to strengthen collaboration among European universities and advance education and research. The Alliance focuses on four key priorities: teaching and learning for societal impact, excellent challenge-based research and innovation, collaboration and engagement through inclusive communities, and sustainability pioneers. Aurora aims to lead by example in sustainability, reducing the footprint of individual and collective activities within the alliance, and making substantial contributions to the SDGs. It also seeks to create opportunities and incentives for research cooperation within the network. Aurora was formally launched as a university network in 2016 and is partially funded by the European Commission.

Master Programme on Islands and Sustainability (ISLANDS)

ISLANDS is an international joint research master's programme offered by UI, the University of Groningen, the University of the Aegean, and the University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. This dynamic two-year research master's explores the intersections of islands and sustainability. The programme focuses on developing knowledge about the unique characteristics of islands and creating tools, skills, and technology to reduce the gap between theory and practice in sustainability. The ISLANDS programme is designed to provide a comprehensive mix of research and professional skills spanning spatial, social, and environmental sciences.

Spark Social

Spark Social is a transdisciplinary course for senior graduate students from all schools and disciplines across UI and is also open to students from all Aurora universities. Students gain insight into current and future challenges and learn how these are being addressed as they work in collaborative, interdisciplinary teams under the guidance of experienced industry and academic leaders. Students develop an understanding of their strengths and learn methods and approaches for innovative thinking. The course includes online content, virtual sessions, and a five-day on-site session at UI.

LOUIS Competence Framework

The *LOUIS Competence Framework*, which stands for **L**earning **O**utcomes in **U**niversity for **I**mpact on **S**ociety, was developed in collaboration among the AURORA universities, under UI's

Source: Jón Geir Pétursson

Research Collaboration in Africa Strengthens Sustainable Development

Jón Geir Pétursson, Professor of Environment and Natural Resources, has for many years conducted interdisciplinary research in the field of sustainable development and environmental and resource management in Africa. His research has primarily taken place in low-income countries facing major challenges, where he works closely with local partners. "Most of my research has been in Uganda, but I've also worked in Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, and Zambia," says Jón Geir. "The economies of these countries largely depend on natural resources, and much of people's livelihoods rely on access to the environment and its resources. A major challenge is that many of these nations have weak institutions that struggle to develop and implement governance systems that promote both public welfare and sustainable resource use," he explains. He adds that climate change also has a significant impact. "This is the global region expected to be most affected by climate change, yet it has limited capacity to adapt and build resilience."

Collaboration, Advisory Work, and Knowledge Sharing

The research is carried out in close collaboration with various collaborators in the partner countries, as well as the UNESCO GRÓ programmes in Iceland, and often involves teaching and supervising students. In addition, Jón Geir has provided policy advice to governments. "Most recently, this has been in the field of climate action in the three partner countries where Iceland maintains bilateral development cooperation and embassies, namely Uganda, Malawi, and Sierra Leone." He also focuses on knowledge dissemination in Iceland, for example, with his editorial work on the book Africa South of Sahara in Focus II published in 2024 with the Africa 20:20 society and is a member of the programme and research council of the Nordic Africa Institute.

Knowledge Builds Bridges Between Iceland and Africa

According to Jón Geir, it is crucial that the University of Iceland, which seeks to be an active participant in international cooperation, has research capacity and expertise on African issues, particularly since the Icelandic government places special emphasis on development cooperation on the continent. "It's important that the University of Iceland engages in research and knowledge building that can support these priorities." He adds that the Environment and Natural Resources programme provides an ideal platform for such collaboration. "The programme is designed as an international, interdisciplinary, and research-oriented graduate programme, and many students from Africa have completed master's or doctoral studies here. Its strength also lies in being jointly run by all faculties at the University of Iceland, allowing for diverse perspectives and approaches across disciplines," Jón Geir concludes.

leadership. LOUIS is a tool that helps academic teachers to articulate learning outcomes for general academic and personal competences, and explains to students what is expected from them and how they are performing, helping them understand the relevance of the knowledge and skills they gain. The objective of the tool is to better equip graduates with not only the subject expertise but also the skills and mindsets to contribute to society. The LOUIS framework is a practical and supportive tool for academic teachers for designing learning outcomes for courses, study lines, or even assignments, ultimately benefiting both teachers and students. In 2024, workshops were held to support teachers in using the LOUIS framework in course and assessment development.

UI and the SDGs event series

UI, in collaboration with the Sustainability Institute of UI, has revived the UI and the SDGs event series, focusing on the most urgent global tasks and challenges. Each event in the series highlights one of the SDGs, bringing together leading scholars from UI and key professionals from society to explore the SDG from multiple perspectives. The events aim to build bridges between the university and the wider community, fostering dialogue and collaboration on how to tackle the challenges each SDG represents. The first event, held in November 2024, focused on SDG 16, which addresses, among other things, how to significantly reduce all forms of violence. The event series is organised in cooperation with the Prime Minister's Office and is free and open to the public. To delve even deeper into each SDG, an accompanying podcast has also been produced, featuring discussions and insights from specialists

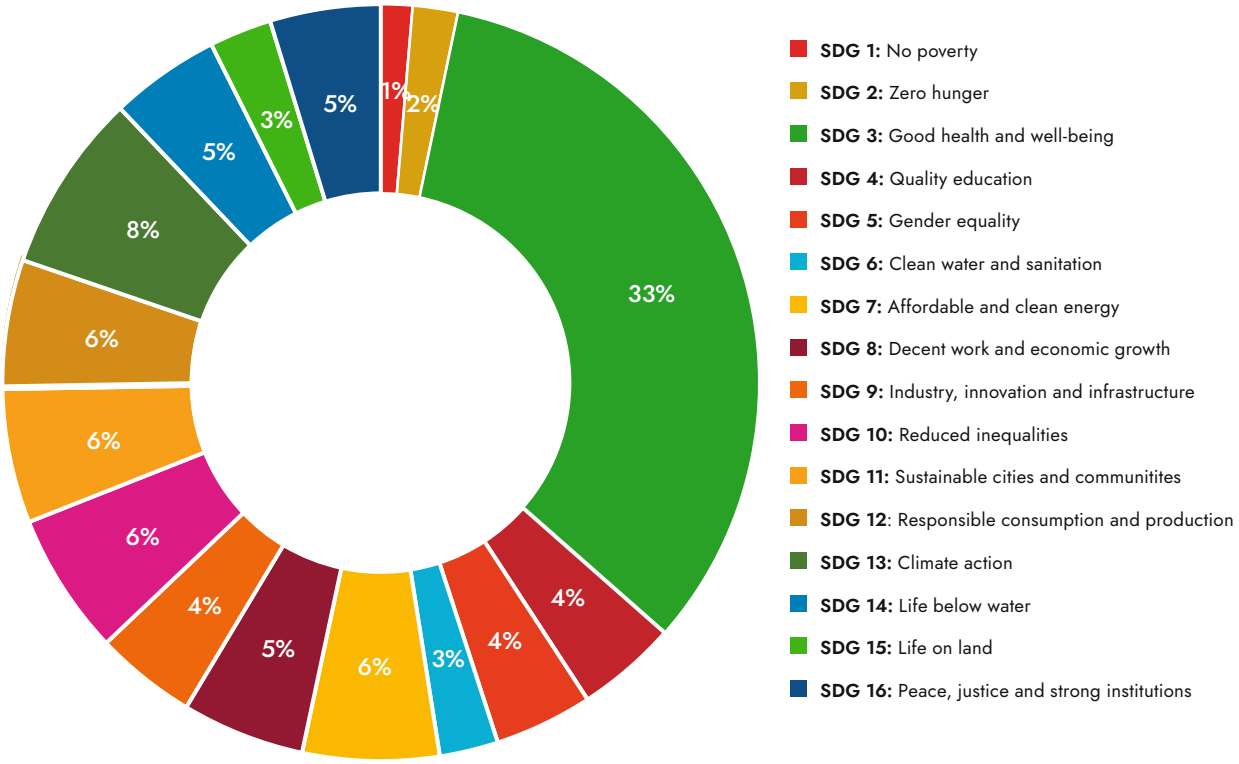
The Sustainability Committee of UI

UI has a Sustainability Committee that includes one representative from each of the five schools, a representative from central administration, and one student representative. The committee operates under the University Council and serves in an advisory role within its respective fields. The Sustainability Committee promotes sustainability in its broadest sense, aligning its work with the SDGs and the current UI strategy.

Research · Teaching and learning · Community outreach and partnerships · Operations and governance · Student initiatives

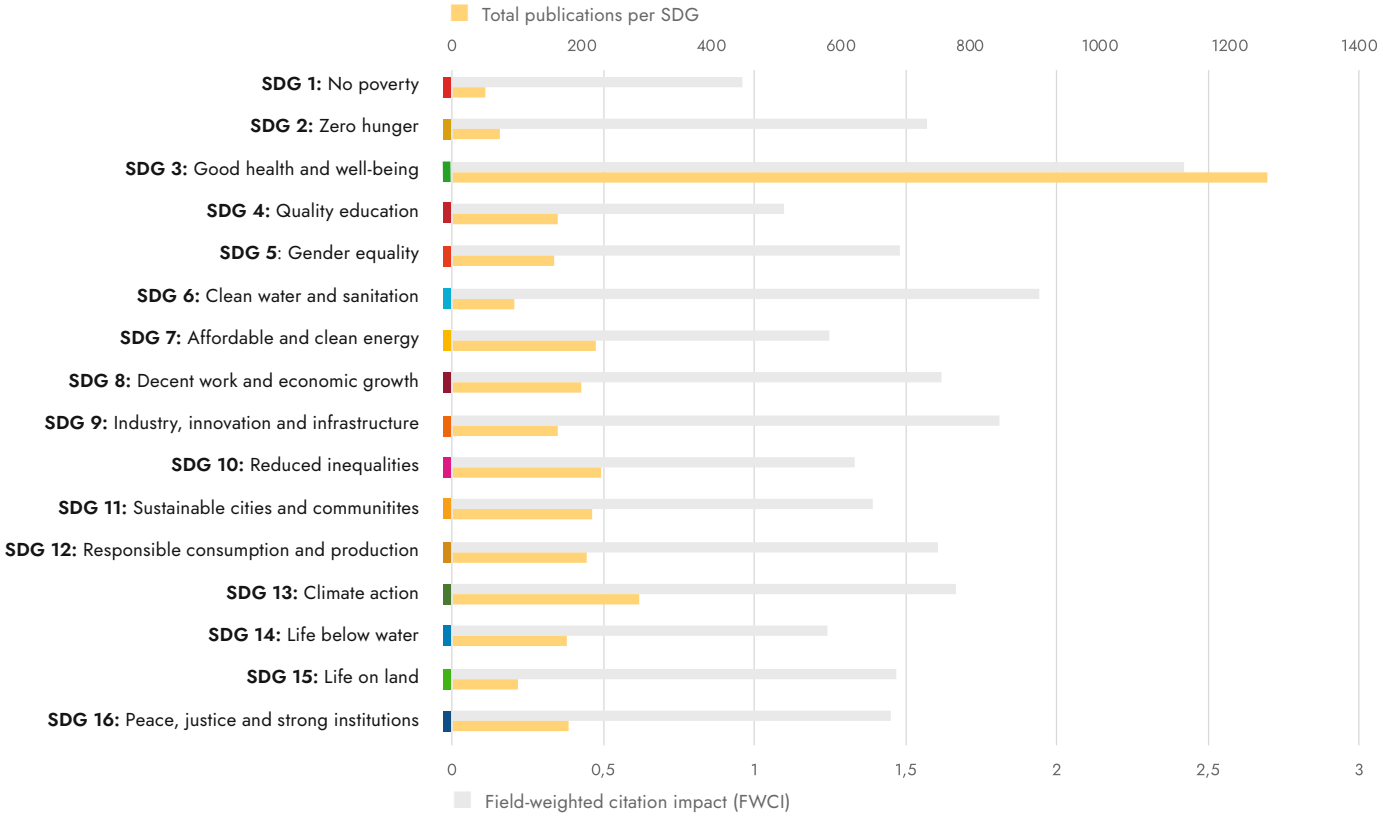
SDGs by the Numbers

Proportion of peer-reviewed articles with relation to SDG 1–16 (2020–2024)



Research publications from UI span all the SDGs. SDG 17 is not included in the Scopus database as keyword searchers are ill suited to identify partnership.

Publications per SDG (2020–2024)



The field-weighted citation impact is the ratio of the citation for all publications and the number of citations expected based on global average for that field of study. A value greater than 1 indicates a higher-than-average impact. Publications generated by UI have stronger than average impact for most SDGs.

THE Impact Ranking Results

Sustainable Development Goal	Our rank 2022	Our rank 2023	Our rank 2024	Our rank 2025	Positive trend / No change between years / Negative trend
SDG 1: No poverty	401–600	601–800	801–1000	601–800	
SDG 2: Zero hunger	201–300	201–300	401–600	401–600	
SDG 3: Good health and well-being	201–300	201–300	101–200	101–200	
SDG 4: Quality education	601–800	601–800	801–1000	1001–1500	
SDG 5: Gender equality	201–300	201–300	401–600	401–600	
SDG 6: Clean water and sanitation	401–600	401–600	401–600	601–800	
SDG 7: Affordable and clean energy	401–600	301–400	601–800	301–400	
SDG 8: Decent work and economic growth	301–400	301–400	401–600	301–400	
SDG 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure	101–200	100	101–200	101–200	
SDG 10: Reduced inequalities	301–400	201–300	301–400	601–800	
SDG 11: Sustainable cities and communitites	201–300	201–300	401–600	401–600	
SDG 12: Responsible consumption and production	201–300	101–200	101–200	201–300	
SDG 13: Climate action	101–200	101–200	101–200	64	
SDG 14: Life below water	201–300	101–200	201–300	201–300	
SDG 15: Life on land	201–300	201–300	401–600	401–600	
SDG 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions	301–400	201–300	201–300	301–400	
SDG 17: Partnerships for the goal	601–800	101–200	301–400	301–400	
Overall ranking for impact	401–600 out of 1406	301–400 out of 1591	201–300 out of 1963	201–300 out of 2318	

Times Higher Education (THE) Impact Ranking measures how universities worldwide are performing against the SDGs. The ranking results from 2022–2025 are shown, along with an indicator of the trend from 2024 to 2025. In 2025 UI is ranked 201–300 out of 2318 universities in the world regarding commitment to sustainability and making a positive societal impact through its research, teaching, operations, community outreach and partnership.

Opportunities for Improvement

The following recommendations are based on the goals outlined in the University of Iceland's strategy for 2021–2026 (UI26) and its Work Programme on *Sustainability in Teaching, Research and University Management.* These recommendations were first presented in UI's first Sustainability Report for 2021.

This section covers the four focus areas identified in the strategy, which are prioritised as critical, very important, and important. The status of each recommendation is noted, accompanied by a brief summary of developments within each focus area.

Recommendation:

- Recommendation: A Pro-Rector and/or a manager in central administration is made responsible for sustainability (and SDG) related issues. This role can be supported by the sustainability committee and the Sustainability Institute.

The Rector of the University of Iceland has assigned the Pro-Rector for Education responsible for sustainability.

FOCUS 1: Raise awareness and understanding of sustainability through presentations and workshops as well as through sustainability research and education dashboards.

Critical:

- In 2023, a presentation about sustainability and the SDGs is held for staff in each school and the central administration.
- Symposium about the findings of the UI's Sustainability report held in early 2023.
- UI's Sustainability report is produced annually, and the editorial team are given greater time and support when making the report.

Very Important:

- Workshops about sustainability and the SDGs are made available for staff.
- Work regarding Aurora SDG education dashboard and Aurora SDG research dashboard continue and are disseminated in 2023.

Important:

- In 2023, revive the series of meetings about the university and the SDGs that were suspended because of Covid-19 (the series on the SDGs were held from late 2019 to early 2020).
- Make the SDGs symbols visible in all events and news at UI's website and inner web *Ugla*. This makes mapping of events and research related to the SDGs more accessible, and more visible to the UI community. Made available in 2023.

No general presentation on sustainability was held for UI staff; however, informal discussions took place throughout the year. UI's fourth Sustainability Report has now been published and is widely promoted within the university. Several workshops have been conducted to support teachers in creating assessment tools aligned with the LOUIS competency framework, and workshops on higher education for sustainability have also been offered. The Aurora SDG research dashboard was finalised, while the Aurora SDG education dashboard has been discontinued. The event series, the University and the SDGs, has been revived, and since the publication of the last report, three events have been held along with an accompanying podcast. Efforts are underway to incorporate the SDG symbols visibly on UI's webpage, although a specific timeline for completion has not been established.

FOCUS 2: Focus on sustainability in teaching and learning by increasing the number of courses and support for teachers. Make study programmes and courses related to sustainability available for students from all disciplines.

Critical:

- A course about sustainability and the SDGs is developed and made available for students from all disciplines in the school year of 2023.

Objective achieved | In good progress | In progress | Little progress

Very important:

- UI should appoint an SDG specialist, who could support teachers when implementing sustainability/SDGs in courses. This should be done in collaboration between the Division of Academic Affairs, Central administration, and UI's schools.

Important:

- A continued mapping of the UI's curriculum in relation to sustainability and the SDGs, similar to the work done in 2019/20. Courses should have a clear connection to the SDGs in the curriculum with a visible SDG symbol.

An interdisciplinary course on sustainability and the SDGs for students from diverse academic backgrounds has yet to be developed. Further deliberation is necessary to determine the best approach for implementing such a course, and close collaboration among the five schools is essential. Although no decision has been made on appointing an SDG specialist to support teachers, efforts are underway to devise alternative methods of educator support. Discussions are ongoing to comprehensively align UI's curriculum with the SDGs.

FOCUS 3: Work towards making the University carbon neutral by mapping emissions and introducing countermeasures.

Critical:

- UI needs a deeper understanding of the scope of UI's emission from its operations from current status, for example with respect to commuting of staff and students, procurement, new construction, etc.
- UI sets a climate action plan and policy regarding operation and measurable goals and countermeasures. To achieve carbon neutrality, UI needs to weigh costs and benefits of different options for carbon offsetting for remaining emissions and decide which option to use.

Very Important:

- UI sets ambitious goals and a time plan regarding transportation to enable staff and students to commute using environmentally friendly transportation modes by implementing incentive programmes to reduce single-vehicle commuting.
- The current transportation contract for staff should be revised.
- The infrastructure for bicycles should be strengthened, e.g., locked bike shelters.
- Evaluation of expanding the area in which parking fees are applied at campus area should continue.

Important:

- UI staff will be encouraged, through various means, to reduce carbon emissions of their air travel, and provided incentives to fly less. This evaluation should start in 2023.
- A special funding and grants should be made available for online conferences. Better facilities should also be established where people can participate online.

UI has evaluated the emissions from staff and student commuting, and strong evidence suggests that commuting makes up a significant portion of UI's Scope 3 emissions. Calculations for these emissions are not included in the Green Accounting and are therefore not part of the overall emissions published by the university. UI's environmental operational strategy was officially adopted in December 2022, but it will continue to evolve as the university gains a deeper understanding of its emissions profile. No decision has yet been made regarding carbon offsetting for the remaining emissions. UI is prioritising the development of infrastructure to promote sustainable mobility. A parking fee was introduced on all UI parking spaces in August 2025, and the staff transportation contract was renewed simultaneously, offering employees who choose environmentally friendly transportation a reduced price for an annual bus pass. In 2025, UI opened a new bike storage facility with changing and showering facilities in the Saga building, and two additional bike sheds are planned for 2026, pending approval. Minimal attention has so far been given to reducing emissions from staff flights or to implementing incentives for reducing air travel among UI personnel.

FOCUS 4: Evaluate whether sustainability and interdisciplinarity should be taken into account when allocating grants from the University's competitive funds:

- Start the evaluation process before spring 2023. The process should be led by the UI's Science Committee. By the end of 2023 the evaluation should be completed.

The evaluation process regarding the consideration of sustainability and interdisciplinary aspects in the allocation of grants from UI's competitive funds has been completed in UI's Research Fund, PhD grants, and post-doc grants, where applicants indicate links to sustainability and the SDGs. In addition, sustainability has been taken into account in the learning objectives for postgraduate studies at UI.

Closing thoughts

Sustainability and diversity remain central to the University of Iceland's 2021–2026 strategic plan. The University continues to strengthen its commitment to sustainability across research, teaching, operations, governance, and community engagement.

Considerable progress has been made in recent years, particularly in developing policies and infrastructure that support sustainable mobility, advancing the integration of sustainability in teaching, and embedding sustainability considerations in competitive research funding. However, maintaining momentum requires continued commitment and broader engagement across all levels of the University. Supporting educators in integrating sustainability into their teaching, enhancing interdisciplinary collaboration, and ensuring that sustainability-related courses are accessible to students from all disciplines is important. This can be achieved by prioritising sustainability in the curriculum and providing robust support for faculty members.

Looking ahead, the University of Iceland should continue to raise its ambitions, setting clear targets and timeframes for achieving carbon neutrality, and strengthening sustainability in teaching and research. Continued collaboration and engagement are essential to sustaining progress, alongside efforts to raise awareness and deepen understanding both within the university and across the wider community. To strengthen its position in sustainability, UI should build on its current progress and pursue even higher ambitions, embedding sustainability as a guiding principle in its operations, teaching, and research.

Objective achieved | In good progress | In progress | Little progress

UNIVERSITY
OF ICELAND

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