



Application of the Sustainability Code in Relation to Higher Education Institutions – an Approach to Sustainability Reporting at Higher Education Institutions

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Sustainability at HEIs: Developing – Networking – Reporting (HOCH^N)

**Application of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs
– an Approach to Sustainability Reporting at HEIs**



The content of the guideline “Application of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs – an Approach to Sustainability Reporting at HEIs” was developed as part of the ‘Sustainability Reporting’ working package of the “Sustainability at HEI: Developing – Networking – Reporting” (HOCH^N) project. The HOCH^N project is jointly implemented by a number of HEIs and coordinated by the Universität Hamburg, the Freie Universität Berlin and the Universität Duisburg-Essen.

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Introduction

Sustainability as a task for higher education institutions

Sustainability is an urgent developmental task for our society, and is attracting increasing attention. Like all other organisations within our society, higher education

An approach to the understanding of sustainability in terms of terminology within the HOCH^N network can be found on Page 14.

institutions are called upon to deal with the associated challenges. How can complex organisations such as higher education institutions succeed in initiating

and maintaining the process of sustainable development within their own institutions and making it a permanent part of their operations? How can it be ensured that as many stakeholders as possible get involved in sustainable development? For these questions there is no ready-made formula, no instruction manual, no checklist that would be equally helpful for all higher education institutions or could be used by all in the same way – higher education institutions are too different, for example with regard to their legal form (private or public), their type (university, university of applied sciences), their location (rural area or metropolitan region) or size (small and specialised or large and comprehensive). In addition, higher education institutions are influenced by external framework conditions that promote aspects of sustainability to varying degrees, depending on the federal state in which they are located.

The HOCH^N network looked at these questions in an initial two-year research phase (11.2016–10.2018). This guide is one of a total of six HOCH^N guides which were first available as beta versions and represented the initial results of the work which has been undertaken. In the subsequent second phase of the project, the guidelines were tested by the eleven partners in the network at various higher education institutions. Some findings from the trial phase have been incorporated in this second and final edition of the guides. In addition to the research work carried out by the eleven German higher education institutions in the network, the HOCH^N project consists of a growing sustainability network of German higher education institutions, in which so far partners from around 140 higher education institutions have been exchanging information.

The four-year cooperation and the close nationwide dialogue involving a range of event formats such as practical research sessions, collaborative meetings and network hubs have revealed the actual value provided by HOCH^N: the exchange of ideas among students, (young) academics, practitioners and experienced actors in the field of sustainability. This makes it possible to adopt new points of view, develop mutual appreciation independent of hierarchical levels and create a forum for constructive discussions.

HOCH^N – the research project

The objectives of HOCH^N

The overriding goal of the joint project **Sustainability at higher education institutions: develop – network – report** (HOCHN) funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) is to promote the sustainable development of the German higher education landscape. Four sub-goals are derived from this:

1. Establishment and consolidation of a network for the exchange of experiences
2. Development and analysis of a common concept of sustainability
3. Promotion of the sustainable development of higher education institutions through the implementation of appropriate activities and methods
4. Drafting of guidelines for sustainable development at higher education institutions in order to create an integrated overall guide

By the end of October 2020 the objective of HOCH^N is to create a roadmap for the sustainable higher education institution of 2030 as a vision for the future of sustainable development in higher education.

The HOCH^N project structure

Eleven funded higher education institutions are networked in the working constellations shown in Figure 1.

The teams at the eleven HOCH^N universities have a high proportion of young academics from a broad range of disciplines. The following higher education institutions

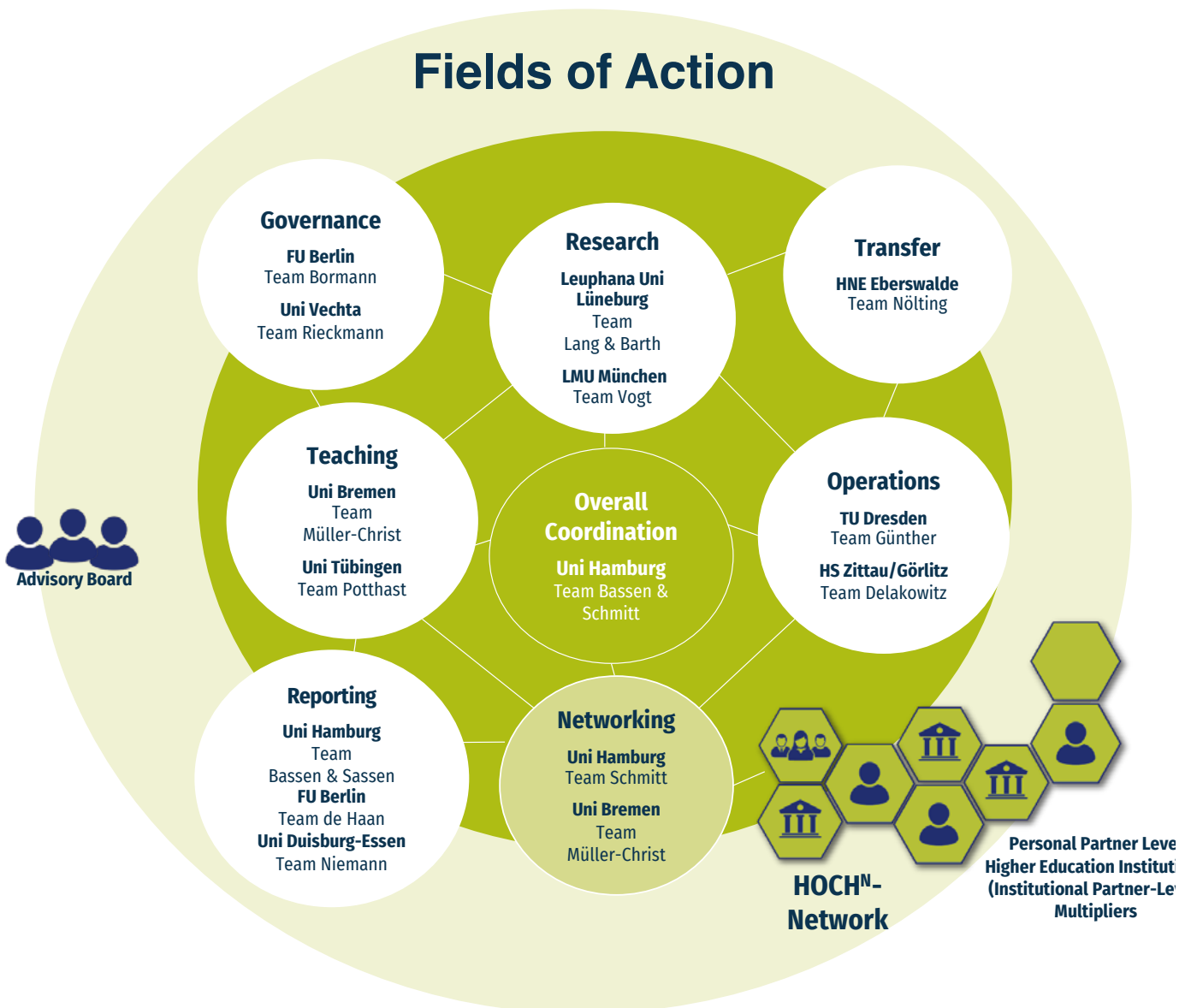


Fig. 1: Overall structure of HOCH^N (Universität Hamburg)

are members of the network:

- Freie Universität Berlin
- Universität Bremen
- Technische Universität Dresden
- Universität Duisburg-Essen
- Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde
- Universität Hamburg
- Leuphana Universität Lüneburg
- Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München
- Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen
- Universität Vechta
- Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz

The HOCH^N project is supported by an international advisory board. In addition the Institute for Higher Educational Development (Institut für Hochschulentwicklung – HIS-HE) is a cooperation partner in the operational field.

Fields of action

In the sense of a whole institution approach encompassing the entire higher education institution, the focus is not only on the core areas of teaching and research, but also on the operational management of higher education institutions. In addition the project focuses on fields of action in sustainability reporting and governance as cross-disciplinary themes, as well as on knowledge transfer.

▶ <http://www.hoch-n.org/4-partner/fachbeirat>

Guides

In the course of the project each of the work packages has dealt with a specific aspect of sustainability at higher education institutions: research, teaching, operation and knowledge transfer, supplemented by the cross-disciplinary topics of sustainability reporting and governance. The six HOCH^N guides were initially available as beta versions. They were prepared in parallel with the start-up, research and networking activities of the first two funding years, and then piloted and revised in the two years following publication. They do not claim to cover the various fields of action in full, but instead focus on specific topics and summarise the findings which have been collected and developed in a structured manner. They accordingly represent a starting point for follow-up discussions in the growing HOCH^N network. They are practical documents in which the process of shared creation and dialogue generates the real added value. They also make it clear that higher education institutions progress by taking many small, often unspectacular steps.

The target groups of the individual HOCH^N guides are all those who wish to promote sustainable development at their own higher education institution and require a low-threshold entry into the various fields of action. At the same time the varying basic conditions of Germany's highly diverse higher education landscape need to be taken into account, so that all institutions can find useful ideas and suggestions for their own situation. The HOCH^N network aims to promote this important dialogue as a nationwide platform for the sustainable development of higher education institutions. In addition, since they create an overview of the framework conditions and actions which a sustainable higher education institution requires, the guides are aimed at all stakeholders in higher education institutions.

HOCH^N – the higher education institution network

Under the auspices of the universities of Hamburg and Bremen a constantly growing network of higher education institutions is being established. At the time this definitive edition of the individual guides went to press, members of around 140 German higher education institutions were already part of this network. In this way, existing experiences and expertise can be made available to the individual higher education institutions, stimulating a shared dialogue and enabling them to learn from one another. The HOCH^N sustainability map provides information on the individuals involved, partner higher education institutions and sustainability initiatives throughout the field of higher education in Germany.

Future prospects – what are the next steps?

An individual consideration of the various fields of action represents a pragmatic starting point. However, there are strong interdependencies between the various fields of action, and a whole institution approach also and especially involves addressing and orchestrating the interfaces between the individual fields of action and themes of sustainable development. The second project phase (11.2018–10.2020) therefore focused on taking these interfaces into account, enriching them with empirical knowledge and presenting them on the basis of concrete practical examples. In addition to piloting and revising the individual guides, the aim is to offer an integrated, digital overall format that invites their application and further shared development. As a result, from the autumn of 2020 a HOCH^N wiki will be available as a common online platform open for use by all interested parties.



Photo: Markus Scholz / scholzfoto.de

In HOCH^N, I experience an inspiring collaboration which is making incredibly rapid progress: it's really exemplary in terms of not only content but also its organisation and working methods.

Dipl.-Ing. Cornelia Reimoser
Headquarters of the Fraunhofer Gesellschaft
Member of the HOCH^N advisory board

Join HOCH^N!

We are looking forward to further HEI partners joining the HOCH^N network. Participating in our events will provide you the opportunity to get actively involved in important processes. Further information:

- ▶ <https://www.hoch-n.uni-hamburg.de/en/5-mitmachen.html>
- <http://hoch-n.org/landkarte>
- netzwerk@hoch-n.org

In addition to the guides and other materials, the HOCH^N wiki also contains the “Sustainable Higher Education Landscape 2030” roadmap. The roadmap identifies perspectives, potentials and concrete implementation paths on how to strengthen and achieve a sustainability transformation of German higher education institutions by 2030. In order to maintain and expand the activities and networks begun within HOCH^N beyond the immediate project period, DG HochN, the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Nachhaltigkeit an Hochschulen e.V. (German Association for Sustainability at Higher Education Institutions) was founded in April 2020. DG Hoch^N provides the arena for further implementation and anchoring of the UNESCO programme “Education for Sustainable Development 2030” in Germany’s higher education system on the basis of previous results.

Acknowledgements

A project for the sustainable development of higher education institutions in this form would not have been feasible without the BMBF and its nationwide start-up financing. As a learning higher education institution network, the task of establishing permanent structures still lies ahead of us until attitudes in the higher edu-

cation landscape have changed in such a way that sustainability processes are regarded as permanent functional tasks for which personnel resources need to be made available. We would like to thank in particular Dr. Karl Eugen Huthmacher, Eckart Lilienthal, Florian Frank, Cornelia Möller and Dr. Martin Schulte from the BMBF’s Department 7: Providing for the Future – Research for Fundamentals and Sustainability. Thanks to their valuable support so far and the possibility of first consolidating the wide range of findings and results and then – in a second funding phase – testing them for their practical application, they have made a major contribution to sustainable development at higher education institutions.

We would also like to take this opportunity to express our special thanks to our project sponsor, the VDI Technology Center, and in particular Svetlana Thaller-Honold, Christiane Ploetz and Helene Leneschmidt. As reliable partners they are contributing significantly to a change of perspective in the world of higher education.

Special thanks are also due to the members of the HOCH^N Advisory Board (<https://www.hoch-n.uni-hamburg.de/1-projekt/fachbeirat.html>), who have contributed to the HOCH^N network in a variety of ways, both in an advisory capacity and in helping to shape it.

We look forward to continuing our cooperation with the many stakeholders who are dedicated to the development of sustainable higher education in Germany and beyond.

If the programme didn’t already exist, we would have to invent something like HOCH^N.

Prof. Dr. (mult.) Dr. h. c. (mult.) Walter Leal
HAW Hamburg / Member of the HOCH^N advisory board



Photo: H. Thämnitz



**The understanding of sustainability
by the joint project HOCH^N**

The understanding of sustainability by the joint project HOCH^N

Background

Many stakeholders of Higher Education Institutions in Germany deal with the topic of sustainability in research, teaching and practical operations. To date, however, there has been insufficient consensus on how the demands for sustainability arising from social responsibility should be understood, shaped and implemented in the context of Higher Education Institutions. This can be seen, for example, in the current debate on the relationship between freedom and sustainability-related responsibility of science.

Within the framework of the joint project, the HOCH^N collaboration has set itself the goal of developing a shared, university-specific concept of sustainability which was conceived in a participatory process by the eleven collaborating Higher Education Institutions. It is based on the interim results of the HOCH^N collaboration, the understanding of sustainability of the individual partner Higher Education Institutions within the joint project, the basic concept of sustainability anchored in many international resolutions, and an evaluation of the relevant literature.

The understanding of sustainability is based on conceptual coherence and attempts to work out the normative implications of sustainability in the context of Higher Education Institutions. It offers an orientation framework for the overall institutional integration and implementation of sustainability as an ethical principle in the theory and practice of research, teaching, operations, governance and transfer at Higher Education Institutions in Germany. It by no means precludes individual Higher Education Institutions with their own individual focal points from setting their own priorities and practices. Rather the diversity provided by different understandings of sustainability can be regarded as a positive factor, since sustainability should ideally take into account the respective contexts, framework conditions and protagonists of the individual Higher Education Institutions. However, precisely because there are different approaches, conceptual clarification fulfils the important function of contextually clarifying the scope for interpretation, commonalities and open questions, and making them more concrete for implementation.

The understanding of sustainability provides the basis for the effective implementation of actions at Higher

Education Institutions which are regarded as indispensable for any major societal transformation and for the execution of the Federal Government's national action plan 'Education for Sustainable Development' (ESD). The extended version of the understanding of sustainability with explanations on the fields of action of research, teaching, operations, governance and transfer as well as on the literature used can be found here: <http://www.hoch-n.org/2-handlungsfelder/04-forschung.html> (in German)

The target group

This understanding of sustainability is primarily aimed at members of Higher Education Institutions, especially those wishing to deal with the subject of sustainability and to shape change processes. Internal stakeholder groups include, for example, representatives of university management, academics, teachers, students, administrative staff and sustainability officers. The following are considered to be stakeholders external to the university: representatives of state and federal ministries, the German Rectors' Conference and the Conference of Ministers of Culture, politics and civil society.

The basic understanding of sustainability in the context of Higher Education Institutions

Sustainability is a normative principle that can be described as a scale for global and intergenerational justice in the face of the challenges posed by current changes in the earth's system. In ethical-political terms, sustainable development is not an externally defined and prescribed goal, but an open search process with heterogeneous target components, which is therefore pluralistic and culturally variable. Its object is long-term responsibility for ensuring environmental viability, social justice and economic performance. It aims to strengthen the cultural competencies for shaping societal life. Its systemically integrated implementation is regarded as the need for comprehensive societal transformation. The core of which is a change in the relationship between human beings and nature.

The task of Higher Education Institutions is to deal theoretically, conceptually, methodically, critically and

reflectively with the processes and conditions of societal transformation. Furthermore, it is also a matter of how the ethical dimension of science (in the fields of action research, teaching and operations) can be respected and implemented.

Postmodern science requires methodical and critical reflection on the significance of normative perspectives. Therefore, ethics analyses the manifold reasons, goals, motivations and resistances of good and just action. In doing so, it is not limited to prescribing ready-made solutions. Rather, it first wants to stimulate reflection and thereby enable freedom. The freedom of science is therefore always to be interpreted as a mandate to independently reflect on its goals in the service of a sustainable society.

The need for ethical reflection and orientation arises above all in situations of radical change. This is the case today in view of the profound change in values and the global, national and regional challenges for sustainable development (e.g. climate change). Therefore, the principle of sustainability sees itself both as a socio-ecological and economic challenge, as well as a cultural task in order to preserve the natural foundations of life for all people, including future generations (cf. Brundtland Commission; Art. 20a GG; SDGs), and the appreciation and protection of the intrinsic value of nature with its biological diversity (cf. Federal Nature Conservation Act § 1).

Higher Education Institutions, as central actors in societal discourse, dedicate themselves to this topic in a central position. Within this context and following the joint HRK/DUK declaration (2010) "Higher Education Institutions for Sustainable Development" (orig. Hochschulen für nachhaltige Entwicklung) and the HRK recommendation (2018) "For a Culture of Sustainability at Higher Education Institutions" (orig. Für eine Kultur von Nachhaltigkeit an Hochschulen), the collaborators of the joint project HOCH^N take sustainability as a profile-forming and connecting central idea. With this common goal Higher Education Institutions can contribute to the transformation for a sustainable society and the responsible use of planetary resources.

Due to their ethical and socio-political position, Higher Education Institutions have an inherent responsibility to engage with a societal transformation towards greater sustainability. As special strengths they can contribute with empirical and theoretical knowledge,

methodological expertise and the ability to analyse. To do justice to the normative content of sustainability means to think methodically about problems in societies, to pose relevant questions regarding the relationship between humans and nature, and to learn to think and act in interdisciplinary contexts. It is a matter of determining how sustainable solutions for dealing with the great challenges of our time can be found globally, nationally and regionally, and then be implemented on a long-term basis at the institutional level. Thereby it is constitutive for ethics to also take a systemic view of obstacles on the way to sustainability. In doing so, it can not only generate target knowledge, but also impart knowledge of design and transformation.

Those involved in the joint project HOCH^N are striving to implement sustainability in the fields of action of research, teaching, operations, governance and transfer at their own institutions. Therefore, contributing to the practical implementation of aforementioned goals, as well as inducing a continuous improvement process and representing a reliable pioneering role.

Stakeholders of the joint project HOCH^N oblige to foster the understanding and implementation of sustainability at their own Higher Education Institutions. Thus Higher Education Institutions contribute to the world wide action plan 'Education for Sustainable Development' of the UN (2015-2019) to which Germany is committed with a national action plan. Additionally, the Higher Education Institutions contribute to the perception, further development and enhancement of both the United Nations 'Sustainable Development Goals' and Germany's sustainability strategy. This is reasonable, since the SDGs do not adequately address central global challenges (such as increasing resource consumption and population growth, externalisation of socio-ecological costs or conflicts of objectives between economic growth and ecological limits).

The Higher Education Institutions are willing to ensure adequate in- and external transparency, to promote continuous, open and reflective improvement processes, to support dialogue with various stakeholders from Higher Education Institutions and to facilitate exchange with society. Therefore, it may prove expedient to analyse the status quo, provide transparent and regular information on their sustainability activities and to communicate these. Sustainability reporting designed in this way helps to reflect the Higher Education Institution's understanding of sustainability, its specific goals and measures, as well as to enter into an exchange with stakeholders.



Introduction to the subject of the German Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs

Introduction to the subject of the German Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs

Preamble

The German Sustainability Code is a (transparency) standard being used by many companies of all kinds as well as by some public institutions for the purpose of reporting on their challenges and achievements in terms of sustainable development. The German Council for Sustainable Development (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung) adopted this code as a voluntary standard in 2011. This had been preceded by an intensive participatory process lasting several years with a number of companies, investors and other stakeholders. The Sustainability Code was initially aimed at companies. Various industries and associations have supplemented the code on a sector-specific basis and developed specific guidelines.

On the initiative of several HEIs, the German Council for Sustainable Development decided in spring 2015 to adapt the German Sustainability Code to the special aspects of its application to HEIs. In early 2016, a test version was developed by the cooperation of around 50 university representatives from all over Germany. In collaboration with other HEIs, the Universität Hamburg, the Freie Universität Berlin and the Universität Duisburg-Essen – as leading universities – applied the test version and developed it further. Their efforts were supported by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF).

The results are now available. The Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs consists of 20 criteria, which are described below. The elaboration on these criteria is limited to the essentials. This limitation or rather increased focus has already been proven to be successful in the case of companies. It should therefore also be applied to HEIs, as these can be very different in terms of size and academic focus. What is required, therefore, is a specific statement on universities' measures in relation to the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability. In a declaration of compliance with the code, universities report on how they conform to the criteria of the code (compliance) or plausibly explain why they do not report on a specific criterion (explanation). The German Sustainability Code database of the German Council for Sustainable Development is available to HEIs for this purpose at www.nachhaltigkeitskodex.org. The application of the

code is voluntary. **Each HEI should present its understanding of and approach to sustainable development** (e. g., in the form of a vision statement, sustainability strategy, mission statement or code of conduct). On this basis, HEIs have the possibility of using the sustainability code in order to summarise much of the data and information already collected for other purposes in suitable documentation. The statements on the 20 criteria are to take into account the fields of research, teaching, operation, knowledge transfer and governance. In order to facilitate the application of the sustainability code, users are also provided with a guideline that uses practical examples for illustrating the criteria in greater depth. At the same time, this makes the topic of sustainability more easily accessible to persons outside the field.

Application of the preamble in terms of content

The preamble highlights the central ideas of the code. The fields of action already mentioned in the preamble – **research, teaching, operation, knowledge transfer** and **governance** – are anchored in Criterion 2 of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs and form the basic building block and influencing factor for all other criteria. In other words, for each criterion, HEIs should refer to the five fields of action in their declarations of conformity. With the exception of the second criterion (fields of action), the formulation of other criteria deliberately refrains from emphasising in each case that the declaration of conformity should deal with all the fields of action mentioned in respect of all criteria.

The criteria are often interdependent and address issues which are to some extent similar, contiguous or related. Accordingly, the first four criteria relating to strategy are overarching strategic topics, which are taken up again in the subsequent criteria for concrete operational implementation (process management, Criteria 5-10). The same applies to more specific themes of the environment (Criteria 11-13) and society (Criteria 14-20). Therefore, the criteria cannot be dealt with completely independently of each other, even if this would be desirable for those preparing sustainability reports.

In addition, both the code and the guide were created in a participatory process that encompassed diverse and sometimes contradictory views. Therefore, a systematic and complete delimitation can only be achieved to a limited extent. The current second revised version of the guide was further developed on the basis of the previous beta version in a collaborative process with HOCH^N internal and external working groups.

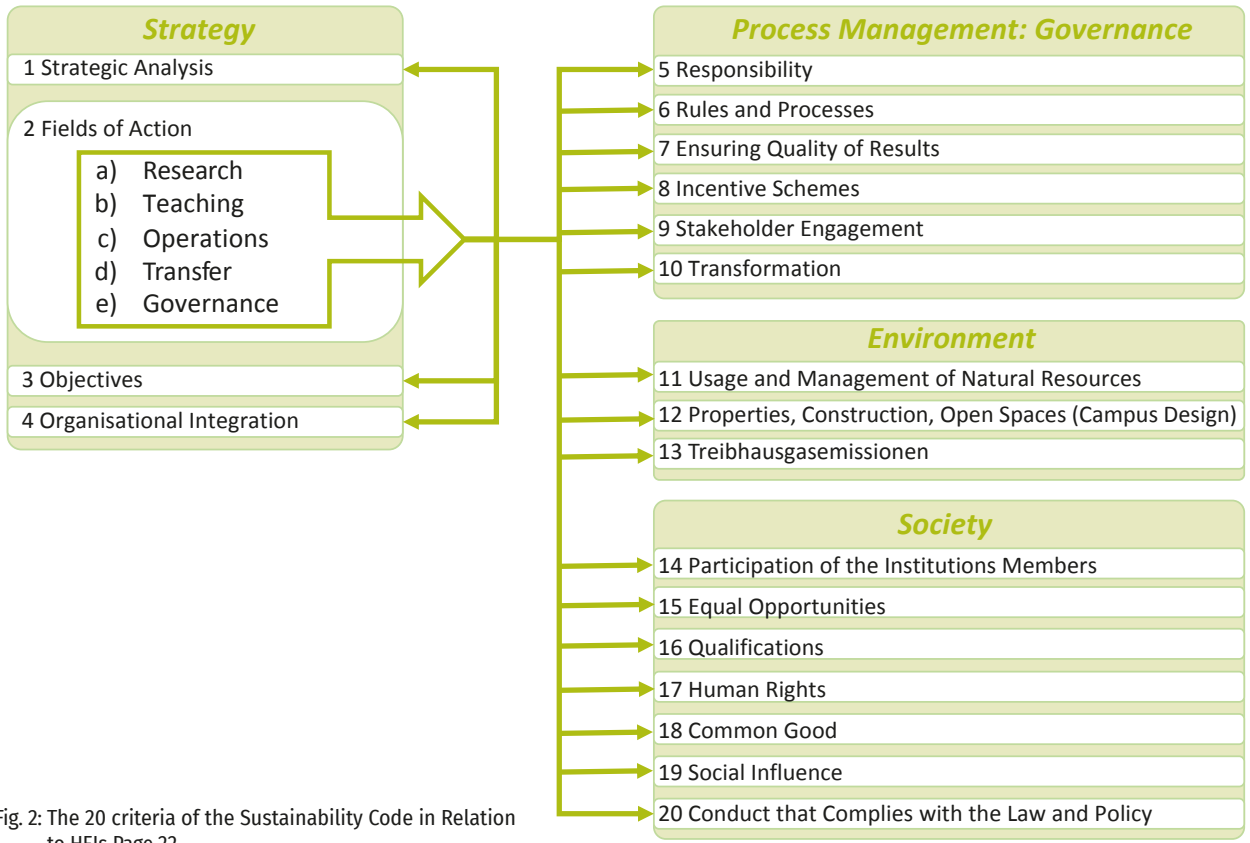


Fig. 2: The 20 criteria of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs Page 22

Development of German Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs on the basis of Germany's existing Sustainability Code

In order to guide the organisational processes in sustainable development, it is essential to first determine the status quo. In the field of sustainable development at HEIs, this can be accomplished by recording sustainability-relevant activities in a structured manner and describing them in sustainability reports.

If a university wishes to realise a sustainability report, it is necessary to take into account various practical aspects. For example, for the documentation of an institution's sustainability activities, it is particularly important that people who have not yet been involved in sustainability issues within the university are given an easy introduction to the topic and, above all, can grasp the diversity of this subject. For data collection, the questions "What", "How" and "Who" are relevant.

Focusing on sustainability reporting at HEIs, in 2015, the German Council for Sustainable Development (RNE) invited participants to a number of events and recommended that the German Sustainability Code for business should be adapted to become a standard reference document for HEIs. In spring 2016, a beta version of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs (referred to below as the "code") was developed with about 50 participants from various German HEIs. After the start of the HOCH^N project in November 2016, the beta version of the guideline (published in May 2018) was developed and collaboratively improved into the now accessible second revised version. In the following chapter of this guideline, we present the code on the basis of 20 criteria. We hope that this low-threshold entry into sustainability reporting will contribute to fostering sustainability reporting activity among German HEIs.

This second revised version of the present guideline was developed in a collaborative process. Experience gained in applying the guide have also been incorporated into an integrated overall guide for all HOCH^N's fields of activity. In the editing process, the indicators for specifying the criteria were made with the aim of linking them to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The criteria described below have been developed independently by working groups within and outside the HOCH^N project. HOCH^N has already used this procedure in all project phases to test how the exchange of experience at workshops and the subsequent documentary work on the various sustainability criteria can succeed beyond the limits of the eleven associated HEIs. The descriptions of these criteria therefore take into account individual experience of the respective working groups.

This learned process with its specific requirements in terms of time and personnel resources was in turn an important experience for the subsequent pilot phase in all fields of action of HOCH^N and the overall guide. In spite of this, we still see potentials for development in this context, and therefore welcome feedback.

Reasons for the submission of a declaration of compliance with the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs

Why use the code and submit a declaration of compliance?

- Public transparency
- Basis for sustainability reporting
- Support for quality and strategy development

As a list of criteria that provides structure, the code is intended to facilitate a low-threshold entry into sustainability reporting for HEIs. However, there are also good reasons for submitting a declaration of compliance with the code by HEIs that have been doing sustainability reporting for some time.

“Doing good” and also talking about it is important for every organisation. The declaration of compliance is a possible transparency instrument for making what a HEI contributes to sustainable development visible both internally and externally. This can have a motivating effect on already committed individuals and organisations as well as an activating effect on individuals and organisations that are still not fully committed.

The visibility effect will be enhanced by the future use of the logo of the German Council for Sustainable Development, which publishes the declarations of compliance as a politically important German sustainability actor.

A declaration of compliance officially issued by the management of HEIs thus becomes a sign of commitment to sustainable development that is clearly visible socially and politically.

In the course of data collection for the submission of a declaration of compliance and/or the preparation of a sustainability report, various processes of interaction and negotiation are stimulated, which in turn contribute to a valuable transfer of knowledge within and often also between HEIs.

Application of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs

Instructions for filling out a declaration of compliance

The German Council for Sustainable Development recommends the following five steps in preparing a declaration of compliance:

1st step: Reviewing the current status and bringing all stakeholders together

- Convening initial meetings
- Defining responsibilities

2nd step: Collecting and presenting data on the 20 code criteria

- Using the “comply or explain” approach: if it is not possible to report on one or more criteria, this is not an exclusion criterion. However, it should be explained why reporting is not possible.
- Approximately 1,500 characters per criterion are available for the explanation.

3rd step: Drawing up a declaration of compliance

- A short “summary” of the 20 criteria
- This can be performed online at the Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung (RNE) (database: <https://www.deutscher-nachhaltigkeitskodex.de/de-DE/Home/Database>)

4th step: Submitting of the declaration of conformity / review

- The submitted data is automatically forwarded to the RNE and checked in terms of form (not content) by a team of RNE experts. If necessary, this can also be complemented by other external reviewers.

5th step: Publishing the declaration of compliance

- The RNE publishes the declaration in consultation with the university.
- Publication by the university can but does not have to take place.

Collaborative sustainability – reporting – initiating transformative processes in HEIs

Leonie Bellina, Prof. Dr. Thomas Potthast, Carla Herth and Kerstin Schopp, all from the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

How can sustainability reporting have a transformative effect? Directly, locally, today – activating, motivating, networking? We investigated this question as part of the development of the Sustainability Code for HEIs at the Centre of Competence for Sustainable Development (Kompetenzzentrum für nachhaltige Entwicklung) at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen.

The idea: What if committed people from various university fields of activity (teaching, studying, research, operations, governance) collaborated on the code together instead of it being filled out by a sustainability officer alone? How do all actors themselves make their activities in relation to the criteria visible? How do the criteria influence further thinking, planning and action in individual fields of action? And what could be achieved if local actors involved were to discuss the criteria of the code and their experience and activities with regard to sustainable development across all fields of action?

The conviction: The code can be more than just a reporting instrument. It can stimulate transformative processes at HEIs. However, for this to happen, the participants – i.e., staff, students, teachers and researchers who are already committed to sustainable development – need to engage directly with the criteria. This should not be designed as additional work (“Please fill in ...”), but as an interactive, stimulating and motivating process that engages and brings together the active participants across all fields of action. In this way, synergies between the fields of action can be discovered and explored, and possible conflicts of objectives and resources can be identified and dealt with constructively.

The implementation: As a test of the beta-version of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs, we organised a networking day dedicated to the code at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen in cooperation

with the Centre of Competence for Sustainable Development. Active participants from all fields of action were contacted, both individually and in the form of a university-wide invitation, which resulted in 46 active participants. Corresponding to the areas of the code there were four working groups: strategy, process management, environment, society. The participants were distributed among the groups in such a way that each field of action was represented within each group. The following steps were processed:

- 1) Stocktaking:
What measures regarding the criteria are already in place at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen?
- 2) A systematic overview:
To what fields of action can the measures be assigned?
- 3) Looking ahead:
What is still missing in the individual fields of action in order to implement the criteria?
How can we collectively achieve this?
- 4) Bringing the four areas together in the plenary session:

Identifying synergies for existing and necessary measures, creating networks of stakeholders and jointly discussing the significance of the criteria and the possibilities of sustainability reporting for the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen and those involved in all relevant fields of action.

Central results: Dealing with the criteria stimulated the participants to perceive the possibilities of their own field of action from new perspectives. Working on the criteria together revealed very different approaches but also common interests and requirements. The networking of existing activities and an alliance aimed at making joint efforts for new measures were achieved. Initial concrete objectives were formulated for individual criteria. Feedback from participants indicated that working together was encouraging (how much has already happened, how many active people are involved), stimulating (applying the criteria in their work) and motivating in terms of working together to advance the transformation to a more sustainable university.

Conclusion: Thinking about sustainability reporting in a different way and approaching it as a participatory bottom-up process open up new ways of stimulating and supporting the transformation of HEIs towards sustainable development. Why don't you give it a try, too?

Criteria of the German Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs

Strategy (Criteria 1–4)

Criterion 1

Designation: **Strategic Analysis**

Compiled by: **Alexander Herzner** (Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Amberg-Weiden – University of Applied Sciences)

The higher education institution explains how it analyses the effects of its key activities with respect to sustainable development and what understanding of sustainability these are based on. The higher education institution describes how it operates in line with the key, accepted national and international standards specific to higher education institutions.

Specification of the criterion's content

As part of the strategic analysis, the HEI should explain **how** it investigates the effects of its main activities with regard to sustainable development. This should be based on the HEI's own understanding of sustainability and its sustainability strategy. If it has not yet formulated its own understanding of sustainability, the HOCH^N understanding of sustainability can serve as a guideline.

With this strategic analysis, the HEI ensures that the desired objectives (cf. Criterion 3) and measures are anchored in the strategy.

Within the scope of the analysis, the activities are compared with the strategy and understanding of sustainability at the HEI. At the same time, an external comparison with established domestic and international standards relating to HEIs can be performed.

The analysis becomes effective through a dynamic process that continuously derives new target statuses from the standards, determines the actual status and presents the causes for any gap in a regulatory feedback loop. Concrete actions need to be defined in order to close identified gaps. For HEIs, this can be done by various domestic or international evaluation and reporting systems which analyse activities and their effects.

Some of these instruments are only suitable to a limited extent that they only address individual aspects of sustainability. Depending on the strategic focus, the systems range from helpful suggestions right up to a standardised management system (e. g., ISO, EMAS).

Practical examples

As part of the reporting by the **Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule Amberg-Weiden**, the Institute for Sustainability in Technology and Commerce (Institut für Nachhaltigkeit in Technik und Wirtschaft) commissioned by the university management records all activities that have taken place for the implementation/strengthening of the UN's PRME principles. After each activity, an analysis is made of the principles which have been strengthened/implemented as a result. Since sustainability requires constant development, the activities are planned and implemented on the basis of available capacities. The impact is assessed by, for example, questioning

the students (within the framework of a certification colloquium). The actual values of certain indicators relating to the environment and employees are reported using indicators from the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), while activities in research, teaching and campus projects are based on the six UN RPME principles. Other aspects of the strategic analysis are carried out internally between the Institute for Sustainability and the university management. The Institute for Sustainability in Technology and Commerce is responsible for implementing the strategy.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- An existing sustainability strategy
- Elements of this strategy
- Measures for implementing the strategy

If there is no sustainability strategy, then:

- development of a sustainability strategy based on the determination of the existing status
- definition of goals and measures

Criterion 2

Designation: **Fields of Action**

Compiled by: HOCH^N-Sustainability Reporting work package

The higher education institution explains which aspects of sustainability are of material importance for the following fields of action, how it takes them into account in its strategy, and how it addresses them systematically:

- a) Research
- b) Teaching
- c) Operations
- d) Transfer
- e) Governance

The higher education institution explains how it promotes sustainability-related activities in the fields of action and how issues of sustainable development will be implemented in these in the future. Furthermore, the higher education institution should demonstrate how sustainability is interconnected across its five fields of action.

Specification of the criterion's content

HEIs have a special organisational form and functional areas at different levels. Typical fields of action are research, teaching, operations, knowledge transfer and governance. This structure is also anchored in the HOCH^N project. Chapter 2 of this guide contains important aspects for understanding sustainable development in relation to these five fields of action.

In this context, it is important for every HEI to show how its own understanding of sustainability (see preamble of the code) is presented, what the relevant fields of action of the

institution are and how it identifies important sustainability-related topics for itself (**materiality analysis**).

On this basis, the HEI should demonstrate how it **promotes** sustainability-related activities in its relevant fields of action relevant and **implements** them within its own organisation.

Since the fields of action are not always independent of each other and there may be interactions, the networking of sustainability activities between the fields of action must also be addressed.

Practical examples

Universität Hamburg: Process for selecting the content of the report and indicators

„The selection of the [...] content of the report was affected in a multi-stage process. First, potentially relevant indicators were compiled. For the sustainability dimensions of economy, ecology and social issues, the guidelines of the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), an internationally widespread and recognised framework for sustainability reporting, were used. In the absence of a standard framework for sustainability reporting in the higher education sector, potentially relevant indicators for teaching, research and knowledge transfer were developed based on academic literature. In addition, indicators from the first sustainability report of the Universität Hamburg were integrated. From this extensive collection of potential indicators, a preliminary selection was made with the help of sustainability experts from the Universität Hamburg. Four specialists from the field of sustainability, the Universität Hamburg's Centre of Competence for the Sustainable University (Kompetenzzentrum Nachhaltige Universität

(KNU) and the international student organisation oikos were each able to make a selection of what they regarded as the most important indicators.

The results were collated and discussed together. This pre-selection was then presented to a wider group of sustainability experts and interested persons in an online survey. More than 100 people connected with the Universität Hamburg took part in this survey. The survey was aimed particularly at students who had chosen sustainability-related courses of study or were involved in sustainability initiatives. In addition to students (approx. 75 % of the respondents), staff from the Universität Hamburg (approx. 20 %) and further interested parties such as Universität Hamburg alumni (approx. 5 %) participated. Those indicators that were considered relevant by at least 40 % of the respondents were taken into account in the further course of the preparation of the report“ (Sustainability Report of the Universität Hamburg 2011–2014, p. 11).

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Application of a systematic process to identify key sustainability-related topics (e.g., a survey, materiality analysis).
- See also Criterion 1

Criterion 3

Designation: **Objectives**

Compiled by: **Alexander Herzner** (OTH Amberg-Weiden)

The higher education institution explains what qualitative and/or quantitative as well as temporally defined sustainability goals it has set, how these are operationalised and how their level of achievement is monitored.

Specification of the criterion's content

The HEI formulates goals on the basis of its strategy. The objectives reflect the relevant topics of sustainable development at the HEI. The objectives can and should be defined so that they are complied with the objectives already formulated elsewhere (e.g., EMAS). In addition, goals such as the introduction of a certified management system can be derived from the strategy.

To ensure that the objectives can also be operationalised, they may be formulated according to the following criteria:

SMART:

Specific

Measureable

Attainable

Realistic

Time-bound

PURE:

Positive stated

Understood (everyone should be able to understand the objective)

Relevant (necessary to achieve the objective)

Ethical

CLEAR:

Challenging

Legal (the objectives and measures are within legal parameters or necessary to comply with the law)

Environmentally sound (acceptable to all stakeholders)

Agreed

Recorded (recorded and verifiable)

Practical examples

In its sustainability report, the **Freie Universität Berlin** defines objectives in each of the categories of governance and participation, research, teaching and knowledge transfer,

campus management, communication and networks, and names those involved in their implementation.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- The objectives should at least be formulated according to one of the SMART / PURE / CLEAR criteria. Ideally all requirements for the objective should be fulfilled
- Resources for the achievement of objectives have been recorded
- Objectives have few / no contradictions in relation to other objectives
- The objectives support the implementation of the strategy and are anchored there
- See also Criterion 1

Criterion 4

Designation: **Organisational Integration**

Compiled by: **Andreas Wanke** and **Julia Kaazke**
(Freie Universität Berlin)

The higher education institution explains how sustainability aspects are integrated into the activities of the whole institution – including its downstream organisational units – and what steps it is taking to embed sustainability throughout the higher education institution and to continuously strengthen and improve the integration of sustainability.

Specification of the criterion's content

An effective consideration of sustainability aspects and the development of transformative narratives require that sustainability-related visions, objectives, strategies, structures and processes are integrated into the organisation. The anchoring of sustainability aspects is an essential orientation framework for all decisions and actions.

Participatory organisational structures offer a good basis for integratively developing sustainability models and/or guidelines.

Sustainability committees compose of, if possible, all stakeholder groups within the HEI, enabling a diversified anchoring of sustainability. The mission statement and the organisational structure complement each other: structural-organisational and communicative measures are necessary for the development of mission statements/guidelines/visions.

Practical examples

The Freie Universität Berlin: In 2015, the Freie Universität Berlin founded a specialist sustainability unit, which reports directly to the university's executive board. The main cross-sectional tasks relating to sustainability management are consolidated here. The unit's tasks include:

- initiating and coordinating sustainability-related activities in research, teaching, management and on campus
- advising the university management on all sustainability issues
- coordinating the sustainability committee, which includes topic-related working groups and decentral sustainability teams
- steering of the university-wide energy and waste management
- assuming responsibility for the integrated management system and the certification process based on it
- coordinating the University Alliance for Sustainability (UAS) funded by the Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) (German Academic Exchange Service)
- representing the Freie Universität Berlin in regional and international sustainability networks.

The **participation structure** was gradually established at the Freie Universität Berlin is based on four pillars:

- a sustainability committee with the working groups „Research“, „Teaching/Education for Sustainable Development“, „Management and Campus“ and „Communication and Participation“,
- decentral sustainability teams in specialist departments,
- cross-departmental audit teams with a large number of inspections and on-site discussions, and
- the SUSTAIN IT! sustainability initiative jointly founded by students and staff.

The Freie Universität Berlin follows a holistic approach and seeks to systematically link research, teaching, outreach, and campus management (see Criterion 9 for the participation structure at the Freie Universität Berlin).

In 2016, the Freie Universität Berlin adopted its **sustainability mission statement**. This was developed in the course of

a participatory process in which the entire university was involved. The SUSTAIN IT! initiative initially developed a draft of the sustainability mission statement. This was adopted by the executive board with a few amendments in July 2015. The university president then called on all members of the university to take a closer look at the sustainability model and to make suggestions for additions and recommendations. Students, academic and non-academic staff submitted a total of 80 proposals. The spectrum ranged from brief suggestions (e.g., the use of recycled paper in publications) to very detailed contributions (including sustainable knowledge management). In December 2015, the proposals were discussed at a workshop with interested students and staff of the university. As a result of the participation process, the executive board adopted the correspondingly adapted sustainability model in March 2016. In its mission statement, the Freie Universität Berlin emphasises the special importance of sustainability in research, teaching, and campus management.

As an open platform for communication and action, the **SUSTAIN IT! Initiative for Sustainability + Climate Protection** contributes to the networking of specialist disciplines, university stakeholders and society as a whole. SUSTAIN IT! contributes to the sustainability mission statement of the Freie Universität Berlin with events such as peer-to-peer lectures, an urban gardening project and art laboratories. The annual one-week „University Days for Sustainability + Climate Protection“ have been a trademark of SUSTAIN IT! since 2011. Due to the continuity of its commitment, SUSTAIN IT! is financially supported by the university management. For its exemplary commitment in the field of education for sustainable development (BNE), in 2012, SUSTAIN IT! received the status of an official project within the UN World Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. Internationally, as an outstanding initiative, SUSTAIN IT! received the “Student Leadership Award” from the “International Sustainable Campus Network” at its 2015 annual conference in Hongkong.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Existence of a sustainability mission statement and/or guidelines
- Practical application of the vision
- See also Criterion 1

Process management: Governance (5-10)

Criterion 5

Designation: **Responsibility**

Compiled by: **Prof. Dr. Ingrid Hemmer and Ina Limmer**
(Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt)

The higher education institution explains roles and responsibilities relating to sustainability.

Specification of the criterion's content

The implementation of a sustainability mission statement can only succeed if the management of the HEI accepts and promotes sustainability at the HEI. A member of the management of the HEI should therefore be responsible for the subject and ensure that sustainability is taken into account in fundamental strategic decisions. A coordination office authorised/appointed by the management should be responsible for the appropriate implementation of the mission statement. It can be staffed with different status groups (scientific and/or administrative staff). Some HEIs already have sustainability officers, and in certain cases, a staff unit. These support the management of the HEI with a range of measures in operationalising and implementing the sustainability concept or strategy, reporting on it regularly, stimulating and

maintaining an ongoing dialogue on sustainable development issues within and beyond the HEI.

The management of the HEI can also assign specific areas of responsibility such as campus environmental management to individual persons. In the coordination office, these operations are consolidated and supported by steering groups at various organisational levels (e.g., faculties, institutions, teaching, research, student activities). If a permanent body (provision of financial resources) with the highest possible status (proximity to the management of the HEI) is created, important factors are a clear designation of its tasks, responsibilities, and, where appropriate, authority to issue instructions (e.g., with regard to the collection of data).

Practical examples

Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

- Since July 2010, a sustainability officer appointed by the university management has carried out tasks including the coordination and support of sustainable development in all fields of action at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt, together with reporting and identification of development potential, committee work and networking.
- Since 2010, there has been a steering group consisting of representatives of internal stakeholder groups (academic and administrative staff, students) and one representative from each of the research and teaching staff.
- Since 2012, the Chancellor has been the responsible contact person for the university management in the area of sustainability.
- Since 2012, there has been a part-time post for campus environmental management with a primary focus on the EMAS process.
- With the participation of the steering group, since 2014, there has been a reporting group which prepared the EMAS certification and is involved in the planning and implementation of the measures of the annual environmental programme decided on by the university management. The reporting group and the steering group partly overlap in terms of personnel, and normally meet twice a year.
- Since 2016, the sustainability officer has been supported by a temporary full-time position.

Universität Hamburg

The executive board develops the sustainability strategy. The Competence Center for a Sustainable University (Kompetenzzentrum Nachhaltige Universität) operates as a scientific network at the university, acting as an innovation laboratory and incubator for new approaches and concepts, procedures and methods in the context of sustainability. In this function, it serves as an advisory body to the executive board in relation to aspects of sustainability at the university.

The Competence Center is essentially made up of five teams, which are interdisciplinary and from different stakeholder groups of the university. These teams deal with a wide range of sustainability-related content in specific topics and target groups: Team 1: The sustainable university, Team 2: Sustainability in teaching and studies, Team 3: Postdoctoral college „Sustainable future“, Team 4: Sustainable university administration, Team 5: Student university projects.

Through the Kompetenzzentrum Nachhaltige Universität, the Universität Hamburg's internal „Future Viability and Sustainability“ funding initiative supports projects that meet the challenge of making the academic world and society sustainable and fit for the future.

The KNU follows a sustainable development strategy in which the formation phase (2011–2013) was followed by a development phase (2014–2017) and a diffusion phase (2018–2022). The main idea here is to develop an understanding of sustainability among the staff and thus create a sense of personal responsibility for sustainability at the Universität Hamburg.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Permanent establishment and funding of full-time/part-time posts for sustainability coordination, management and networking
- Appointing persons responsible for sustainability:
 - in the governing bodies
 - in the faculties
 - in the institutes and facilities, including the computer centre and library
 - in campus operations
 - within student formal and informal groups or bodies
- Reporting – with regard to process and feedback loops
- Networking with quality management / integration into existing processes and structures

Criterion 6

Designation: **Rules and Processes**

Compiled by: **Dr. Hilmar Westholm** (Universität Hamburg), **Constanze Störk-Biber** and **Dr. Brigitte Biermann** (Hochschule für Wirtschaft und Umwelt Nürtingen-Geislingen [HfWU])

The higher education institution explains how it implements the sustainability strategy by means of rules and processes.

Specification of the criterion's content

In order to achieve the goals of the individual sustainability strategy, processes within the HEI have to be identified, reviewed, and, if necessary, the appropriate management processes need to be developed or modified. This usually has an impact on all areas within a HEI. Rules and processes should be specifically explained with regard to selected key criteria (analogous to the requirements of „GRI 103: Management Approach 2016“), so that the rules, responsibilities and control, where applicable, are published concretely and in more or less detail according to their significance. For the university itself, rules and processes are necessarily published as transparent procedures so that sustainable development can become a routine in the organisational culture.

It needs to be explained how these rules are defined, what objectives they pursue and how the relevant processes are implemented in everyday university life. Information on the

management of and possible involvement in the development or improvement of processes reveals responsibilities and participation options. The aim of the rules and processes themselves is to ensure that sustainability aspects are integrated into the processes within the university in such a way that they become a natural activities in the medium term. Target and performance agreements with the federal state or a new mission statement can be important steps as they can be guidelines for purchasing, research, the development of young talent or studies and teaching with the aim of taking sustainability aspects into account. Service agreements can also help to establish rules that promote the sustainable development of a HEI. The guidelines should not stand on their own but be supplemented by a description of how they are accompanied by the appropriate monitoring instruments.

Practical examples

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg

Sustainability objectives have been integrated in the target agreements with the State of Lower Saxony since 2010. The development plan of Leuphana Universität Lüneburg for the period of 2016-2025 in accordance with § 1, Section 3, Subsection 2 of the Lower Saxony Higher Education Act (NHG) stipulates the consistent further development of the concept of sustainability in all areas and integrally within the university.

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg has had sustainability guidelines since 2000. After being revised by the senate commission on sustainability, the principles for the environment and a civil clause were integrated, and approved anew by the senate on 20 November 2013.

Examples of rules and guidelines (extract):

- a directive on the implementation of the tasks of equality and equal rights for women and men at the Leuphana Universität Lüneburg; 16.11.2005
- guidelines on protection against discrimination, violence and sexual harassment; 20.02.2013
- guidelines to ensure good academic practice and procedures in dealing with academic misconduct; 08.06.2009
- guidelines for the prevention and combating of corruption at the Leuphana Universität Lüneburg; 10.03.2004
- guidelines for sustainable construction for new buildings and conversions; 2010
- recommendations for the sustainable organisation of events (continuously updated)

Examples of service agreements:

- health (e.g., ban smoking, dealing with staff at risk of addiction and addicted staff)
- flexible working hours
- advanced training
- low level of car use within campus (parking management)

Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Rules and processes at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt are determined by the concept of sustainability, the statements in the development plan and within the framework of EMAS with applicable sustainability guidelines and the environmental programme. These processes

and responsibilities are specifically defined and explained in the internal environmental management manual. For example, since the 2015/16 winter semester, all first semester students in a Bachelor's or Master's programme have been informed about the university's sustainability concept and receive the "Environmental life guide" (Leitfaden zum ökologischen Leben) designed by the Environmental Department. The aim is to enable all students to participate in the sustainable development of the university and society. All staff of the Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt receive an employee code of sustainability, the development of which began in 2015/2016.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Established management processes (EMAS, family-friendly university audit, diversity audit, etc.)
- Availability of guidelines and manuals
- Existence, design and further development of target agreements on sustainable development, both externally with the Ministry of Science and internally with the faculties and departments
- Anchoring of rules and processes for sustainable development in the strategy and development plan
- Existence of sustainability-related guidelines, directives, service agreements
- Established monitoring processes
- Similarly to the specifications of „GRI 103: Management Approach 2016“, it should also be considered whether a „management approach“ should be described for selected criteria of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs and whether it is relevant to the respective university.

Criterion 7

Designation: **Ensuring Quality of Results**

Compiled by: **Prof. Dr. Magdalène Lévy-Tödter** (FOM Hochschule für Oekonomie & Management)

The higher education institution explains which sustainability indicators are used. It also discloses how the reliability, comparability and consistency of data is ensured and utilised both to ensure quality of results internally and for internal and external communication.

Specification of the criterion's content

The university specifies the framework conditions for ensuring the quality of results with regard to sustainable development, e.g., responsibilities, budgets. The SDGs can be used as strategic reference points for quality objectives; the integration in and orientation towards trans-regional sustainability networks and actors can also be mentioned here. Information is provided on the quality of the goals that have been implemented, what has been achieved and the identification of potential for improvement.

What is desirable here is an evaluation of the university's own activities in a neutral way and which is based on a process-oriented understanding of organisational development and learning. The treatment of critical results is relevant, e.g., the integration of feedback loops and participatory methods; momentary inaction or supposed failure should be regarded here as potential for development and improvement.

Practical examples**Universität Bayreuth**

The 2015 sustainability report of the Universität Bayreuth presents measures and results in an integrated way. The strategy (objectives and materiality) and the basic principles of process management are described in detail.

When presenting the results of measures under the headings of „Environment“ and „Society“, international standards are also mentioned in order to clarify the wider applicability of the data.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Employee/student surveys, existence of participatory improvement processes
- Transparency of the results/documentation
- Verifiability/reference framework/comparability benchmarking

Criterion 8

Designation: **Incentive Schemes**

Compiled by: **Nadine Chrubasik** (Universität Kassel), **Elisa Gansel** (Universität Duisburg-Essen), **Andreas Wanke** und **Julia Kaazke** (Freie Universität Berlin)

The higher education institution explains to what extent its executive organisational units promote and stimulate sustainability processes in both material and non-material ways by means of project-specific or allocated budget resources and how they authorise and support such activities at all (decision-making) levels. It also explains to what extent the management of higher education institutions checks the effectiveness of such incentive systems.

Specification of the criterion's content

Incentive systems foster changes in behaviours of university staff and students. Positive incentives such as rewards and bonuses serve to activate and support behavioural changes, while negative incentives serve to reduce undesirable behaviours. Incentives therefore represent actively designed materials (e.g., bonuses) or immaterial instruments (e.g., praise, recognition, free training measures, additional leisure time, additional vacation days), which have direct or indirect impacts on the desired sustainability processes. It makes sense to track and verify the effectiveness of the respective measures in a (uniform) monitoring system. For the implementation of an incentive system, it is necessary to define

targets (cf. Criterion 3): What is the long-term goal? How can motivation and performance with a focus on a specific topic or problem be maintained and increased by creating the kind of working conditions which reinforce motivation (e.g., autonomy, self-determination)?

In order to be able to implement the sustainability goals, it is first necessary to invest in personnel (e.g., recruit/appoint responsible persons), material (e.g., for campaigns, technical optimisation of energy-saving equipment) and research (also in terms of the time required to obtain third-party funds for the financing of sustainability-related research projects).

Practical examples

Albert-Ludwigs-Universität Freiburg

A scrappage premium for old computers and reimbursement of one third of the purchase price for the replacement of an old refrigerator with an energy-efficient appliance were conducted.

The Freie Universität Berlin

Since 2007, the departments have received direct **financial incentives** to minimise energy consumption in their own buildings through a **university-wide bonus system for energy saving**. The departments receive a premium from central funds if the energy consumption in their buildings falls below a previously defined baseline. In order to motivate the departments to take measures for organisational and behavioural energy savings even more effectively, the executive board decided to lower the baseline for the years from 2012 to 2015 by two percentage points annually. In addition, in 2012, water consumption was integrated into the bonus scheme in order to establish a corresponding incentive mechanism for the economical use of water. The amount of the premium payment is 50 percent of the annual cost reductions achieved and is not predefined for specific purposes. However, if the baseline is exceeded, 100 percent of the costs must be borne by the department itself. In conjunction with the structural energy efficiency programmes implemented by the Technical

Department of the Freie Universität Berlin between 2003 and 2011 and the Green IT programme adopted in 2010, the university's internal bonus system has helped to reduce energy consumption by more than 25% within a decade, and CO₂ emissions have been cut by around a third.

Technische Universität Braunschweig

The various institutes receive a fixed amount for their energy costs. If this is exceeded, they have to pay for the difference themselves.

Universität Kassel

In autumn 2020, a pilot project referred to as "intracting" will test whether the financing model of the municipal administration can be transferred to the university landscape. Intracting means that "energy saving measures are financed with the money that becomes available through the savings" (April 2017).

For this purpose, an additional budget item was set up to, among other things, finance an energy manager and provide incentives for switching from spotlights to LED lights and using waste heat to produce hot water, for example.

The savings are then credited to the budget item and subsequently invested in new measures.

Universität Kassel

Communication campaign and ideas competition on the subject of “Sustainable University” (<https://www.uni-kassel.de/uni/nachhaltigkeit/nachhaltige-uni/ideenwettbewerb-zur-nachhaltigkeit.html>): (1) Publication of the formulated sustainability mission statement, the integrated sustainability strategy and the structures of the sustainability management. (2) Raising awareness and motivating staff and students to

participate in the university’s sustainability development operations. (3) Competition for ideas with total prize money of 1,500 Euros as an essential element of the campaign.

It was possible to submit concepts, ideas or suggestions in the categories “User behaviour” and “Technical or organisational improvements”.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion**Division into**

- sources of incentives (extrinsic/intrinsic), long-term/short-term motivation parameters
- incentive recipients (individual/group/organisation-wide incentives)
- incentive objects (material [direct/indirect incentives]/immaterial [social, organisational incentives])

Indicators

- Number and scope of incentive schemes
- Savings of resources, e.g., energy, water
- Reduction of emissions and waste
- Budgetary savings
- Increasing the proportion of female staff, students, doctoral candidates, (visiting) academics, etc.
- Increasing the total number of students, doctoral candidates, (visiting) academics and scientists
- Reducing sick days, health management

Criterion 9

Designation: **Stakeholder Engagement**

Compiled by: **Andreas Wanke** and **Julia Kaazke**
(Freie Universität Berlin)

The higher education institution explains whether and how it identifies internal and external stakeholders and how they are integrated into the sustainability process. It explains whether and how an ongoing dialogue takes place with them and how the results of this are integrated into the institution’s sustainability process.

Specification of the criterion’s content

Participation is a central design principle of sustainable development and can contribute significantly to the success of strategic sustainability management at HEIs. It enables internal and external stakeholders to become actively involved in the existing operations of the university and thus participate in the processes of the organisation. Rights of co-determination for employees are coded in German law. Participation beyond this usually improves the acceptance of decisions. Participatory processes promote the motivation of those involved in the university, and can defuse potential conflicts by building trust and strengthening mutual understanding.

In an initial step, the university clarifies which stakeholders have influence on the university and expectations of the university with regard to sustainability. A distinction must be drawn between internal and external stakeholders. Internally, the list includes professors, academic staff, non-academic staff in all areas, students, university management (president, vice president, chancellor, rector, dean), lecturers and heads of research institutions.

External stakeholders can be funding agencies (federal, state or private), companies, regional politics (city, district, etc.), project partners (research partners, HEIs and practice partners), research funding agencies (the EU, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, state, the Federal Environment Foundation, foundations, the German Society for International Cooperation, etc.), schools, NGOs, etc.

In the second step, the HEI considers whether and how a dialogue with stakeholders on sustainable university development can be organised. Stakeholder dialogues not only help to identify different needs and perspectives; they are indicative of active participation.

Practical examples

Freie Universität Berlin

The responsibility for sustainability management is organisationally integrated as a staff unit at the Freie Universität Berlin. The participation structure is based on a number of elements.

- The **sustainability committee** (founded in May 2016) is composed of representatives from the executive board, the faculties and administration, and other university groups. The committee is responsible for the strategic development of sustainability management and meets at least once a year.
- The **working groups** assigned to the committee – “research”, “teaching/education for sustainable development”, “management and campus” and “communication/participation” – deal with processes for the further development of the sustainability strategy in relation to specific topics. The working groups meet two to four times a year and, like the central committee, are coordinated by the Sustainability and Energy staff unit.
- **Decentralised sustainability teams** from all departments initiate optimisation and work on key topics in the form of specific sustainability projects. They are a development of the environmental teams that were already established in 2004 as part of the environmental certification in accordance with DIN ISO 14001. Depending on the department, 5-14 members from research, administration and operational management formed the teams, which were coordinated by the heads of various departments. The work of these teams, which comprised a total of around 120 members university-wide, focused on aspects of campus

management and environmental communication. At present, the environmental teams are being “transformed” into sustainability teams, which will devote themselves to the extended range of subject areas in the future. The frequency of their meetings is based on the requirements arising from external certification and sustainability projects.

- **Cross-departmental audit teams** were first formed in 2005 in the course of the certification in accordance with DIN ISO 14001. These are distinguished by their cross-divisional composition of representatives from the sustainability and energy unit, occupational health and safety and the areas to be audited. The teams discuss optimisation measures in operational procedures, check compliance with occupational health and safety and environmental regulations, and draw up proposals for action. The audit discussions take place in on-site visits. Annually, up to 40 audits are carried out by the audit teams. Every year, up to 20 internal auditors get into direct contact with up to 100 discussion partners.
- **The Sustain It! – Initiative for Sustainability and Climate Protection** is anchored in the participation process across all organisational structures. The mixed initiative of students and staff organises a wide range of events and activities on sustainability issues together with stakeholders from the university and local environment, thus contributing to the networking of disciplines, university stakeholders and society.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Established structures with overall organisational reach such as staff units or sustainability committees
- Meetings/round tables/stakeholder dialogues with various internal and external stakeholders to further develop sustainability processes
- Stakeholder identification process
- Implementation of new sustainability ideas in projects

Criterion 10

Designation: **Transformation**

Compiled by: **Dr. Silke Kleihauer**
(Hochschule Darmstadt – University of Applied Sciences)

The higher education institution explains how it achieves a transformation in favour of sustainable development in its key fields of action by means of suitable processes. It also explains to what extent measures within the fields of action trigger a learning process for the whole organisation and third parties and how processes entrenching the desired transformation are driven forward. This also includes maintaining an ongoing dialogue with local authorities, businesses, policymakers and civil society.

Specification of the criterion's content

The objectives are formulated by Criterion 3. In general, following Germany's 2011 Advisory Council on Global Environmental Change (WBGU) report, the focus has been on comprehensive change processes that contribute more intensely to sustainable development. How can a HEI contribute to change processes in society? A HEI can achieve this, for example, through its results from teaching, research and knowledge transfer. The concrete question is therefore how these areas support change processes towards sustainable development in society.

Teaching, in addition to its classical idea, has the task of imparting disciplinary knowledge and further knowledge such as information on orientation, systems and transformation, and developing skills and competencies required for transformation processes. Starting with a problem, the aim of transformation is to give this problem a concrete form in a transdisciplinary way, derive a common research question from it, as well as develop common solutions via the integration of know-how, which lead to processes of change in

the direction of sustainable development. Since the key to change processes is the willingness of the stakeholders to participate, it is also important to consider incentives/opportunities for relevant stakeholders and consequently institutional issues.

Research and knowledge transfer shall, in interaction with politics, economy and society, point out visions, describe different development paths and develop technological, social and institutional innovations and support their implementation. It must be clarified how or to what extent the respective HEI structures can already be linked to these ideas, and where the HEI itself must change to achieve this. Ultimately, it is also a question of a cultural change within the HEI, which enables transdisciplinary teaching and research projects as well as knowledge transfer. In addition to the objective (Criterion 3), a corresponding development of the vision (see preamble) can support such a cultural change and appropriate incentive systems (Criterion 8).

Practical examples

Hochschule Darmstadt – University of Applied Sciences

Teaching: The curriculum of the Master's programme "Risk Assessment and Sustainability Management" is based on transformative research. Each year, group works in an interdisciplinary team on a practical project are carried out. See: <https://rasum.h-da.de/>

Research: The university has an interdisciplinary research centre on "Sustainable processes and procedures".

The aim is to work on transformative research projects, such as those funded within the framework of socio-ecological research. At the same time, a doctoral centre for sustainability sciences is being established (<https://ine.h-da.de/forschung/forschungszentrum-fne/>).

Knowledge transfer: The university has a knowledge transfer strategy and a concept for implementation, in which system innovations for sustainable development are designed in collaboration with practitioners (<https://sne.h-da.de/>).

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Number of teaching/practical projects with reference to sustainable development
- Number of research/knowledge transfer projects in the field of transformative research
- Number of system innovations (technological, social and institutional innovations)

Environment: Operations (11-13)

Criterion 11

Designation: **Usage and Management of Natural Resources**

Compiled by: **Dr. Jörg Romanski** (Technische Universität Berlin), **Kay Schomburg** (Technische Universität Dresden (TUD)) and **Eric Schön** (Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz – University of Applied Sciences)

In relation to the following areas, the higher education institution explains the extent to which natural resources are

utilised for its operation and the mobility of its members. Furthermore, it describes reduction and efficiency targets relating to resource usage and explains how it intends to achieve these by means of current and future measures.

- a) Life cycle of consumables, capital goods and services
- b) Circular economy and disposal
- c) Mobility
- d) Nutrition
- e) Energy
- f) Water

Specification of the criterion's content

To make the operation of a HEI more sustainable. Strategies, concepts and measures for environmental and climate protection have to be integrated into operational processes. The following aspects may be helpful. **List of key words:**

- Considering the requirements of the EU's Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) to avoid duplication of work (also: the EMAS guidelines of the Federal Environment Agency for authorities)
- Certification in accordance with EMAS or DIN/ISO 14001. The corresponding documentation shall be enclosed.
- **Mobility:** The mobility of commuters, on campus and for official and research trips should also be included, ideally with compulsory CO₂ compensation for air travel, taking into account favourable alternative means of transport.
- **Mobility** includes the routes taken by students and staff within the university, to and from the university and for

official, teaching and research trips; it also includes transport routes and vehicle fleets. The focus of this criterion is primarily on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving mobility (not transport).

- The topic of catering in German universities is mainly operated by the Studentenwerk, a state-owned company: <https://www.studentenwerke.de/de/node/1697>. The Federal Environment Agency has published guidelines for the sustainable organisation of events.
- The use of content of the Federal Environment Agency guidelines, e.g., guidelines on the fundamentals (e.g., for operational environmental indicators), guidelines on procurement (e.g., for monitors, notebooks, PCs, environmentally friendly materials), and guidelines on services and mobility (e.g., event organisation, cleaning services & products, quality objectives for mobility, cycling and walking).

Practical examples

Universität Bayreuth

Concepts: Development and implementation of new building concepts with energy self-sufficiency and implementation of specific environment-oriented measures in building utility services

Further measures:

- Installation of thermal and solar protection glazing, rain-water storage, etc.
- Appointment of a Green Campus team to implement the measures

Hochschule für nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde

Concepts: Introduction and validation of an environmental management system according to the requirements of EMAS, and implementation of a climate protection concept

Further measures:

- Further development of the guidelines for ecological procurement into guidelines for sustainable procurement
- Carbon-neutral semester ticket
- Establishment of a sustainability canteen with weeks of regional food
- Checklist for sustainable event management, tips and links for planning sustainable excursions

Universität Hamburg

Concepts: Development of a concept for sustainable purchasing (recording of environmentally relevant aspects on the part of suppliers)

Further measures:

- Promotion of sustainability-related student projects
- Participation in the consulting programme ÖKOPROFIT® Hamburg

Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz – University of Applied Sciences

Concepts: Introduction of an environmental management system based on the newly developed concept of a “modular system for a sustainable campus” in areas such as waste, energy, procurement, campus design

Further measures: Implementation of sustainability-oriented actions and events to raise awareness among students and staff, including health and environment days, cinema salon, thermal mug campaign, vital canteen, eco-community get-together, sustainable campus book BOXX

Technische Universität BerlinConcepts:

- Integrated occupational safety and environmental protection management system
- Energy management
- Cross-institutional cooperation in an environmental network (organisational environmental protection)

Further measures:

- Conduct-based energy conservation
- Waste week
- Waste avoidance: old-furniture store
- Procurement of recycled paper
- Job ticket for public transport

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Brief descriptions of the planned, applied and implemented strategies, concepts and measures for sustainable operations in the above-mentioned topics
- Description of the organisation for working on the topics as well as occurrences in teaching and research
- Selection of appropriate indicators in each area to measure success, e. g.,
 - Waste footprint: waste quantities by waste type
 - Energy consumption by type of energy
- Water and wastewater footprint
- Proportion of recycled paper
- Analysis of mobility: modal split (choice of transport mode), share of environmental intermodality (walking, cycling, public transport), etc.
- In addition to absolute figures, reference values (university staff/members, employees or usable floor space) need to be defined and indicators need to be created

Criterion 12

Designation: **Properties, Construction, Open Spaces** (campus design)

Compiled by: **Thomas Pioch, Theresa Spandel**
(Universität Hamburg)

The higher education institution explains how new-builds, extensions, refurbishment, renovations and building operations at the institution are planned and completed in a resource-efficient, climate-friendly way, including the use of renewable energy. This relates to both the way in which build-

ing work is completed and the use of space and land, including the impact on biodiversity. Furthermore, the higher education institution should explain whether it manages the buildings itself or uses external service providers.

The higher education institution explains how it designs and manages open spaces (including light smog, noise and surfacing) and how it safeguards and improves the quality of user experience (campus design).

Specification of the criterion's content

The HEI explains how the handling of buildings, real estate and open spaces at the university is planned and executed in a resource-efficient and climate-friendly manner. First of all, it makes sense to create an overview of various buildings, properties and open spaces and to distinguish, for example, between buildings owned by the HEI and rented or leased buildings. The extent to which buildings are managed autonomously or by external service providers should also be recorded. Different strategies and criteria can therefore be created on the basis of individual scopes of action. With regard to its own buildings, for example, the HEI explains how the new construction, extension, refurbishment, renovation and operation are planned and executed in a resource-efficient and climate-friendly manner, taking into account the use of renewable energies. In the case of rented buildings, the HEI explains what criteria must be applied from a climate perspective when selecting rented buildings. Both buildings and the use of land and soil, including their impacts on biodiversity, are addressed. The HEI accordingly outlines, for example, how it designs and manages open spaces (incl. light smog, noise and sealing of land), as well as how it ensures and improves the quality of residence (campus design)

The way buildings, real estate and open spaces are dealt with is considered from various aspects. Based on these aspects, strategies, targets, responsibilities and relevant activities are developed. The following superordinate and subordinate categories can be useful, for example:

Facility management

- Heating and cooling (e.g., heating and cooling by earth-energy, see example below)
- Energy (e.g., X% green electricity as target, decentral energy teams, self-generated energy, installation of LED lamps)
- Water (e.g., public water dispensers, tap attachments)

Construction and real estate

- Biodiversity (e.g., greening for insects, beehives, bird houses)
- Accessibility (e.g., based on DIN 18040-1 for barrier-free construction of publicly accessible buildings)
- Light smog, noise, sealing of land
- Residential quality taking into account different stakeholder groups

(Natural) resources (see also Criterion 11)

- Re-use of used office equipment
- Eco-friendly printing

Practical examples

Technische Universität Dresden

Concepts:

- The “Sustainable campus” project

Measures:

- Improving biodiversity through sustainable management of green spaces
- Competition of ideas for a sustainable campus
- Design of open spaces as seminar rooms, fitness, etc.
- Signposting, orientation, accessibility, participation and inclusion as an aspect of the social dimension of sustainability

Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz – University of Applied Sciences

- One-off mowing of the meadows on campus to safeguard and increase biodiversity
- Herb spiral planted and used on the campus
- University garden laid out and used (urban gardening project)
- Student park in which graduates can plant a tree

Universität Hamburg

With regard to drawing up strategies for dealing with real estate, construction and open spaces, it makes sense to first take stock of the university’s scope for action and possibilities, taking into account other stakeholders (e.g., municipality, state, students). In Hamburg, for example, the “Hamburg Climate Plan” drawn up at the municipal level, including a long-term perspective for 2050 and an action plan for 2020/2030, is also relevant to the scope of action for universities in Hamburg. For example, it presents a green roof strategy which provides a total of 3 million Euros for the promotion of green roofs and has already been taken up by Hafencity Universität.

In addition, explicit targets are set for new buildings, which also apply to Hamburg’s universities. At the same time, students are involved as potentially active participants in the design of facility management and the handling of construction and real estate. Examples of student initiatives at the Universität Hamburg include the “Wurzelwerk” (public community garden on campus) and the installation of public water dispensers. It can therefore also be part of the strategy to create structures and incentives for students to become involved in the planning and implementation of property, building and open space design. For example, the Competence Centre for the Sustainable University (Kompetenzzentrum Nachhaltige Universität) at the Universität Hamburg promotes the Wurzelwerk, which provides more plant diversity on campus and additionally stimulates discussions on sustainability issues. For buildings rented by the university, criteria such as energy efficiency can also be taken into account when deciding whether to rent or extend rental contracts.

The Center for Free-Electron Laser Science (CFEL) at the Universität Hamburg has a geothermal heat pump system that has been operating since 2012 and reduces heating costs in winter. According to the funding, the following savings are expected: 378 MWh (megawatt hours) of heating per year and 273 MWh of cooling per year, resulting in financial savings of approx. € 18,000 per year and approx. 65t less CO₂ emissions compared to the supply of district heating. The CFEL is a collaboration between the Universität Hamburg and DESY (Deutsches Elektronen-Synchrotron) and the Max Planck Society (<https://verwaltungslandkarte-nachhaltigkeit.uni-hamburg.de/detail.html?2>)

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- In-house or third-party management of the buildings
- Evaluation system for sustainable building, including outdoor facilities (<https://www.bnb-nachhaltigesbauen.de/bewertungssystem.html>)
- Solar panel areas
- Proportion of low-energy buildings, energy self-sufficient buildings and energy-plus buildings
- Proportion of green areas/total useable area
- Proportion of green roofs
- Accessibility (see also Criterion 15: Equal opportunities)
- Reduction of light smog and noise
- Consideration and creation of residential quality on the campus

Criterion 13

Designation: **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Compiled by: **Thomas Pioch, Theresa Spandel**
(Universität Hamburg)

The higher education institution discloses the extent, type and impact of greenhouse gas emissions and states its targets for reducing emissions and achievements to date.

Specification of the criterion's content

Greenhouse gas emissions are linked to many other criteria, which is why the following topics must always be thought of in the context of the entire university management. In order to design the operation of a university in such a way that the resulting greenhouse gas emissions are compatible with the Paris Agreement, various dimensions of university operations have to be considered. It must also be taken into account that state-funded HEIs are bound by guidelines and targets at the level of the federal state. Unlike many other sustainability criteria, greenhouse gas emissions have a concrete physical dimension that can be recorded and regularly reported. In line with the Greenhouse Gas Protocol classification, CO₂ equivalents (CO₂e) are reported separately under Scope 1 (direct emissions), Scope 2 (indirect emissions through heat and electricity) and Scope 3 (indirect emissions from the value chain). Targets for reducing CO₂e emissions are formulated separately in terms of the individual scope. Since Scope 3 emissions are generally more difficult to capture, a balance is struck here between the consumption involved and the extent of emissions in order to be able to focus on selected areas of high impact. One example of a possible target would be to avoid disposable packaging, such as coffee cups, in order to avoid indirect emissions.

Identification of sources of greenhouse gas emissions and materiality analysis

The HEI first identifies the sources of greenhouse gas emissions and their levels. After that, potential savings can be identified by means of a materiality analysis. When quantifying greenhouse gas emissions, the division into different categories can also be helpful in order to apply overriding objectives (e. g., reducing CO₂ emissions by X %) to the individual areas. A division into mobility (official trips, commuting, vehicle fleet, see Criterion 11), buildings (thermal energy, electrical energy, grey energy, see Criterion 12) and catering (canteens, kiosks) is possible, for example.

Mobility

In the field of mobility, the greenhouse gas emissions caused by official trips by plane, train or car can be offset in the process of travel expense accounting by supporting NGO projects such as atmosfair. The information collected on travel kilometres is also used to prepare the HEI's greenhouse gas footprint. When offsetting greenhouse gas emissions, care must be taken to ensure that the emissions that are offset nevertheless appear in the HEI's carbon footprint, since the goal must be the general reduction of emissions rather than a constant offset of more emissions. In order to reduce overall emissions from official travel, the university should ensure that telephone and video conferencing are accessible as alternatives. In addition, guidelines can be created that specify more climate-friendly travel by rail under certain conditions (e. g., less than X km distance). The mobility of employees and students on their daily commute can also be taken into account by conducting mobility surveys and making projections of the total greenhouse gas emissions produced. The HEI can contribute to improvements through targeted promotion of emission-free forms of transport, e. g., secure parking for bicycles. Unnecessary journeys can be avoided by organising classes or work processes in such a way that commuting between different areas of the institution is unnecessary.

The greenhouse gas emissions from the institution's vehicle fleet are measured on the basis of fuel consumption, e. g., from fuel receipts. In addition to switching to e-mobility, the planning and organisation of work processes can also avoid unnecessary business trips.

Buildings

Energy consumption in buildings is closely linked to Criterion 12 in the context of energy-related renovation and efficiency criteria for new buildings. The energy consumed here is determined by the consumption of district heating, heating oil, gas and the electrical energy used to operate the building.

Catering

The Studierendenwerk in Germany runs canteens at many HEIs and have developed principles for the sustainable purchasing and the planning of meals. Universities can base their own services on these principles. Vegetarian products make a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Total emissions can be estimated from the quantities of meat and other food consumed annually.

Practical examples

Universität Hamburg

- “Climate meals” in the canteens with 50% less CO₂e emissions than an average dish.
- With the “Cycle to work” initiative, teams of employees cycle to work for at least 20 days from April to August and thus contribute to climate protection. Winning teams receive awards.
- Extensive survey on employee mobility
- The Universität Hamburg purchases 100% green electricity.
- A discount on coffee is offered at many points of sale if a re-usable mug is used (reduction of indirect emissions through waste avoidance).

Examples from Technische Universität Dresden

- Introduction/validation in accordance with EMAS and presentation of the GHG balance according to Scope 1 and 2

Leuphana Universität Lüneburg and Birkenfeld Environmental Campus

- Both institutions are carbon neutral.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- CO₂ equivalents in relation to employees or students, if applicable.
- Quantity of greenhouse gas emissions broken down by sources (e.g., electricity, district heating, heating oil, diesel/petrol, etc.) by infrastructure (e.g., energy and water footprint, procurement, mobility), depending on the data situation.
- (...)

Society (14-20)

Criterion 14

Designation: **Participation of the Institution’s Members**

Compiled by: **Marco Lange**

(Georg-August-Universität Göttingen)

The higher education institution explains how it encourages its members to participate in making the institution more sustainable.

Specification of the criterion’s content

The involvement of all members of the HEI (see also Criterion 9) represents a decisive factor for the long-term establishment and development of sustainability in all relevant fields of action. To achieve this objective, sustainability has to be anchored in the institution’s strategy and promoted in its culture (Criterion 4). In addition to the management, teachers, students and administrative staff also need to be involved in sustainability developments and processes. The HEI therefore actively promotes institution-wide commitment and ensures that all members of the institution’s community are aware of and have easy access to binding and advisory incentives for sustainable development of the HEI for participation. This ensures that all members of the HEI can communicate, discuss, develop and are involved in issues and ideas on sustainability. For this purpose, access is created and methods are developed in order to avoid exclusion and to ensure the widest possible range of ideas, opinions and perspectives. In addition to working groups, it is necessary to establish committees, forums and commissions for sustainability, as well as opportunities for individual participation.

An institution-wide sustainability development plan is developed and implemented in a top-down and bottom-up approach at the same time. Strategic and trend-setting approaches and decision-making processes should be transparent and accessible to all members of the HEI, so that frameworks conditions and reasons for decisions are comprehensible.

For successful and comprehensive involvement of all members of the HEI, existing structures might need reconsideration, obstacles need to be removed, work consolidation needs to be dissolved, working conditions need to be improved and regulations are reviewed and made transparent. This also includes regularly disclosing sustainability efforts and measures, reflecting and evaluating them within the HEI.

Practical examples

U4 Student Network

The U4 Student Network within the international network of the Universities of Göttingen, Groningen, Ghent and Uppsala offers students the opportunity to exchange experiences and good practice on the sustainable development of HEIs (e.g., campus development, equal opportunities, student well-being, internationalization, integration, and student participation). Discussing problems and possible solutions in an international context is enriching and meaningful for the students because concepts and measures that work at a specific location might also be applied in other institutions and joint projects can be developed. The recommendations and results are presented to the four university management-boards at the annual rectors' meeting so that the practical implementation can be discussed and agreed upon in cooperation between the student groups and the university management. The **Sustainability Thinktank** consists of committed staff from administration, research and teaching and representatives of the student groups of the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen, who exchange information on current internal as well as regional, national and international sustainability development and are committed to the practical implementation of appropriate measures. The broad positioning and the involvement of various functional groups and areas of expertise allow an intensive exchange of experience and the development of new solutions. The proposals and results of the Sustainability Thinktank are presented to the university management and reviewed regularly.

The **Sustainability Working Group** is set up as a student platform for sustainability at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen. It is being established by the general students' committee (AStA), but will be independent of university policy. The participants are committed to sustainability at the uni-

versity and organise their own events on the topic of sustainability/sustainable development. In this way, students can discuss their own specific topics, identify problems and mobilise themselves. The idea is to pool knowledge and commitment in the working group, in particular to promote sustainability projects in teaching, research and operations.

The **Sustainability Forum** was set up in 2018 to enable an active exchange of ideas between all interested members of the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen and the Göttingen campus partners. Monthly open meetings with about 50 participants on a specific sustainability-related topic provide a platform for ideas and promote dialogue among the various stakeholders. An informative keynote speech is followed by a moderated discussion, which is goal-oriented and takes various opinions and perspectives into account. In this way, approaches and possibilities for solutions are sought, which can contribute to the sustainable development of the entire Göttingen campus.

With the creation of its **Sustainability Coordination Office**, the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen has created a central point of contact for all queries and issues concerning sustainability issues. In cooperation with university staff and students, the Coordination Office examines what approaches and projects already exist with regard to sustainability in the areas of research, teaching, operations, governance, reporting and knowledge transfer. In addition, plans are made with responsible and motivated stakeholders at the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen on how the sustainable development of the university can be fostered. This means that all members of the university community have a contact person and can also participate individually in sustainability development measures.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Promotion of interest and opportunities for participation and co-determination by all members of the HEI in the field of sustainability
- Information, advice and incentives for the participation and involvement of all members of the HEI's community
- The number of groups and projects with explicit reference to sustainability
- Transparent and easily accessible presentation of sustainable development objectives and processes for all members of the HEI's community

Criterion 15

Designation: **Equal Opportunities**

Compiled by: **Nadine Chrubasik** (Universität Kassel), **Magdalène Lévy-Tödter** (FOM Hochschule für Ökonomie & Management), **Petra Stemmer** (Kölner Design Akademie in cooperation with the Universität zu Köln), **Silke Schreiber-Barsch** (Universität Hamburg)

The higher education institution explains what targets it has set to promote equal opportunities in relation to health, gender equality, diversity, the integration of people from immigrant families, the inclusion of people with disabilities, work-life balance for employees and students, and commensurate pay for members of the institution (especially when outsourcing is used).

Specification of the criterion's content

HEIs train future decision-makers in society. They can implement the resulting responsibility they bear and their function as role models by demonstrating good practice, for example, by reducing existing inequalities of opportunity and creating opportunities for participation. This means that students and staff members will not have to conceal differentiating features (e.g., dyslexia, hearing loss) for fear of discrimination or stigmatisation. In this sense, a HEI culture should be promoted in which diversity is recognised and carried into society by members of the HEI as multipliers. The profile of a HEI in terms of the criterion of equal opportunities can be based on the following fields of action:

- promoting a culture of diversity and inclusion,
- inclusion and freedom from barriers,

- equal treatment of the genders (across all university members),
- recognition and promotion of intercultural diversity and internationality,
- compatibility of family and career or studies,
- health promotion and the prevention of illness.

In the interests of an inclusive and barrier-free HEI, obstacles to participation should be identified and removed, and solutions offered that foster equal opportunities.

In addition to the consideration of aspects of heterogeneity, an academic debate on the topic of equal opportunities in teaching and research also needs to be supported.

Practical examples

Universität Kassel

By signing the "Diversity charter" in June 2014, the Universität Kassel committed itself to creating an organisational structure characterised by mutual recognition and participation of all members of the university, regardless of gender, ethnicity, social background, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or ideology. Measures taken: From 2014 to 2016, the Universität Kassel successfully completed the "Shaping diversity" audit of the Association of Donors for the Promotion of Sciences and Humanities (Stifterverband für die Deutsche Wissenschaft) in Germany. The university's diversity mission statement was developed throughout the university as part of the first phase of the "Shaping diversity" audit process. On 19 September 2016, the Universität Kassel signed the charter on the "Family in the university" and accordingly also joined the "Family in the university" best-practice club.

Universität zu Köln

With "Giving people a voice", one of many concrete measures, the Universität zu Köln aims to make particular strengths and also challenges of university members with disabilities and chronic illnesses visible and comprehensible. The participatory approach is also intended to address and involve people who have not yet had personal contact with the subject and thus contribute to raising awareness. On the website of the project (<http://vielfalt.uni-koeln.de/den-menschen-einstimme-geben.html>), students and employees with health impairments provide an insight into their personal experiences in their everyday studies and professional lives at the Universität zu Köln. The project evolved from the Donor Association's "Shaping diversity" audit, in which the university successfully participated in 2017/18, and the "Inclusion" action plan.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

Promotion of an inclusive and open culture within the HEI

- Establishing equality, inclusion and interculturality in the mission statement, (structural) development plan or in internal target agreements
- Official commitment in a letter of intent from the executive board
- A range of awareness-raising and training programmes on equal opportunities for teachers and administrative or management staff as well as students
- Internationalisation profile of the university

Administrative/institutional processes

- Indicators on equal opportunities (in-house inclusion plan, participation in diversity audits, documented promotion of commitment to equal opportunities)
- Information from qualitative student or staff surveys and regular checks on the existence of inequalities, e.g., in examination regulations

- Documentation on staffing and organisational structures in the areas of inclusion, diversity and internationalisation (number of advisors, dedicated department)
- The number of research and implementation projects on inclusion, diversity, interculturality
- Documentation of the composition of equal, interdisciplinary, diversity-focused and inclusion-oriented working groups in decision-making and research processes

Inclusive structures and learning environments for students and staff

- A representative for the interests of students and staff with disabilities
- Existing measures for equal-opportunity access to HEIs
- Counselling services for barrier-free studies or employment
- Information on ensuring personnel and technical support
- Information on a barrier-free teaching and learning culture (including compensation for disadvantages)
- Information about checks on structural and technical accessibility

Compatibility of family and work or studies – health promotion and prevention of illness

- Information on the composition of the governing bodies in line with gender equality
- Information on capacity for work, and an operating and working atmosphere in line with diversity criteria

- The number of mentoring and coaching programmes offered for specific dimensions, e.g., family and age-appropriate careers, including management
- The number of offers for flexible working, health promotion and utilisation rate

Criterion 16

Designation: **Qualifications**

Compiled by: **Svetlana Harms** (Hochschule Fresenius – University of Applied Sciences) and **Dr. Tiemo Timmermann** (Universität Greifswald)

The higher education institution explains which targets and measures it has adopted to foster the qualifications and skills of all its members with respect to sustainable behaviour. Furthermore, it outlines how these will be adapted to cater for demographic developments and future challenges.

Specification of the criterion's content

The aim is to enable all members of the HEI to acquire the necessary professional, methodological, social and personal skills and to create the structural conditions necessary for participation in the process of sustainable development. In addition to enhancing the skills of teaching and research staff, technical/administrative staff and students/doctoral candidates, lifelong learning is also promoted by means of training courses. In addition to formal learning, these also include informal learning processes. Furthermore, the HEI promotes an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue across departmental boundaries.

Possible fields of action could be: Teaching and research:

- Training of teachers on education for sustainable development (ESD)
- Workshops on HEI teaching
- Evaluation of the study programmes
- Collegial interaction formats (interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary dialogue)
- Advisory meetings
- (Research) promotion of transformation research
- New formats: e.g., real-world laboratory research

Students/PhD students:

- Specific study programmes, modules and lectures related to sustainability
- Extracurricular studies
- Lecture series on sustainability topics
- Certified qualification offers for ESD/sustainability expertise
- Provision of service learning projects/excursions

- Self-organised project studies, student Green Office
- Cooperation with the student union, student parliament and other student initiatives, teaching gardens, repair workshop, sustainable nutrition, sustainable mobility offers, etc.

Technical/administrative personnel:

- Education, training on operational sustainability topics, e.g., energy and environmental management, climate protection measures, water consumption, mobility, paper, etc.
- Day(s) of action and project week(s) on sustainability issues
- Provision of information and training materials
- Department-specific training, e.g., sustainable procurement, energy management, event management, personnel management, etc.
- Cooperation with student services (canteen, student housing) and other partners (e.g., state companies, energy supply companies)

Lifelong learning/knowledge transfer/communication:

- Lecture series on sustainable development topics
- Implementation of discussions, conferences and congresses
- Advanced training courses on sustainability topics
- Service-learning projects
- New formats: Science slams, citizen science projects
- Development of "science-society interfaces", e.g., within the framework of real-world laboratory projects
- Promotion of teaching and research projects in cooperation with practice partners
- Establishing of committees, platforms, working groups, etc., for interaction among all different groups at the university

Practical examples

Technische Universität Dresden

- Lecture series on the environment
- Project days of the Technical University's student environmental initiative (TUUWI)
- Extracurricular studies (Aqua Module)
- Training on the environmental management concept

Hochschule Darmstadt – University of Applied Sciences

- Lecture series on sustainable development
- M.A. programme: 'Risk Assessment and Sustainability Management'

Hochschule Fresenius – University of Applied Sciences

- M.A. programmes: “Sustainable Marketing and Leadership” and “Sustainability in Fashion and Creative Industries” as

well as various modules related to sustainability, e.g., “Sustainability in Tourism and Mobility Management”

- Greencamp@Hochschule Fresenius
- Service-learning projects

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- The number and relative proportion of study programmes, modules, courses with a link to sustainability
- Type, number and relative share of informal and non-formal programmes
- Programmes on university teaching, advanced training, training for sustainable development
- Evaluation of the training (with indication of when, how, etc.)
- Number of participants in workshops and further training, as well as the proportion of status groups involved
- Number and relative share of extracurricular events related to sustainability

Criterion 17

Designation: **Human Rights**

Compiled by: **Dr. Diana Grundmann**
(Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)

The higher education institution explains which human rights conventions its work is based on and what steps it takes to uphold these in its local, national and international activities, in partnerships and in procurement. It also describes how it is working to raise its members’ awareness of associated issues.

Specification of the criterion’s content

Human rights are the normative basis of human coexistence worldwide. The objectives of sustainable development are also based on this. At the same time, the guiding principle of sustainable development provides the framework and basis for the (improved) visibility of human rights. This connection between human rights and sustainable development is a fundamental part of Education for Sustainable Development.

HEIs are obliged to respect and protect human rights. They are also spaces for human rights education where young adults learn about, through and for human rights. Imparting knowledge about human rights, empowering young people to stand up for their own rights and those of others, and organising operations in line with human rights are important tasks for these HEIs. In addition, through their research activities, they contribute to the expansion of knowledge relating to human rights and are called upon to make this knowledge available to the public.

The following measures can be important parameters for how and whether HEIs are committed to human rights:

- At lectures and seminars, students can learn about human rights, important protective instruments (conventions, documents, etc.), the historical process of the development of human rights, and analyse the underlying values.
- Human rights-related perspectives are integrated into courses on sustainable development and are included in interdisciplinary events.
- Classes and events for interested members of the public are created (e.g., extracurricular events, children’s universities, further training for teachers).
- There are events for students and staff that promote emancipatory thinking and actions, with the aim of teaching them to stand up for their own rights and those of others.
- The rights of all participants are respected in classes and research projects.
- Initiatives by students and staff at the HEI in order to strengthen human rights are implemented and supported by the HEI (e.g., Amnesty International University Group).
- Research work contributes to the expansion of the human rights knowledge base.
- Human rights-related perspectives are integrated into research projects and criteria.
- The transfer of research results to the worlds of politics, business and the public is encouraged.
- The requirements of labor law for the protection of employees are observed.
- A diversity strategy including measures to protect against discrimination is developed and implemented.

Practical examples

Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

A **Human Rights Week** has been taking place annually in the university city of Tübingen since 2015. It was initiated by students of the university. The slogan of the 2017 Tübingen Human Rights Week was “Putting human rights into practice. Reinforcing democracy”. The aim of the event, which was organised by 15 Tübingen university groups, was to raise awareness for human rights and their importance as the basis of democracy and to promote and encourage commitment to human rights. Workshops, panel discussions, poetry slams and exhibitions enable students, pupils and interested citizens to learn about and discuss human rights.

Since the 2016 summer semester, the Faculty of Law at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, in cooperation with the Career Service and the Law&Legal e.V. student legal advisory service, has been offering a **refugee law clinic** on “Human Rights Law in Practice”. As part of the training, students first deepen their specialist knowledge in the field of migration and asylum law, and acquire interdisciplinary qualifications such as trauma awareness and counselling skills, before the participants in the clinic can become active as counsellors themselves under the guidance and supervision of experi-

enced practitioners. The Refugee Law Clinic thus responds, on the one hand, to an urgent need on a part of society and people seeking protection in Tübingen. At the same time, it offers committed students the opportunity to gain insights into their future professional practice, to gain counselling experience, to deepen their knowledge in the area of international law/human rights for their studies, and to acquire knowledge of administrative law in the special field of asylum rights.

The **M.A. programme on “Peace Research and International Politics”** is based within the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences. It is aimed at university graduates with a first degree in social sciences who wish to pursue a profession in areas relevant to peace studies and peace policy. In the course of advancing globalisation and the increasing fragmentation of political controls, the need for expertise in social sciences is growing, especially in the areas of crisis prevention, conflict management, peace promotion and world governance. The M.A. programme in Peace Research and International Politics contributes to acquiring the knowledge and skills necessary to deal constructively with old and new challenges to peace from a peace research perspective.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- The number of courses on human rights
- Further training opportunities for staff
- Information services for members of the public
- Number of members of the HEI involved in relevant initiatives
- Regular development and monitoring of a diversity strategy

Criterion 18

Designation: **Common Good**

Compiled by: **Nadine Chrubasik** (Universität Kassel);
Dr. Diana Grundmann
(Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen)

The higher education institution explains how it contributes towards the common good as defined in the UN SDG in its key operating regions (regional, national, international).

Specification of the criterion's content

HEIs are a central part of society and interact in many ways with the municipality, town and region. They benefit from good schools, the local infrastructure, regional cooperation partners, etc. At the same time, they pay back to society: HEIs create new knowledge and train young decision-makers; beyond that, they contribute to public welfare in the region. This requires interaction at an equal level, from which society and HEIs benefit to the same extent.

The following measures can contribute to the institution's commitment to charitable projects in the community or region:

- courses on service learning (linking academic learning with civic commitment)
- transdisciplinary research projects
- knowledge and technology transfer in the environmental and/or sustainability sector (eco-innovation support and consulting)
- maintenance and development of cooperation and contacts (research cooperation with regional companies, the municipality, school cooperation)
- (cooperative) events with and for the region
- promotion of local initiatives and communities
- involvement of members of the HEI in local sustainability initiatives
- promotion of sustainable business start-ups (green products, services) in the region
- provision of educational opportunities (e.g., extracurricular studies, children's university) and organisation of cultural events related to sustainable development
- promotion of transdisciplinary student projects in the region
- social entrepreneurship in education

Practical examples

Service learning at the Universität Kassel

Since 2011, the “Coordination Centre for Service Learning and Social Commitment” of the Universität Kassel has meaningfully linked the area of teaching and learning with practical commitment to the public welfare, especially through so-called “Service learning seminars”.

The “Science Park” at the Universität Kassel

In the Science Park, the Universität Kassel and the municipality of Kassel have established a joint flagship project to promote innovation and business start-ups in the direct field of research and teaching. The Science Park is intended as a forum for interaction between academia and industry. It is also home to UniKassel Transfer, a university institution which is operationally responsible for all relevant transfer tasks such as start-up support, technology transfer, patent management, career service, further education, dual studies, a citizens’ university and an alumni service.

The “Children’s university” at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

Since 2002, the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen has organised an annual children’s university, which proved to be very popular: in packed lecture halls, academics introduce eager young students (aged 7 to 12) to their research. They explain complex issues in child-friendly language, for example, “Why our heart beats” or “Why the stars don’t fall from the sky”. On the subject of “Why have we only borrowed earth from our children?”, children also discussed sustainable development.

The “Energy Laboratory Tübingen” at the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen

The aim of the participatory research project is to identify the potential for renewable energies in Tübingen and to identify the prospects for sustainable energy use. The participation of Tübingen’s residents is of great importance here. The city is transformed into an “energy laboratory”, in which academics and practice partners collaborate to make a major shift in sustainable energy. The focus is on experimenting with and researching social and technical innovations in Tübingen’s urban area.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Governance structures (public participation events, and participatory formats such as World Cafés)
- Cooperation and network building
- Participation procedures and processes: transparency, participation by stakeholders
- Contact points: accountability thanks to transparent responsibilities
- The number of transdisciplinary research projects, budget for transdisciplinary research projects
- Embedding of service learning in the curricula, number of programmes with service learning components
- Educational opportunities for the public

Criterion 19

Designation: **Social Influence**

Compiled by: **Loreen Wachsmuth** (sneep e.V.)

The higher education institution explains how it influences major decisions by policymakers and within society.

It discloses the main ways in which external social stakeholders influence the higher education institution’s decisions. Furthermore, the higher education institution accounts for the origins and use of external funds.

Specification of the criterion’s content

Social influence happens on two levels: How the university itself exerts influence and how influence is exerted on the university

HEIs exert a direct or indirect influence on social issues, e.g., by training future specialists and managers, promoting academic dialogue at the (inter)national level, producing research results, being represented on committees, or exerting influence in public through individual opinions and through public appearances as an organisation per se.

On the one hand, the time spent studying at a HEI shapes the behaviour patterns of students through the canon of values that are communicated and put into practice there, which they in turn carry into society later after finishing their studies.

On the other hand, the expertise and assessments of HEIs or their representatives are appreciated by business and society, which means that a HEI is directly involved in, for example, opinion formation, technical and social developments, legislative processes, products, etc.

Because of its special importance in the opinion-forming and development process involving students, members of the HEI and thus society, a HEI is attractive for external influence, namely whenever corresponding interests (research priorities and results, teaching opinions and mission statements, etc.) are to be asserted.

It is therefore important that HEIs disclose with whom they cooperate, who funds their chairs or research projects or from whom they generate third-party funds.

Practical examples

- **Cooperations:** In 2013, a list of questions was developed by students and university staff at Leuphana Universität Lüneburg. This list, which is in accordance with the universities mission statement, now regulates the universities cooperation with companies. At the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen, all cooperations are presented in an online map as part of the FIT research information system.
- **Disclosure of third-party funds:** Leuphana Universität Lüneburg annually discloses these with the amount, name

and project. In its FIT research information system, the Eberhard Karls Universität Tübingen names the sponsors of projects. The Eberswalde University of Applied Sciences reports the amount of third-party funding in its sustainability report (2014/15, p. 37 f.)

- **Interaction formats with society:** “Bayreuth Dialogues”, “Future Forum” or “City Talks” initiated by the Universität Bayreuth; “Zittau Discussions on Business Ethics” initiated by the Technische Universität Dresden (TUD) – IHI Zittau.

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- The number and names of donors of externally funded chairs (e. g., endowed chairs) and research projects, as well as the main teaching and research topics of the university that could be relevant to economy and society
- The types of advertising that companies do at the university (as part of the career service, posters and flyers, stands on campus, etc.),
- Disclosing of the sponsoring partners of the university, e. g., naming of buildings
- External persons in university bodies, e. g., advisory board, by each form of organisation
- Disclosure of important cooperation partners of the university from business and society, e. g., companies, non-governmental organisations
- Memberships of the university in political, economic and social organisations
- Participation by representative members of the university in external bodies, committees, commissions, etc.
- The number and nature of large, regular and relevant interaction formats such as conferences, workshops, network meetings, etc.

Criterion 20

Designation: **Conduct that Complies with the Law and Policy**

Compiled by: **Loreen Wachsmuth** (sneep e.V.)

The higher education institution explains which standards, processes and measures are in place to prevent unlawful conduct and corruption.

In particular, it describes how violations of the rules which apply to academic work are prevented, detected and sanctioned.

Specification of the criterion's content

As generators of knowledge and research results, HEIs are particularly relevant to economic, political and social decision-making processes. Illegal, corrupt behaviours and violations of the rules of good academic practice would take place in a very sensitive environment, because HEIs tend to enjoy a high level of trust within society. HEIs must therefore consistently address conflicts of interest in order to remain credible in terms of “freedom of research and teaching”.

In the context of this criterion, relevant topics in the HEI field are, for example, data protection, data falsification, incorrectly conducted research, patent protection and copyright,

handling of the research results of commissioned work, “dual use” of research, publication of even negative results (e. g., contrary results, zero effects), bias in expert opinions and applications, corrupt administration of third-party funds or relevant secondary activities on the part of members of HEIs.

It is not only a matter of complying with the rules of good academic practice or ensuring that financial flows comply with the rules and ethics, but also of complying in general with the rules (environmental and health protection, anti-discrimination directives, etc.). This also includes a functioning risk management system.

The disclosure of relevant information is important in order to assess whether HEIs comply with the law and applicable guidelines. In this sense research results, the sources and

use of third-party funding, procurement procedures, financial investments, etc. should be disclosed.

Practical examples

- **Responsibilities:** A compliance officer at Hochschule Augsburg – University of Applied Sciences; ombudspersons at various HEIs within the network of complaint and improvement management and the ombudsman system or the German Research Foundation; the ethics advisory board at Leuphana Universität Lüneburg; an ethics commission at the Universität Bayreuth, Hochschule Osnabrück – University of Applied Sciences, Hochschule Fulda – University of Applied Sciences, etc.
- **Risk management:** Hochschule Zittau/Görlitz – University of Applied Sciences, Medizinische Hochschule Hannover
- **Finance:** Regulations on financial investments of the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen (exclusion of investment in armaments, tobacco, weapons, etc.); disclosure of third-party funds (see Criterion 19) in its “Guidelines on university funding” and “Guidelines on the handling of grants from private third parties” (contained in Official Notices No. 2/2011) and budget rules (part of the university’s 2012 business plan, more recent ones not available)
- **Regulations on good academic practice:** “Guidelines on responsible research at Leibniz Universität Hanover” and the “Commission for responsible research” at Leibniz University Hanover, which in this way combines good scientific practice with risk management. “Guidelines for safeguarding good academic practice and the procedure for dealing with scientific misconduct” and the commission for investigating cases of scientific misconduct at Leuphana Universität Lüneburg; “Rules for safeguarding standards of good academic practice and dealing with allegations of scientific misconduct” at the Catholic Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt and in the mission statement of the Georg-August-Universität Göttingen

Possible indicators for operationalising the criterion

- Established guidelines, codes, etc. such as a code of ethics, code of conduct, commitment to civil purposes, procurement regulations, course-related codes of ethics, etc.
- The existence of an ethics, anti-corruption or compliance officer, ombudsperson or ethics council, etc.
- Number of registered plagiarism attempts in publications
- Presence of a whistle-blower system
- The number of reported compliance cases (e.g., within a whistle-blower system) that required a response
- The existence, nature and content of a risk analysis
- The nature and extent of secondary activities performed by members of the HEI
- The number and type of training courses on compliance for HEI staff

Differentiation from other systems for sustainability assessment and reporting in relation to the HEI

Overview

In addition to the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs, we also focus on other university-specific sustainability assessment and reporting systems in order to provide an all-round perspective. Among others, the following systems are being examined at the domestic and international level:

Sustainability assessment and reporting systems for HEIs

- STARS: Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System
- AISHE: Auditing Instrument for Sustainability
- SAQ: Sustainability Assessment Questionnaire
- AUA: Alternative University Appraisal

All five evaluating and reporting systems support collaborative work on a sustainability report. The following matrix provides insights into the extent to which the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs differs from the other reporting standards.

In addition to the evaluation and reporting systems presented, our project partners have also worked on solutions for taking stock of sustainability activities and/or have applied further criteria. The results are briefly summarised below:

Criteria for an inventory of sustainability activities at HEIs in Bavaria (Bayern) (KriNaHoBay)

Lara Lütke-Spatz, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München and Prof. Dr. Ingrid Hemmer, Katholische Universität Eichstätt-Ingolstadt

Within the framework of the project “Criteria for an inventory of sustainability activities at HEIs in Bavaria” (Nachhaltige Hochschule: Kriterien zur Bestandsaufnahme) (KriNaHoBay) funded by the Bavarian Ministry of the Environment, a list of criteria has been developed as a framework for a systematic inventory of sustainability activities in a HEI. This framework shall help to identify opportunities for action within the individual HEI. The content was developed in a participatory process with stakeholders from four Bavarian HEIs and contains a concept of sustainability in the context of HEIs as well as criteria in six fields of action (govern-

ance, research, teaching, knowledge operation, knowledge transfer, student initiatives). It will be developed in a continuous and dynamic process that takes into account the changing understanding of sustainability and the dynamic framework conditions for this development at HEIs in the future. Both the Bavarian criteria and the German Sustainability Code support the structural implementation and optimisation of sustainability activities at HEIs and are intended to complement each other. In comparison to the German Sustainability Code for HEIs, however, the focus of the Bavarian criteria is on the internal analysis and communication of sustainability activities at HEIs, rather than on the external communication and transparency of sustainability performance.

Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME)

Dr. Adrian Boos, Hochschule Pforzheim – University of Applied Sciences

As one of the first 100 HEIs worldwide, Hochschule Pforzheim – University of Applied Sciences signed the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) of the United Nations Global Compact in 2008. The special feature of Pforzheim is that the principles were endorsed by the entire university and not “only”, as it is usually the case, by the Business School. Since the six principles are guidelines for the responsible training of future managers, they are relevant for all graduates of Hochschule Pforzheim of Applied Sciences. Over the past ten years, the university has worked continuously on implementing the subjects of ethics, responsibility and sustainability not only through all 24 study programmes of the Faculty of Business & Law, but also in the 24 study programmes of the two faculties of Design and Technology. This means that the majority of the university’s current 6,200 students get into contact with these principles during their studies.

All business studies programmes include the elective subject “Ethics and social responsibility”, in which students choose a subject from the fields of business ethics and sustainable development. The Faculties of Design and Technology also offer classes such as “Sustainable product development” and “Sustainable fashion”. In addition, with its B.Sc. course in Resource

Efficiency Management, M.Sc. course in Life Cycle & Sustainability and the collaborative doctoral programme in Energy Systems and Resource Efficiency [in collaboration with the Karlsruher Institut für Technologie (KIT) and the Hochschule Stuttgart – University of Applied Sciences], the Hochschule Pforzheim – University of Applied Sciences offers its own degree programmes in the field of sustainability.

The goal of the Hochschule Pforzheim is to raise awareness of these issues among all staff. This in no way affects the freedom of teaching and research, but is motivated by the conviction and participation of the teaching staff. For example, all members of the university are invited to participate in the preparation of the PRME report in its various stages. Since the PRME regulations stipulate a reporting obligation every two years, Hochschule Pforzheim published its fifth report, which is also for the first time a fully comprehensive sustainability report in 2018. The university's Sustainability Board based this report on the beta version of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs. As the recommendations on PRME reporting obligations already suggest that the five fields of action Governance/Strategy, Operation/Organisation, Sustainability in Teaching, Sustainability in Research and Transfer to Society should also be considered in the context of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the transition from PRME reporting to sustainability reporting is rather easy.

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		Differentiation from the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs		
System	Description	Contained in the code	Not contained in the code	Remarks
STARS	The Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS) is an evaluation system used primarily by North American HEIs. All the necessary data for a sustainability audit is collected on the basis of step-by-step instructions; a points system enables the achievement of a specific level of certification (bronze, silver, gold, platinum); this certificate is valid for 3 years.	The guide simplifies data collection and is comparable to step-by-step instructions.	The code is not an evaluation system, but offers 20 criteria with a „comply or explain“ approach.	STARS does not replace comprehensive sustainability reporting.
AISHE	AISHE (Assessment Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education) is – like STARS – an evaluation system with qualitative and quantitative indicators; originally, the focus was solely on the educational sector, in particular the examination of curricula; the evaluation system is mainly used in the Dutch and Belgian higher education landscape.	As one of a total of five fields of action, teaching is essential within the AISHE frame.	Teaching is included in all 20 criteria within the code; the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs does not offer a list of questions for examining the curriculum.	Regardless of the standard used, a curriculum examination should generally be done when preparing a sustainability report.
SAQ	SAQ (Self-Assessment Questionnaire) is a list of questions and guidelines for the self-assessment of sustainable development at the individual HEI.	The code criteria are comparable to the questionnaire.	It covers two other fields of action: „Outreach and Services“ and „Faculty and Staff Development and Rewards“	Developing of the „self-assessment“ area is planned in the future course of the HOCH ^N project.
AUA	AAUA (Alternative University Appraisal) was a project from 2009 to 2011; the collaborative system consisted of SAQs (self-awareness questions), BIQs (benchmarking indicator questions) and interaction among the project partners; AUA assessors evaluated the HEIs involved and their self-assessments, and then carried out consultation sessions.	In the application of the code, HOCH ^N employees and the German Council for Sustainable Development can make use of consulting services.	Comparability with other HEIs is not a priority.	More intensive consulting services and self-assessment possibilities will be developed in the further course of the HOCH ^N project; in addition, an implementation model for the development of a sustainability strategy (structure) will be created.

Appendices

Overview of the thematic guidelines

Sustainability reporting (Work package 2)

Reporting as a cross-sectoral task makes it possible to depict developmental steps and changes within the individual organisation over time, to group together sustainability-related activities and to discuss them on a common basis. In addition, as a management instrument, such reports support the administration of HEIs. The HOCH^N guide on the “Application of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs – an Approach to Sustainability Reporting at HEIs” presents examples based on the criteria of the German Sustainability Code (HS-DNK) adapted to meet the individual requirements of HEIs.

Governance (Work package 3)

The cross-sectoral area of governance deals with the structural conditions and institutional mechanisms of sustainability at HEIs. The findings presented in the guide on “Sustainability Governance at HEIs” are based on the evaluation of a comprehensive empirical study conducted at the eleven HOCH^N HEIs. Representatives of each stakeholder-group of higher education were interviewed, including students, researchers, the university management, administrative staff and sustainability coordinators. The guide is dedicated to the conditions for the successful implementation of sustainability at HEIs. Measures of university sustainability governance are also presented. This applies in particular to establishing structures and processes through which stakeholders from each area of higher education become involved in the sustainability process at HEIs and with which a long-term transformative effect can be achieved.

Teaching (Work package 4)

In the teaching field of action, it is not just a matter of making students aware of sustainability-related issues but also about how the teaching and learning process can be structured holistically in line with the ESD model. The HOCH^N guideline on “Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in Teaching at HEIs” opens up access to the core elements of ESD as well as areas of tension, action and culture.

Research (Work package 5)

The HOCH^N guide on “Sustainability in Higher Education Research” examines the landscape of sustainability-oriented higher education research in terms of its focal points, key stakeholders, research modes and significant academic and application-related achievements. In addition, relevant fields of action and a selection of concrete instruments are described for the purpose of initiating, expanding and consolidating sustainability-oriented research at respective HEIs. The shared HOCH^N understanding of sustainability, which is intended to facilitate orientation and analysis both within and outside the network and thus represents a thematic starting point, was developed with the “research” field of action.

Operations (Working package 6)

The guide on “Sustainability in Operations at HEIs” takes a closer look at examples of operating procedures at HEIs. These include procurement, waste management, mobility, building and energy management, controlling, research operations, event management, employment relationships and communication.

Knowledge transfer (Working package 7)

Knowledge transfer is understood in a broad sense as the mutual interaction between HEIs and practical applications. At many HEIs, knowledge transfer is part of how they see their role. The guide “Knowledge Transfer for Sustainable Development at HEIs” shows how knowledge transfer can contribute to sustainable development and provide impulses for higher education. It provides an overview of different forms and formats of sustainability transfer in teaching and research. The guide supports teachers, researchers and students in classifying their knowledge transfer activities and indicates concrete starting points for initiating, developing and establishing sustainability transfer.

Table of illustrations

Fig. 1: General structure of HOCH^N

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Fig. 2: The 20 criteria of the Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs

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List of abbreviations

AISHE	Assessment Instrument for Sustainability in Higher Education
AStA	Allgemeiner Studierendenausschuss (General student committee)
AUA	Alternative University Appraisal
BMBF	Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Education and Research)
BNC	Baukastensystem Nachhaltiger Campus (Sustainable campus modular system)
BNE	Bildung für Nachhaltige Entwicklung (Education for sustainable development)
ca.	circa (approx.)
CLEAR	Challenging, Legal, Environmentally Sound, Agreed, Recorded
CO ₂	Kohlendioxid (carbon dioxide)
DAAD	Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (German Academic Exchange Service)
DBU	Deutsche Bundesstiftung Umwelt (Federal German Foundation for the Environment)
DIN	Deutsches Institut für Normung (German Institute for Standardization)
DNK	Deutscher Nachhaltigkeitskodex (Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung) (German Sustainability Code – Council for Sustainable Development)
DUK	Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission (Germany's UNESCO Commission)
EMAS	Eco-Management and Audit Scheme
etc.	et cetera
EU	Europäische Union (European Union)
FONA	Research for Sustainable Development (funding framework programme of the BMBF)
GG	Grundgesetz (German constitution)
ggf.	gegebenenfalls (where applicable)
GHG	Greenhouse Gas (Protocol)
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Society for International Cooperation)
GRI	Global Reporting Initiative
HIS-HE	Institut für Hochschulentwicklung e. V. (Institute for the Development of HEI)
HNEE	Hochschule für Nachhaltige Entwicklung Eberswalde
HOCH ^N	Nachhaltigkeit an Hochschulen (Sustainability at HEIs)
HRK	Hochschulrektorenkonferenz (Conference of University Rectors)
HS-DNK	hochschulspezifischer Nachhaltigkeitskodex (Sustainability Code in Relation to HEIs)
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
IT	Informationstechnologie (Information Technology)
KIT	Karlsruher Institut für Technologie
KriNaHoBay	Kriterien für eine Bestandaufnahme von Nachhaltigkeitsaktivitäten an Hochschulen in Bayern (Criteria for an inventory of sustainability activities at HEIs in Bavaria) (KriNaHoBay)
KU	Katholische Universität (Catholic university)

KNU	Kompetenzzentrum nachhaltige Universität (Universität Hamburg) (Competence Center for the Sustainable University – Universität Hamburg)
LED	light-emitting diode
LeNa	(Leitfaden) Nachhaltigkeitsmanagement in außeruniversitären Forschungseinrichtungen (Guide Sustainability management in non-university research institutions)
LMU	Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität (München)
MWFK	Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kultur des Landes Brandenburg (Ministry for Science, Research and Culture of the State of Brandenburg)
NAP	Nationaler Aktionsplan (BNE) (National plan of action)
NHG	Niedersächsisches Hochschulgesetz (Lower Saxony Higher Education Act)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ÖPNV	Öffentlicher Personennahverkehr (public transport)
OTH	Ostbayerische Technische Hochschule
PC	Personal computer
PURE	Positive Stated, Understood, Relevant, Ethical
RLC	Refugee Law Clinic
RNE	Rat für Nachhaltige Entwicklung (German Council for Sustainable Development)
SAQ	Self-Assessment Questionnaire
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SISI	Sustainability in Science
SMART	specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time bound
STARS	Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System
StuPa	Studierendenparlament (Students' parliament)
SWS	Semesterwochenstunden (Semester hours per week)
THG	Treibhausgase (greenhouse gases)
TU	Technische Universität (technical university)
TUUWI	TU Umweltinitiative (TU Dresden) (Technical University Environmental Initiative (Technische Universität Dresden))
u. a.	unter anderem (among others)
UAS	University Alliance for Sustainability
UHH	Universität Hamburg
UN	United Nations
UN PRME	United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education
vgl.	vergleiche (cf.)
WAP	Weltaktionsprogramm (World Action Programme)
WBGU	Wissenschaftlicher Beirat der Bundesregierung (Scientific Advisory Council of the Federal Government)
z. B.	zum Beispiel (for example)

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Reporting as a cross-sectoral task makes it possible to depict developmental steps and changes within the individual organisation over time, to group together sustainability-related activities and to discuss them on a mutual basis. In addition, as a management instrument such reports support the administration of the higher education institution. The HOCH^N guide on the "Application of the Sustainability Code in Relation to Higher Education Institutions - an Approach to Sustainability Reporting at Higher Education Institutions" presents examples based on the criteria of Germany's Sustainability Code (HS-DNK) adapted to meet the individual requirements of higher education institutions.