Uniarts Helsinki’s environmental programme

[Introduction: Art is part of the solution to the ecological sustainability crisis 2](#_Toc128568645)

[1 Teaching, research and artistic activities 3](#_Toc128568646)

[Vision for 2024 3](#_Toc128568647)

[Case: Courses and research projects with ecological sustainability themes 4](#_Toc128568648)

[Measures: teaching, research and artistic activities 5](#_Toc128568649)

[2 Sustainable daily activities and reducing our environmental load 7](#_Toc128568650)

[Vision for 2024 7](#_Toc128568651)

[Case: Development of responsibility in Uniarts Helsinki’s procurement 7](#_Toc128568652)

[Measures: Sustainable daily activities 8](#_Toc128568653)

[3 Structures and management 11](#_Toc128568654)

[Vision for 2024 11](#_Toc128568655)

[Case: Quality management of ecological sustainability 11](#_Toc128568656)

[Measures: structures and management 12](#_Toc128568657)

**Version history**

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## Introduction: Art is part of the solution to the ecological sustainability crisis

Responding to the climate change, biodiversity loss and other ecological sustainability crises requires a comprehensive change in our actions and thinking. Art and education in the arts play an important role in the ongoing sustainability transition. Art gives us tools and resources for processing complex ecological crises. Art can also serve as a significant driver of cultural change and as a platform for adopting and experimenting with new ways of being.

One of the six main goals of Uniarts Helsinki’s strategy is that **art is part of the solution to the ecological sustainability crisis.** This environmental programme states the concrete measures that will help Uniarts Helsinki contribute to a more sustainable world. In the future, we will include knowledge of ecological sustainability issues and sustainable practices more widely than before in our multidisciplinary teaching, research and artistic activities. We will also reduce our use of natural resources and emissions to a sustainable level so that our operations are carbon neutral[[1]](#footnote-2) by 2030. As we promote ecological sustainability, we also take social, cultural and financial sustainability into consideration whenever possible.

The environmental programme document has three main themes, resulting in 23 measures. The goals and measures of the environmental programme were defined in 2022 through a process where all members of the community had the chance to influence the content of the programme.

The environmental programme is not just a list of wishes but a tool that steers Uniarts Helsinki and its art towards an ecologically sustainable reality with solutions to sustainability crises. We will monitor the implementation of the environmental programme on a yearly basis as part of Uniarts Helsinki’s operational planning process. We will report the programme’s progress openly, and we will update it when necessary, in 2024 at the latest.

# 1 Teaching, research and artistic activities

We want to enable the growth of our students into broadminded operators in the arts who work sustainably within the existing ecological parameters. Our aim is that graduates of Uniarts Helsinki lead the way in showing what social, cultural and artistic agency can mean when it is also ecologically sustainable. Every year, hundreds of new graduates from Uniarts Helsinki pursue careers as artists, pedagogues, researchers and other experts in the arts sector. They all can pave the way for the sustainability transition in their own artistic activities and by working in various sectors of society.

Uniarts Helsinki’s learning and research environment gives students tools needed for critical thinking, increases their understanding on environmental issues and helps them see and create opportunities for art to contribute to solving various sustainability crises. Our research deepens the development work in various artistic disciplines and opens up new perspectives on the range of ways that art can be linked to sustainability issues.

Besides carrying out teaching and research, we organise about 700 public artistic performances, concerts, exhibitions or other events each year. These versatile artistic activities of the Uniarts Helsinki community examine themes of ecological sustainability, too, and also provide an environment for the promotion of these themes. Teaching, research and artistic activities also provide a context for experimenting with and developing ecologically sustainable artistic practices in practice.

## Vision for 2024

* We have integrated themes of ecological sustainability into curricula and defined competence goals for each theme.
* We have developed the selection of studies in ecological sustainability offered by the Open Campus and the academies.
* We are active participants in the higher education institutions’ joint networks for sustainability studies.
* We have developed sustainable practices for our doctoral education, research and artistic activities and strengthened the chances for art to influence solutions to the ecological sustainability crisis.

## Case: Courses and research projects with ecological sustainability themes

Uniarts Helsinki’s academies have carried out and are currently carrying out several courses and research projects that discuss ecological issues from various perspectives and/or that are arranged in accordance with the principles of sustainable operations.

For example, the Theatre Academy arranged a course named “Sustainable stage” as a collaboration between the Degree Programmes in Lighting Design, Sound Design and Design for the Performing Arts and the Theatre Academy’s support services for artistic work in 2022. In 2022–2023, the Sibelius Academy is offering a course called ArsADAPT, which is arranged in cooperation with researchers of the ADAPT project (Adaptation and Resilience for Sustainable Growth, 2018–2023).

Ongoing projects at the moment also include the international project titled Music Education, Professionalism, and Eco-politics (2021–2025), which is run by the Sibelius Academy and deals with the responsibility of music education professionals in the times of systemic crises and the project Terra-Performing (2022–2027), which was launched by Samir Bhowmik and focuses on extractivism through the means of performance research, environmental humanities and media research.

## Measures: teaching, research and artistic activities

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| # | Measure | Time period | Person or unit in charge: | Goals | Monitoring and indicators |
| 1.1. | We integrate themes of ecological sustainability all across the curricula that will enter into force in 2024.  We define the general learning goals for ecological sustainability in curriculum work and include ecological sustainability in the yearly implementation plans for teaching. | 2022 - 2024 | Executive group for bachelor’s and master’s education, lecturer in ecological sustainability, project manager for curriculum work, steering group for ecological sustainability | Themes of ecological sustainability have been integrated into Uniarts Helsinki’s curricula as general compulsory studies and in a cross-cutting manner in the course selection of the units. | 1. Themes of ecological sustainability have been integrated into curricula in accordance with the goals (y/n)  2. The university-level learning outcomes for ecological sustainability have been defined as part of Uniarts Helsinki’s pedagogical strategy. Course-specific learning outcomes have been defined in the curriculum. (y/n) |
| 1.2 | We develop the existing selection of eco-themed studies and training and also make updates in the selection of the academies and the Open Campus. | 2022 -> | Lecturer in ecological sustainability, academic director of the Open Campus, steering group for ecological sustainability, steering group for bachelor’s and master’s education, project manager for curriculum work | The Open Campus and the academies offer courses that discuss ecological sustainability to bachelor’s, master’s and doctoral students as well as to staff members. | 1. a) The number of available credits for eco-themed studies b) the number of completed credits for eco-themed studies  2. Question “Discussion of ecological themes in studies” in the Rector’s Questionnaire |
| 1.3. | We make the selection of sustainability studies offered by networks of higher education institutions available to Uniarts Helsinki students.   We offer future sustainability-themed courses as part of the study selection of these networks. | 2022 -> | Lecturer in ecological sustainability | Students and academic staff have good possibilities to include the selection of sustainability studies offered by networks in their studies/teaching.  Uniarts Helsinki makes one of its courses available in the selection of the network for sustainability studies. | 1. Number of credits awarded to Uniarts Helsinki students for courses that are available through the networks  2. Number of credits awarded for courses offered by Uniarts Helsinki in networks  3. Number of completed credits awarded for courses offered by Uniarts Helsinki in networks |
| 1.4. | We develop sustainable and responsible practices for doctoral education and research. When possible, we take sustainability themes into consideration in Uniarts Helsinki’s strategic applications. | 2023 - 2024 | Vice rector for research, steering group for research and doctoral education | 30 June 2023: Measures and goals related to sustainability of research have been defined. | Goals and measures have been defined (y/n) |
| 1.5 | We develop sustainable practices for artistic work and come up with ways to share them within the Uniarts Helsinki community.   We establish guidelines concerning sustainable practices for artistic work and include them as part of the More Sustainable Uniarts Helsinki guide. | 2022 -> | Lecturer in ecological sustainability, project manager for ecological sustainability, support services for artistic work, heads of degree programmes and departments | 2024: The guidelines are in use in all teaching, research and artistic activities that are carried out at Uniarts Helsinki. | The guides are ready and in use at the academies (y/n) |
| 1.6 | We support cooperation between Uniarts Helsinki’s teachers, researchers and students, sharing of ecologically sustainable practices and co-learning by organising sustainability-related events and training seminars and by compiling a databank for the use of the community. | 2023 -> | Lecturer in ecological sustainability, project manager for ecological sustainability | 2024: We have established ways and structures of cooperating and made them known to the community. | We have established a forum for cooperation (y/n)  We have a databank that we maintain (y/n) |
| 1.7. | We promote the role of art and arts education in society and make it possible for art to have a new kind of impact in the sustainability transition in cooperation with operators in the arts sector and other stakeholders | 2023 -> | Chair of the steering group for ecological sustainability, lecturer in ecological sustainability, project manager for ecological sustainability | 2024: We are active participants in central cooperation networks in various fields | We are active participants in our chosen networks (y/n) |

# 2 Sustainable daily activities and reducing our environmental load

We build a sustainable and environmentally friendly Uniarts Helsinki through the joint effort of the entire university community. Sustainable daily choices are aided through guidelines concerning facilities, travelling and procurement and through various development measures. Our goal of reaching carbon neutrality[[2]](#footnote-3) by 2030 requires that we have an ecologically sustainable organising culture and that each member of Uniarts Helsinki finds their own role in promoting ecological sustainability and contributes to the work of spreading sustainable practices.

## Vision for 2024

* We monitor the carbon footprint of our most central emission categories and have compiled a plan for reducing emissions and reaching carbon neutrality.
* We have reduced the environmental impact of purchases, travelling, facility use, investments, catering and use of materials in accordance with the plan for reducing emissions.

## Case: Development of responsibility in Uniarts Helsinki’s procurement

In 2022, we compiled a guide for making more responsible purchases. In addition to this, in acquisitions of over 60,000 euros, we use a risk management model that promotes the management of risks related to the responsibility of acquisitions as well as risks related to reaching the goals of the acquisitions. Our goal is to include at least one central responsibility-related criterion in all invitations to tender. We gather information about the responsibility of service providers and suppliers by sending all contracting suppliers that provide services worth of over 30,000 euros a supplier questionnaire concerning responsibility issues.

So far, we have taken responsibility into consideration in the following ways, for example:

* We have awarded points for the guarantee period in tendering processes: this way the guarantee period has been longer than usually, which promotes longer durability of the product.
* We have taken responsibility into consideration in our restaurants’ product selection: we promote organic food and favour local products and fresh ingredients that are in season.
* In the tendering process for facility maintenance, we awarded points for the service providers’ achievements in projects that aim at reducing negative environmental effects.
* We required all service providers in tenders for construction services to have an environmental impact management plan: how the service providers recycle their waste; in addition to this, the materials they used had to comply with the M1 emission classification.
* In connection with the tendering process for waste management, we developed our internal logistics and recycling of waste (e.g. by expanding sorting and by replacing the waste press with waste bins).
* In the tendering process for occupational healthcare services, we considered the service providers’ responsibility reports, eco certifications, diversity of the workplace community, the positive environmental impact of digital services and better accessibility of services.
* In furniture purchases, we took material certifications into consideration.
* In certain IT services, we awarded points for producing energy required by the operating environment of the services with renewable energy.

## Measures: Sustainable daily activities

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| # | Measure | Time period | Person or unit in charge: | Goals | Monitoring and indicators |
| 2.1 | We compile a concrete plan for reducing emissions, and it will include the measures and short-term goals that will help us create a carbon neutral Uniarts Helsinki by 2030. We monitor our progress in the plan on a yearly basis. | 2023 | Project manager for ecological sustainability, steering group for ecological sustainability, person in charge of carbon calculation | 1. The plan for reducing emissions is compiled in 2023. A process is established for monitoring and updating the plan 2. The estimated carbon footprint offset costs of Uniarts Helsinki is monitored until the end of May 2024 as part of financial reporting | 1. The plan for reducing emissions is ready (y/n)  2. Monitoring of goals and measures in the plan for reducing emissions 3. The share of the current estimated carbon footprint offset costs from the university’s budget |
| 2.2 | We monitor Uniarts Helsinki’s carbon footprint and develop and expand our carbon footprint calculation. We engage in open cooperation with Finnish higher education institutions and other operators in the development of calculation grounds.  We utilise the results of carbon calculation in decision-making and when planning environmental measures. We communicate our environmental impact openly on our website. | 2022 -> | Project manager for ecological sustainability, steering group for ecological sustainability, person in charge of carbon calculation, person in charge of communications | 1. We carry out a carbon footprint calculation every 6 months and share the results on the Uniarts Helsinki website (2023). 2. We monitor all of the calculation categories that have been agreed upon by the universities by 2024 (minimum: travel, facilities, procurement). | 1. The share of emission categories that are being monitored of the universities’ joint vision  2. Carbon footprint  3. Number of visitors on the website |
| 2.3 | By 2024, we will identify and determine those activities of Uniarts Helsinki where emissions cannot be reduced to zero or reduced by 2030, or where this is not desirable.  We plan how we can offset the carbon footprint that remains after the reduction measures reliably and to a high quality in 2030 | 2023 - 2024 | Steering group for ecological sustainability, project manager for ecological sustainability | By the end of May 2024, we will have an assessment of the remaining emissions in 2030.   We assess the anticipated cost implications of offsetting emissions in the same connection and take them into consideration | The mapping out process has been carried out and definitions have been agreed upon (y/n) |
| 2.4 | In procurement, we include responsibility-related criteria in our invitations to tender and collect information on the responsibility of our suppliers with the help of Uniarts Helsinki’s supplier questionnaire.  We develop the supplier cooperation during the agreement period and promote responsibility actions of the suppliers. | 2022 -> | Procurement network, procurement manager, person in charge of carbon calculation, project manager for ecological sustainability | These will be defined in the “Ecologically and Socially Responsible Procurement” document. | 1. A certain percentage of invitations to tender with responsibility criteria (purchases of over €30,000) 2. A certain percentage of Uniarts Helsinki’s contracting suppliers who have filled in the supplier questionnaire |
| 2.5 | We reduce the environmental impact of travelling for work by streamlining our travel policy, by supporting more sustainable travel habits and by starting to use an internal offset system for air travel. | 2022 - 2024 | Finance director, project manager for ecological sustainability, HR team | This is defined in the action plan for reducing emissions (measure 2.1) | 1. Carbon footprint of travelling  2. Number of flights |
| 2.6 | We reduce the negative environmental impact caused by the use of facilities e.g. by introducing energy-efficient building systems and by switching to using renewable district heating in cooperation with lessors.  We optimise the use of facilities in an efficient way and maximise the utilisation rate of the facilities when they are in use. | 2022 -> | Finance director, facilities team | This is defined in the action plan for reducing emissions (measure 2.1) | Carbon footprint of facilities |
| 2.7 | We establish a responsibility strategy for our investments and set ambitious goals for the indicators that are relevant to our strategy. | 2023 | Finance director, person in charge of investments (finance manager) | In April 2023, a decision is made on which responsibility indicators we monitor and what kinds of goals are set for them. | Selected responsibility criteria for investments |
| 2.8 | We serve only sustainably produced vegetarian food and responsibly caught Finnish fish in our meetings and events. We also aim to favour products (at least coffee, tea and bananas) that have a high-quality eco certification[[3]](#footnote-4) (Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance). | 2023 -> | Finance director, project manager for ecological sustainability, event organisers |  | Carbon footprint of catering |
| 2.9 | We reduce the amount of mixed waste and waste-to-energy we produce and increase the recycling rate by improving our sorting and recycling possibilities and instructions on campus. | 2022 - 2023 | Facilities team | Goals are defined based on the baseline in the waste report for 2022 | 1 Key figures found on the L&T ympäristönetti website:   1. Recovery rate 2. Recycling rate 3. Carbon footprint 4. Total amount of waste   2 User feedback |

# 3 Structures and management

Our existing structures and management principles provide the framework and the right circumstances for a sustainable operating culture and for committing to ecological sustainability at Uniarts Helsinki. Our management principles enable the promotion of a sustainable culture and sustainable practices, and we set an example on how environmental sustainability is taken into consideration in everyday choices as well as in decisions concerning the university’s operations.

We include sustainability and responsibility measures and their monitoring as part of Uniarts Helsinki’s yearly recurring processes. We consider the impact that decisions have on the university’s environmental load and the goal of carbon neutrality more carefully than before in decision-making and budgeting. We strengthen the university community’s sustainability knowhow by offering guides, training and tools.

We are not going through the sustainability challenges alone. That is why we actively cooperate with our partners and stakeholders to contribute to a more sustainable future and communicate openly about our activities.

## Vision for 2024

* We have included the development of ecological sustainability as part of the structures and processes of our university.
* We monitor the progress of our environmental programme on a yearly basis and have planned how to continue with our environmental work after the end of the strategic project for ecological sustainability from 2024 onwards.
* We have developed and started taking advantage of training seminars, guides and tools that help us integrate ecological sustainability into our daily activities within the university.

## Case: Quality management of ecological sustainability

Ecological sustainability is established as a part of Uniarts Helsinki’s normal activities. As part of this integration process, we include ecological sustainability as part of Uniarts Helsinki’s quality system and quality management tools. We describe the procedures (planning, practical measures, assessment, development) and responsibilities related to the quality management of ecological sustainability in the Quality Manual. Quality management tools (project work, process work) and related guidelines are updated so that in the future they will take ecological sustainability issues into consideration.

Uniarts Helsinki’s quality system is audited in the spring of 2024. Uniarts Helsinki has selected quality management of ecological sustainability as its optional theme in the audit. The functionality of these quality management procedures will be assessed as part of the audit. Uniarts Helsinki will compile a self-assessment report where it reviews the effectiveness of its practices, and in addition to this, Uniarts Helsinki will receive feedback from the audit team. The aim is that the university’s practices meet the criteria set for the quality system audit.

## Measures: structures and management

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| # | Measure | Time period | Person or unit in charge: | Goals | Monitoring and indicators |
| 3.1 | We monitor the progress of the environmental programme in the yearly process of operations management and update the programme if necessary. We make more extensive updates on the environmental programme for the 2025–2030 strategy period at the latest | 2023 -> | Rector, chair of the steering group for ecological sustainability, manager for Development Services | 1. We have established and started implementing the monitoring practices for the environmental programme by the end of 2023. 2. The environmental programme has been updated by the end of May 2025. | 1. We have established and started following the practices for monitoring (y/n)  2. We have updated the environmental programme by the end of May 2025 at the latest (y/n) |
| 3.2. | We report on the progress of the environmental programme on a yearly basis as part of other yearly reporting | 2023 -> | Project manager for ecological sustainability, person in charge of yearly reporting | We have established and started following the reporting practices for the environmental programme by the end of 2023. | We have established and started following the practices for reporting (y/n) |
| 3.3 | We include ecological sustainability and responsibility as part of Uniarts Helsinki’s quality system and quality management tools.  We audit responsibility-related quality management as part of the auditing of Uniarts Helsinki’s quality system. | 2023 | Planning manager in charge of quality management, project manager for ecological sustainability | Ecological sustainability and responsibility have been integrated into Uniarts Helsinki’s quality system by the end of May 2024. | Ecological sustainability and responsibility issues have been integrated into the quality system (y/n) |
| 3.4 | We define the responsibilities for Uniarts Helsinki’s environmental work from 2024 onwards after the end of the strategic project for ecological sustainability. | 2022-2023 | Steering group for ecological sustainability, manager for Development Services, Uniarts Helsinki executive group, rector | 2023: The responsibilities have been defined and recorded. The exit plan for the project, from June 2024 onwards, has been compiled. | The responsibilities have been defined and the exit plan for the project has been compiled (y/n) |
| 3.5 | We promote the kind of management culture that takes principles of ecological sustainability and the environmental impact of decision-making into consideration. We organise training that focuses on the role of ecological sustainability in decision-making and management.  We reinforce the role of supervisors in the promotion of ecological sustainability by educating supervisors and updating our guidelines for supervisors. We monitor the promotion of ecological sustainability in performance reviews with staff. | 2023 | Rector, executive groups of Uniarts Helsinki, HR team, project manager for ecological sustainability | 2024: The executive groups of Uniarts Helsinki have established practices, acquired competence and created a standard process for taking ecological sustainability into consideration in management and decision-making by the end of 2023.  Supervisors have clear practices for how to develop and monitor environmental sustainability in their supervisor work by the end of May 2024. | 1. Executive groups’ memos that reference environmental issues as grounds for the decision (qualitative assessment 2024)  2. The university has organised training (y/n)  3. The guidelines for supervisors have been updated (y/n) |
| 3.6 | We improve the entire university community’s sustainability-related competence in work and studies by compiling eco-themed guides and by organising training seminars.  We monitor the development of the community’s competence in training and staff planning. | 2022-2024 | Project manager for ecological sustainability, lecturer in ecological sustainability, HR team | 2022: The More Sustainable Uniarts Helsinki guide is included in induction materials.  2023: At least one section of the Moodle training material is ready and undergone a test use, 20% of the target group have gone through the material.  2023: We have planned and started following processes for monitoring training and HR planning from the perspective of ecological sustainability. | 1. Utilisation rate of training 2. User feedback concerning guides and training  3. Ecological sustainability as part of the process for training and HR planning (y/n) |
| 3.7 | We establish practices that ensure that we cooperate with partners that operate sustainably and responsibly. | 2022/2023 -> | External relations team | 2023: We have planned and started following the practices by the end of 2023 | 1 We have established practices (y/n)  2 Monitoring of practices |

1. In this context, carbon neutrality refers to minimising the carbon footprint of at least the heating and energy consumption of facilities, travelling for work as well as procurement, and compensating for the remaining emissions in a high-quality and reliable way. The goals for carbon neutrality work will be determined in further detail through cooperation with other higher education institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. In this context, carbon neutrality refers to minimising the carbon footprint of at least the use and maintenance of facilities, travelling for work and procurement, and compensating for the remaining emissions in a high-quality and reliable way. Carbon neutrality work will be determined in further detail through cooperation with other higher education institutions. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://finnwatch.org/images/reports_pdf/Kaalimaan_vartijat_2_.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)