

Sustainability Report of the Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies

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1. Background

In the course of the ongoing climate debate, the demands that society places on institutions such as universities and colleges are also increasing. In order to live up to their responsibility, many of these institutions have been intensifying their efforts in this area for years. One sign of this is that more and more colleges and universities are publishing sustainability reports to make their activities transparent.

The adoption of the 2030 Agenda by the United Nations in 2015 was an important milestone. This agenda comprises 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that can be assigned to the social, economic and ecological areas.



Photo: [UN Sustainable Development Goals](https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/)

With the Sustainable Development Goals, policymakers worldwide are setting a direction to promote sustainable development. In particular, institutions such as companies, associations and educational institutions are called upon to align their actions with these SDGs and thus actively contribute to a sustainable future.

The Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies is also committed to the 17 United Nations goals and is working to implement them. Particularly at the level of the university organization, the university shows that these goals are important to it, and it is continuously working to further strengthen its efforts in this area.

2. The Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies at a Glance

The Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies (HfJS) was founded in 1979 by the Central Council of Jews in Germany and is still sponsored by it today. In addition, the HfJS has close ties with the University of Heidelberg. A cooperation agreement forms the basis for double enrolment at both institutions.

The study of the foundations of Jewish culture, history and religion touches on many central questions of being human, which are reflected in the global goals for sustainable development. An important aspect here is the biblical image of humanity, which attributes an inviolable value to every human being (the image of God). The Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies has an important role in imparting knowledge about a wide range of topics such as

justice, charity and philanthropy, but also gender equality, diversity, ethics, equality, sustainability, environmental protection, social responsibility, as well as conflicts and peace perspectives in the Middle East.

The Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies welcomes students and researchers regardless of their origin or faith. As a place of lively scientific exchange, it is dedicated to the many aspects of Jewish religion, history, culture and society. It is precisely this combination of internal and external perspectives that enables the university to promote a differentiated understanding of these topics.

3. Operation

Complex and elaborate processes are required for a university to function as a place of study, research and teaching. These processes represent a significant part of the carbon footprint. Precise and targeted precautions in this area in particular can therefore make a significant positive contribution to the sustainable development of the university. For this reason, the Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies has already implemented numerous measures in recent years.

3.1 Mobility → the following SDGs are affected: 8, 9, 15

- Financial participation of the employer (50%) in the *Deutschlandticket* as a job ticket.
- Approval of domestic flights only in exceptional cases.
- Parking facilities for bicycles and e-bikes at the university.
- Good accessibility of the facility by public transport.
- Existence of an infrastructure for digital and hybrid events.
- Possibility to work from home.

3.2 Energy → the following SDGs are affected: 7 and 15

3.2.1 Energy Supply

The global climate crisis and events such as Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine have made it abundantly clear to all of us – including universities and universities of applied sciences – how important renewable energies are. The Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies has also set itself the goal of continuously increasing the share of renewable energies in its energy supply. We are very pleased that, thanks to our partners, we have already achieved some important milestones in recent years. It is particularly noteworthy that our university no longer purchases gas.

3.2.1.1 District Heating

The municipal utilities of Heidelberg supply the university with district heating. 50 percent of the district heating generated by the municipal utilities of Heidelberg is already CO₂-free and over 25 percent is generated from renewable energies.

	MWh	Coverage share <i>DA</i>	Mandatory share <i>PA</i>	Degree of fulfill- ment <i>EG</i>
Total heating network supply	616.719			
from high-efficiency KWK (com- bined heat and power)	492.340			
of which from heat purchase FRN (district heating demand)	457.732	0,7422	0,5	1,484
- of which from EB – BHKW (Combined heat and power plant)	13.608	0,0221	0,5	0,044
- of which from KWK (com- bined heat and power)	21.000	0,0341	0,5	0,068
from biomethane in KWK (com- bined heat and power)	27.139	0,0440	0,3	0,147
from solid biomass	77.520	0,1257	0,5	0,251
from enviromental heat (heat pump)	8.100	0,0131	0,5	0,026
from solar heat	296	0,0005	0,15	0,003
<i>total from</i> renewable energies (RER: Renewable Energy Resources)	163.498	26,5%		
<i>total from</i> waste heat/waste (WHR: waste heat recovery)		19,0%		
<i>from</i> heat generators with heat- ing oil		0,39%		
Degree of fulfillment of district heating <i>EG FW</i>				2,02

Source: [Zertifikat des Ingenieurbüros ZICON über den Anteil erneuerbarer Energien der Fernwärme in Heidelberg und Eppelheim v. 29.03.2021](#)

The municipal utilities in Heidelberg aim to continuously increase the share of green, CO₂-free heating. In 2030, the aim is to generate heating that is largely green and CO₂-free, and to provide completely climate-neutral heating from 2035 onwards.

3.2.1.2 Electricity

The university obtains its electricity exclusively from renewable sources. Our energy supplier provides annual proof of this in the form of guarantees of origin, which are entered in the Federal Environment Agency's register of guarantees of origin. This proof serves as the basis for electricity labelling and certification by TÜV Nord.

3.2.2 Other Measures

- Lowering temperatures in heating circuits overnight

3.3 Canteen → the following SDGs are affected: 12, 15

Our global food system contributes up to 37% of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹ The Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies takes this fact seriously and focuses on sustainable nutrition. Students and staff here receive fresh, seasonal dishes from the region at fair prices every day. The fact that sustainability is a top priority for us is demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that vegetarian dishes are served exclusively four days out of five. In addition, each dish is freshly prepared on site. And if you are thirsty, you can fill your glass with water or juice from glass bottles – this is how we help to avoid plastic waste. We are pleased that our concept of sustainable and kosher cuisine has also inspired many external guests.

3.4 Purchase → the following SDGs are affected: 7, 12

A university requires numerous resources to function smoothly. Paper in particular plays a major role. That is why we use recycled paper with the *Blue Angel and Forest Stewardship Council®* (FSC®) certificates as standard. We only use age-resistant paper that complies with DIN EN ISO 9706 for important documents that need to be archived.

We pay attention to sustainability in office equipment and facility management. Our cooperation partner, Heidelberg University, takes this into account in its calls for tenders, from which we also benefit.

We prefer sustainable products for giveaways.

3.5. Waste Management → the following SDGs are affected: 12

3.5.1 Waste Prevention and Minimization

- The university's caretaker tries to give priority to repairing items instead of throwing them away.
- The university participates in the University of Heidelberg's materials exchange.

¹ cf. <https://www.wwf.de/themen-projekte/landwirtschaft/ernaehrung-konsum/essen-wir-das-klima-auf>

- Employees try to avoid printing out documents; for example, committee documents are no longer printed out for the participants of the committee meeting and laid out in the meeting.
- Waste is separated in such a way that it can be easily recycled by municipal waste treatment facilities. Special attention is paid to hazardous waste. This is separated, collected and disposed of in an appropriate manner.
- Suitable containers are provided at central points throughout the university, on each floor and in offices so that waste can be separated according to the municipal system. The cleaning company has been informed accordingly.

3.5.2 Waste Disposal

Waste products are disposed of by companies specializing in recycling.

This applies in particular to printer toner, which is disposed of via the Office Mix Umweltbox.

Three forms of printer cartridge reuse are used:

- Recycling of empty printer cartridges
 - Rebuilt toner is remanufactured, wearing parts replaced and the toner cartridges refilled
 - Refill toner cartridges are reusable after refilling.
- Recycling: Return to the recycling process
 - The material recycling of non-recyclable printer cartridges is carried out in accordance with the German Electrical and Electronic Equipment Act (ElektroG).
- Thermal recycling
 - In the case of thermal recycling, the residual materials are used as an energy source.

4. Teaching and Research → the following SDGs are affected: 4, 5, 9, 10

At the Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies, scientific research and research-based teaching are among the central tasks and supporting pillars. There is also a need for action in the field of sustainability in science as a subsystem of society. The HfJS is committed to this responsibility. That is why it supports researchers in their daily work in making their scientific activities resource-efficient, emission-reducing, health-conscious and socially sustainable. The aim is to reduce the ecological footprint of research activities without the orientation towards sustainability criteria leading to restrictions in the expected gain in knowledge. The focus on climate protection and sustainable research conditions should not restrict academic freedom, in particular the openness of research projects and the freedom to choose methods.

The university strives to make knowledge about Jewish religion, culture and history generally and freely accessible and to secure it transparently for the future – for example, by providing scientific information online free of charge and by digitally archiving research data in the long term. In addition, it aims to make research socially sustainable and to counteract structural discrimination. It sees diversity in the scientific working world as an important development goal.

The idea of sustainability also allows us to derive requirements for sustainable teaching. The Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies is actively working to minimize its ecological impact in the area of teaching and learning. To this end, it is developing measures that aim to design and implement teaching in a responsible manner that conserves resources and reduces emissions. Regardless of the subject matter, teachers create a learning environment in which they encourage inquiry-based and problem-based learning as well as critical thinking. Students are encouraged to develop empathy and self-reflection and are trained in dealing with complexity and ambiguity. Sustainable teaching opens up interdisciplinary perspectives and promotes collaboration among learners.

5. Albert Einstein University Library → the following SDGs are affected: 1, 3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17

Libraries make an important contribution to achieving the goals of the 2030 Agenda by ensuring free access to information and knowledge.

The Albert Einstein Library at the Heidelberg University for Jewish Studies connects the old and new buildings and brings together administration, students, teachers, researchers and the interested public. As part of the university's urban community in Heidelberg, the open library plays an important role in bringing together and fostering cohesion among people of different nationalities, ethnic groups, religions, age groups and social backgrounds (5, 10, 11).

Creating a pleasant place to study and providing access to reliable sources of information are central aspects of this (3, 4). The Albert Einstein Library offers education for all. It is not only open to university and college students and members of the university, but also to all interested parties for on-site use and borrowing. By providing assistance with library use, information searches and individual advice, it optimally supports everyone in their right to education. In this way, it contributes to reducing inequality and injustice (4, 8, 10). A particular focus is on teachers and students, who, as the future generation, must continue to develop the goals for a fairer world.

The Albert Einstein Library ensures that everyone has non-discriminatory access to information, thus making an important contribution to a sustainable, inclusive and democratic society. Education is crucial to combating poverty, improving socio-economic status, strengthening democratic skills, countering disinformation and reducing prejudice. These are prerequisites for peace, especially in times of conflict between different ethnic and religious groups (1, 4, 8, 16).

The provision of media and information in libraries for everyone contributes to sustainability, since multiple use conserves resources (12).

In addition, specific measures to promote sustainability are implemented in the library organization:

- Accessibility
 - All users have unrestricted access to the library for reference use during opening hours.
 - For users with a library card, there is the option of borrowing and returning during opening hours, independently of service hours.
 - The library team provides support during service hours, including research and access to media.
 - Barrier-free access to the main level (ground floor) and the basement of the library areas; the library team provides support for additional requirements.
 - The library participates in the interlibrary loan; the taking interlibrary loan is given by the University Library of Heidelberg.
 - Implementation of introductory and training events, also as part of the course of study.
 - Teaching of information skills.
 - Digitization of old works no longer protected by copyright and making the digitized copies available free of charge to promote barrier-free access to information and knowledge worldwide and to ensure the preservation of individual tangible cultural assets.
- Resource-saving and environmentally friendly measures
 - Purchases from local booksellers who deliver on foot or by bicycle.
 - Delivery of information (books and articles) in digital form within the limits of copyright law.
 - Reuse of packaging material when sending media.
 - Use of ecological thermal paper for printing receipts.
 - Use of an electronic information system in library work (Confluence) for the library team.
 - Use of e-mails and messenger services.
 - Participation in interlibrary loan via the University Library of Heidelberg for shared use of the transport infrastructure.
- Creating a pleasant place to study (3)
 - Open and inviting spatial design of the library.
 - Opportunity to meet the entire library team.
 - Indoor plants to improve the indoor climate and promote mental and physical health.
- Resource-saving equipment
 - Use of durable and high-quality furniture.
 - Re-use of old furniture, e.g. library shelves from their previous location.
- Stockpiling (12, 13)
 - New acquisitions: purchase of new and used literature.
 - Accepting bequests and donations.
 - Exchange of publications.
 - Planned switch to e-books.

- Cancellation of print journals that are digitally available through the University Library.
- All users have the opportunity to suggest acquisitions.
- Donation of unneeded media and duplicates to interested users instead of disposing of the media.
- Cooperation with other institutions (17)
 - Cataloging in the joint union catalog K10plus of the GBV and SWB.
 - External data transfer.
 - Collaboration with the FID Jewish Studies.
 - Collaboration with the University Library of Heidelberg on interlibrary loan, cataloging, acquisition agreements and training.
 - Membership of the Association of Jewish Libraries.
 - Collaboration with other institutions in the field of Jewish Studies

6. Social Affairs→ the following SDGs are affected: 3, 5, 10, 16

Sustainability has many facets, and the social aspect is of particular importance. At our university, we place a high value on community, whether it be in teaching, research, learning or work. To strengthen our sense of community, we hold regular events such as Shabbat celebrations led by our university rabbi, company outings and monthly canteen days reserved exclusively for HfJS members.

6.1 Gender Equality

Equality and the reconciliation of work and private life are particularly important to us at the Heidelberg University of Jewish Studies. We have dedicated a separate section to these topics and refer here to our equality plan, which contains detailed information.

6.2 Internationalization

The internationalization strategy is also set out in a separate document.

6.3 Health

- Students at the university can take part in the university sports program at Heidelberg University.
- Employees at the university are offered annual G37 examinations and flu vaccinations. Furthermore, an annual inspection of the workplaces takes place to ensure that they meet health and safety requirements.
- The company doctor is available to answer any health-related questions that employees may have.