



COMMUNICATION ON  
PROGRESS

This is our **Communication on Progress** in implementing the principles of the **United Nations Global Compact** and supporting broader UN goals.

We welcome feedback on its contents.

**IU INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**

**OF APPLIED SCIENCES**

16-Mai-2024

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## MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR OF IU INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Dear Reader,

Herewith we would like to present our 5<sup>th</sup> report – Communication on Progress (COP) – within the United Nations Global Compact Framework – since signing our commitment in December 2011. It shows some of our activities and initiatives during 05/2022 – 04/2024 and reflects our ongoing commitment to the UN Global Compact as well as a number of recent academic challenges. This document is a key component of our commitment to the UN Global Compact and its well-known 10 Principles, deriving from: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Labour Organization’s Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. We are delighted to be a part of the world’s largest corporate sustainability initiative within the United Nations Global Compact framework. We are also proud of being a member of the PRME DACH chapter.

IU International University of Applied Sciences (hereafter: IU) is Germany’s largest university of applied sciences in terms of student numbers. Our success is based on the fact that we enable our students to successfully complete their studies with us through a wide variety of flexible study models. We offer different study formats (full-time, part-time, online, dual studies) for careers in different fields (Design, Architecture & Construction, Health, IT & Technology, Human Resources, Hospitality, Tourism & Event, Management, Marketing & Communications, Social Sciences, Business) at 39 locations (winter semester 2023/24) in total. Additionally, we offer tailor made educational programmes for corporate companies.

We understand that our own organisational practices should serve as an example of the values and attitudes we convey to our students. Therefore, we continuously focus our efforts on advancing sustainability, and encouraging international collaboration, as we strive to live up to our vision.

Today, with more than 130,000 registered students from more than 150 countries enrolled in a large number of on-campus and Distance Learning programmes with highly qualified professors, lecturers and guest lecturers from all over the world, IU is more than just a well-known and respected private university of applied sciences – it is a benchmark in higher education, where business ethics, equality, equity, diversity, sustainable development and quality have been a longstanding part of our philosophy.

These are our values:

1. **Innovation:** We are always looking for ways to improve our offers for our students.
2. **Courageous:** We make courageous decisions and take calculated risks.
3. **Getting things done:** We implement things quickly, pragmatically, effectively and goal-oriented.
4. **Customer-focus:** In everything we do, our students come first.
5. **Collaboration:** We aim for the best solution as a team and have fun with it – without ego or politics.
6. **Empowerment:** We support each other’s development to become the best version of ourselves.
7. **Growth Mindset:** We aim to improve ourselves in everything we do and work hard to do so every day.

We fully support the voluntary initiative based on CEO commitments within the above-mentioned framework to implement universal sustainability principles and to take steps to support UN goals. This report shows some examples of our work at IU and we look forward to deepening this engagement as we steadily grow and move forward.

Enjoy reading!

Sincerely yours



[Holger Sommerfeldt \(16. Mai 2024 14:24 GMT+2\)](#)

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## OUR COMMITMENT TO THE 10 PRINCIPLES OF THE UN GLOBAL COMPACT

We fully agree that corporate sustainability starts with a solid value system and a principled approach to doing business, operating in ways meeting fundamental responsibilities in the areas of human rights, labour, environment and anti-corruption. Responsible businesses enact the same values and principles wherever they have a presence, knowing that good practices in one area do not offset harm in another. By incorporating the Global Compact principles into strategies, policies and procedures, establishing a culture of integrity, we are not only upholding their basic responsibilities to people, but also setting the stage for long-term success. Herewith we add our name under every single Principle:

### **HUMAN RIGHTS**

Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and

Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.

### **LABOUR**

Principle 3: Businesses should uphold the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining;

Principle 4: the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour;

Principle 5: the effective abolition of child labour; and

Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

### **ENVIRONMENT**

Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;

Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and

Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

### **ANTI-CORRUPTION**

Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

IU is delighted to submit this Communication on Progress for the United Nations Global Compact. As a university of applied sciences, we are proud that our values of freedom, justice, truth, human rights and collective effort for the public good are at the heart of our institutional mission.



## HUMAN RIGHTS

**Principle 1: Businesses should support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights; and**

**Principle 2: make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses.**

Herewith, IU fully agrees to support and respect the protection of internationally proclaimed human rights and to make sure that they are not complicit in human rights abuses, understanding them as inalienable fundamental rights that every person is entitled to regardless of their nationality, geographic location, language, religion, ethnic origin or any other status. In this context, IU fully supports the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The respect, consideration and promotion of universal human rights are an integral part of the daily work at IU. Discrimination based on gender, age, religion, cultural affiliation, disability or social origin is not tolerated at IU.

This is initially taken into account in the mission and vision that shape the daily actions of all employees:

**Mission:** “Empower people across the globe with the most personalised approach.”

**Vision:** “Everybody can access education to grow.”

Based on the mission and vision, various concepts and functions have been developed.



### Equal opportunities concept

IU is committed to considering diversity and gender equality in the decision-making processes in all areas and at all levels and to realising this objective in an all-encompassing manner. For IU, promoting diversity among students and employees means not only increasing the number of female students or female professors and lecturers, but also addressing the needs of people with disabilities or other underrepresented groups and, if necessary, taking appropriate measures. Equal opportunities are seen as a cross-sectional task and are taken into account in all IU projects.

To ensure the relevance of diversity and its implementation, IU is establishing a comprehensive equal opportunities concept. The Equal Opportunities Officer is responsible for the implementation and further development of the concept. She is appointed by the rectorate for a term of office of three years and reports to the senate once a year. Her office is anchored in the IU Basic Regulations.

The equal opportunities concept was adopted and approved by the university of applied sciences' management in December 2022 for a period of five years following extensive consultations.

The basis for the equal opportunities concept are:

- The anchoring of diversity and equality in the mission statement and in the university of applied sciences' regulations.
- The best possible balanced participation of all people in committees, commissions and similar bodies.
- The consideration of all equality aspects in processes of all kinds.
- Consideration of the compatibility of family, career and studies.

- Inclusion of the diversity perspective in teaching and personnel decisions.

For the coming years, the following is planned:

**Goals and measures for implementation in the academic area:**

- Goal: Increase the proportion of full-time female professors in underrepresented study programmes and record all gender identities  
Measure: targeted advertisement of professorships through gender-appropriate job formulations
- Goal: Gender- and diversity-responsive teaching  
Measure: review of teaching materials in terms of diversity, in particular the use of the gender guidelines
- Goal: Accessibility in teaching  
Measure: consideration of aspects of (physical) accessibility when selecting new locations, accessible teaching materials (scripts, video material), raise awareness of teachers on the topic "Communication with students with disabilities" through an online course

**Goals and measures for implementation in the administrative area:**

- Goal: shortening the processing of disadvantage compensation applications  
Measure: Catalogue of aids and recommendations
- Goal: competence assurance for gender equality work  
Measure: professional training for Equal Opportunities Officer
- Goal: Building inclusion competence in student counselling, study coaches and study guides  
Measure: The course "Communication with students with disabilities" on the internal Learning Hub is mandatory for student counselling, study coaches and study guides
- Goal: increase in the proportion of (severely) disabled employees  
Measure: standardised tender texts and increasing the visibility of relevant internal contact persons
- Goal: increase in the proportion of female and non-binary employees  
Measure: Revision and adaptation of job advert texts with regard to stereotypical formulations
- Goal: raise awareness of the General Equal Treatment Act (German: *Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz (AGG)*)  
Measure: training on the AGG for more tolerance, respect and fairness in the workplace (mandatory for managers)
- Goal: standardisation and increased transparency of remuneration structures  
Measure: in-depth analyses of remuneration structures including compensation & benefits and derivation

A major challenge over the next few years, particularly up to 2025, will be to ensure (digital) accessibility in accordance with the German Accessibility Improvement Act (German: *Barrierefreiheitsstärkungsgesetz*). This has implications for the planning of websites, the design of services, the accessibility of scripts and much more.





## Diversity Award

IU has presented the IU Diversity Award twice a year since 2018. The jury consists of a ten-member team of employees from faculty, the examination office, equal opportunities office and other departments. IU students from Germany and abroad have the opportunity to submit their bachelor's or master's thesis. The IU Diversity Award is intended to contribute to raising public awareness of the research field of diversity.

In the second semester of 2022, Maurice Spitzner received the award for his bachelor's thesis in social work entitled: "About Pink Princesses and Blue Knights – The Construction of Gender Stereotypes and the Representation of Relationship Constellations in Luxembourg's Most Popular Picture Books". "This work shows that although the social discussion about diversity and gender has arrived in society, this is not being passed on in the broad media, nor to our youngest generation as it should be", said Nicola Schmidt-Geheb, Equal Opportunities Officer at IU, on the jury's reasoning.

In the first half of 2023, the IU Diversity Award went to Katharina Babl. In her bachelor's thesis, the graduate in social work deals with the structural care of refugees with disabilities. To this end, she spoke with people affected from Ukraine in the district of Traunstein/Germany and investigated how refugees with disabilities are identified and at the same time how it is ensured that they receive the appropriate support in Germany and are referred to the right counselling centres.

In the second semester of 2023, Matthia Leyendecker was honoured for her innovative solutions: She has developed a novel approach that can give people who suffer from dementia more independence and relieve the burden on caretakers. Within eight weeks, the IU student in the User Experience Design (UX Design) programme developed a prototype that enables those affected to independently stimulate their cognitive performance by playfully exploring different media formats.



## Code of Ethics & Conduct

IU attaches great importance to ensuring that students feel comfortable in their study programme. This presupposes that ethically correct behaviour is cultivated by all university of applied sciences' members (lecturers, students, staff, etc.). Ethically correct behaviour can and should support students in their academic success. In June 2022, the new and specially established contact point for Ethics & Conduct Regulations was launched in cooperation with the Equal Opportunities Office.

In case of doubt regarding their own behaviour or the behaviour of another person, every IU member and every person associated with IU can seek competent advice. Behaviour is based on the Code of Ethics & Conduct. Violations will be met with disciplinary measures accordingly. The aim is to create a guiding effect for fair cooperation and to prevent undesired behaviour.



## Equality at work

At IU, diversity and openness have been in its DNA from the very beginning. With a “Culture of Everyone®”, IU creates a working environment in which every employee is motivated to contribute their individual strengths and grow personally. Just as many IU students organise their day-to-day learning in a highly flexible and digital way, the day-to-day work of IU employees is just as flexible and progressive. State-of-the-art technical infrastructure, individual working time models, flexible office space in almost all major German cities and services such as Workation and Full-Remote make it possible to work from almost anywhere at IU and adapt work to the own life. AI-controlled voice assistants and other GPT systems have become an integral part of everyday working life at IU and help to free up more resources for the really important projects.

In 2023, Great Place to Work® has certified IU as an attractive employer for the fourth time in a row. The Great Place to Work® award is given by the internationally active consulting and research institute of the same name, which supports employers worldwide in implementing an attractive and future-oriented workplace culture. The award is based on both an anonymous survey of all IU employees and an external analysis of HR measures. In the overall evaluation, IU was able to gain two percentage points from the previous year and achieved significant top scores in various categories. Over 80 percent of the employees believe that there is a good sense of togetherness, team spirit and friendliness at IU. A full 90 percent rate IU as a fair employer.

Moreover, IU has been awarded the TOTAL E-QUALITY award for the first time for the years 2022 to 2024. The TOTAL E-QUALITY award recognises companies and organisations from business, science and administration for their commitment to establishing and expanding equal opportunities and diversity within the company. IU receives this award for its extraordinary commitment to its equal opportunities and diversity-oriented personnel and organisational policy. IU underpins its socio-political commitment by signing the *Charta der Vielfalt* (Diversity Charter & Association), among other things. A clear zero-tolerance policy promotes appreciative, prejudice-free behaviour within the organisation and takes action against any form of abuse of power, discrimination, harassment or violence.



## Culture of Everyone®

IU’s trademarked term Culture of Everyone® stands for a corporate culture that thrives on diversity, openness, tolerance and respect. More than 130,000 people from all over the world study at IU, and more than 4,000 people from over 87 nations work here. Each and every one of them plays an important role in maintaining a culture in which everyone feels safe, heard and tolerated. This is also the essential basis for IU’s mission to empower people worldwide with the most personalised education by breaking down barriers to higher education.

To show the importance of an open and respectful work and living environment, IU initiated an employee campaign on social media in February 2024. Anyone who wanted could share their thoughts on why a Culture of Everyone® is important to them personally and was encouraged to publish a picture or post with the hashtag #CultureOfEveryone. Everyone outside IU was also invited to join this movement to set an example for democracy.



### Member of UNESCO'S Global Education Coalition

In June 2022, IU became the first higher education institution in the European Union to join UNESCO'S Global Education Coalition. IU membership provides students in crisis situations with the opportunity to learn relevant topics and acquire useful skills while simultaneously earning ECTS credits. In line with the mission of the coalition, IU will offer students free flexible online micro-credentials (totalling five ECTS credits) in the fields of computer science, engineering, and data science that they can put toward a globally recognised, top-rated bachelor's degree at IU. In this way, IU can support students in need.

The Global Education Coalition, launched by UNESCO, is a multi-sector partnership to provide appropriate distance education for all learners. Through the Global Learning House, resources, solutions, programmes and networks of the coalition, members are mobilized for the delivery of cost-free, supplemental and relevant online and offline lessons, tutorials and training sessions to one million learners to help them bridge their learning losses.



### Initiative #Zusammenland – Vielfalt macht uns stark (“#Togetherland – Diversity makes us strong”)

IU is not only committed to diversity, democracy and cosmopolitanism itself with its “Culture of Everyone” campaign, it also supports other initiatives to advocate peaceful coexistence. This includes the new media initiative “#Zusammenland – Vielfalt macht uns stark” organised by ZEIT, *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, *Handelsblatt*, *WirtschaftsWoche*, *Tagesspiegel* and *Ströer*. The initiative is dedicated to combating right-wing extremism and is committed to freedom, democracy, diversity and a welcoming culture. IU is happy to support this campaign together with more than 350 other academic institutions in Germany and hundreds of companies.



### Initiative Weltoffenes Thüringen (“Open-minded Thuringia”)

IU, with its headquarters in Erfurt, Thuringia/Germany, is supporting the initiative *Weltoffenes Thüringen* launched in 2024. It is committed to diversity, tolerance and democracy: basic values that are being threatened by a possible far-right political shift in the current “super election year” in Germany. A now broad alliance of over 7,000 supporters from the church, trade unions, science, business, culture, education, sport and numerous private individuals are publicising their stance in favour of peaceful, humane coexistence based on diversity with the initiative.



### **Freedom of research and teaching**

IU's basic regulations in § 3 guarantee the freedom of research and teaching. This applies equally to employees and the freedom of study for students. Staff members can freely disseminate and exchange scientific opinions. They are free in regard to research methodology and the evaluation of research results. As orientation serves the jointly developed guidelines for ensuring good scientific practice and the information sheets on data protection in research and ethics and ethical self-reflection in research projects. Scientific honesty and adherence to the principles of good scientific practice are indispensable prerequisites for scientific work that aims to gain knowledge and acceptance by the public. In order to fulfil its responsibility in research and the directly related tasks in teaching and the promotion of young researchers, IU takes precautions within the legal framework to ensure good scientific practice in its field and to deal with cases of scientific misconduct.

A central research office is the contact for all enquiries and questions regarding research. In addition, IU established an ombudsperson for ensuring good scientific practice and dealing with scientific misconduct.

To oversee medical or human research studies an independent ethics committee has been established recently. In particular, the commission examines the ethical and legal admissibility of research on human subjects and ensures that medical experimentation and human subject research are carried out in an ethical manner in accordance with national and international law.



### **“Women in Tech” scholarship programme**

Women in the tech and IT industry are still significantly underrepresented. The goal of the Women in Tech initiative of IU is to change this. Various projects aim to dismantle misconceptions about the working world and promote various roads into IT. Besides the chance to apply for a scholarship at IU, additional offers are designed to pique the curiosity of girls and women in the IT industry.

YES SHE CAN – Excite for STEM from the start

IU aims to excite female students for STEM (science, technology, engineering, mathematics). That is why a lecture series in collaboration with the technology and IT professors of IU was designed which is geared towards female students from the 10th grade onwards. Over the course of six weeks, girls could interactively get to know technical correlations and dip their toes in various areas of application.

We are FRIDA

Most girls and women lack female role models who work in IT within their own environment. However, the influence of the environment is significant when choosing a career path. More female role models who work in the IT industry are needed. For this, stereotypes must be dismantled. In addition, education about jobs in IT is needed. The aim of the project is to make women in IT more visible and to give authentic insights into the digital job market.

Together with #SheTransformsIT and the industry association Bitkom, IU has launched the project FRIDA. FRIDA stands for “*Frauen in der Digitalen Arbeitswelt*” (Women in the Digital World of Work), but Frida is also reminiscent of the Mexican artist Frida Kahlo, a symbol of the women’s movement. The project wants to offer authentic insights into the digital working world, showcase women and their career paths, and show how colourful and diverse the digital economy is.

In September 2022, a total of 21 women who work in IT were interviewed on video in Munich and Berlin. The result are 21 short films that tell individual life stories and aim to inspire a passion for IT. The Women in Tech initiative is intended to become a permanent part of IU initiatives and continue to offer social added value through various projects in the future. It aims to educate, spark curiosity, inform, inspire and follow the 50/50 goal.



### **Study Access Alliance**

The Study Access Alliance (SAA) was initiated by IU’s parent company IU Group to provide people from Africa in financial need with access to university education. IU is the academic partner of the SAA and providing up to 100,000 scholarships to the newly founded non-profit organisation. The pilot projects with partner organisations were launched in Summer 2022.

According to the World Bank, only nine percent of young people in Africa are able to study – the world average is about four times higher. Many people cannot afford a degree. This is why the Study Access Alliance was founded as a non-profit organisation in May 2022. IU is providing it with up to 100,000 subsidised scholarships for online bachelor’s and master’s study programmes. The remaining costs of the scholarships are covered by the Study Access Alliance and financing partners, in order to remove all financial barriers for the scholarship holders. The Study Access Alliance supports students during their studies and prepares them for the job market. For this, IU focuses on content that is relevant for the job market and is also planning to expand the career service.

The Study Access Alliance, in partnership with African partner organisations, awards the scholarships. These partners also support the students locally, for example, in the development of soft skills for the workplace. Or they place them in internships, where they can apply their knowledge from their studies. The initiative also works with NGOs and companies to create a partner network for improved learning infrastructure: Many still do not have access to computers or an internet connection. This way, the Study Access Alliance, together with IU, creates a valuable and scalable offer to further democratise education.

## LABOUR

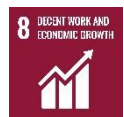
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**Principle 6: the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.**

Being a renowned private university of applied sciences it is especially important for us to practically promote and to implement international principles on labour, upholding the freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced and compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and particularly the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.



### **Personnel development concept**

Two of the seven core organisational values of IU are “collaboration” and “empowerment”. “Collaboration” means teamwork, knowledge sharing and an open and valuable atmosphere. IU leaders are cooperative and are striving to create a trusting atmosphere, promote respectful feedback and mutual appreciation. “Empowerment” means to trust and help each other. Personal development is promoted through regular coaching and feedback on best performance. IU leaders support their teams by focusing, providing quick answers and helping the team to help itself.

Lifelong Learning also applies to the teaching staff and faculty. The professional training takes place continuously at academic conferences, congresses and with the help of professional articles on an individual basis. For further education in didactic questions or for familiarisation with new software, IU offers various education options within the framework of its personnel development concept. In addition to the chance of taking part in external training courses, there is also the option of inviting trainers to an in-house course at one of the sites. The seminar topics stem from the teaching practice of the participants, e.g. new didactic approaches, helpful e-learning tools or the design of teaching materials.



## Practical experience

In the on-campus programmes, the focus on practical experience is particularly strong. Dual students spend every second week working at their employing business partner. Besides, the integration of theory and practice is a daily reality for every student. The curriculum has multiple facets which reflect this, for example discussions and lectures with experts from industry and excursions to companies. In “CEO’s lectures” leaders from business and industry hold seminars on campus and students have the opportunity to interact with them directly. IU Career Services provide students with recommendations for internship placements and for jobs after graduation. In the so-called “practical workshops” students work on real business cases under the leadership of a professor and in cooperation with a company. Ideally, all parties benefit from this: The students experience in practice how research and consulting projects are carried out and what it means to present results in front of a client. The companies receive new input for their questions and benefit from the independent and fresh perspective of the students.



## Centre for Radicalisation Research and Prevention

In April 2023, IU opened the Centre for Radicalisation Research and Prevention in Essen/Germany. The research institution was presented to the public for the first time as part of the lecture series “Radikalisierung und Prävention: Soziale Arbeit bringt sich ein” (“Radicalisation and Prevention: Social Work gets involved”). At the new research centre, researchers from various disciplines related to social work, such as education, sociology, political science and criminology, are investigating the causes of radicalisation as well as academic findings from the field of prevention. Research focuses on the manifestations and dynamics of radical ideologies, developments surrounding extremist actors and scenes as well as possibilities for counselling and prevention.

The research centre stands for a broad transfer of knowledge from research to practice and university teaching. As part of the research projects, methods and concepts for the prevention of radicalisation tendencies in society are developed in cooperation with practitioners to combine basic and application-oriented research.



## Bicycles for better access to education

“For each other, with each other – together around the world” was the motto of the internal fitness challenge at IU in March 2023. IU employees circumnavigated the globe almost nine times with their combined strength – and matched their goal from the previous year. More than 100 IU teams collected kilometres through sporting activities, tracked them in an app and together covered 345,357 kilometres for a good cause: for every circumnavigation of the globe, IU donated ten bicycles to the aid organisation World Bicycle Relief (WBR) to give people in rural regions more mobility and better access to education. IU then rounded up the 90 bicycles to 100.

IU is increasingly committed to sustainable development on an economic, social and ecological level and is guided by the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. With the fundraising campaign, IU supports people in rural developing regions. Thanks to the provision of bicycles by WBR, local people become more mobile, self-reliant and financially independent. Especially for girls and women, access to education, good health care and professional self-determination is often difficult due to cultural norms. Therefore, according to WBR, 70 percent of the bicycles are given to female recipients to counteract their disadvantage. In rural developing regions, there is often only rudimentary or no transport infrastructure. The bicycle is a reliable, cost-effective and resource-saving means of shortening the often very long distances to school, work and shopping.

1,270 employees across all IU locations and departments came together in teams to take part in the challenge and do something good together for themselves and their fellow human beings. A heartfelt project that took place for the second time in 2023: for sustainable development and community cohesion.



## ENVIRONMENT

**Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges;**

**Principle 8: undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and**

**Principle 9: encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.**



### Environmental education and sustainability

IU is committed not only to teaching sustainability in an interdisciplinary way in all faculties, but also to making a very concrete contribution: for the environment, for its students and employees, for society as well as in its corporate management.

In 2020, IU became one of the world's first climate-neutral distance learning universities. In January 2023, the Technical Inspection Association TÜV SÜD reconfirmed the climate neutrality of IU's parent company IU Group for the third year in a row. The conditions for certification include an inventory of actual and expected emissions, proof of ambitious measures to gradually reduce avoidable greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the promotion of recognised climate protection projects to offset unavoidable emissions.

Despite rapidly growing student numbers, IU has been gradually decreasing its total direct (Scope 1) and indirect (Scope 2) emissions, almost halving it between 2019 and 2022. The carbon footprint was calculated by the Institute for Energy, Ecology and Economy (DFGE) based on the international Greenhouse Gas Protocol.

The majority of students at IU learn in a Distance Learning model thanks to innovative digital learning formats. This can significantly reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions that would be caused by commuting, for example. Teaching a Distance Learning student at IU generates seven times less greenhouse gases than teaching a regular on-campus student.

Moreover, energy officers are deployed at all IU locations in Germany, which are currently more than 30. They check the individual circumstances as well as the consumption on site and establish resource-saving measures. In addition, IU offsets its carbon footprint in cooperation with ClimatePartner Deutschland GmbH by supporting certified climate projects. These include the expansion of wind energy in Brazil, the generation of hydropower in Laos and access to clean water in Mozambique.

Apart from reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, IU places particular emphasis on education when it comes to sustainability. Education enables people to develop and live sustainably. In addition to individual learning modules, IU offers entire study programmes such as *Nachhaltiges Management* (Sustainable Management), which equip today's students with knowledge and methods for a viable future.

To provide access to education for more and more people worldwide, IU initiates important alliances. Numerous scholarship models (e.g., for people from poorer countries, single parents and people with disabilities), fair admission requirements and inclusion-friendly study formats open up individual continuing education opportunities for additional target groups - and thus the basis for a self-determined, sustainable life.



## ESG Report

In 2022, IU Group, the parent company of IU International University of Applied Sciences, presented its first ESG Report, giving an overview of the main sustainability projects and initiatives implemented during 2021 and 2022. The report covers the activities of IU International University of Applied Sciences and its key stakeholder-focused topics, illustrated by case studies and ESG data. Sustainability and social responsibility gain an ever larger importance, as IU is driven by the mission to empower people across the globe with the most personalised education. The report is an important step in the development of the corporate governance practices as well as towards the implementation of the best standards in the field of ESG and sustainability. The full report can be found [here](#).



## B Corp Certification

In November 2023, IU's parent company, IU Group, received the B Corp certification from the independent non-profit organisation B Lab for its high social and environmental performance, transparency and holistic, sustainable actions. As a certified B Corporation, IU Group has undergone a rigorous assessment by B Lab and thus fulfils high standards in terms of social and environmental impact. The positive certification also reflects IU International University of Applied Sciences' commitment to sustainability.

IU aims to make a contribution to sustainability primarily through its educational programmes. This is based on IU's fundamental idea of democratising education. This states that everyone should have access to education in order to be able to develop further – regardless of their personal and financial situation or their background.

IU Group's B Corp certification is the result of a comprehensive process in which the corporate structures of all affiliated companies and the entire social and environmental performance along an organisation's entire value chain are examined. For the evaluation, 350 questions and data points were analysed over a period of two years. The B Corp certificate is one of the most demanding sustainability certificates in the world and is regarded as a kind of seal of approval for corporate social responsibility. Companies must fulfil strict social and environmental standards and undergo recertification every three years.



## **IU joins HESI**

IU has become a member of the Higher Education Sustainability Initiative (HESI). This partnership brings together United Nations entities and the higher education community to foster sustainable development and exchange best practices.

HESI, launched in 2012 and co-chaired by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, aims to elevate the role of higher education institutions in supporting sustainable development through collaborative efforts and policy engagement. The membership signifies the commitment to sustainability and global responsibility. As part of HESI, IU will contribute to discussions and actions focused on sustainability, allowing to share the expertise and learn from other esteemed institutions. By participating in HESI, IU strengthens the resolve to integrate sustainable practices into the fabric and operations.



## **Cooperation with *XU sustainable***

IU and *XU sustainable* are launching pioneering educational opportunities in the field of sustainability as part of a partnership. Through this collaboration, companies will have the opportunity to qualify their employees at *XU sustainable* at the university level of IU and its modern teaching methods in the field of sustainability – including the possibility of having their achievements credited towards a university study programme at IU. This partnership marks an important milestone for *XU sustainable* and IU and underlines the quality of their educational programmes.

The evaluation of *XU sustainable*'s online courses by sustainability experts at IU shows that these programmes meet the university's academic standards. The courses provide a broad range of sustainability knowledge across different business functions and roles, as well as specific key competences tailored to target groups, positions or industries. These pioneering skills and knowledge are crucial to driving the corporate transformation towards greater sustainability.

A wide range of courses, masterclasses and certificate programmes on all relevant sustainability topics are now available via *XU sustainable*'s online learning platform. As part of the certificate programmes, companies have the opportunity to train and certify their employees as "Certified Sustainability Managers", "Certified Climate Action Managers", "Certified Social Supply Chain Managers" and "Sustainability Compliance Managers". The centrepiece of the cooperation between *XU sustainable* and the IU is the Nano Degree "Global Challenges and Sustainable Development". This certificate programme can be credited with five ECTS credits after successful participation at IU and thus replace a course in the master's study programme *Nachhaltiges Management* (Sustainable Management). The total scope of the programme is 150 learning hours and should be completed within a period of twelve months. Graduates receive an official Nano Degree certificate from *XU sustainable* upon completion.

The partnership opens up opportunities for an innovative educational future in which high-quality knowledge is imparted flexibly and practically without the need for a full degree programme.



### **Online master's course *Nachhaltiges Management (Sustainable Management)***

Sustainability is an important factor for business success: At IU, students receive a comprehensive education. Since June 2022, IU offers a new master's programme in sustainable management. Graduates will be capable of integrating sustainability as an entrepreneurial success factor into business processes. Thus, the study programme considers all disciplines of business administration from economic, ecological and social perspectives.

Numerous larger and smaller companies now rely on sustainability and introduce environmental and social standards to their supply chains. It's no longer just about the "green image", but about actual ecological and social responsibility. According to recent studies, companies are more successful in the long term if they integrate sustainability into their business strategy – both in terms of product design and the company's production and administration.

Depending on one's background, the online master's programme can be completed with 60 ECTS credits or with 120 ECTS credits. The former is aimed at graduates of a first degree in all subject areas with relevant professional experience. The study programme qualifies for positions such as business consultant for sustainable business transformation, managing director in companies that want to integrate sustainability into their business strategy, culture and organisation or founders of a company with responsibility for their social and ecological environment. The programme can also be attractive for heads of finance departments who write ESG-compliant investment applications in their annual planning, i.e. applications that take into consideration the areas of environment, social issues, and responsible corporate governance, and support other departments with regards to sustainable innovations and investments.



### **New tourism concepts for Ahrtal**

On July 14 and 15, 2021, a flood wave destroyed an entire region and thus also its tourism infrastructure. Two years after the flood, 50 IU students from the fields of tourism, event management and food management have developed tourism concepts that are to lead Ahrtal/Germany as a tourism region out of the crisis and make it attractive for guests again. The interdisciplinary projects of IU students and the professors Prof. Dr Margit Bölts, Prof. Dr Peter Neumann, Prof. Dr Felix Wölfle and Prof. Dr David Rempel, who come from the IU campuses in Cologne, Düsseldorf, Dortmund, Münster, Frankfurt and Nuremberg, among others, are also intended to serve as a blueprint for other crisis-ridden tourism regions.

Through discussions and qualitative analyses, the students gained an insight into the existing offers, the conditions after the flood and the local mood. The concepts are the result of close cooperation between the students, IU and the local partners in Ahrtal and are based on an initiative of the *Kreissparkasse Ahrweiler*, which funded the project.

The IU project shows how important crisis management is in modern tourism and that tourism professionals will have to deal with issues such as extreme weather events and their consequences to a greater extent in the future. In view of rising temperatures and increasing weather extremes, tourism experts must be perfectly prepared

professionally. The effects of the flood disaster in Ahrtal have shown how important effective crisis management and innovative approaches to solutions are in tourism. With their projects, the IU students have developed a new perspective for Ahrtal tourism. The interdisciplinary approach and the resulting concepts show how an educational institution can advance not only its students but also entire regions.



### **Acting locally: IU contributes to the climate strategy of Bad Honnef**

On November 29, 2022, IU participated in the workshop “Municipality and Citizenship as Role Models for the Climate Protection Concept of Bad Honnef”. The event was organised by the city of Bad Honnef, home to the largest and oldest campus, and was part of the development of the city’s climate strategy. The workshop’s participants represented various groups of local stakeholders, including organisations of the education sector such as IU, and shared their ideas and perspectives about potential projects Bad Honnef could implement on its path to carbon neutrality. Several new initiatives were proposed and will become part of the strategy.



### **Research project “Sustainable Media Management”**

On November 8 and 9, 2023, the IU symposium “Sustainable Media & Brand Management – Nachhaltige Media-Strategien für eine werthaltige Markenführung” (“Sustainable Media & Brand Management – Sustainable Media Strategies for Value-Based Brand Management”) took place in Hamburg with over 100 researchers, media and brand professionals. In 15 presentations and panels, questions were discussed on how brands, media and agencies, as well as consumers, can act sustainably in a dynamic media world. The objectives: new standards and enabling society to categorise valuable media, content and brand communication in order to act responsibly.

The symposium was based on the Sustainable Media Management research project, which was initiated in early 2022 by Prof. Dr Lisa-Charlotte Wolter in cooperation with the University of Florida/USA, the Consortium on Trust in Media and Technology and the practice partner Mediaplus Group.



### **Editorship “Journal of Global Responsibility”**

The Journal of Global Responsibility (JGR) is dedicated to original, high-quality research and thought-provoking articles on global responsibility. It aims to enhance our understanding of this area in today’s interconnected world, contributing to leadership and best practice. One of the two editors of the journal is Prof. Dr Willy Legrand, IU Professor for Hospitality Management.

Global responsibility refers to the obligations of individuals, organisations, and institutions to act in line with globally accepted standards. These standards have evolved significantly recently with developments such as the UN’s

17 Sustainable Development Goals, the UN Global Compact's ten principles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other global benchmarks in sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, and governance.

The journal covers various aspects of global responsibility including:

- Responsibility within a global scope: Issues directly involving the entire world like globalisation or environmental degradation,
- Responsibility on a global scale: Issues potentially impacting the whole world such as poverty or multinational corporations' influence,
- Responsibility at the global level: Issues related to public institutions and networks at an international level,
- Responsibility from a global perspective: Holistic thinking about worldwide issues.

## ANTI-CORRUPTION

### **Principle 10: Businesses should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.**

IU is working against corruption in all of its forms by promoting high ethical standards both on-campus and globally. It stands for well-founded, sound scientific study and focuses particularly on promoting work ethic and service mentality for its students. Talking about anti-corruption measures, IU fully agrees that every business should work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery. IU sees itself as a good example of the implementation of such measures because of a transparent decision-making process on each management level, a functioning quality management system and the freedom of research and teaching.



### **Ethics policy**

A compliance guideline was adopted for IU's parent company IU Group. The guideline sets out the ethical principles of IU Group and contains general guidelines, in particular for employees, to protect against economic crime and other misconduct. The document is intended to ensure compliance with the corporate principles of IU Group and in this sense serves as a guide for legally compliant and responsible behaviour both in the dealings with each other and with customers and business partners. All affiliates respect and comply with this code.



### **Transparency of decision-making**

In accordance with IU's basic regulations, members of IU are entitled and obliged to participate in IU's self-administration. Organs and bodies are the Rectorate, the Rector, the Vice-rectors and Registrar, the Senate and the advisory board. These bodies and committees have clearly defined areas of responsibility and jointly participate in the tasks and objectives of IU. Goals, responsibilities and structures are transparently laid down in IU's basic regulations.

The Rectorate is ultimately responsible for all operative and strategic decisions. For this purpose, it uses the results of the quality management system (QMS, see below). The Rectorate controls the quality of ongoing operations and decides on the establishment and further development of the QMS. The Rectorate meets on a regular basis. Every session includes inter alia operational aspects of management, academic issues and current problems as well as initiatives for further development of IU and measures to improve ongoing processes.

The Senate is responsible for issues that affect the entire university of applied sciences or are of central importance. In addition, the Senate discusses fundamental issues of the QMS and the quality objectives. The standing members of the Senate with voting rights are the Vice-rectors and the Registrar. As elected members, the Senate includes six representatives from the group of professors, three representatives from the group of academic

staff, three representatives from the group of full-time employees of the administration and three representatives from the group of students.

A further committee at IU is the expert advisory board. The goal of the expert advisory board and its top-level members is to use their extensive network and extraordinary pool of experience to promote the continuous development of IU. This regular dialogue between campus and professional representatives is an essential contribution to tailoring the study programmes to the current needs of the market.

The responsibilities of IU are carried out by full-time academic personnel (professors and lecturers with additional responsibilities), research assistants and other academic staff (freelance lecturers and honorary professors). The academic staff has qualifications required for this group by the higher education law of the state of Thuringia. Further qualifications (for example, professional experience) may additionally be required. Professors are employed by the Rector in accordance with the provisions of the respective valid appointment regulations.



## Quality management

IU supports students with innovative study programmes in realising their professional and personal goals. To achieve this target, a quality management system has been established that sustainably ensures the quality of the services offered and involves all employees. The IU quality management system is the result of an intensive cooperation process between the management, the administration, the teaching staff, the committees and the students. The quality management system has the purpose of ensuring compliance with internal and external requirements and supporting the achievement of the development goals set by IU.

The quality objectives of IU are derived from the mission statement and the development goals. They were adopted by the Rectorate after consultation in the Senate:

- Develop high-quality, innovative study programmes.
- Continuous development of teaching quality, taking into account the latest technologies and innovative teaching formats to increase student satisfaction.
- Ensuring a high level of quality transparency with regard to teaching, administrative and technical support for students.
- Involving relevant stakeholders in the quality assurance process through regular evaluations and active involvement in the quality assurance process.

In order to achieve the development goals and the higher-level quality goals based on them, the central processes for achieving goals in the area of study and teaching were defined and documented. For each process, concretely measurable quality goals were defined, which were backed up with measurable criteria as well as with quality development measures.

IU developed a functioning quality management system based on the quality objectives and the expectations of the stakeholders. The precondition for quality management of ongoing operations is the availability of the necessary data. This goal is achieved by the IU's reporting system, which documents the degree of goal achievement at regular intervals in a Quality Report that can be found on the website: <https://www.iu.de/en/university/quality/quality-management>



## CONCLUSION

IU is actively engaged in a continuous development and improvement process to keep and improve the ten Principles of the UN Global Compact. IU is proud to be part of the world's largest corporate sustainability initiative.

IU can identify its role in relation to a number of the Global Goals, for example the SDG's on Poverty, Health & Wellbeing, Quality Education, Inequalities, Decent Work, Climate Action and Peace & Justice. In moving forward, the SDG Compass (published by the UN Global Compact, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development and the Global Reporting Initiative) will provide a useful guide for setting out the work and activities at IU.

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact us:



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