

## **UAS BFI Vienna Sustainability Policy**

### **Corporate social responsibility (CSR) management at the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna**

This document explains the principles of CSR management at the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna, University of Economics, Management and Finance (UAS BFI Vienna), and defines its strategy for continuous improvement.

UAS BFI Vienna sees its contribution to the sustainable development of society as the provision of affordable education opportunities for students – principally for people already in employment and those who do not have a secondary school-leaving certificate – and in linking teaching and research with practice in a dynamic economic environment.

Although we are an academic institution, we also act like a business – which is why we integrate values of sustainability and social responsibility into our strategy, our core business and our day-to-day activities. We understand how the dynamic of societal development brings with it constant change, and that stakeholder-oriented management is essential in order for the resulting continuous process of adaptation to lead to responsible innovation and, in turn, long-term success.

We are responding to the growing demand from businesses to develop new ways to integrate environmental, social and governance responsibilities, by integrating these themes into the curricula of our degree programmes and continuing education courses. In the area of executive education in particular, we develop and offer courses and master programmes in sustainability and responsible management.

These measures are intended to meet the new demands and expectations of the business world, as well as the needs of a new generation of students when it comes to sustainability and corporate citizenship. UAS BFI Vienna wants to do its part in the development of a new generation of professionals, whose knowledge and capabilities correspond to the new requirements of forward-looking companies with regard to sustainable value creation.

In consideration of the range of UAS BFI Vienna's external relationships, the university has a code of conduct that goes beyond its employees, providing information on the basic conduct that all stakeholders (students, graduates, partners, etc.) and the public can expect in interactions with university staff. The code of conduct is actively communicated to internal and external staff, as well as suppliers and partners, and can be accessed by all target groups on the website.

The management culture at UAS BFI Vienna is characterised by respect and appreciation. An environment of mutual trust provides the basis for working together. Our work is infused with a capacity for enthusiasm and a target-oriented approach. Together, we pursue the aims of UAS BFI Vienna and implement them effectively.

### **CSR and sustainability activities and measures**

In 2017 UAS BFI Vienna joined the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC), a platform for organisations that commit to upholding and promoting ten principles of responsible conduct in the areas of human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption, as well as to actively supporting the achievement of the UN's sustainable development goals (SDGs). UAS BFI Vienna publishes a report on activities and impacts at least every two years.

Cooperation between academic staff – from the university and research sector – and the business world underpins knowledge transfer and the connection between practice and research. Universities of applied sciences, business schools and other management-focused academic institutions have a large degree of influence on, and therefore also responsibility for the dissemination of socially responsible business practices, since they can put them into effect in their own operations and embed the topic in their teaching and research. The duality of effect and function can be seen in both areas.

UAS BFI Vienna sees itself as an open-minded, active part of society, the business world and the scientific community, with regional roots, a global, sustainable perspective and a European focus, and as an institution committed to educating responsible specialist and management professionals.

It is a priority for us to support students according to their needs regardless of gender, age, disability, origin and cultural background, sexual orientation and religion. We are committed to **permeability in education and training** and **equal opportunities**. Courses and continuing education events for graduates – and others interested in learning – facilitate networking in the context of a scientific community.

For these reasons, we have made the promotion of equal opportunities a key aim. Gender mainstreaming is embedded throughout the operations of UAS BFI Vienna, in the form of interdisciplinary topics. Gender competence and gender sensitivity are continuously expanded at UAS BFI Vienna. Alongside the appointed officer for gender mainstreaming and diversity management, the Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity Management steering group works to further embed and promote these issues, and to identify new topics and responsibilities. The composition of the steering group is culturally diverse and interdisciplinary.

The Managing Board and the chair of the academic council are responsible for CSR management at UAS BFI Vienna, supported by a steering group comprising representatives of various administrative departments and subject areas. Their activities are coordinated by a sustainability expert at UAS BFI Vienna, and supported by the Communications Department. Organisational measures developed by the steering group support the achievement of our strategic and operational goals. CSR management measures are implemented by formal approval and are periodically evaluated and adapted.

All university employees, and all degree programmes and students, are regularly informed regarding the content and meaning of the UNGC principles and the SDGs, and provided with training where needed. They all play a role in upholding the ten principles and our code of conduct.

CSR management, as well as the quality of the services we offer as a university (above all the degree programmes offered) are subject to a continuous improvement process and to consideration of the UNGC principles as well as achievement of the SDGs. Research at UAS BFI Vienna incorporates these aspects into all defined research focuses. It is our declared aim to integrate the results of related research into teaching.

### **Strategy for continuous improvement of our contribution to sustainable development/the SDGs**

- We optimise our academic and operational processes systematically and on an ongoing basis, including by consistently incorporating them when formulating the university's strategy, as well as through the work of the sustainability steering group and diligent process management.
- Employees contribute actively to continuous improvement through a structured suggestions process. Competitions for ideas are also employed to leverage talent among students.

- The status of continuous improvement of the quality of performance with regard to CSR and sustainable development is regularly assessed by internal and external evaluation processes. Students, employees and other relevant stakeholder groups are appropriately and objectively informed thereof.
- We are constantly developing a CSR and sustainability structure in our organisation, by systematically implementing the above as well as by means of:
  - o the involvement of many employees, with a variety of functions, in the ongoing discussions and projects concerning sustainable development;
  - o adequate incentives for employees;
  - o an attitude of critical self-reflection, demonstrated by management staff;
  - o demonstration of the relevance of sustainable development in the way we work – in particular by management staff, and upholding the ten principles of the UNGC and promoting the SDGs, and
  - o periodically inviting students to get involved in activities to promote CSR and sustainable development at UAS BFI Vienna, in the steering group and via idea competitions.
- We principally measure our success by:
  - student and employee engagement, in the shape of suggestions for development and improvement of sustainable services;
  - the embedding of the ten principles of the UNGC and the SDGs in teaching; the proportion of courses and the implicit and explicit inclusion of sustainability in learning outcomes are taken account of;
  - the proportion of research output accounted for by projects that incorporate the ten principles of the UNGC and the SDGs;
  - the number of public events that implicitly (e.g. as green events) or explicitly (e.g. through the event content) boost public knowledge and awareness of sustainability;
  - the degree of achievement of the targets defined in the Communication on Engagement, published every two years, and
  - ongoing improvement of the above metrics.