

2021/22

AUS SUSTAINABILITY REPORT



AUS Sustainability Historical Overview

AUS Sustainability was established in 2008 and all the achievements today are the results of the efforts made by collaborative actions across campus. As AUS strives to be a leader in areas of recycling, energy conservation, working to ban single-use plastic and integrating sustainability into the curriculum, many initiatives have been introduced throughout the years to achieve AUS' sustainability goals. In 2017, AUS Sustainability's role was reimagined with support from Dr. Jeannette Vinke, Chief Operations Officer, and Dr. John Katsos, Associate Professor of Management in the School of Business Administration. With their vision AUS Sustainability determined that the most comprehensive sustainability assessment would be to complete the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education's (AASHE) Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Ranking System (STARS) report.



WHAT IS AASHE STARS?



STARS Recognition and Scoring

STARS participants pursue credits and earn points in order to achieve a STARS Bronze, Silver, Gold or Platinum rating.

The credits included in STARS span the breadth of higher education sustainability and include performance indicators and criteria related to academics, engagement, operations, and planning and administration.



In 2018, AUS received a rating of Bronze. It was the first university in the MENA region to receive a rating. In 2021, AUS renewed its STARS rating and received Silver. This report highlights the findings made from each of the four focus areas within the STARS report.

INSTITUTIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

American University of Sharjah (AUS) was founded in 1997 by His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah. AUS has succeeded in fulfilling His Highness' vision for an American-style institution of higher education thoroughly grounded in Arab and Gulf culture.

128 Hectares Total Campus Area

350 Total Faculty

540 Total Staff

1,018 Faculty & Family Living on Campus

1,312 Students Living on Campus

5,198 Total Student Enrollment 2019-2020

178,245 m² Academic Buildings



ACADEMICS

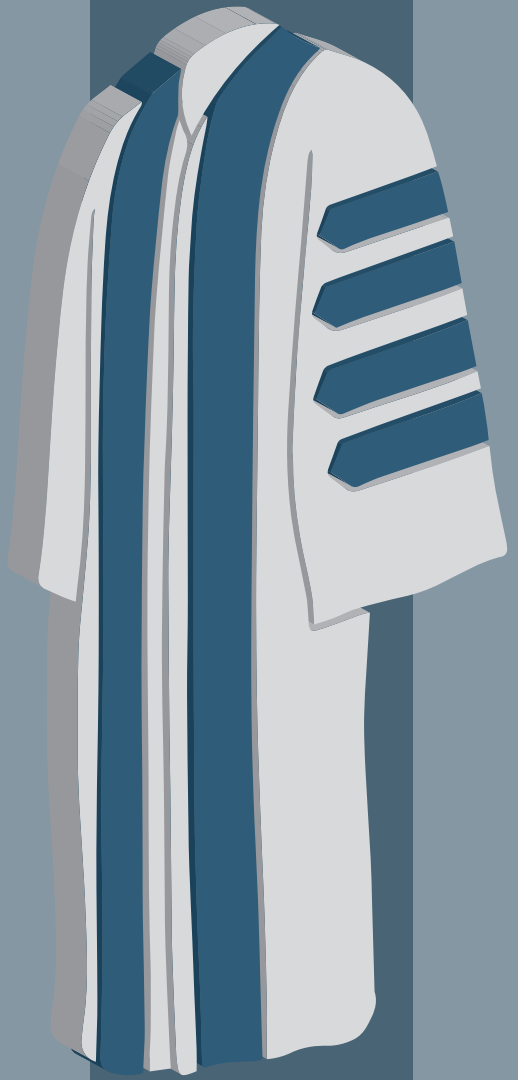
Curriculum

The Curriculum category seeks to recognize institutions that have formal education programs and courses that address sustainability. By training and educating future leaders, scholars and professionals, higher education institutions are uniquely positioned to prepare students to understand and address sustainability challenges.

Research

The Research category seeks to recognize institutions that are conducting research on sustainability. By researching sustainability issues and refining theories and concepts, higher education institutions can help the world understand sustainability challenges and develop new technologies, strategies and approaches to address those challenges.

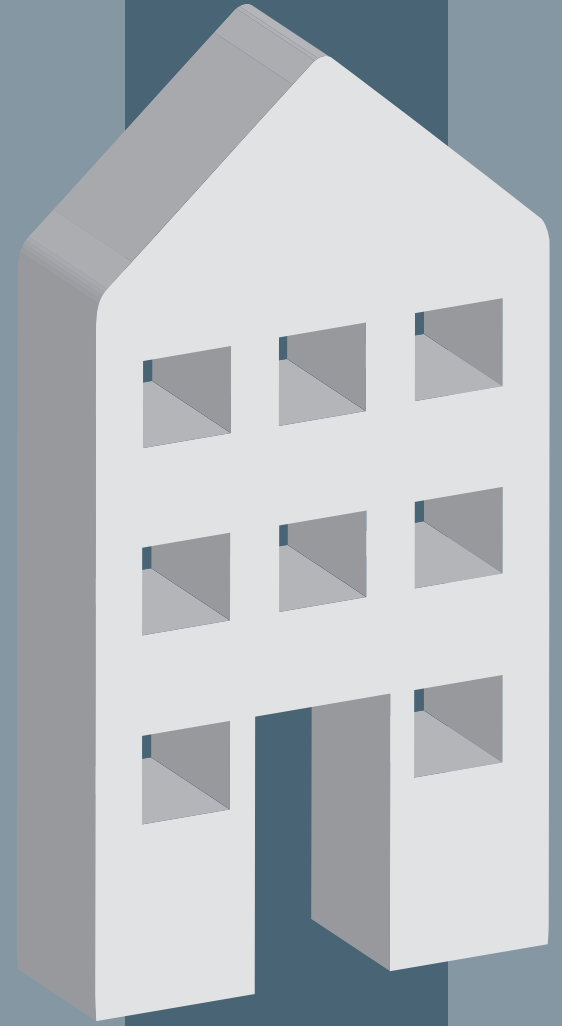
16.5% of graduate courses address sustainability



21% of undergraduate courses address sustainability



95% of academic departments offer a sustainability course or a course that includes sustainability topics





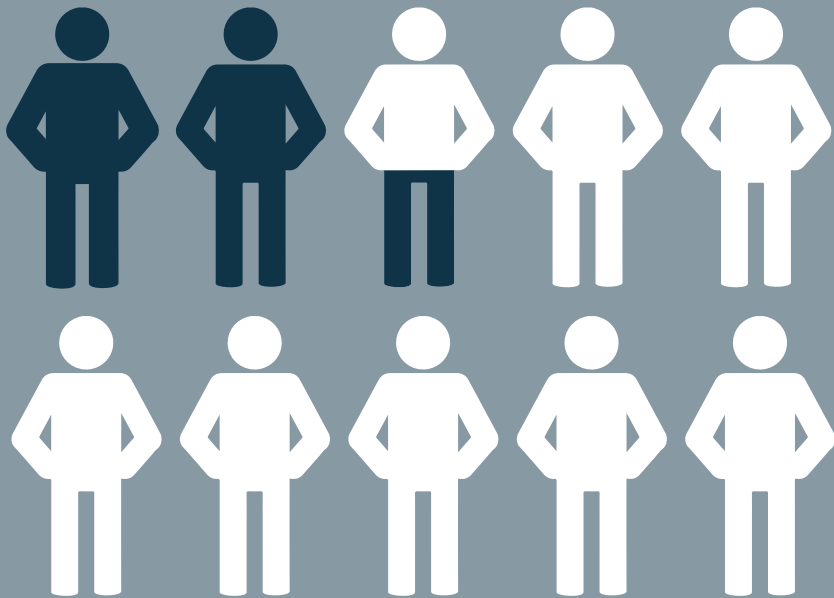
Undergraduate Programs

AUS has sustainability-focused degrees and minors in the College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) and College of Engineering (CEN). CAS offers a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Sciences and a Minor in Environmental Sciences, and CEN has a Minor in Renewable Energy and a Minor in Environmental and Water Engineering.

Graduate Programs

AUS has sustainability-focused graduate programs in the College of Engineering (CEN). CEN has a master and PhD program in Engineering Systems Management and a master program in Construction Management, all of which have sustainability at the core of their learning.

Research and Scholarship



24%

of AUS's faculty and staff researchers are engaged in sustainability research



71%

of AUS's research-producing departments are engaged in sustainability research



Support for Research

The AUS library has committed to highlighting sustainability research. Through the library supported D-Space platform, there is a curated list of the sustainable-focused faculty publications and sustainability-focused student theses.



ENGAGEMENT

Campus Engagement

The Campus Engagement category seeks to recognize institutions that provide their students with sustainability learning experiences outside the formal curriculum. Engaging students in sustainability issues through co-curricular activities allows students to deepen and apply their understandings of sustainability principles. Campus Engagement includes support for the entire campus community equipping the community with the tools, knowledge and motivation to promote sustainability.

Public Engagement

The Public Engagement category seeks to recognize institutions that help catalyze sustainable communities through public engagement, community partnerships and service. By engaging with community members and organizations in the governmental, nonprofit and for-profit sectors.

Outreach Campaign

In early 2020, AUS Sustainability launched its Single-Use-Plastic (SUP) Ban across campus operations with the goal to reduce the amount of plastic waste generated on campus. In the first phase of the ban, AUS Sustainability worked with all campus food outlets and vendors to ensure items such as single-use plastic shopping bags, drink cups, takeaway containers, straws and cutlery were either removed or replaced with a plant-based and biodegradable material.





Student Educators Program

Established in 2018, the AUS EcoRep Program recruits four students every year to promote sustainable change on campus. AUS EcoReps educate and work with their student peers on issues such as waste reduction, energy conservation, diversity and tolerance.



Employee Orientation

All new joiners received training about the AUS Sustainability office, including best practices in making AUS a more sustainable campus.



Community Partnerships

AUS sits on the board of the UN Global Compact UAE Local Network, which is a network of 151 UAE organizations/companies signed up to the UN Global Compact.

Inter-Campus Collaboration

AUS is a member of numerous local, national and international organizations. The following are a few of the sustainability-focused inter-campus networks and organizations with which AUS is affiliated.

- Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education
- Emirates Environmental Group
- Sustainable Campus Initiative via the Environmental Agency - Abu Dhabi





OPERATIONS

The Operations category seeks to recognize institutions that take sustainability into consideration in their decision making. There are numerous ways that an institution can reduce their overall environmental impact, including tracking and managing greenhouse gas emissions; implementing green building initiatives and sustainable building management, such as energy and water management; providing sustainable dining options; using environmental landscape management and protecting campus biodiversity; employing sustainable procurement with attention to electronics, paper and cleaning products; providing sustainable transportation options to campus users; and following sustainable waste and recycling management practices.





Office Paper Purchasing

100% of the office paper purchased by AUS is Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Certified. FSC certification indicates that the paper has been sourced from sustainably managed forests.

New Construction

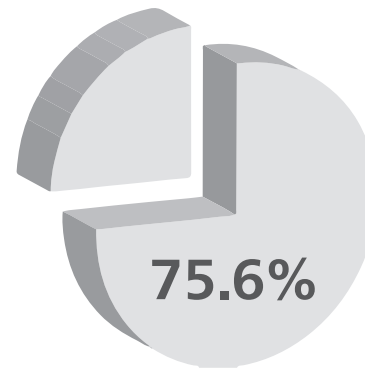
During the reporting period, all new construction was certified with an Estidama Pearl 2 rating, a green building standard.



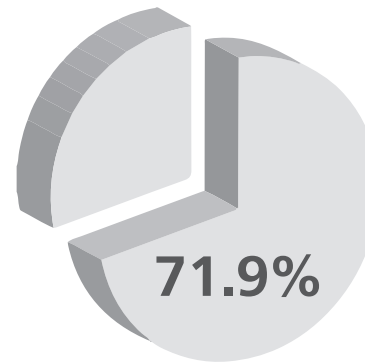
Transportation

The Transportation category seeks to recognize institutions that are moving toward sustainable transportation systems. Transportation is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions and other pollutants that contribute to health problems.

AUS Community Commute



of faculty and staff use more sustainable commuting options*



of students use more sustainable commuting options*

* Such as walking, bicycling, vanpooling or carpooling, taking public transportation, riding scooters, campus shuttle, or a combination of these options.





PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

The Planning and Administration category seeks to recognize institutions that are institutionalizing sustainability by dedicating resources to sustainability offices and coordination, engaging stakeholders in governance, working to address equity for employees and students, addressing access and affordability to their institution, showing commitment and action towards sustainable investment and finance, and wellbeing at the workplace.

Coordination and Planning

The Coordination and Planning category seeks to recognize universities that are institutionalizing sustainability by dedicating resources to sustainability coordination, developing plans to move toward sustainability, and engaging stakeholders in governance. Sustainability staff positions and other resources help an institution organize, implement and publicize sustainability initiatives.

Sustainability Coordination

AUS has an active office of sustainability, AUS Sustainability, with two full-time equivalent staff, showing the university is committed to addressing sustainability.





Wellbeing and Work

The Wellbeing and Work category seeks to recognize institutions that have incorporated sustainability, including mental and physical health, into their human resources programs and policies.

Workplace Health and Safety

In 2020 – 2021 there was a 72% reduction in workplace injuries and occupational disease cases per FTE employee from the original baseline in 2016-17.



Wellness at AUS

AUS University Counseling Services assistance is available free of charge to all registered students, as well as faculty, staff and their dependents. AUS has a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities available free for our students, faculty, staff and members of the AUS community. Furthermore, the AUS Wellness Center is open to all staff, faculty and faculty dependents. It includes a gym, exercise classes, a pool, personal training opportunities and other wellness-related programming. There is an after-school program, the Epicenter, for faculty and staff children ages 5 to 12 and an Early Childhood Learning Center for children ages 2 months to 4 years. Both of these are fee-based services located on campus. Additionally, community members have access to healthy sustainable foods through a Farmer's Market.



FUTURE PLANS

AUS Sustainability has used the AASHE STARS framework as a guide to build on the institution's sustainability. By reviewing the STARS reporting results, AUS has determined areas where there is room for improvement in its sustainability efforts. The list of potential actions that follows is not exhaustive, but are areas where AUS sees opportunities to increase sustainability and to further educate our students and the broader community in the area of sustainability.



THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

الجامعة الأميركية في الشارقة

ACADEMICS

- Support for Research: Encourage more faculty from multiple disciplines or academic programs to conduct research on sustainability topics.

ENGAGEMENT

- Student Life: Work to expand the experiential/applied opportunities for students, such as developing sustainable investment and financial knowledge and skills, and sustainable-focused student-run enterprise.
- Employee Educators Program: Create resources and foster a sustainable office culture at AUS.
- Community Service: Collaborate with the Office of Student Affairs to develop more community service that is focused on sustainability.



OPERATIONS

- Outdoor Air Quality: Collaborate with an external partner or AUS faculty to conduct an inventory of significant air emissions.
- Clean and Renewable Energy: Follow advancements made in Sharjah about the feasibility of purchasing our electricity from renewable sources.
- Sustainable Dining: Provide guidance and support for more sustainable dining options to be provided by AUS food vendors.
- Sustainable Procurement: Develop commodity-specific sustainability criteria and Incorporate sustainability reporting into new contracts, ensuring necessary data for future reporting.

PLANNING AND ADMINISTRATION

- Sustainability Planning: Develop and publish an AUS Sustainability Plan.
- Diversity and Equity Coordination: Create a diversity and equity committee
- Assessing Diversity and Equity: Conduct a structured assessment process to look at diversity, equity and inclusion on campus.
- Assessing Employee Satisfaction: Conduct a survey or other evaluation to measure employee satisfaction and engagement.

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