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# SHIFT

## ESG Impact Index Matrix

### Explanation of Indicators and Areas



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# Index

# Introduction

The main goal of this text is to provide an explanation of the indicators and areas within the ESG dimensions of the Impact Index platform. The development of the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) Actions Framework is a pivotal aspect of the project, designed to enhance sustainability and responsible practices within higher education institutions (HEIs). This framework includes the identification and definition of 33 indicators distributed across three ESG dimensions, and which are proposed within the Memoria document, pages 75-76. These indicators address essential sustainability areas that highlight the unique challenges and opportunities within HEIs. The goal is to assess and improve the impact of HEIs in various fields, such as their environmental footprint, social responsibility, and governance standards. Each ESG dimension is subdivided into specific indicators, which are further elaborated through distinct areas. These areas provide a clear path for making the indicators measurable and actionable within the context of HEIs. Through the ESG Actions Framework, a foundation for measurable impact across the three ESG dimensions is established, aiming to create a more sustainable, inclusive, and transparent academic environment.

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# Environmental dimension

## Indicator: Climate change and adaptation strategies

In the context of HEIs, the "Climate change and adaptation strategies" indicator evaluates the institution's approach to mitigating climate risks and enhancing resilience. This indicator is critical as HEIs not only influence their immediate environments through campus operations but also play a pivotal role in shaping future leaders and professionals. By adopting effective climate strategies, universities contribute to broader sustainability goals, support climate resilience, and promote a culture of environmental stewardship within and beyond the campus.

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### Areas:

**Implementation of green infrastructure projects:** This area focuses on tangible actions HEIs take to reduce their carbon footprint and enhance climate resilience. Green infrastructure projects—such as green roofs, rain gardens, sustainable drainage systems, and energy-efficient buildings—help manage environmental impacts while providing educational opportunities. Including this area justifies the indicator by demonstrating measurable efforts in adapting to climate change, offering practical learning environments, and fostering innovation in sustainable practices.

**Extent of student and staff participation in climate adaptation awareness and training programs:** Engaging the HEI community in awareness and training programs ensures that students and staff are equipped with the knowledge and skills to respond to climate challenges. This area emphasizes the institution's role in cultivating a climate-conscious culture and building adaptive capacity at an individual level. Its inclusion is crucial as it bridges institutional strategies with personal responsibility, promoting behavioral change and empowering participants to become advocates for sustainability.

**Integration of climate adaptation topics in university curricula:** By embedding climate adaptation topics into curricula, HEIs contribute to long-term climate resilience through education. This area aligns academic offerings with global sustainability needs, preparing students with critical insights and problem-solving skills related to climate adaptation. It justifies the indicator's use by highlighting the educational institution's influence on societal adaptation capabilities and demonstrating a proactive approach to addressing environmental challenges through academic excellence.

## Indicator: sustainable land use and biodiversity preservation

In the context of HEIs, the "Sustainable land use and biodiversity preservation" indicator evaluates the institution's commitment to maintaining ecological balance and promoting environmental sustainability on campus. As HEIs often manage substantial land areas, their approach to land use and biodiversity directly influences local ecosystems. By prioritizing green spaces and conservation efforts, universities not only enhance the aesthetic and recreational value of their campuses but also contribute to biodiversity preservation, carbon sequestration, and improved air quality.

### Areas:

### **Percentage of campus area dedicated to green spaces or biodiversity conservation:**

This area highlights the institution's strategic allocation of land for ecological purposes. Green spaces and biodiversity zones provide habitats for local flora and fauna, support ecosystem services, and create natural habitat for education and research. Including this area justifies the indicator by demonstrating a tangible commitment to environmental stewardship, promoting ecological awareness, and offering hands-on learning opportunities in sustainability and conservation practices.

### **Percentage increase in number of plants on campus compared to the base period:**

Measuring the increase in campus plant populations reflects proactive biodiversity enhancement efforts. This area emphasizes progress in greening initiatives, contributing to habitat enrichment, microclimate regulation, and carbon absorption. Its inclusion is important because it provides a quantifiable measure of biodiversity growth, aligns with broader sustainability goals, and serves as a visible indicator of the institution's ecological impact and commitment to continuous improvement.

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**Number of campus tree planting events per year:** This area focuses on community engagement and practical action in promoting biodiversity. Tree planting events often involve students, staff, and local communities, enhancing environmental education and fostering a sense of collective responsibility. Including this area justifies the indicator by demonstrating the institution's efforts to integrate environmental action into campus culture, providing experiential learning opportunities, and strengthening community ties through shared sustainability initiatives.

## **Indicator: Research environmental impact assessment**

For HEIs, the "Research environmental impact assessment" indicator evaluates how effectively research activities align with sustainability principles. As hubs of innovation and knowledge creation, universities influence not only academic discourse but also practical environmental outcomes through research initiatives. By incorporating environmental impact assessments (EIAs) into research projects, HEIs can ensure that their research contributes positively to environmental sustainability, mitigates negative impacts, and aligns with global ecological goals.

### **Areas:**

**Percentage of research projects with an environmental impact assessment:** This area measures the proportion of research initiatives that undergo a formal evaluation of their potential environmental effects. Including this area is important because EIAs help identify and mitigate negative environmental impacts, promote sustainable research practices, and integrate ecological considerations into project planning and execution. It justifies the indicator by demonstrating a structured approach to sustainability in research, enhancing transparency, and supporting informed decision-making processes.

**Reduction in environmental impact due to research activities:** This area focuses on the tangible outcomes of applying environmental assessments to research. It evaluates whether research activities lead to measurable improvements, such as reduced resource consumption, lower emissions, or minimized ecological disruption. Its inclusion is vital because it emphasizes outcome-oriented research practices, demonstrating how academic work can contribute to environmental conservation, support institutional sustainability goals, and offer replicable models for other organizations.

**Percentage of research funding allocated to environmental impact studies:** By tracking the share of research funding dedicated to environmental impact studies, this area highlights the institution's strategic prioritization of sustainability research. Funding allocation reflects institutional values and priorities, indicating a commitment to advancing knowledge in areas that support ecological balance and innovation in sustainability practices. This area justifies the indicator by showing that the institution not only supports sustainability initiatives theoretically but also backs them with financial and resource investments, promoting long-term environmental impact.

## Indicator: Emission reduction

The "Emission Reduction" indicator evaluates how HEIs minimize their carbon footprint by reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. As significant consumers of energy and resources, HEIs play a critical role in addressing climate change by adopting strategies to lower emissions from campus operations, transportation, and energy use. This indicator reflects the institution's commitment to sustainability and aligns with broader environmental objectives such as carbon neutrality and climate resilience.

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### Areas:

**Implementation of smart systems for monitoring energy consumption:** This area focuses on the deployment of advanced technologies to track and manage energy use in real-time. Smart systems provide valuable insights into consumption patterns, enabling targeted interventions to reduce energy waste and optimize efficiency. Including this area justifies the indicator by demonstrating a data-driven approach to emission reduction, enhancing transparency in energy management, and supporting strategic initiatives to decrease GHG emissions through informed decision-making and resource allocation.

**Ratio of eco-friendly lighting to total lighting:** This area evaluates the proportion of energy-efficient lighting, such as LED or sensor-based systems, compared to conventional lighting solutions on campus. Lighting is a significant contributor to energy consumption, and switching to eco-friendly alternatives can lead to substantial emission reductions. Its inclusion is crucial because it offers a measurable and impactful way to reduce electricity use, decrease emissions associated with power generation, and create a model for sustainable infrastructure improvements within HEIs.

**Adoption of a telecommuting policy to replace transport emissions:** This area measures how effectively the institution implements policies that allow remote work and study options, reducing the need for commuting. Commuting contributes to a considerable share of emissions through fuel consumption and vehicle use. Including this area is important because telecommuting not only decreases transport-related emissions but also promotes flexible work arrangements, contributing to both environmental sustainability and enhanced work-life balance for students and staff.

## Indicator: Use of renewable energy

The "Use of renewable energy" indicator assesses how HEIs integrate renewable energy sources into their operations to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and lower their carbon footprint. As energy consumption represents a significant portion of campus emissions, transitioning to renewable energy is a critical step toward achieving sustainability goals.

By prioritizing renewable energy, HEIs can not only reduce their environmental impact but also serve as leaders in promoting green energy solutions within their communities.

#### Areas:

**Percentage of electricity from renewable sources:** This area measures the proportion of the institution's total electricity consumption that is sourced from renewable energy, such as solar, wind, or hydroelectric power. The inclusion of this area is essential because it provides a direct metric of the institution's commitment to green energy. By increasing the percentage of renewable electricity, HEIs can significantly reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and contribute to the global transition toward cleaner energy sources. This area reflects the institution's sustainability priorities and shows a tangible effort to mitigate climate change through energy sourcing.

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**Usage of daylight in classrooms and offices:** This area focuses on the use of natural daylight as a key strategy to minimize the need for artificial lighting in classrooms and offices. By designing spaces that maximize daylight access and promoting practices that utilize natural light, HEIs can reduce energy consumption and lower their carbon footprint. The importance of this area lies in its potential to optimize energy efficiency and promote a healthier, more productive environment for students and staff. Incorporating daylight into building design is a simple yet effective way to reduce reliance on electricity, contributing to broader sustainability goals.

**Renewable energy consumption per student/staff:** This area evaluates renewable energy consumption relative to the number of students and staff at the institution, offering a more personalized measure of energy use efficiency. By tracking renewable energy consumption on a per capita basis, HEIs can monitor the effectiveness of their renewable energy initiatives and identify areas for improvement. This area is important because it connects sustainability efforts with the institution's community, promoting a collective responsibility for energy conservation. It encourages resource optimization and ensures that renewable energy use is scaled in relation to institutional growth, helping HEIs achieve long-term sustainability targets.

### Indicator: Energy management

The "Energy management" indicator evaluates how efficiently a HEI uses energy within its facilities, aiming to reduce consumption and environmental impact while optimizing energy use. Effective energy management is crucial for HEIs to lower their operational costs, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and demonstrate leadership in sustainability practices. By focusing on energy efficiency, HEIs can contribute to broader climate goals while setting an example for students, staff, and the surrounding community.

#### Areas:

**Energy consumption per square meter of campus facilities:** This area measures the amount of energy used for each square meter of campus space, helping to assess the efficiency of energy use across different facilities. It is important because it provides a baseline for evaluating how well the institution is optimizing its energy consumption in relation to the size and functionality of its campus buildings. By tracking this metric, HEIs can identify areas where energy use can be reduced, implement energy-saving measures,

and reduce overall environmental impact. This area promotes efficient resource use and highlights the institution's commitment to sustainable operations.

**Implementation of energy management systems driven by AI (such as smart radiators, air conditioners, etc.):** This area focuses on the adoption of AI technologies to manage and optimize energy consumption. Technologies like smart radiators, thermostats, and air conditioning systems help regulate energy use based on real-time data and user needs, improving efficiency and reducing waste. Including this area is essential because it demonstrates the institution's investment in innovative solutions to monitor and control energy consumption, leading to substantial reductions in energy costs and environmental impact. Smart technologies also enhance operational flexibility, providing more granular control over campus energy systems and promoting a more sustainable approach to campus management.

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**Percentage of energy-efficient appliances and equipment on campus:** This area tracks the proportion of energy-efficient appliances and equipment used across campus facilities, such as LED lighting, Energy Star-rated appliances, and low-energy office equipment. Its inclusion is significant because it directly correlates to energy consumption reductions. By replacing outdated or inefficient equipment with energy-efficient alternatives, HEIs can lower energy demand, reduce their carbon footprint, and set a strong example of sustainable procurement. This area highlights the institution's commitment to long-term environmental stewardship and provides a clear metric for measuring improvements in energy efficiency.

## Indicator: Sustainable focus curriculum and teaching initiatives

The "Sustainable focus curriculum and teaching initiatives" indicator measures how well sustainability is integrated into the academic and research activities of HEIs. By embedding sustainability into the curriculum and encouraging both staff and student involvement in sustainability-related projects, HEIs can foster a culture of environmental and social responsibility, ensuring that the next generation of leaders and professionals is equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to address global challenges such as climate change, resource depletion, and social inequality.

### Areas:

**Extent to which sustainability topics are integrated into mandatory courses across disciplines:** This area evaluates the integration of sustainability-related content into required courses across various academic disciplines. Its inclusion is essential because it ensures that all students, regardless of their major, receive exposure to the principles of sustainability and understand its relevance to their fields. By making sustainability a core component of the curriculum, HEIs can foster interdisciplinary learning, encouraging students to think critically about the environmental, social, and economic impacts of their future professions. This area reflects the institution's commitment to shaping a generation that is not only knowledgeable but also responsible in addressing global sustainability challenges.

**Level of staff engagement in sustainability-related teaching and research initiatives:** This area measures the extent to which faculty and staff are actively involved in teaching



and conducting research related to sustainability. Staff engagement is crucial because it directly influences the depth and quality of sustainability education provided to students. Including this area is important because it demonstrates the institution's commitment to cultivating expertise in sustainability, which can lead to innovative solutions for real-world challenges. Faculty engagement also supports the creation of interdisciplinary research opportunities, where sustainability can be explored across different domains, from environmental science to business ethics.

**Level of student engagement in sustainability-related research projects:** This area tracks the extent to which students participate in sustainability-focused research initiatives. Student engagement is critical because it empowers students to apply theoretical knowledge to practical, real-world problems, promoting critical thinking and innovation. Including this area is important because it fosters hands-on learning experiences that contribute to the development of sustainable solutions. It also provides opportunities for students to collaborate with staff and external stakeholders, building a strong foundation for future careers in sustainability and contributing to the institution's broader sustainability goals.

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## Indicator: Waste reduction

The "Waste reduction" indicator evaluates the efforts of HEIs to minimize waste generation and manage waste more effectively. Waste reduction is a critical aspect of sustainability as it reduces environmental pollution, conserves resources, and lowers disposal costs. HEIs, as major consumers of resources, have a responsibility to implement waste reduction strategies that both reduce their environmental footprint and serve as educational models for students and the broader community. This indicator helps assess the impact of waste reduction initiatives and provides measurable targets for continuous improvement.

### Areas:

**Implementation of 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) program for university waste:** This approach emphasizes not only minimizing waste generation but also promoting sustainable waste management strategies throughout the institution. The 3R program aims to integrate waste reduction principles into daily campus operations, fostering a culture of environmental responsibility among students, staff, and faculty. Key components of the program include initiatives to reduce waste at the source by encouraging mindful consumption and reducing single-use materials. The reuse aspect involves promoting the repurposing of materials and resources, extending their lifecycle and reducing the demand for new products. Recycling efforts are enhanced by establishing accessible recycling stations, providing clear guidelines on waste separation, and collaborating with waste management partners to ensure effective recycling processes. The introduction of the 3R program offers a holistic and measurable approach to waste reduction, aligning with broader sustainability goals and contributing to a cleaner, more sustainable campus environment.

**Reduction in total waste generated compared to base period:** This area tracks the decrease in overall waste production over time, compared to a baseline period. It is significant because it provides a clear measure of the institution's effectiveness in implementing waste reduction initiatives. A reduction in total waste generation indicates successful strategies in areas like resource management, recycling, and waste avoidance.

This area is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of campus-wide efforts to minimize waste, ensuring that the institution is progressing toward its sustainability goals. It also helps identify trends and areas for improvement, driving continuous refinement of waste reduction practices.

**Ratio of waste bins for separate collection to total waste bins on campus:** This area focuses on the proportion of waste bins dedicated to separate collection (e.g., recycling, composting, and general waste) relative to the total number of waste bins on campus. Its inclusion is crucial because waste separation at the source is a key strategy in reducing landfill waste and promoting recycling. By increasing the number of bins designated for separate collection, HEIs can make it easier for students and staff to properly dispose of waste, improving recycling rates and diverting waste from landfills. This area also highlights the institution's commitment to waste management best practices and supports broader sustainability goals by ensuring that recyclable and compostable materials are properly handled.

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## Indicator: Water conservation

The "Water conservation" indicator assesses the efforts of HEIs to manage and reduce their water consumption, promoting sustainability and resource efficiency. Water conservation is a vital component of environmental stewardship, as it helps preserve natural water resources, reduces operational costs, and decreases the environmental impact of water use. By measuring and improving water efficiency, HEIs can play an important role in addressing global water scarcity issues while setting a positive example for students, staff, and the surrounding community.

### Areas:

**Annual water consumption per student and staff:** This area measures the average water usage per person (student or staff) on campus annually. It is important because it provides a clear benchmark for water consumption and highlights the institution's efficiency in water use relative to its population size. By tracking this metric, HEIs can identify opportunities for reducing water waste, such as implementing low-flow fixtures, promoting water-saving behaviors, and optimizing water distribution systems. This area is essential for setting reduction targets and for tracking the success of water conservation initiatives over time, ensuring that the institution is making measurable progress.

**Reduction in water consumption per year compared to baseline:** This area tracks the annual reduction in water consumption relative to a baseline period. It is significant because it shows the effectiveness of water conservation measures implemented by the institution. Reducing water consumption year over year indicates that the HEI is actively addressing inefficiencies, improving infrastructure, and encouraging water-saving practices. This area provides a tangible metric for evaluating the impact of conservation strategies, motivating the institution to adopt more sustainable practices and further reduce its environmental footprint.

**Water efficiency index:** This area measures the efficiency of water use on campus by evaluating the total water consumption relative to campus activities, such as building operations, academic programs, and student engagement. The Water Efficiency Index is important because it provides a comprehensive assessment of how well the institution is managing water resources across various sectors. A higher index indicates better

efficiency in water use, suggesting that the HEI is successfully optimizing its water consumption without compromising operational needs. This metric helps the institution track overall water usage patterns and identify areas for improvement, ensuring that water conservation remains a key priority.

## Indicator: Sustainable procurement policies and practices

The "Sustainable procurement policies and practices" indicator evaluates the extent to which HEIs integrate sustainability into their procurement processes. Sustainable procurement ensures that the products and services purchased by the institution support environmental, social, and economic sustainability goals. This indicator is critical because procurement activities can have significant environmental and social impacts, particularly in terms of resource consumption, waste generation, and labor practices. By adopting sustainable procurement policies, HEIs can contribute to the development of more responsible supply chains, promote ethical business practices, and support the transition to a circular economy.

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### Areas:

**Percentage of suppliers that have implemented a code of ethics:** This area measures the proportion of suppliers that adhere to a formal code of ethics, which may include standards for fair labor practices, environmental responsibility, and anti-corruption measures. Its inclusion is important because it ensures that the institutions' procurement decisions align with broader ethical and sustainability principles. By prioritizing suppliers who demonstrate commitment to ethical practices, HEIs can avoid supporting businesses that engage in exploitative or environmentally harmful activities. This area is crucial for fostering social responsibility within supply chains and reinforcing the HEI's commitment to sustainability and ethical business conduct.

**Percentage of eco-certified products in procurement:** This area tracks the proportion of products purchased by the institution that carry recognized environmental certifications, such as organic, fair trade, or energy-efficient labels. The inclusion of eco-certified products is significant because these products are produced with lower environmental impact, often using sustainable materials or practices that reduce carbon emissions and resource depletion. By prioritizing eco-certified products, HEIs contribute to market demand for sustainable goods and services, encouraging suppliers to adopt more environmentally responsible practices. This area demonstrates the institution's proactive approach to reducing its environmental footprint through purchasing decisions.

**Percentage of locally sourced products:** This area measures the percentage of products purchased from local suppliers, reducing the carbon footprint associated with transportation and supporting local economies. It is important because sourcing locally minimizes the environmental impact of logistics and transportation, which is a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, locally sourced products are often more sustainable due to the reduced need for packaging and the potential for shorter supply chains. By prioritizing local procurement, HEIs can reduce their environmental impact, promote community engagement, and support regional economic growth, creating a positive feedback loop that benefits both the institution and the local community.

## Indicator: Green supply chain management

The "Green supply chain management" indicator measures the extent to which HEIs incorporate environmental sustainability into their supply chain practices. Green supply chain management focuses on reducing environmental impacts through sustainable procurement, product lifecycle management, and minimizing waste. This indicator is crucial for promoting sustainability across the entire supply chain and ensuring that environmental considerations are prioritized not just within the institution but also throughout its supplier network. By adopting green supply chain practices, HEIs can contribute to the reduction of their carbon footprint and enhance their role in driving environmental stewardship within the academic and commercial sectors.

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### Areas:

**Percentage of university suppliers with verified environmental certifications:** This area tracks the proportion of suppliers who hold recognized environmental certifications, such as ISO 14001, which confirm that they meet specific sustainability standards in their operations. This is important because it ensures that HEIs are sourcing from companies that actively manage their environmental impact, whether through waste reduction, energy efficiency, or sustainable sourcing of materials. Suppliers with verified environmental certifications are more likely to adhere to responsible production practices, making them key partners in the institution's sustainability goals. This area reinforces the institution's commitment to supporting environmentally responsible businesses and strengthens the credibility of its green procurement practices.

**Procurement of products (office supplies) produced from recycled raw materials:** This area measures the percentage of office supplies, such as paper, furniture, and equipment, that are made from recycled materials. The importance of this area lies in reducing the demand for virgin resources, thus conserving natural resources and minimizing environmental harm. Recycled products often have a smaller carbon footprint and reduce waste that would otherwise end up in landfills. By prioritizing recycled materials in procurement, HEIs not only reduce their environmental impact but also promote the use of circular economy principles, encouraging suppliers to use recycled raw materials in their production processes. This area reflects the institution's dedication to supporting a sustainable, closed-loop supply chain.

**Share of digital vs. paper-based administrative processes in procurement:** This area measures the proportion of administrative processes, such as procurement requests, invoicing, and contract management, that are conducted digitally rather than on paper. It is significant because transitioning to digital processes reduces the need for paper, thereby conserving natural resources and minimizing waste. Digital processes are also more efficient, reducing the time and energy spent on manual paperwork, and contributing to a more streamlined, eco-friendly procurement system. By promoting digital administrative practices, HEIs can not only improve operational efficiency but also reduce their environmental impact, leading to long-term sustainability gains. This area demonstrates the institution's commitment to adopting modern, resource-efficient systems that align with green supply chain management principles.

# Social dimension

## Indicator: Socio-economic equity and affordability initiatives

The "Socio-economic equity and affordability initiatives" indicator measures the efforts made by HEIs to ensure that education is accessible and affordable for students from various socio-economic backgrounds. This indicator is crucial for promoting social justice, equality of opportunity, and inclusivity within the academic environment. Addressing socio-economic disparities in education enables institutions to create diverse student populations, reduce barriers to higher education, and empower students from marginalized or financially disadvantaged backgrounds. By implementing such initiatives, HEIs contribute to a more equitable society and help bridge the gap between different socio-economic groups.

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### Areas:

**Annual amount allocated to financial aid programs compared to total budget:** This area assesses the proportion of the institution's total budget dedicated to financial aid programs, including grants, scholarships, and low-interest loans. Its importance lies in ensuring that financial resources are being invested in supporting students who face financial barriers to accessing education. By allocating a significant portion of the budget to financial aid, HEIs demonstrate their commitment to making higher education accessible and reducing the financial burden on students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This area is a direct measure of the institution's efforts to enhance affordability and promote greater equity in education.

**Percentage of students receiving financial aid or scholarships:** This area tracks the proportion of students who benefit from financial aid or scholarships. It is important because it reflects the institution's success in reaching students who might otherwise struggle to afford tuition and other associated costs. Providing financial assistance helps level the playing field for students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to pursue higher education. By offering such support, HEIs increase the likelihood of attracting a more diverse student body, which enriches the learning environment and fosters social mobility. This area is an essential metric for gauging the inclusivity of an institution's financial support systems.

**Ratio of students from underrepresented regions or communities enrolled compared to total student population:** This area measures the percentage of students from underrepresented or marginalized communities who are enrolled at the institution, compared to the total student population. Its inclusion is vital for assessing the institution's role in promoting diversity and inclusion in higher education. By increasing the enrollment of students from underrepresented regions or communities, HEIs can help combat systemic inequities in education and provide opportunities for students who face historical or geographical disadvantages. This area demonstrates the institution's commitment to broadening access to education, fostering social inclusion, and supporting the upward mobility of disadvantaged groups.

## Indicator: Universal design principles for accessibility and inclusivity

The "Universal design principles for accessibility and inclusivity" indicator evaluates the extent to which HEIs create an accessible and inclusive environment for all students, particularly those with disabilities or other special needs. This indicator is critical for ensuring that HEIs provide equal opportunities for learning, participation, and integration into campus life, regardless of physical or cognitive challenges. By implementing universal design principles, institutions can foster an environment that accommodates a diverse range of abilities, promoting inclusivity and social equity. Accessibility in both physical spaces and digital platforms is essential for creating an academic environment that supports diversity and enhances the overall student experience.

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### Areas:

**Degree to which university buildings are accessible to people with disabilities:** This area examines the accessibility of campus buildings for individuals with physical disabilities, including the presence of ramps, elevators, accessible restrooms, and other facilities that cater to the needs of those with mobility impairments. It is important because physical accessibility is a fundamental aspect of inclusivity, ensuring that all students, staff, and visitors can fully participate in campus life. Ensuring that university buildings are accessible helps eliminate barriers to education and participation, promoting a sense of belonging for individuals with disabilities. This area demonstrates the institution's commitment to providing a physically accessible environment for all members of the academic community.

**Level of inclusion of accessibility and inclusivity principles in course design:** This area assesses how effectively accessibility and inclusivity principles are integrated into course curricula, materials, and teaching methods. It is crucial because inclusive course design ensures that students with disabilities or learning difficulties can engage with the content and participate in class activities. Implementing accessibility principles, such as providing alternative formats for learning materials, using clear and straightforward language, and offering flexible assessment methods, ensures that all students, regardless of their abilities, can succeed academically. This area highlights the institution's commitment to fostering an inclusive educational experience that accommodates diverse learning needs.

**Level of accessibility of online learning platforms for students with disabilities:** This area evaluates the degree to which online learning platforms are designed to be accessible to students with disabilities. It includes features such as screen reader compatibility, captioning of videos, text-to-speech options, and navigational tools that support users with visual, auditory, or cognitive impairments. Given the increasing reliance on online education, it is vital for HEIs to ensure that their digital platforms are inclusive and accessible. This area is significant because it reflects the institution's responsibility to provide equal access to education in both physical and virtual learning environments, ensuring that no student is excluded due to technological barriers.

## Indicator: Mental health and wellbeing support services

The "Mental health and wellbeing support services" indicator measures the extent to



which HEIs provide comprehensive support services aimed at promoting the emotional, social, and intellectual wellbeing of their students. This indicator is crucial for ensuring that students are supported in their mental health, which plays a significant role in academic success and overall life satisfaction. Mental health issues, such as stress, anxiety, and depression, are prevalent among students, and providing robust support services can help mitigate these challenges. A holistic approach to mental health, including emotional, social, and intellectual support, ensures that students are equipped to thrive both personally and academically.

### Areas:

**Emotional and social well-being:** Degree to which the university offers emotional support programs (e.g., counseling, stress management workshops) and social connections through student support networks: This area evaluates how effectively the HEI supports both the emotional and social aspects of student well-being. It encompasses counseling services, stress and time management workshops, peer support networks, mentorship programs, and organized social activities that help students build relationships. Emotional and social well-being are deeply interconnected—students who feel emotionally supported are more likely to engage socially, and vice versa. Integrating both aspects into one indicator highlights the need for a holistic approach to mental health and community building on campus. The presence of accessible emotional support services ensures that students can manage stress, anxiety, and academic pressures, which directly contributes to academic success and personal development. At the same time, fostering strong social ties through structured support systems and inclusive events reduces loneliness and encourages a sense of belonging.

**Physical Health and Activity Engagement:** This area assesses how well the HEI supports students' physical well-being through health promotion and opportunities for physical activity. It includes access to sports facilities, organized exercise programs, health awareness campaigns, and initiatives encouraging daily physical activity (e.g., walking groups, fitness classes, intramural sports).

**Intellectual well-being: level of intellectual support programs provided (e.g., academic mentoring, research workshops):** This area assesses the level of intellectual support available to students, such as academic mentoring, research workshops, and tutoring services. Intellectual well-being is critical for academic success, and providing students with the tools and guidance they need to excel academically enhances their self-confidence and overall mental health. Academic mentoring and research workshops help students navigate their academic journeys, improve their research skills, and foster a sense of intellectual growth. By offering such programs, HEIs contribute to a well-rounded student experience that supports not only academic achievement but also mental clarity and intellectual stimulation.

## Indicator: Child care and family support services

The "Child care and family support services" indicator evaluates how well HEIs provide support to students and staff with family responsibilities, especially those with young children. This indicator is crucial for promoting a more inclusive and equitable environment in academia, as it helps remove barriers for individuals who may face challenges balancing family obligations and academic or professional commitments.

Access to child care and family support services ensures that students and staff with caregiving responsibilities can fully engage in their educational or work responsibilities without compromising family needs. Providing these services helps HEIs become more family-friendly, promoting work-life balance, and supporting diverse student and staff populations.

## Areas:

**Partnerships with childcare institutions and benefit provision for employees and students:** This indicator assesses the institution's approach to supporting students and staff who are parents, through partnerships with local childcare providers and the provision of related benefits. Instead of managing on-campus childcare, which can be resource-intensive and underutilized by student populations, universities can collaborate with nearby kindergartens or childcare centers to ensure accessible, high-quality services. Such partnerships can include reserved placements, subsidized fees, or flexible scheduling aligned with academic calendars. This area is important because it addresses the real needs of university members with caregiving responsibilities, particularly in contexts where on-campus childcare may not be feasible or efficient. By allocating part of the HEI's budget to support childcare costs or providing logistical support (such as referrals or coordination services), institutions promote equity and inclusion. It ensures that parenting does not become a barrier to participation in education or employment within the university. This solution is cost-effective and adaptable, especially for smaller or private HEIs, and demonstrates sensitivity to the diverse life circumstances of the academic community.

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**Extent of family support programs, such as parental leave or flexible work hours:** This area assesses the availability and scope of family support programs, including parental leave policies, flexible work hours, and other accommodations for staff and students with family obligations. It is significant because these programs can help employees and students better manage the demands of family life while maintaining their academic or professional roles. By offering flexible schedules or parental leave, HEIs provide necessary support to family caregivers, enhancing work-life balance and reducing the likelihood that family responsibilities will hinder academic or career advancement. These policies can help attract and retain a diverse student and staff population, including those with caregiving responsibilities.

**Level of awareness and accessibility of family support services for students and staff:** This area evaluates how well the family support services are communicated to and accessed by students and staff. It includes the awareness of available child care, parental leave, and flexible work policies, as well as how easy it is for individuals to access these services. It is crucial because even if support programs exist, they are only effective if students and staff are aware of them and can easily access them when needed. Ensuring clear communication about family support services and providing simple processes for accessing these services can significantly improve the overall experience of students and staff with family responsibilities, promoting a supportive and inclusive environment at the institution.

## Indicator: Campus safety and security measures

The "Campus safety and security measures" indicator evaluates how well HEIs address



safety concerns on campus, providing a secure environment for students, staff, and visitors. Ensuring safety on campus is crucial for fostering a conducive academic atmosphere where students and staff feel secure and supported. This indicator also reflects the institution's commitment to preventing harm and responding effectively to emergencies or incidents that may arise. Strong campus safety measures contribute to mental well-being and encourage academic and social engagement by reducing anxiety related to security concerns.

#### Areas:

**Availability and visibility of emergency response systems (e.g., alarms, call boxes):** This area evaluates the presence and effectiveness of emergency response systems, such as alarms, call boxes, and other safety features that ensure prompt response in case of an emergency. It is important because these systems act as immediate solutions for students and staff to report emergencies or seek help in potentially dangerous situations. The visibility and accessibility of these systems increase the chances of a quick response, reducing the impact of emergencies and promoting a sense of security on campus. The presence of well-marked emergency response points and systems shows that the institution takes the safety of its community seriously, ensuring students and staff feel protected.

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**Extent to which campus security policies address issues like harassment and violence prevention:** This area looks at the comprehensiveness of campus security policies, particularly how they address issues like harassment, bullying, and violence prevention. It is significant because these issues can seriously affect the physical and psychological well-being of students and staff. Effective policies that prevent and address harassment and violence are essential for creating a safe campus environment. Clear, robust policies that include preventive measures, reporting mechanisms, and support services ensure that students and staff feel safe from any form of abuse or violence. This area also reflects the institution's proactive stance on preventing harmful behaviors before they escalate into incidents that can disrupt campus life.

**Student and staff perceptions of campus safety:** This area assesses how safe students and staff feel on campus, based on their experiences and perceptions of security measures. It is important because an institution's safety measures are only truly effective if students and staff feel secure in their daily activities. While objective safety features, like alarms or security personnel, are vital, the perceptions of the campus community are just as important in evaluating campus safety. If students and staff feel that the campus is unsafe or that the security measures are inadequate, this can hinder their academic performance and overall well-being. Regular surveys and feedback from the campus community can help identify any gaps in security measures and ensure that the institution meets the needs of its population.

### Indicator: Research social impact assessments

The "Research social impact assessments" indicator evaluates how well research conducted at HEIs addresses social issues and contributes to positive community outcomes. This indicator is crucial because research not only advances academic knowledge but also has the potential to significantly influence the social fabric of communities. By assessing the social impact of research, HEIs can ensure that their work

directly contributes to addressing societal challenges, fostering inclusive development, and promoting economic and social well-being. Integrating social impact considerations into research ensures that HEIs are not just centers of knowledge creation but active participants in social change.

### Areas:

**Extent to which social impact considerations are included in the research design:** This area evaluates the extent to which researchers incorporate social impact factors, such as the well-being of marginalized communities, sustainability, or equity, into their research designs. It is important because the intentional inclusion of social impact considerations ensures that research is not conducted in isolation but with an awareness of its potential to affect society. This approach can enhance the relevance and applicability of the research, ensuring that the findings are more likely to lead to positive social outcomes. By considering social impacts from the outset, researchers can identify potential benefits and risks to communities and society and design studies that actively aim to mitigate negative consequences while maximizing positive ones.

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**Level of research integration in local community development efforts:** This area measures the extent to which research at HEIs is integrated into community development projects or efforts to address local issues. It is significant because HEIs have a unique role to play in local development, not just through education but also through applied research that meets community needs. By aligning research efforts with local development priorities, HEIs can directly contribute to improving local infrastructure, services, or social outcomes, thereby enhancing the quality of life for community members. This integration fosters a stronger connection between HEIs and the communities they serve, demonstrating the institution's commitment to societal impact.

**Extent to which research outcomes contribute to economic development or job creation:** This area evaluates how research outcomes are linked to economic growth and job creation, particularly through innovations, new technologies, or partnerships that create opportunities for employment. It is crucial because the practical applications of research can stimulate economic activity, create new industries, and enhance local economies. Research outcomes that lead to new business ventures, start-ups, or workforce development programs provide tangible benefits to society. By measuring how research contributes to economic development or job creation, HEIs can demonstrate the direct value of their academic efforts in fostering broader economic and social prosperity.

## Indicator: Access and support for students from marginalized communities

The "Access and support for students from marginalized communities" indicator measures how effectively HEIs ensure that students from historically marginalized groups have the resources, support, and opportunities they need to succeed academically and socially. This indicator is crucial for fostering inclusivity and equity within HEIs, ensuring that all students, regardless of background, have an equal opportunity to thrive. HEIs must actively work to dismantle barriers to success that students from marginalized communities may face, offering tailored support and representation across all levels of academic and extracurricular life.

## Areas:

**Level of accessibility of academic resources for students from marginalized communities:** This area evaluates how accessible academic resources such as textbooks, learning materials, libraries, technology, and tutoring services are to students from marginalized communities. It is vital because unequal access to these resources can hinder the academic success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. By ensuring that academic resources are easily accessible and tailored to the needs of marginalized communities, HEIs can help level the playing field and provide students with the necessary tools to succeed. This accessibility is foundational to equitable academic achievement, ensuring that no student is left behind due to lack of resources or support.

**Level of representation of students from marginalized communities in student leadership positions:** This area measures the degree to which students from marginalized communities are represented in leadership roles within student organizations, councils, and other extracurricular activities. It is important because student leadership positions offer opportunities to influence campus culture, advocate for change, and develop essential skills for future careers. Representation in these roles empowers marginalized students, helps raise awareness about their unique needs and challenges, and fosters a sense of belonging. When students from diverse backgrounds occupy leadership positions, it signals to the broader campus community the value of inclusivity and diverse perspectives in decision-making processes.

**Level of awareness of support programs for students from marginalized communities:** This area assesses how well students from marginalized communities are informed about the various support programs available to them, such as mentorship, financial aid, mental health services, and career guidance. Awareness is key because students may not seek support if they are unaware of the services that could help them succeed. By raising awareness and ensuring that marginalized students know where to turn for assistance, HEIs can provide a safety net that helps these students navigate academic and social challenges. Additionally, promoting these programs encourages a culture of support and inclusivity, making students feel more confident in accessing help when needed.

## Indicator: Innovation for social good

The "Innovation for social good" indicator measures how effectively a HEI utilizes its resources, research, and influence to contribute to the welfare of society, particularly by fostering social innovation. This includes collaborations with local communities, a commitment to addressing social issues, and actively promoting positive societal change. Social innovation within the context of HEIs not only contributes to solving community problems but also enhances the institution's role as a proactive participant in societal development. The focus is on creating solutions that have a meaningful, positive impact on social challenges, such as inequality, health disparities, and education access.

## Areas:

**Frequency of partnerships with local communities to foster social innovation:** This area measures how often the institution partners with local communities or organizations to co-create and implement social innovation projects. These partnerships are crucial because they provide HEIs with opportunities to use their research, expertise, and student involvement to tackle real-world issues faced by local communities. Collaboration fosters

mutual benefits—communities gain access to valuable knowledge and resources, while students and staff gain hands-on experience addressing societal challenges. These partnerships also help ensure that social innovations are grounded in the actual needs of communities, making the solutions more relevant and impactful.

### **Perception of students and staff regarding the university's commitment to social innovation:**

This area assesses how students and staff perceive the university's efforts in promoting and committing to social innovation. Perception is a powerful indicator because it reflects the institutional culture and values. If students and staff perceive that the university genuinely prioritizes social good, they are more likely to engage in or support initiatives related to social innovation. A positive perception also enhances the university's reputation, attracting students and staff who are committed to making a social impact. It reflects a broader sense of responsibility within the institution to contribute to solving pressing societal issues.

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**Level of institutional commitment to social responsibility:** This area measures how strongly the university integrates social responsibility into its mission, policies, and strategic plans. Institutional commitment to social responsibility is key to ensuring that social innovation is not only a peripheral activity but a core part of the institution's identity. This commitment may manifest through dedicated funding, strategic goals, and structured programs aimed at addressing societal issues. HEIs that show a strong commitment to social responsibility are more likely to embed social innovation into their curricula, research agendas, and community engagement efforts, ultimately fostering a culture of social good across all aspects of university life.

## **Indicator: Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices**

The "Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and practices" indicator evaluates how effectively a HEI fosters an inclusive and equitable environment for all students, staff, and faculty. This indicator encompasses formal policies and practices that promote diversity, ensure equal opportunities for all individuals, and create an inclusive environment where all members feel respected, valued, and supported. Effective DEI policies help in addressing historical and systemic inequalities, ensuring that marginalized groups have equal access to opportunities and resources. The focus is on creating an environment that values and celebrates diversity, promotes fairness, and ensures that all individuals can thrive.

### **Areas:**

**Presence of formal diversity, equity, and inclusion policies:** This area assesses whether the institution has formal, written policies that explicitly address diversity, equity, and inclusion. These policies are foundational in setting the tone for the university's commitment to DEI. A strong presence of such policies demonstrates that the institution recognizes the importance of diversity and inclusion and has taken steps to ensure equitable practices are in place. Policies often cover areas such as recruitment, admissions, retention, and support for underrepresented groups. Their existence is crucial for guiding the institution's efforts, aligning its operations with DEI principles, and providing a basis for accountability and continuous improvement.

**Perceived inclusiveness of university culture for underrepresented groups:** This area measures how inclusive the university culture is perceived to be, particularly by underrepresented groups, such as racial minorities, individuals with disabilities, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. The perception of inclusiveness is important because it reflects the lived experience of students, faculty, and staff. If underrepresented groups feel excluded, marginalized, or unsupported, even the most robust policies will not be effective. By understanding how inclusiveness is perceived, the institution can better assess whether its policies and practices are truly fostering an environment where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and able to contribute.

**Level of awareness among staff and students regarding DEI initiatives:** This area assesses the extent to which staff and students are aware of and understand the DEI initiatives in place at the institution. Awareness is critical because even the best DEI policies will have little impact if the university community is not aware of them or does not understand their importance. Increased awareness among staff and students can lead to more active participation in DEI-related activities, greater support for institutional initiatives, and a more inclusive atmosphere overall. It also ensures that DEI efforts are integrated into the daily practices and culture of the institution, rather than being seen as isolated or secondary concerns.

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## Indicator: Impartiality and independence of academic research

The "Impartiality and independence of academic research" indicator evaluates how well HEIs safeguard academic freedom and independence in research. This indicator reflects the extent to which researchers are free from external pressures, influences, or biases when conducting their research. The integrity of academic research is vital for producing reliable, credible, and unbiased findings that contribute to knowledge and societal progress. This indicator focuses on the protection of academic freedom, the transparency of funding processes, and the academic autonomy of staff and researchers, ensuring that academic inquiry is not influenced by outside interests or commercial pressures.

### Areas:

**Perceived level of academic freedom in conducting research:** This area assesses how the research community within the institution perceives the freedom to conduct research without undue influence or restriction. Academic freedom is a fundamental principle that enables researchers to explore ideas, challenge conventional wisdom, and pursue innovative solutions to pressing global issues. The perceived level of academic freedom within an HEI is crucial, as it indicates whether researchers feel safe to engage in critical, controversial, or unconventional research topics. Institutions that protect academic freedom are more likely to foster an environment conducive to high-quality, impactful, and independent research.

**The level of protection of academic freedom (e.g., in creating teaching materials, choosing textbooks, defining the teaching plan):** This area examines the protection of academic freedom within teaching and curriculum development. It looks at whether faculty members are free to design their courses, select teaching materials, and create syllabi based on academic merit rather than political, corporate, or ideological pressure. Protection of academic freedom in teaching allows educators to foster critical thinking,

diverse perspectives, and intellectual diversity in the classroom. This level of protection ensures that academic content remains grounded in scholarly inquiry and not swayed by external agendas, enhancing the overall educational experience for students.

**Perceived transparency in the allocation of research funding:** This area focuses on the transparency of the research funding process within the institution. It evaluates how clearly research grants are allocated and whether the funding process is open, fair, and based on merit. Transparency in research funding is essential for maintaining impartiality, as it ensures that research projects are supported based on academic quality and potential impact, rather than influenced by commercial interests or external pressures. A transparent allocation process helps researchers trust that funding decisions are made equitably, and it fosters an environment where academic research is driven by curiosity and scholarly rigor, not financial or political motivations.

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## Indicator: Stakeholder management and consultation processes

The "Stakeholder management and consultation processes" indicator measures how effectively HEIs engage with their stakeholders in decision-making and policy development. This indicator emphasizes the importance of involving various stakeholders—such as students, faculty, staff, industry partners, local communities, and policymakers—in the processes that shape the institution's strategies, research agendas, and policy changes. Effective stakeholder management is essential for ensuring that decisions reflect diverse perspectives, promote transparency, and build collaborative relationships, all of which contribute to a more sustainable and impactful institutional environment.

### Areas:

**Degree of involvement of key stakeholders in decision-making processes:** This area evaluates the extent to which key stakeholders are involved in shaping the decisions that affect the institution's strategic directions, policies, and initiatives. Stakeholders may include faculty, students, staff, local communities, government bodies, and industry partners. The degree of involvement can vary from consultative to collaborative, depending on how actively stakeholders are engaged in decision-making. Active involvement ensures that the perspectives and needs of different groups are considered, leading to more informed and inclusive decisions. In HEIs, fostering strong relationships with stakeholders in decision-making processes can enhance institutional credibility and responsiveness to the evolving demands of society.

**Frequency of consultations with external stakeholders regarding research or policy changes:** This area measures how often HEIs consult with external stakeholders—such as community groups, policymakers, and industry partners—on matters related to research priorities or policy changes. Regular consultations with external parties are crucial for ensuring that the institution's research agenda aligns with societal needs, industry demands, and global challenges. Frequent consultations promote a feedback loop, allowing HEIs to stay relevant and responsive to external expectations and potential changes in societal needs. It also ensures that research and policy decisions are not made in isolation but are informed by the knowledge, concerns, and expertise of stakeholders outside the university.



**Perceived effectiveness of communication with stakeholders regarding policies:** This area assesses how stakeholders perceive the communication effectiveness between the institution and its stakeholders regarding policy changes, strategic plans, or other institutional initiatives. Effective communication is fundamental to maintaining transparency, trust, and collaboration. This includes clear dissemination of information, timely updates, and the ability to engage stakeholders in meaningful dialogues. When communication is perceived as effective, stakeholders are more likely to support institutional initiatives and feel that their opinions are valued. In turn, this fosters stronger relationships between HEIs and their stakeholders, creating an environment of mutual understanding and respect.

## Indicator: Public communication and transparency

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The "Public communication and transparency" indicator measures how effectively HEIs communicate their research findings, activities, and overall operations to the public. Transparency and open communication are fundamental for building trust with external stakeholders, including the general public, potential collaborators, policymakers, and the media. By ensuring that research, policies, and institutional activities are openly communicated, HEIs can demonstrate their commitment to accountability, social responsibility, and the dissemination of knowledge. This fosters public support and engagement, which is critical for advancing the institution's mission and impact.

### Areas:

**Percentage of public reports on research findings and university activities:** This area measures the extent to which HEIs publish public reports that provide details on their research outputs, achievements, management decisions and operational activities. Public reports can include annual reports, research summaries, sustainability reports, or any other documents that detail the institution's performance and contributions to society. The higher the percentage of publicly available reports, the more transparent and open the institution is regarding its activities and progress. Publishing these reports helps ensure accountability, demonstrates the impact of the institution's research and initiatives, and keeps stakeholders informed about institutional developments and achievements. Additionally, it promotes trust between the institution and the public, stakeholders, and potential donors or partners.

**Proportion of public events or conferences held at the university:** This area assesses the frequency of public events, such as conferences, seminars, and workshops, that are hosted by the university. Public events provide an opportunity for HEIs to engage directly with external stakeholders, including the local community, industry representatives, researchers, policymakers, and the general public. Hosting such events is essential for promoting dialogue, sharing knowledge, and showcasing the university's research and educational achievements. Public events also serve as platforms for universities to demonstrate their commitment to public engagement, facilitate networking, and foster collaboration across different sectors. A higher proportion of public events indicates an institution's active efforts to connect with the broader community and promote open communication.

**Proportion of research initiatives with public engagement activities:** This area measures the extent to which research initiatives include public engagement activities,

such as community outreach, public lectures, workshops, or participatory research. Public engagement in research is crucial for ensuring that the knowledge generated by HEIs reaches and benefits a broader audience, particularly those who may not be directly involved in academic or scientific communities. Engaging the public in research helps raise awareness of critical issues, fosters a culture of science communication, and encourages public participation in the research process. By integrating public engagement into research initiatives, HEIs can make their research more accessible, impactful, and socially relevant, contributing to the broader societal good.

## Indicator: Community engagement in research to address social issues

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The "Community engagement in research to address social issues" indicator measures the extent to which HEIs actively collaborate with communities to conduct research aimed at solving pressing social issues. Research that directly addresses community needs and challenges plays a pivotal role in creating positive social change, improving public policy, and fostering social justice. By engaging communities in the research process, HEIs not only contribute to societal well-being but also enhance the relevance and applicability of their research outcomes. This indicator reflects the institution's commitment to conducting socially responsible research that directly impacts the lives of individuals and communities, particularly in areas such as social equity, public health, and environmental sustainability.

### Areas:

**Collaboration with the community on social impact research:** This area focuses on how HEIs collaborate with local communities, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders in research that aims to address social challenges. Collaborative research enables universities to harness local knowledge, experiences, and perspectives, ensuring that the research is contextually relevant and practical. This partnership can include joint research projects, community-based participatory research, or co-designing research agendas that reflect the priorities of the community. By actively involving the community in the research process, HEIs can create more impactful solutions that are grounded in real-world issues, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement among community members. Such collaborations enhance the social relevance of academic research and contribute to addressing critical issues like poverty, inequality, and public health challenges.

**Extent to which research has led to policy changes addressing social issues:** This area measures the degree to which research outcomes have led to tangible policy changes or improvements in addressing social issues. Research that influences public policy can drive systemic change, particularly in areas like social justice, healthcare, education, and environmental protection. HEIs play a crucial role in generating evidence that informs decision-making processes, helping policymakers develop more effective and equitable policies. By assessing the extent to which research has led to policy changes, this area highlights the impact that academic work can have on societal transformation. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of translating research findings into actionable recommendations that directly address the needs of communities and promote social equity.



**Level of alignment between research outcomes and social equity goals:** This area evaluates the degree to which research outcomes align with social equity objectives, such as reducing inequality, promoting access to education, ensuring fair economic opportunities, and advocating for marginalized populations. Research that prioritizes social equity ensures that its findings contribute to improving the lives of underserved communities and addressing disparities. The alignment between research outcomes and social equity goals is crucial in ensuring that the institution's research agenda actively contributes to a more just and inclusive society. A strong alignment demonstrates the institution's commitment to advancing social equity and its role in addressing systemic issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable groups.

# Governmental dimension

## Indicator: Diversity among university leadership

The “Diversity among university leadership” indicator focuses on ensuring that the leadership within the university reflects a diverse mix of backgrounds, including gender, ethnicity, and other key demographic factors. Diversity in leadership is crucial for fostering inclusive decision-making processes and ensuring that a wide range of perspectives are considered in the direction and strategies of the institution. Diverse leadership can drive innovation and create an environment that values equality and representation at all levels of university management.

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### Areas:

**Degree to which university leadership reflects diversity in terms of gender, ethnicity, and background:** This area measures the demographic diversity within the leadership of the university, specifically focusing on gender, ethnicity, but also other relevant social and cultural factors. It is important because a diverse leadership team can influence policies that are more inclusive and reflective of the broader community within the institution. It helps challenge traditional power dynamics and contributes to creating a more balanced and equitable governance structure.

**Extent to which leadership development programs prioritize diversity and inclusion:** This area evaluates how university leadership programs are designed to actively promote and integrate diversity and inclusion in their training and development activities. It is essential because such programs ensure that potential future leaders understand the importance of inclusivity and are equipped to address diversity-related challenges in their roles. Prioritizing diversity in leadership development leads to a more inclusive leadership pipeline, which is crucial for maintaining equitable governance.

**Degree to which recruitment and promotion processes in leadership roles promote diversity:** This area focuses on whether the university’s recruitment and promotion policies encourage diverse candidates to apply and advance into leadership roles. It is important as it ensures that the processes are designed to identify and support underrepresented groups, thus promoting equity in leadership. Encouraging diversity in these processes can help break down systemic barriers and provide opportunities for leaders from varied backgrounds to emerge.

## Indicator: Transparent and accountable decision-making process

The “Transparent and accountable decision-making process” indicator focuses on ensuring that university decision-making processes are clear, documented, and open to scrutiny. Transparency in decision-making is crucial for building trust within the institution and among external stakeholders. Accountability in these processes ensures that decisions are made responsibly and in alignment with the institution’s values, goals, and regulatory requirements.

## Areas:

### **Extent to which decision-making processes are documented and publicly accessible:**

This area evaluates how well decision-making processes are recorded and made available to the public. It is important because transparency in documentation allows stakeholders, including students, staff, and external partners, to understand how decisions are made. Public access to these processes ensures that the university is held accountable for its actions, fostering a culture of openness and trust.

**Level of stakeholder participation in decision-making processes:** This area assesses how actively stakeholders are involved in the decision-making process. It is critical because inclusive decision-making ensures that the needs and perspectives of all relevant parties are considered. Promoting stakeholder participation helps prevent decisions that may disproportionately affect certain groups and increases the likelihood that outcomes will align with the community's needs and expectations.

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**Timeliness of feedback mechanisms for decisions made by governing bodies:** This area measures how quickly feedback from stakeholders is sought and integrated into the decision-making process. Timely feedback mechanisms are essential for ensuring that decisions can be adjusted or refined based on input from those affected. It also enables the governing bodies to be responsive to concerns and to make improvements in future decision-making, fostering an environment of continuous improvement and responsiveness.

## Indicator: Compliance with applicable EU laws and regulations

The “Compliance with applicable EU laws and regulations” indicator focuses on ensuring that the university's practices are in alignment with relevant EU laws and regulations. Compliance with these regulations is crucial for legal and ethical operations within the EU framework. It ensures that the university meets its obligations while maintaining trust with students, staff, and external stakeholders. This indicator stands out as relevant due to the fact that certain HEIs are not members of the EU, but are in the admission process, or are candidates, as a result of which they must harmonize their legislation with EU laws.

## Areas:

**Extent to which organizational practices align with EU regulations:** This area evaluates how well the university's operations, policies, and procedures comply with EU regulations. It is important because adherence to EU laws ensures that the university operates within the legal framework and minimizes the risk of legal issues, fines, or reputational damage. Compliance with EU regulations helps maintain the institution's credibility and its ability to operate internationally.

**Frequency of internal audits to ensure compliance with EU laws:** This area assesses how often the university conducts internal audits to review compliance with EU regulations. Regular audits are essential for identifying any gaps or areas of non-compliance. They ensure that the institution remains compliant over time, helping to avoid legal challenges and enabling the university to make timely corrections when necessary.

## **Extent to which the organization provides training to employees regarding EU regulations:**

This area looks at how well the university educates its employees about EU regulations and compliance requirements. Training is critical because it helps ensure that all staff members are aware of their responsibilities in maintaining compliance with EU laws. Providing regular training supports a culture of legal awareness and reduces the risk of inadvertent violations of regulations.

## **Indicator: Anti-corruption policies and practices**

The “Anti-corruption policies and practices” indicator evaluates the university’s commitment to maintaining integrity and transparency by preventing corruption. The establishment of clear anti-corruption policies is essential for fostering a culture of ethical conduct and trust, both within the university and in its interactions with external stakeholders.

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### **Areas:**

#### **Degree to which the university has clear anti-corruption policies and practices in place:**

This area measures the existence and clarity of formal anti-corruption policies within the university. A well-defined anti-corruption policy is essential because it provides a framework for ethical behavior, sets clear standards for staff and students, and ensures that all members are aware of unacceptable practices. It also strengthens the university’s commitment to transparency and accountability.

**Whistleblower protection mechanisms for reporting corruption:** This area assesses the university’s efforts to protect individuals who report corruption or unethical behavior. Whistleblower protection mechanisms are critical for encouraging reporting of misconduct without fear of retaliation. They contribute to creating a safer environment for individuals to expose unethical practices, thereby improving the overall transparency of the institution and maintaining public trust.

#### **Level of employee and student awareness of anti-corruption policies and practices:**

This area gauges how well employees and students understand the university’s anti-corruption policies. Raising awareness is crucial for ensuring that everyone within the university community is informed about the policies and knows how to act if they encounter corruption. A high level of awareness increases the likelihood that individuals will adhere to the university’s standards and contribute to maintaining an ethical environment.

## **Indicator: Digital readiness and cybersecurity**

The “Digital readiness and cybersecurity” indicator assesses the university’s preparedness to handle the digital age’s demands, focusing on both its technological infrastructure and its ability to protect sensitive information. Digital readiness is essential for enabling modern learning, teaching, and administrative functions, while cybersecurity is crucial for safeguarding institutional data, student information, and research outputs.

### **Areas:**

**Degree to which the university has a comprehensive digital readiness strategy (e.g., digital infrastructure, e-learning tools):** This area evaluates the extent to which the

university has planned and developed the infrastructure necessary to support digital initiatives. A comprehensive digital readiness strategy ensures that the institution is equipped with up-to-date tools, platforms, and resources to provide high-quality online education and efficient administrative services. It is crucial for staying competitive and adapting to technological advances.

**Level of cybersecurity measures in place to protect university data and systems:** This area examines the university's cybersecurity framework, including its ability to defend against cyber threats and unauthorized access. Robust cybersecurity measures are essential to protect sensitive information, including student records, financial data, and intellectual property. These measures ensure that the university's digital environment remains secure, reducing the risk of data breaches and financial or reputational damage.

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**Frequency of testing and cybersecurity risk assessment:** This area looks at how often the university conducts tests and assessments of its cybersecurity systems. Regular risk assessments and testing are crucial to identify vulnerabilities, evaluate the effectiveness of existing security protocols, and adapt to emerging threats. By conducting frequent assessments, the university ensures that its cybersecurity measures remain strong and responsive to new challenges.

## Indicator: Data privacy and security policies and practices

The "Data privacy and security policies and practices" indicator evaluates the university's commitment to protecting personal data in line with legal requirements, focusing on compliance with regulations such as Data privacy and security policies and practices (GDPR) and national data protection laws. As universities collect, process, and store large amounts of personal and sensitive data, it is essential to ensure robust data privacy and security policies to prevent breaches and misuse of information.

### Areas:

**Degree to which the university adheres to GDPR and other data protection (National) regulations:** This area assesses the university's compliance with (GDPR) and other relevant national data protection laws. Adherence to these regulations ensures that the institution respects individuals' privacy rights and handles personal data lawfully and securely. Compliance is vital to avoid legal consequences, financial penalties, and damage to the university's reputation.

**Level of staff and student awareness regarding data privacy policies and practices:** This area examines how well staff and students understand the university's data privacy policies. It is essential for individuals to be aware of their rights, as well as their responsibilities regarding personal data, to ensure that sensitive information is handled appropriately. Increased awareness helps mitigate the risk of accidental data breaches and ensures better compliance with data protection practices across the institution.

**Degree to which the university regularly updates its data privacy policies to comply with changing regulations:** This area evaluates how frequently the university revises its data privacy policies to stay aligned with evolving legal requirements. As data protection laws and standards change, the university must adapt its practices to ensure ongoing compliance. Regular updates not only ensure legal compliance but also demonstrate the

university's commitment to safeguarding personal data in an increasingly complex regulatory landscape.

## Indicator: Risk management and ethical conduct

The “Risk management and ethical conduct” indicator measures the university's commitment to managing risks and upholding high ethical standards throughout its operations. Effective risk management processes, combined with clear ethical guidelines, are essential for maintaining the institution's integrity, transparency, and public trust. This includes ensuring ethical conduct in decision-making, while proactively addressing potential risks.

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### Areas:

**Clarity of ethical guidelines and their enforcement across the organization:** This area assesses how well the university's ethical guidelines are defined and communicated, and how consistently they are enforced. Clear ethical guidelines ensure that all members of the organization understand their obligations and are held accountable for their actions. This is vital for maintaining ethical standards across all aspects of university operations and preventing unethical practices that could harm the institution's reputation.

**Frequency of risk training and awareness programs for staff:** This area evaluates how often the university provides risk management training and awareness programs for its staff. Regular training ensures that staff members are equipped to identify and mitigate potential risks. It also raises awareness about ethical considerations in daily operations, helping to reduce the likelihood of actions that could compromise the institution's integrity.

**Integrating ethical considerations into financial and administrative decisions:** This area examines the degree to which ethical considerations are incorporated into the university's financial and administrative decisions. Integrating ethics into these decisions ensures that resources are used responsibly and fairly, promoting transparency and accountability. It helps prevent corruption, conflicts of interest, and ensures that financial decisions align with the university's values and long-term goals.

**Extent to which the code of ethics is implemented and followed across all levels of the organization:** This area assesses how well the university's code of ethics is applied at all organizational levels, from leadership to staff and students. A strong, consistently followed code of ethics fosters a culture of integrity and ensures that ethical behavior is embedded in the university's operations. It also creates a foundation for addressing any ethical violations promptly and fairly.

## Indicator: Ethics and integrity training for staff and students

The “Ethics and integrity training for staff and students” indicator measures the university's commitment to promoting a culture of ethics and integrity among its staff and students. Regular ethics training and the integration of ethical principles into the curriculum are essential for ensuring that all members of the university community understand their roles in upholding ethical standards. It helps prevent misconduct and fosters an environment of trust and accountability.

## Areas:

**Frequency of ethics training and awareness programs for staff:** This area evaluates how often the university provides ethics training and awareness programs for its staff. Regular training equips staff with the knowledge and skills needed to recognize ethical dilemmas and handle them appropriately. It also emphasizes the importance of maintaining ethical behavior in both professional and personal conduct, contributing to a positive organizational culture and mitigating potential risks.

## Level of integration of ethics and integrity principles into the curriculum for students:

This area assesses how well ethics and integrity principles are integrated into the curriculum for students across various disciplines. By incorporating ethical considerations into academic programs, the university ensures that students are not only academically prepared but also ethically responsible. This is particularly important for preparing students to face ethical challenges in their professional lives and fostering a sense of social responsibility.

**Frequency of ethics training and awareness programs for students:** This area focuses on the frequency of ethics training and awareness programs designed specifically for students. Providing regular ethics training helps students understand the importance of integrity in both academic and social contexts. It encourages them to act ethically in their interactions, decision-making, and academic work, reducing the likelihood of academic dishonesty and promoting a respectful, responsible campus environment.

## Indicator: Data training for staff

The “Data training for staff” indicator measures the university’s efforts to ensure that its staff are equipped with the necessary digital and data literacy skills to perform their duties effectively. With the increasing reliance on data and digital tools in higher education, it is crucial to provide staff with ongoing training to ensure they can work with data responsibly, securely, and efficiently. This also helps to foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptability in an evolving digital landscape.

## Areas:


**Digital literacy programs are included in regular staff training:** This area focuses on the inclusion of digital literacy programs as part of the university’s regular staff training. It ensures that all staff members, regardless of their role, are kept up to date with the latest digital tools and technologies. Regular training in digital literacy is crucial for ensuring staff can handle digital systems, navigate data responsibly, and adapt to evolving technologies, which contributes to more effective work processes and greater institutional efficiency.

**Personalized training programs based on staff roles and responsibilities:** This area assesses the degree to which digital training is tailored to meet the specific needs of staff members, depending on their roles and responsibilities. Personalized training ensures that staff receive relevant skills that directly impact their job performance. For example, staff involved in data management or IT-related tasks may require more specialized training compared to staff in administrative or teaching roles. This targeted approach maximizes training effectiveness and supports the efficient use of university resources.



**Extent to which digital literacy is incorporated into the university's employee onboarding process:** This area evaluates how digital literacy is integrated into the university's onboarding process for new employees. Incorporating digital literacy from the start ensures that new staff members are immediately familiar with the digital tools and systems they will use. It fosters a smoother transition into their roles and reduces potential frustrations, helping them become productive more quickly while ensuring compliance with digital and data security standards.





# SHIFT



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