

University of Pécs

Green University Program

Sustainability Report

2024

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<http://greenmetric.ui.ac.id>

[Strategy \(pte.hu\)](http://strategy.pte.hu)

<http://zoldegyetem.pte.hu>

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Introduction

The University of Pécs aims to create and operate a sustainable campus, which will be achieved through the active participation and involvement of students and university staff. The primary target group of the programme is the university community, including students and staff representing the entire spectrum of the institutional hierarchy. As part of its commitment to sustainability, the university **launched the UP Green University Program in 2016**, focusing on environmental, social and economic sustainability. In order to further strengthen the sustainability efforts represented by the programme, the Board of Trustees of the Universitas Quinqueecclesiensis Foundation (UQF) unanimously decided to establish the UP Green University Program Office (Green UP) and the Sustainable Development Coordination Council of the UP. **The mission of the UP Green University Program Office is to think systemically and, with the support of the Sustainable Development Coordination Council, to be the Green Compass of the University of Pécs and to enforce the principles of sustainability in both university operations and in the fields of science and education. As the organizational unit responsible for the operational implementation of the sustainability strategy, the Program Office prioritizes a bottom-up, community-oriented approach.** This approach allows the transformation to be based on the actual needs and initiatives of the university community – students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff. The aim of the programme is to encourage all stakeholders to take active action, contributing to the creation of a more liveable, sustainable and conscious university ecosystem.

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1. The fundamental values and mission of the University of Pécs

The University of Pécs is an independent higher education institution that remains true to its traditions and values while maintaining a modern outlook and commitment to quality. It operates with an efficient and flexible faculty and central organisational structure. The institution is student- and community-friendly and, as an international campus, provides competitive knowledge, while also serving as a catalyst for innovation and economic development as a university. The UP is a reliable partner to the domestic and international higher education community and actively cooperates with institutions in the economic, social and artistic spheres.

The University's core values are defined by the duality of tradition and innovation, which also form the basis of its organisational culture. Its educational, research and artistic programmes are built on historical foundations, yet remain open to changes in the social and economic environment. Responsible and strategic management makes decisions that promote both sustainable growth and international competitiveness. The aim of the University of Pécs is to contribute to the sustainable development of Hungary and the European Union in the fields of education, research, science, arts and healthcare. The institution aims to play a prominent role at the regional level in promoting intellectual achievement, civic well-being and economic development, while creating an environment that fosters innovative thinking and creativity.

The University treats the strengthening of university-centred innovation and research, as well as the involvement of the arts in improving the quality of community life, as strategic priorities. It pays particular attention to the development of data sciences, with a special focus on the challenges and opportunities presented by artificial intelligence. As a leading higher education institution in the South Transdanubia Region, the UP is not only a key player in intellectual training and lifelong learning, but also a key research and development partner for industrial and economic players in the region. At the same time, it is the centre of the region's sporting life, supporting the development of both mass and competitive sports.

The University of Pécs is an inspiring and creative intellectual environment that sees success as achievable through the synergy of academic rigour, individual diligence and community cooperation. The key to its success is its committed community of lecturers, researchers and staff with international experience, its constantly evolving teaching and research methods, the cultural values conveyed through the arts, and its inclusive, open-minded student community that emphasises the importance of personal development. The institution strives to maintain the prestige of knowledge transfer, improve the quality of student life, and support individual and community development.

In organizing and developing the quality of its entire training portfolio, the UP places particular emphasis on the consistent application of the principles set out in the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG) and on training highly qualified professionals with practical knowledge and professional and personal competences who meet the needs and expectations of the constantly changing labour market. practical knowledge, professional and personal competences, who, after graduating from the university or even during their studies, become active and effective participants in the domestic and international labour market and the business sector. In addition, graduates of the University of Pécs contribute to the well-being of their immediate and wider environment by sharing and applying their knowledge.

It is important for the University of Pécs to operate and inspire a network of open professional workshops in order to create value at the individual and community level by exploiting synergies between different scientific fields and through cooperation between people working in a wide variety of areas.

The university performs key tasks at the national level in the region's healthcare system, keeping in mind the principle of patient- and people-centred care, which it strives to achieve primarily by improving access to healthcare services. In order to ensure equal opportunities, the University of Pécs rejects all forms of discrimination and pays particular attention to social inclusion, helping disadvantaged groups and strengthening the role of women in its training, research and third mission activities.

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*In the future, the University of Pécs will be
a leader at the regional level and
at the national level,
and authoritative at the international level
player.*

In order to achieve this vision, the University's governing bodies and citizens will do everything in their power to operate an institution that is visible and influential at the international level, in line with the expectations set by the maintainer, serving the national economy and, through it, the regional economy, keeping in mind the challenges of the future and the changing needs of the labour market, and maintaining a training and research portfolio that is responsive to these challenges and thus attractive to investor capital. In order to realise this vision, they also promote the University of Pécs to play a decisive role in cross-border, regional economic development and innovation tasks, as well as to train employees with digital skills and the ability to use modern technology for the economic development zone.

The vision of the University of Pécs offers every member of the university community and every organisational unit the opportunity for personal and organisational development, while also obliging everyone to find, within the framework of the UP Strategy, those strategic goals that they are best able to achieve [1].



Photo: The 10 faculties of the University of Pécs

2. The strategic goals of the University of Pécs

The University's strategic objectives and their metrics are set out in part by the requirements formulated by the maintainer, the Universitas Quinqueecclesiensis Foundation, and in part by the public service financing agreement concluded with the Ministry of Culture and Innovation in terms of state customer expectations. These defining frameworks are complemented by the objectives arising from the University's own mission, vision and institutional expectations, faculty-level strategies, and guidelines arising from domestic and international requirements, particularly those imposed by the European Union.



Figure 1: Strategic objectives of the University of Pécs

Figure 1. clearly shows that **sustainability is a flagship objective for the UP.**

Environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability aspects must be implemented in all dimensions of higher education and in the operation of the University of Pécs itself.

3. Results

3.1. Results of environmental responsibility

The University of Pécs has achieved significant domestic and international success in the field of environmental sustainability.

In 2024, the University of Pécs won the **"Cyclist-Friendly Workplace"** title for the fourth consecutive year [2].

On the initiative of the University of Pécs, fourteen Hungarian universities signed a framework agreement in 2022 to establish the Sustainability Platform of Hungarian Universities alliance. The aim of the alliance is to share best practices in the field of sustainability, organise regular joint actions and develop closer cooperation for sustainable development. In 2024, the platform expanded with two new members: **John von Neumann University** and **Széchenyi István University** [3]. **In 2024, Platform member universities organized nine joint actions or shared good practices in sustainability with each other.**

In 2024, the University of Pécs competed for the ninth time in the international **"UI GreenMetric World University Rankings"** program and **finished in an impressive 25th place among the world's "green universities", with 1,477 universities from 95 countries participating** [4]. It was ranked the best among the **13 Hungarian universities in the ranking** for the fourth time, earning it **the title of the greenest university in Hungary once again.**

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3. WORLD RANKINGS HISTORY

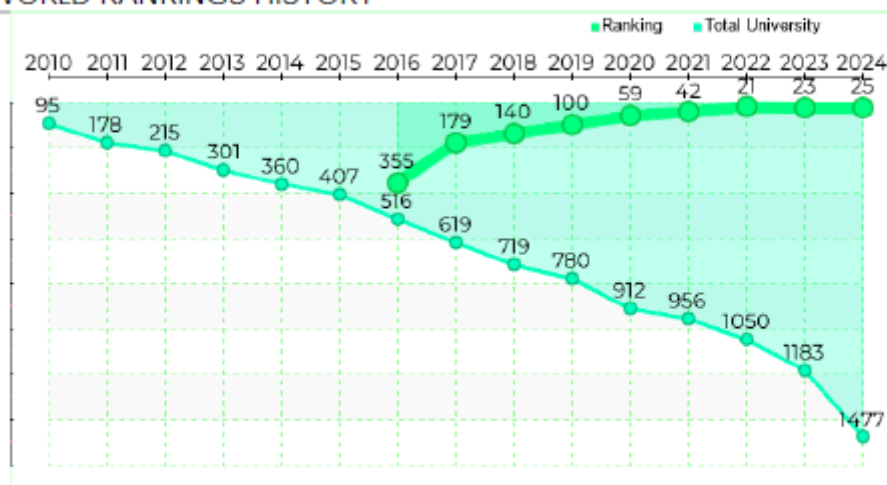


Figure 3.1 World Rankings History Diagram

Figure 2: The UP's position in the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings
Between 2016 and 2024

The services related to the operation of the University of Pécs have a significant environmental impact, which is why the institution makes a special effort to mitigate these impacts and adapt to environmental changes. To this end, the UP consciously builds the conditions for sustainable development and is committed to implementing sustainable operations. The university has taken significant steps in several areas: it has introduced energy- and water-saving solutions, expanded the use of renewable energy sources, renewed its selective waste collection system, reinforced its PET-free university concept, and regularly uses electric vehicles. In addition, the number of sustainability-themed training courses, research projects and publications is constantly growing, and great emphasis continues to be placed on shaping individual and community attitudes.

As Hungary's greenest university, the UP is open to any innovation that contributes to reducing its ecological footprint. Its primary goal is to develop and promote environmentally conscious thinking, **driven by the UP Green University Program.**

The institution's exemplary role in higher education places further responsibility on it: not only must it continue its efforts towards sustainability, but it must also actively participate in the networking process as an initiator and, in cooperation with other domestic universities, help to promote sustainable development goals more widely. Through its social shaping activities, **the Green University Program of the UP** shapes the attitudes towards sustainability not only of the university's citizens, but also of the members of the Sustainability Platform of Hungarian Universities and the employees of companies and organisations in the region. Awareness-raising actions, events, campaigns and initiatives focus on priority areas such as lifelong learning, quality education, energy management, climate protection, waste and water management, sustainable urban development, zero-emission transport, protection of terrestrial ecosystems, health and well-being, and reduction of inequalities. In today's world of information overload, it is particularly important for the UP to work with its partners to raise awareness of the many aspects of sustainable development through coordinated programmes and joint actions, exploiting the synergies inherent in cooperation.

The **National Energy and Climate Plan** and the **National Energy Strategy** give priority to decarbonization targets. In order for Hungary to become a winner in the "green economy", it is necessary to create a knowledge base and competence centre that will enable domestic economic actors to be competitive in the field of various decarbonisation technologies. A new national laboratory will bring together and stimulate domestic research and development in the field of renewable energies. The University of Pécs has launched a project with nine consortium partners. This is the **National Laboratory for Renewable Energy** [5], which, under the leadership of the University of Pécs, is the third priority national-level organization contributing to Hungary's development after the National Laboratory on Human Reproduction and National Laboratory of Virology. The "National Laboratory for Renewable Energy" project is being implemented under the Széchenyi Plan Plus program, with two main thematic areas: hydrogen technologies and carbon dioxide recovery. The National Laboratory for Renewable Energy will lay the scientific, technological, legal, economic and industrial foundations for low-carbon energy technologies, in particular H₂ production, transport, storage, use and CO₂ recovery. The two technology clusters can play a significant role in sector integration, strengthening domestic security of supply and achieving decarbonization targets, working in parallel and complementing each other.

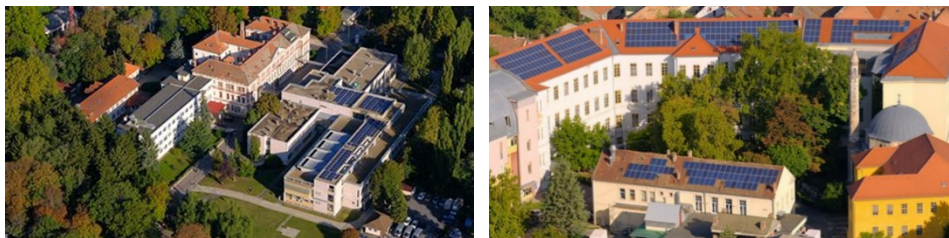
The strategy for the Hydrogen Centre, a new, independent organisational unit created through the Laboratory tender, has been developed. The definition of the main development directions and specific objectives has made it possible to direct the work of the research groups towards common goals with new momentum and in an organised manner. When developing the strategy, the UP paid particular attention to defining R&D&I activities that are relevant to industrial needs, practical in nature and support service competence through research and development. Taking into account the specific characteristics of hydrogen technologies and domestic conditions, and exploiting the university's competencies, two main strategic directions emerged.

The first strategic direction is the "infrastructure technology development" competence, which includes all projects aimed at the technical and economic modelling, design and integration of hydrogen technology infrastructure into the entire value chain, whether for system balancing or mobility purposes. The second strategic direction is "energy container" product development, which begins with prototype production and aims to develop a scalable, modular hydrogen energy storage system at the product level. The work of the Hydrogen Centre is carried out at three faculties (Faculty of Business and Economics, Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology, Faculty of Sciences) and within several research groups.

In 2024, the University of Pécs implemented a wide range of energy efficiency measures to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impact and increase the use of renewable energy sources. Several university buildings switched from gas-based systems to biomass-fired district heating, which contributed to a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. To encourage energy-saving behaviour, programmable radiator valves have been installed, allowing room heating to be regulated and unnecessary energy consumption to be avoided.

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The University of Pécs is constantly working to implement **energy-saving measures** in the short, medium and long term. It strongly supports energy-efficient systems. These **are** implemented and monitored **using and involving information and communication technology**. The energy efficiency potential of the university's campuses and buildings is continuously assessed. The aim is to prioritise sustainability considerations in order to optimise energy consumption. **Building management systems** ensure the continuous monitoring of heat and electricity consumption in a number of buildings. The modernisation and standardization of these systems has begun and will continue in the coming years. Following the successful and highly profitable installations of previous years, solar panels were installed at further UP sites in 2024. The project will continue in the coming years.



Regular monitoring tests are carried out on energy consumption. **Energy management software has been purchased** to track the energy consumption of UP sites, the energy production of solar panels and the associated costs. The sustainability function of the software supports the UP's efforts to reduce emissions. It also supports the setting of GHG reduction targets, which facilitates the compilation of carbon inventories in accordance with the GHG Protocol and the definition and monitoring of climate targets.

The modernization of lighting is a priority. Thousands of outdated light sources have been replaced with high-efficiency LED solutions, contributing to a reduction in energy consumption while still meeting brightness and safety requirements.

The UP has also begun replacing outdoor lighting with sensor-controlled systems that respond to dusk in order to further minimise unnecessary energy consumption. To further support energy efficiency, it has introduced shading systems to reduce natural heat gain, thereby minimizing the need for air conditioning and reducing the ecological footprint of its buildings.

In addition to these developments, the architectural design of the university buildings also incorporates key elements of green architecture. The layout of the spaces allows for natural ventilation, reducing the need for artificial cooling and ventilation systems. Large glass surfaces and carefully designed structures make maximum use of natural sunlight, which not only reduces the need for artificial lighting but also improves the comfort and well-being of those using the rooms. Several buildings have green roofs, which serve as effective thermal insulation, reduce heat absorption and help manage rainwater, while also offering environmental and aesthetic benefits.

The commitment to sustainability is also evident in various units of the University of Pécs: for example, the main building of the Research Institute for Viticulture and Enology at Szentmiklós hill was completely renovated as part of the RRF project [6]. The investment represented a step forward not only from an aesthetic but also from a functional point of view: the building was fitted with new windows and doors, a state-of-the-art heating system and modern thermal insulation, which significantly improved energy efficiency and reduced environmental impact.

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The University of Pécs also took a pioneering step by becoming a co-founder of the **Pannon Energy Community** in cooperation with UQF [7]. This model allows the university to bypass the traditional electricity grid and purchase renewable energy from external producers, as well as make better use of surplus energy from its own solar energy systems. This decentralised energy supply model supports long-term resilience and makes the university a model for institutional energy transition.

Tettye Forrásház Ltd. and the **Hydrogen Centre of the University of Pécs** have signed a cooperation agreement on the innovative H2 project, which investigates the cascading use of hydrogen technologies [8]. Under the partnership agreement, the utility provider and the University's Department of Hydrogen Economy will jointly evaluate the possibilities of integrating hydrogen solutions into water and energy systems.

From an educational perspective, the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology has launched the third year of the postgraduate training program in fuel cell and hydrogen engineering [9] and introduced an elective course entitled "**Hydrogen-based Technologies**", for which 29 students enrolled in the spring of 2024. These initiatives aim to build national expertise in hydrogen technologies and promote interdisciplinary collaboration. In 2024, the Faculty of Law of the University of Pécs launched unique training programs: **ESG-oriented economic law consultant and specialist lawyer (LLM)** program [10]. The aim was to provide students with theoretical and practical skills in the fields of environmental, social and responsible corporate governance law. The "**Sustainability Reporting and Data Analysis Specialist**" course introduced by the Faculty of Business and Economics presents sustainability reporting frameworks and standards such as ESRS, GRI and CSRD. It emphasises the importance of accountability and transparent communication. Students learn how to effectively manage their relationships with key stakeholders and investors, emphasising transparency and ESG considerations.

In the field of energy, the university is actively involved in international cooperation and project development:

- The **H2SCALE** project aims to develop scalable, green hydrogen-based economic models in the Danube region [11].

- led by the University of Amsterdam **SUSGREEN Clean Energy Transition Partnership** [12], in which the UP will investigate the replacement of grey hydrogen with green hydrogen in next-generation biofuel production processes.

The University of Pécs' commitment to sustainability goes beyond infrastructure and energy systems and also includes efforts to promote environmentally conscious behaviour among members of the community. In 2024, students from the **Babits Mihály High School of the University of Pécs** took part in a community environmental project for the third time, with the aim of supporting a family in need. With the support of the UP Green University Program, the initiative focused on the production of **paper briquettes** from recycled materials, including waste paper, sawdust and rainwater. Approximately 100 students participated in the programme and received community service points for their work. A total of approximately 2 cubic metres of briquettes were produced and donated to a local family for the heating season [13].

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Photo: Paper briquettes

Sustainable energy sources and hydrogen technology were the focus of the Simonyi Hackathon, a student ideas competition organized by the **UP BEDC Business Development Centre**. The 21 participating teams had to develop an educational campaign and concept for the use of alternative energy sources. Corporate partners also took part in the event, supporting the teams as experts. Students from all faculties of the University of Pécs were represented in the competition [14].

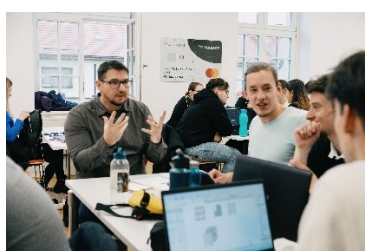


Photo: Simonyi Hackathon

The UP Green University Program "smuggled" everyday **green ideas on the lock screen** of IT devices on the topics of energy conservation and conscious energy use.



Photo: Lock screen

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The environmentally friendly and energy-efficient renovation of Kádárkocka, a residential building built exclusively from natural materials on pile foundations, green roofs, a wide variety of water recycling solutions, straw and adobe as building materials – these were among the ideas featured in the entries for the **"Design your own eco-house!" competition** organized by. The competition was organized by the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology of the University of Pécs with the involvement of a strategic partner, and was open to student teams from all Hungarian and foreign technical colleges of architecture. In addition to highlighting a new aspect of construction culture for future architects, the competition brought a new perspective to their professional development, giving them the opportunity to freely try out different solutions [15].



Photo: "Design your own eco-house!" competition

The sustainability principles of the University of Pécs are in line with the guidelines of the **National Waste Management Plan (2021–2027)**, which aim to reduce consumption and waste production, as well as to repair, reuse and recycle worn-out products. The University organizes its waste management according to the 5R principle (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose, recycle), while the quantity and quality of waste generated is playing an increasingly important role in its procurement. The UP Green University website shares tips, best practices, infographics and links on how to reduce waste production in everyday life.

All types of waste generated on campus are collected, transported and professionally treated in accordance with the current Hungarian waste management law and regulations, through a contractual partner (MOHU). The European Union has laid down strict guidelines stipulating that as much of the waste generated in Member States as possible should be recycled so that it can enter the circular economy.

The University of Pécs' sustainability and waste management measures for 2024-2025 focus on increasing the rate of selective waste collection and selling secondary raw materials recovered from waste, which is beneficial not only from an environmental but also from an economic point of view.

In 2019, the University of Pécs became the first Hungarian higher education institution to stop purchasing plastic bottled water and drinks, becoming a **PET-free PTE**. Instead, it installed free water filling stations, **with more than 500 "water islands" now available**. In parallel with the development of infrastructure, the UP places great emphasis on raising awareness and changing attitudes. The "Bring your own water bottle, and refill it!" campaigns encourage students and staff to switch from single-use plastic bottles to reusable bottles, promoting sustainable water consumption practices and reducing plastic waste.

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Shoot4Earth! A global film-making marathon encouraged participants to draw attention to the problem of global food waste, which results in around 1.3 billion tonnes of food being thrown away each year, by making short films of up to one minute in length using their mobile phones. Entry was free and anyone could join, whether a beginner or an experienced filmmaker, on the condition that the film had to be completed within 24 hours. As a special feature, films made by artificial intelligence were also eligible to participate in the competition in 2024, further expanding the creative possibilities [16].

A second-year graphic design student at the Faculty of Music and Visual Arts of the University of Pécs achieved significant international success in Berlin at the **Pro Carton Young Designers Award** competition, one of the most prestigious European design competitions in the field of **sustainable packaging**. The student won third place in the Food & Drinks category with his packaging design called "**Sweet Drops**" [17].



Photo: Pro Carton Young Designers Award – Sweet Drops packaging

More than 40% of the University of Pécs's campuses are covered with vegetation. Not only is the expansion of green spaces a priority for the university, but so is the regular maintenance of its parks. **Although the possibilities for afforestation are limited due to the geographical conditions, the University of Pécs still considers the further increase of the proportion of areas covered with vegetation and trees to be a strategic goal.** In the area of green space maintenance, the Green Group replaced the previously felled trees in 2024 as part of the afforestation program.

The UP has signed an agreement with Mecsekerdő Ltd. with the aim of establishing long-term cooperation in line with the UN's 17 sustainable development goals, primarily through **joint tree planting programmes and measures to keep forests clean** [18]. The stylish celebration of World Forest Day was a project carried out in cooperation between the UP Green University Program and Mecsekerdő Ltd. in which a total of 400 oak trees were planted by university citizens and Mecsekerdő Ltd. employees [19].

Nearly fifty people collected rubbish in the Mecsek as part of the UP Green University programme . The campaign involved pupils from the UP-Affiliated Elementary School and High School No.1 , as well as staff from the Chancellery, the Teacher Training Centre, the University Library and Knowledge Centre, the Green University Program and Mecsekerdő Ltd. [20].

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The **YouPick! Volunteer for a Clean Hungary** program, Hungary's largest volunteer litter collection campaign, was held for the 12th time. As in previous years, the UP practice schools also took part in this noble initiative, following the philosophy of the UP Green University Program. The main goal of the campaign is to raise awareness among children, parents and teachers about the importance of environmental protection. The school students enthusiastically cleaned the surrounding streets and, as a result of their work, removed several bags of household waste from the area. At the same time, the joint litter collection increased the children's awareness and made them realise that they must work together for the environment [21].



Photo: YouPick! volunteer litter collection campaign

The "**Our Environment – Our Health – Our Shared Future**" competition took place at the UP Botanical Garden. More than 200 preschoolers and primary school pupils entered the competition. The eco-game was judged by teachers from the UP-Affiliated Practical Elementary School, High School, and Kindergarten, as well as staff from the UP Botanical Garden and the UP Green University Program. All teams finished the competition with a gold rating [22].



Photo: "Our environment – our health – our shared future" competition

The UP-Affiliated Elementary School and High School No.1 and the UP Green University Program launched an environmentally conscious, playful camp for children aged 6-10 in the summer of 2024. The camp was aimed at children who care about protecting the environment and want to gain insight into the most pressing challenges of sustainability through playful, experimental tasks. The programs included learning about renewable energy sources, the environmentally friendly packaging materials of the future, the importance of selective waste collection and the basics of sustainable development [23].

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Photo: Ecoadventure camp 2024

The UP College for Sustainable Development, in cooperation with Green University Program of the UP, launched the **UP Bird-Friendly University** program, which involved installing bird feeders and birdhouses with unique graphics created by students, and bat boxes promoting ecological diversity in the park of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology the University of Pécs, which was awarded the **Bird-Friendly Workplace** title for adapting the institution to a bird-friendly environment. The faculty's teachers, staff and students will monitor and maintain the birdhouses in the future, and will continuously feed the birds during the winter. The creation of a bird-friendly workplace does not end there; there are plans to install other types of birdhouses in the future so that even more species can become useful "property occupiers". Bird baths, insect and bee hotels, and snail hotels will also be installed in the institution's park to maintain ecological balance [24]. Under the auspices of the UP Bird-Friendly University, additional bird feeders and nesting boxes have been installed at other faculties of the university.



Photo: UP Bird-Friendly University

The water management measures and initiatives of the University of Pécs are in line with national and global sustainability policies and contribute directly to the achievement of sustainable development goals. Sustainable water use and water management are of paramount importance to the University of Pécs. It pays particular attention to reducing water consumption, water conservation, water recycling programs and habitat protection. Landscape architecture projects favour the planting of drought-tolerant and native plant species, further supporting long-term water conservation goals. One of the main goals of the University of Pécs' water management measures is to increase water conservation, which includes the ongoing replacement and maintenance of aerators.

Water is one of the planet's most valuable, if not the most important, resources. Due to global climate change and increasing human water use, more and more watercourses are drying up, which is having an increasing impact on everyday life and the economy. This phenomenon has received very little attention so far, and researchers do not have enough data on the tens of thousands of small watercourses affected worldwide to understand the effects of this process. Therefore, researchers at the University of Pécs **have developed the DRYRivERS smartphone app** as part of a Horizon 2020 research project **to enlist the help of the public in collecting data to protect small watercourses**. More than 100 researchers from 25 research institutes in 16 countries are participating in the DRYvER project, with the Department of Hydrobiology at the Faculty of Science of the University of Pécs representing Hungary. All observations recorded with the DRYRivERS app are publicly available on the DRYvER project website [25], and registered users can edit their data, add new data, and participate in games and challenges through the website, as well as collect rewards and badges for their activities.

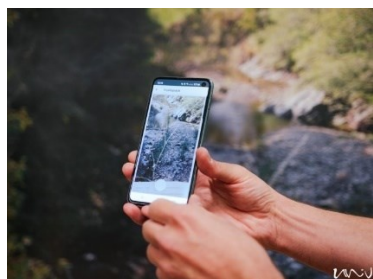


Photo: DRYvER project

Pécs has been selected by the European Commission as one of 100 European cities that can achieve their climate neutrality goals within the framework of the Horizon Europe Urban Mission, with the professional support of the **NetZeroCities** platform. As a result, several committees have been formed, in which the University of Pécs is also represented. The city and the university are committed to working together to achieve climate neutrality and green transition, with a particular focus on research and development, joint applications, and the coordinated use of university and municipal competences. Among the activities of the University of Pécs supporting the achievement of the climate strategy goals of the city of Pécs is the **SpongeCity** project coordinated by the University, which aims to improve the ability of cities to adapt to climate change by testing and promoting the "sponge city" methodology. The extreme weather conditions of recent years, including intense rainfall and periods of drought, increasingly highlight the need for efficient water management. Flooding and rapid drainage are serious problems in urban areas, so new, innovative solutions are needed. The aim of the **Sponge City** project is **to increase green spaces, reduce asphalt-covered soil surfaces and create green roofs**. The goal is to successfully store large amounts of precipitation and use it for irrigation or, if necessary, firefighting. The project is led by the University of Pécs, with 13 partners from 12 countries working together on the project. Cities with different geographical characteristics have been included, so it is possible to test models in densely populated, sparsely populated, hilly and flat areas. Several factors have been taken into account: the city's current water management, hydrological conditions, previous practices and technical plans [26].

As part of the tender, UP experts will develop a **local action plan for the city** that takes into account sponge city principles and aims to reduce rainwater utilisation and flash flood risks. A **feasibility study** will also be developed to provide a detailed description of one of the investments/measures proposed in the action plan. The measure will be selected based on a proposal from the City of Pécs with county rights. Experts from Faculty of Sciences of the UP have established an experimental rain garden in the Botanical Garden, equipped with measuring instruments. The **water balance measurement results** will be provided to the city, which may help in the development of further urban rain gardens.



Photo: Sponge City

As Hungary's greenest university, the University of Pécs has made a long-term commitment to the widespread integration of sustainability guidelines and environmentally conscious solutions. It places particular emphasis on promoting sustainable transport and micromobility. A central element of this is the development of bicycle-friendly infrastructure on the university campus.

The University of Pécs is continuously developing and improving its own transport culture. Many factors are taken into account, but meeting demand and following sustainability guidelines are paramount. When planning, the distance between locations, the topography, the frequency of commuter traffic and the needs of UP citizens must be taken into account, which have been assessed through online surveys and data collection in recent years.

In 2024, the UP Green University Program Office organized an internal competition entitled **"Cycle to work at the university!"**, in which 23 UP employees were given the opportunity to use traditional bicycles free of charge for one year for commuting purposes, travelling between campuses, and parking [27]. A prize draw was also held in connection with this [28]. In parallel with the traditional bicycle project, the University received two requests in 2024, thanks to which, in the second half of the year, employees were given the opportunity to **test electric bicycles free of charge**, courtesy of the Institute of Transport Sciences [29] and Hellovelo Ltd. [30]. The tests ended with very positive results. The positive feedback received during and after the cycling periods confirms the value and success of introducing sustainable means of transport in the workplace.

Given the university's circumstances, the most suitable solution for the UP at present is to operate a fleet of electric cars and to make traditional and electric bicycles available for commuting purposes. By 2024, a total of **nearly 1,900 bicycle parking** spaces will have been created on the university campus. In addition to the cycling infrastructure, the university has also made significant improvements to its vehicle fleet and logistics system in order to reduce its environmental impact. **By 2024, the UP operated 17 electric and 14 hybrid vehicles.**

In connection with **European Mobility Week 2024**, the University of Pécs' Green University Program, in collaboration with the institution's faculties, member institutions and partners, prepared a diverse range of zero-emission programmes to jointly encourage the travelling public to cycle safely. In keeping with tradition, the faculties organized cycling breakfasts for students and staff. At the member institutions of the UP-Affiliated Practical Elementary School, High School, and Kindergarten, those who arrived by bike took part in a raffle in addition to enjoying a refreshing breakfast, with the lucky ones winning useful cycling equipment [31].

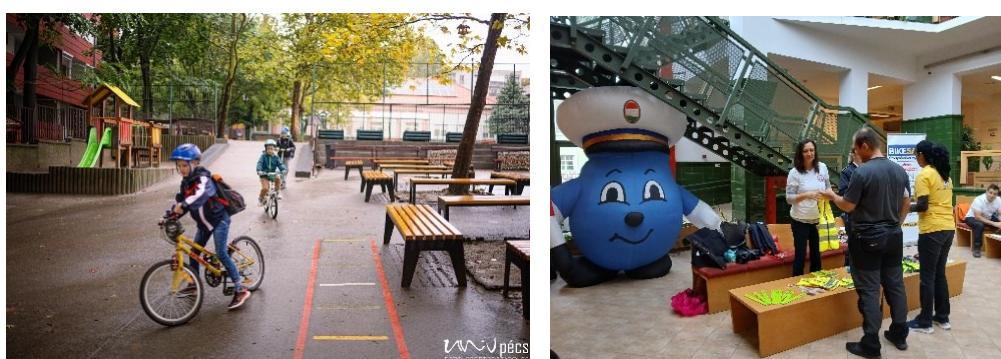


Photo: European Mobility Week 2024 at the University of Pécs

The UI GreenMetric WUR Network, in collaboration with seven universities, including the University of Pécs, organised an online sustainability course in English. The course was available to students from all ten faculties of the University of Pécs [32].



Photo: UI GreenMetric online course

3.2. Results of social responsibility

The University of Pécs came second in the **"Responsible Employer of the Year 2024"** competition. The National Employment Non-Profit Ltd. announced the competition in five categories, in which organisations engaged in a wide variety of economic activities could participate. Its objectives include: gathering and recognising companies that value human resources, presenting their best practices, connecting like-minded organisations, and creating a long-term employer community [33].

Every year, the University of Pécs publishes its **Equal Opportunities Plan** for the following year and evaluates the previous year in terms of compliance with equal opportunities criteria. The Equal Opportunities Plan covers all faculties, independent organizations and departments of the University of Pécs, as well as all civil servants and other employees. With the Equal Opportunities Plan, the University of Pécs expresses its commitment to the principles of equal opportunities in the workplace, its intention to fully respect the principles of equal treatment, and to take supportive measures to enforce these principles and promote equal opportunities.

The University of Pécs prevents and prohibits discrimination against public employees in the course of employment. The prohibition of discrimination applies:

- during recruitment,
- in terms of employment and working conditions,
- in terms of wages, income, benefits,
- in the determination of training, further training and other incentives,
- in relation to the membership and participation of public servants in public servant organisations,
- in the promotion system,
- as well as in cases of termination of employment, transfer and other employment-related matters.

The prohibition of discrimination and the requirement of equal treatment apply to all groups of public servants and prohibit, in particular, any discrimination based on their age, gender, skin colour, marital status, nationality, ethnic origin, descent, religion and worldview, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity. The University of Pécs pays particular attention to preventing and eliminating direct and indirect discrimination based on the age, gender, nationality, family or health status, or disability of public employees [34].

The **Gender Equality Plan (GEP)** of the University of Pécs [35], taking into account the recommendations of the Horizon 2020 research and innovation program supported by the European Union and based on the results of the analysis of initial data, focuses on the following areas and aims to achieve progress through systematic monitoring:

1. Work-life balance in organisational culture.
2. Gender balance in university management and decision-making.
3. Gender equality in recruitment and career development.
4. Integrating gender equality into research and teaching content.
5. Prevention of sexual abuse and harassment, and elimination of gender bias and stereotypes.

20

At the **Solidarity Architecture Conference**, participants sought answers to the question of how architecture can be used to alleviate social problems such as homelessness. Speakers demonstrated how smart, community-centred and sustainable design can help create better living conditions for those in need [36].



Photo: Solidarity Architecture Conference

The **"Teach for Hungary" program** began the second semester of the 2024/25 academic year with the participation of seventeen universities and more than four thousand mentees. The new mentor students and their new mentees at the University of Pécs met for the first time during a fun, informative and team-building experience day [37].



Photo: "Teach for Hungary" program

At a joint press conference, **the University of Pécs, the Municipality of Pécs and the Diocese of Pécs** announced that they were taking revolutionary steps to improve the housing conditions of teachers in the city. **The city offered 17 apartments for teachers.** By creating this scholarship programme, which is unique in Hungary, they wanted to help teachers with their housing and at the same time promote the teaching profession. The housing scholarship programme, initiated by the Faculty of Sciences and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Pécs, helps teachers to enter the profession. The two main objectives of the program are to introduce teacher candidates and newly qualified teachers to the profession and to support teachers already in the profession with their housing costs [38].



Photo: Municipal housing for teachers – press conference

21

The **Faculty of Cultural Sciences, Education and Regional Development** of the University of Pécs, with the support of the local government of Szekszárd and a pensioners' community, launched the **Third Age University** again in 2024. The programme ran for two semesters and offered academic and cultural lectures for people over 50, free of charge but subject to registration. The topics of the lectures included marriage customs, Kyrgyzstan, healing dance and microbiotics [39].

The **Chaplaincy of the UP** organized a Christian orientation camp called **Kilátó**, which was open to prospective students of the University of Pécs, among others. The aim of the camp was to energise prospective students, bring them together with new friends and help them integrate into university communities [40].



Photo: Kilátó Christian Freshmen' Camp

The **Clinical Centre of the University of Pécs** held its ceremonial **Semmelweis Day** event in 2024, recognising the outstanding professional work of healthcare workers. Several professional awards were presented at the event, including the Pro Patiente Award and the Saint Elizabeth of the House of Árpád Memorial Medal for Professionalism, which were given to dedicated doctors, nurses and healthcare workers. The ceremony also welcomed newly elected or re-elected institution leaders, recognising their managerial and professional work.

The event paid a fitting tribute to the Hungarian medical community and role models in the healthcare profession [41].



Photo: Semmelweis Day

22

In cooperation with the Research Group for Combating Human Trafficking at the **Faculty of Law** of the University of Pécs and the **Dutch Reshape Foundation**, the "escape truck", an interactive crime prevention tool, returned to Hungary. The aim of the program was to make young people aware of the dangers of human trafficking in a playful way and to raise awareness of the factors that make them vulnerable to becoming victims [42].



Photo: Escape Truck

In 2024, the University of Pécs launched **UniSec**, a **24-hour security helpline** for its students. The aim of the service was to provide rapid response and support in security or crisis situations and to connect students with the appropriate professional help [43].

A new home was designed and built for a single mother and her young daughter living in difficult circumstances as part of the **"You have to live somewhere!"** project of the Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology of the University of Pécs. Architecture students drew up the plans for the home and then carried out the renovation using building materials collected from donations [44].



Photo: "You have to live somewhere!" project

A photo exhibition and roundtable discussion entitled "**Autism Beyond Words**" was held at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Pécs, focusing on the communication difficulties and inner experiences of autistic children. Students and staff shared their personal experiences: the role of shadow teachers, teaching methods and accessibility measures were discussed [45].



Photo: Autism Beyond Words – photo exhibition

The UP - For Families program invited university staff to fantastic events throughout the year [46].

The UP International Centre's Diamond Award-winning International Seasons program series offered a wide range of programmes to university citizens in 2024 [47].

University safety and a safe environment are in the interest of the entire university community. The goal is to create and maintain a safe university environment for undisturbed work, study, teaching and entertainment. Its fundamental purpose is to serve and promote the educational, scientific, developmental and healing goals of those working, studying and receiving care at the institution in a constantly changing, multi-ethnic and multicultural university environment [48].

3.3. Results of economic responsibility

The University of Pécs and the Prodiák School Cooperative launched a joint *student career program* in the autumn. As part of the program, students can do professional student work that fits in with their studies, while establishing contacts with local companies. The aim was to help students develop their skills and find employment in the region. The program included a mentoring and feedback system, as well as the launch of a job portal [49].



Photo: Student Career Path Program – press conference

The University of Pécs **has prepared nearly 250 exciting programs at ten locations** for the **Researchers' Night 2024** event.

The aim of the University of Pécs is to show students, their parents, teachers and the general public to show how engineering, medicine, sports, social sciences and natural sciences intertwine with people's everyday lives, how important these fields are for describing and understanding the processes around them and discovering new connections; to help them better understand their immediate and wider environment, the world around them.

In addition, the Researchers' Night program series aims to support cooperation between public education and higher education institutions and companies providing practical training, and to promote scientific and innovation activities and research careers [50].

The **Career Office of the UP** organized the three-day **kilÉPTető** program series to help graduating students in their job search and integration into the world of work. On the first day of the event, a Career Evening and roundtable discussion took place with the participation of HR managers, lecturers, company executives and students. On the second day, workshops were held with interactive tasks designed to develop integration skills. On the third day, participants received support through personal consultations (CV writing, interview preparation, career planning, etc.) [51].

24



Photo: KilÉPTető

The **UP Alumni and Corporate Relations Office** organised a conference entitled "*How can we maintain our alumni's connection to their alma mater?*", at which representatives from 13 higher education institutions exchanged experiences on building relationships between institutions and their alumni. The event discussed how alumni systems must be consciously built from the very beginning so that students develop a connection to the institution during their university years. Several speakers presented the role that alumni programme discounts, events, training courses and digital platforms play in maintaining relationships. In the closing roundtable discussion, experts talked about how alumni sentiment and motivation can help maintain loyalty between institutions and their graduates [52].



Photo: How to maintain our alumni's connection to their alma mater – conference

The **University of Pécs** organized **Innovation Days** in collaboration with **Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions**. The first day focused on artificial intelligence research, innovations and business applications, supplemented by practical workshops. The second day focused on the development of scientific and business partnerships and the utilization of scientific research. Several thematic programs took place, such as the MedTech Minds workshop and the Data-EDIH workshop. The event concluded with the presentation of the UP Innovation Awards in the categories of researchers, inventors and students [53].



25

Photo: Innovation Days 2024

The Centre for Applied Learning once again organized the **iExpo** reverse job fair at the Faculty of Business and Economics of the University of Pécs, where students presented their projects, research and business ideas developed during the semester. The event was organized at university level, with **8 faculties, 78 student teams and around 80 experts from 40 companies taking part**. Anyone could apply individually or as a team, provided they could present a business idea, community development project, research or innovation at the expo that also showcased their knowledge and skills. The students set up their own stands on tables and display boards in the building, and the organisers provided each participant with a piece of cardboard that they could fill with content and use as a poster for their exhibition. Students from different faculties of the university drew attention to their projects with creative solutions [54].



Photo: iExpo

XVII. Pollack Expo focused on smart home technologies, demonstrating how intelligent systems can be integrated into the operation of a building. Electric vehicle developments also played a prominent role at the event, such as an electric go-kart built by UP students. **More than 100 professional presentations were given during the event, and approximately 130 exhibiting companies presented their latest products** [55].

The Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology of the University of Pécs held **its MIK PARTNERS Professional Day** under the motto "IN-BETWEEN", with the aim of presenting the results of cooperation between the university and its industrial partners in the fields of education, research and development, innovation and knowledge transfer. The event featured nearly **150 presentations in 27 sections** and was attended by a large number of students, lecturers, chamber members and external guests. As part of the event, scholarships funded by the partners were awarded, developments on the campus were presented, and the results of student competitions and creative works were displayed in exhibitions. As part of a special collaboration, a new agreement was signed with the Bosch Group, in which they undertook to accept student internships, support joint research and development projects, nurture talent and involve teaching mentors [56].



Photo: MIK PARTNERS Professional Day

The tangible results of the University of Pécs' corporate network are the **"adopted" rooms and community spaces**, which reflect the image and values of each partner company. These modern, inspiring environments support students' learning, community life and professional development. Examples **include the Viapan Lounge [57], the Holcim [58] and Lidl rooms [59] at the Faculty of Business and Economics, and the Sanofi room [60] at the Faculty of Pharmacy.**

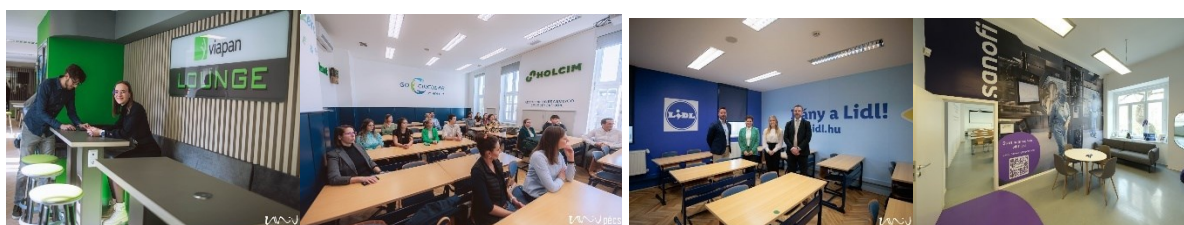


Photo: UP "adopted" rooms and community space

In the spring of 2024, the UP launched the **Cooperative Research and Development Program**, under which it **signed cooperation agreements with five domestic companies**. The aim was to support joint R&D projects based on real market needs, in which the university participates as an active partner.

Examples of collaborations included the detection of aflatoxin contamination using optical technology, the technological validation of titanium endoprostheses, the development of smart textiles using non-invasive measurements, and the design of microfluidic chips [61].

The University of Pécs develops its procurement policy in accordance with the sustainability guidelines set by the Public Procurement Authority.

The university's new vision and policy defined a strategy for environmental sustainability as a goal, thereby raising the university's profile in sustainability policy and practice. As part of its comprehensive strategy, it set itself the task of ensuring that all people, processes, goods, services and work at the University of Pécs are carried out with due regard for environmental considerations. The University of Pécs strives to incorporate sustainability as a fundamental principle into the entire procurement process, the assessment and determination of procurement needs, the selection of suppliers, the evaluation of bids and post-contract management [62].

3.4. Results of cultural responsibility

The Faculty of Music and Visual Arts of the University of Pécs and the Quintessence Master School Foundation, founded by Kossuth Prize-winning opera singer Erika Miklósa (also an alumna of the University of Pécs), signed a cooperation agreement and launched a new postgraduate programme in Pécs. The program was designed to include master classes, opera studio studies and individual training after graduation.

Another goal was to develop accreditation, for which the Faculty of Music and Visual Arts at the University of Pécs provided the necessary structures. The program focuses on developing the skills necessary for an artistic career, including professional networking, stage presence and creativity [63].

The Janus University Theatre presented a special multilingual performance of " **Hamlet – Poem Unlimited** " with actors speaking Hungarian, Italian, English and German. The production was performed by the EuAct Group as an international co-production with the aim of breaking down cultural and linguistic barriers [64].



Photo: Hamlet – Poem Unlimited

An exhibition of works by the **Ferenc Medgyessy Art Workshop** was held at the Medical School of the University of Pécs. The exhibition featured 22 works by 11 artists, using a variety of techniques, including watercolour, pastel, acrylic and mixed media. The works were later donated to the Dean's Office of the Medical School, thus enriching the faculty community [65].

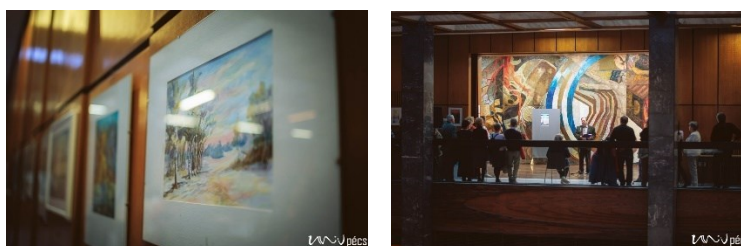


Photo: Photo exhibition

The teaworkshop entitled " **Introduction to the magical world of teas** " took place in front of a full house. Participants tasted several types of tea: Japanese green teas, Chinese oolongs, Indian masala chai, and even Tibetan salted butter tea. The event covered the history, cultivation and processing of tea, and presented the necessary tools, such as teapots, strainers, gaiwan and various mugs. The aim of the workshop was to show that tea drinking is an experiential community: tea goes beyond the daily routine, and its rich culture can be incorporated into everyday life with relative ease [66].



Photo: Teaworkshop

At the **Pécs Cantat Festival 2024**, 18 choirs performed at various locations in Pécs. Among the nearly 800 singers were the University Choir of the UP and the Women's Choir of the UP. The evening's program continued with a concert by the winning choirs, communal singing and anniversary performances. With the help of the "Festival Songbook" distributed to the audience, anyone could join in the communal singing [67].



Photo: Pécs Cantat Festival 2024

The University of Pécs's "International Seasons" series offered a number of exciting programmes for those interested [68]. A photo exhibition entitled "**My Pécs**" opened at the Knowledge Centre as part of the International Seasons program series. The call for entries was open to international students, who submitted 37 entries representing seven faculties. The applicants took photos depicting their personal experiences related to Pécs: in addition to famous buildings, lesser-known but important locations also appeared in the descriptions submitted [69].



Photo: "MyPécs" - photo exhibition

The city centre of Pécs was once again filled with vibrant cultural events as part of **International Culture Day in Pécs (ICDiP)**, which took place as part of the International Seasons series of the International Centre of the UP and as the opening event of the Pécs Days. The event began with a lively dance and acrobatic performance by the UP Dance Ensemble and the Cheerleading Section of the University Athletics Club of Pécs, followed by West African early music by the Lamine Siskora Trio, then a concert by the indie rock band Čuvarkuća from Eszék, and finally a concert by Brains. The event not only featured music and dance, but also gave an important role to internationalism and the introduction of young talents, showcasing the diverse cultural face of Pécs [70].

The Expo Centre in Pécs hosted the **International Evening**, a cultural celebration for international students at the University of Pécs with a rich tradition. Organized by the Hangol English-German Student Council of Medical School of the University of Pécs, the aim of this annual event is to celebrate the cultural diversity of foreign students at the University of Pécs [71].

29

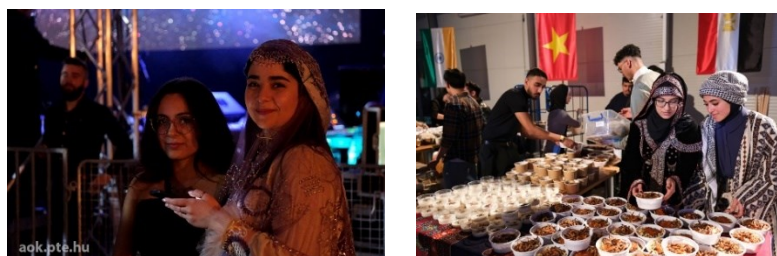


Photo: International Evening

The **Open Workshops** event was held at the Faculty Music and Visual Arts of the University of Pécs, where visitors could gain insight into the processes of painting, sculpture, ceramics and electronic music composition. Abstract painting techniques, ceramic sculptures made from recycled clay, the basics of sculpture and algorithmic sound art were presented [72].



Photo: Open Workshops

The 2024 **Pécs University Days** event started in gloomy weather, but the mood quickly brightened [73].



Photo: Pécs University Days

In 2024, the International Directorate of the University of Pécs organized six different summer schools as part of the **Pécs Summer School program**, which attracted students from all over the world. The programmes took place in five periods during July, in two- and four-week cycles, covering a wide range of academic and cultural topics. The programs ranged from European studies to leadership skills development and international human rights. The Debate Academy gave participants the opportunity to deepen their knowledge. In addition to UP students, students from foreign partner universities also participated in the courses. The classes were taught by UP lecturers as well as guest lecturers from the Netherlands and Croatia. In 2024, for the first time, **students also received a micro-certificate for successfully completing the program** [74].



Photo: Pécs Summer School

The **Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) Vocational** scholarship programme has come to an end, with 32 Indonesian students spending an eventful autumn semester in Pécs. The closing ceremony was held at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Pécs, where awards were presented to the participants. In his speech, the dean thanked the Indonesian government and praised the students' outstanding performance during the semester. The scholarship students developed their skills through theoretical courses and practical activities, as well as learning about Hungarian culture, and after the ceremony they presented the organisers with creative gifts [75].



Photo: Indonesian Excellence Scholarship Program

At the **"Go to the UP! Culturefest"** event, everyone had the opportunity to experience what it feels like to be a university student for a day. Participants got to know the ten faculties of the University of Pécs, various university organisational units, and gathered valuable information from the UP's partners.

In addition, they learned all the essential details necessary for a successful application and heard first-hand about changes to the admission process. Experts presented various career paths to prospective students to ensure that they apply for a programme that truly interests them. Throughout the day, residents of Pécs and UP alumni who have achieved significant success in their respective fields shared their career paths, providing authentic insights [76].



31

Photo: " Go to the UP! Culturefest"

The Kodály Centre hosted the **15th UP University Concert** , where the auditorium was filled with music lovers preparing for the festive season. The aim of the event was to create an Advent atmosphere, and it successfully brought the community a musical experience at the beginning of the festive season [77].



Photo: XV. UP University Concert

4. Summary

The mission of the University of Pécs is to be a highly recognised institution in the Hungarian and international higher education market, a key player in the knowledge industry shaping the future of future generations in terms of environmental, social, economic and cultural sustainability, an important training and research partner for the Hungarian government, and a knowledge centre providing significant research services to businesses and other organisations supporting Hungarian and Central European climate goals.

The University of Pécs's approach to sustainability encompasses all relevant areas of environmental, social, economic and cultural responsibility. Within the framework of the UP Green University Program, it has achieved numerous results in promoting sustainable practices, including measures to increase energy efficiency, utilize renewable energy sources and reduce its ecological footprint, such as selective waste collection, regular use of electric cars, and the development of education and research from a sustainability perspective.

In terms of environmental responsibility, the UP was awarded the title of "Cyclist-Friendly Workplace" for the fourth time in 2024, further enhancing the campus's environmentally friendly transport attitude. Furthermore, the UP is at the forefront of promoting environmentally friendly and sustainable urban transport through programs organized during European Mobility Week, in which students and staff have become active participants in sustainability issues.

In the area of social responsibility, the University of Pécs places great emphasis on promoting equal opportunities and regularly publishes its Equal Opportunities Plan, which aims to minimise discrimination in the workplace and support disadvantaged groups. The institution pays particular attention to ensuring equal opportunities for students and staff and to enforcing the principle of equal opportunities in all organisational units .

Economic responsibility is a key element of the UP's strategic operation. The university plays an active role in supporting local industry and businesses, as well as in transferring knowledge and innovation to industrial partners. A prime example of this is the Innovation Days organized in collaboration with Deutsche Telekom IT Solutions, which showcased the application possibilities of artificial intelligence and the data economy, strengthening cooperation and knowledge transfer between the university and economic actors.

In terms of cultural responsibility, the University of Pécs aims to create a cohesive community and encourage creative collaboration between students and teachers. The university organises numerous cultural programmes that promote the development of relationships between students of different nationalities. Events such as International Culture Day have a significant impact on promoting cultural diversity among students and creating an inclusive community.

In 2024, the University of Pécs once again demonstrated that its leading role in higher education is reflected not only in the quality of its teaching and research, but also in its responsible, environmentally conscious and community-building activities. The University of Pécs continues to aim to contribute to preserving the quality of life and environmental safety of future generations as a regional and international centre of knowledge on sustainability.

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