



26 March 2025

Durham Declaration

on the collaboration of Coimbra Group Universities on Climate Change and Sustainability

Representatives of the Coimbra Group Universities gathered at the “Coimbra Group Climate Symposium” in Durham, United Kingdom, on 24-26 March, 2025 and signed the present Declaration consisting of the following seven principles and a non-exhaustive list of examples.

The signatories

- I. *Celebrate* that Coimbra Group Universities are at the forefront of efforts to understand, mitigate, reduce, and prepare for the adverse impacts of climate change and the loss of nature, and embed sustainability in all areas of life;
- II. *Affirm* that the efforts needed to address climate change and loss of nature through research, education, policy engagement and collaboration are now more urgent than ever, and demand accelerated action, including on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals;



- III. *Recognise* that universities acting as **innovators** produce cutting-edge fundamental and applied research that is urgently needed to enable transitions to more sustainable lives for all, and play a growing role in technology transfer and societal outreach;
- IV. *Appreciate* that the Coimbra Group Universities acting as **educators** have the responsibility of educating over one million students annually, preparing the next generation with the understanding, skills, competencies, and training needed to address the interconnected challenges of climate change, environmental degradation, planetary health and social justice;
- V. *Support* transformative change through our actions as **partners** with public and private organisations, regionally, nationally and globally, by enhancing and transferring knowledge on climate change. Our partnerships aim to accelerate societal resilience, through skills development and capacity building in communities, with NGOs, businesses, governments and international organisations, to implement environmental, social and economic sustainability;
- VI. *Commit* as **investors** to leading by example to transform our campuses and facilities for a net zero, nature positive world and to ensure that we act responsibly and sustainably;
- VII. *Acknowledge* that CG universities have already created important and positive outcomes as innovators, educators, partners and investors, but recognise that so much more can be done to strengthen joint efforts and create synergies among universities and partners.

The Coimbra Group Universities confirm their commitment to the above principles and based on the Durham Declaration, the Coimbra Group commits to support each Member University to enhance and strengthen their sustainability strategies.





We set out in a non-exhaustive list of examples the types of initiatives and actions on which the Coimbra Group universities can work together and share best practices.

These include:

- 1. Sharing the benefits and impacts of our research on understanding climate change as a societal challenge through Coimbra Group organised events.*
- 2. Supporting and promoting cooperation among members and across Working Groups and partners to secure research funding related to the climate emergency.*
- 3. Strengthening our advocacy for higher levels of research funding, including inter-, multi- and transdisciplinary approaches, to support societal responses for transformative change towards a net zero, nature positive world.*
- 4. Promoting climate education and the UN Sustainable Development Goals within our universities and with regional, national and European stakeholders.*
- 5. Cooperating on educational approaches to promote awareness of the climate emergency and the loss of nature and to facilitate cultural and behavioral change. This might include both staff and students' incentivisation and promotion of climate education and recognition of the emotional stress that climate change can bring.*
- 6. Developing policies that support our ambitions to protect, enhance and sustain buildings and infrastructure, the academic heritage and collections, as well as biodiversity within our campus settings.*
- 7. Advancing solutions to promote sustainable and net zero transport in the context of daily commuting to and from campus, and rethinking behaviours associated with international mobility for university communities to reduce GHG emissions. The Coimbra Group are already lobbying relevant public authorities for the expansion to higher education of rail travel schemes such as the DiscoverEU Actions that are integrated into the Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027.*



8. *Working in tandem with the Coimbra Group's Poitiers Declaration to promote policy dialogue between universities, cities and regions to develop policies related to accessibility with green public transport.*
9. *Supporting expansion of student cooperation both within and among institutions to promote initiatives around climate change and a sustainability.*
10. *Celebrating and optimising the benefits of our longstanding cooperation through the Coimbra Group, as we believe that on climate change and sustainability, we are stronger and we can go further together.*
11. *Sharing best practice on how our EU universities meet the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) which requires universities to report on the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS) on climate change, pollution, water and marine resources, resource use and circular economy, and biodiversity and ecosystems.*
12. *Encouraging our Working Groups to identify opportunities where members can cooperate to implement innovative solutions to the challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss.*

The Coimbra Group will endeavour to strengthen its position internationally through sharing best practices and enhancing the visibility and influence of the University sector in international fora, including at Conferences of Parties under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change.