# Universities on their way to emission neutrality

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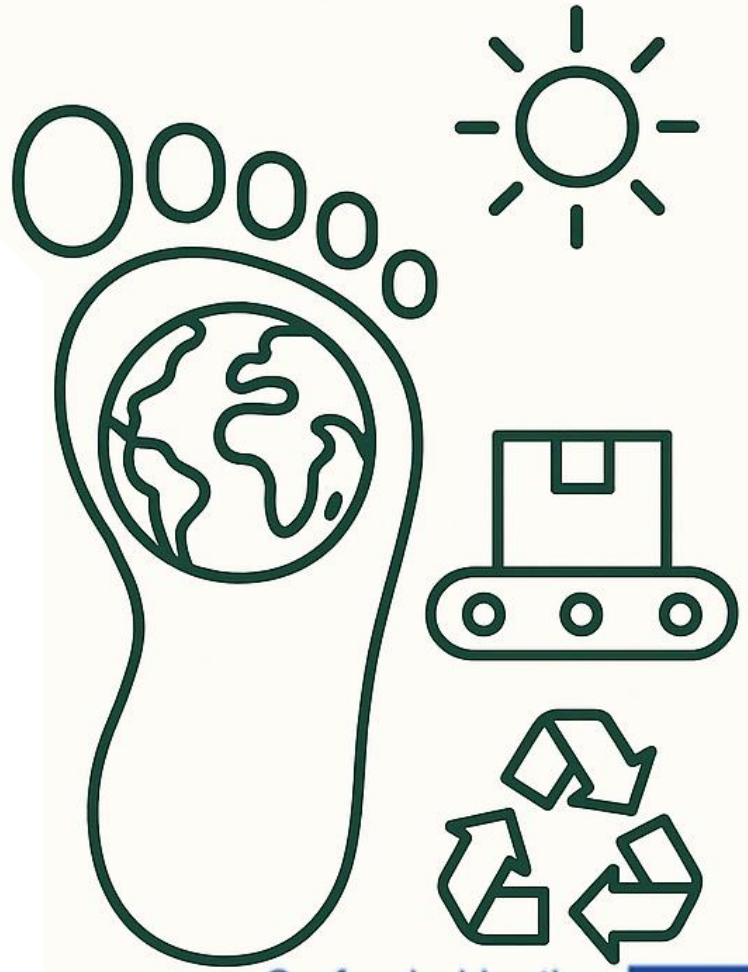
POLITÉCNICO DE LEIRIA

EFEU



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Sustainable mobility in university campi is critical for reducing carbon footprints and fostering environmentally friendly habits among students and staff.

With increasing urbanization and rising concerns over emissions, universities must take a proactive approach to integrate sustainable transport solutions.

This guide categorizes best practices into five main groups: Public Transport Optimization, Active Mobility Promotion, Vehicle Management and Incentives, Digital Integration and Smart Mobility, and Behavioural and Policy Interventions.

Each category presents structured proposals, supported by data from the EFEU Mobility Report, to help universities transition towards sustainable mobility.

# 1. Public Transport Optimization

Public transportation is the backbone of sustainable university mobility. Enhancing accessibility, affordability, and efficiency can encourage higher adoption rates.


# Incentivise and promote the use of Public Transportation


**Mobility report finding**:
"The survey results revealed that 80% of students and 70% of staff have a public transport stop within 10 minutes from home, yet over 40% of students and 65% of staff use internal combustion engine vehicles daily".


**Proposal**: Universities should collaborate with city councils to enhance public transport networks for students and staff.

# Support funding students' Public Transport Passes

**Mobility report finding**: "Cost-effectiveness was one of the main reasons students opted for public transport, as indicated by 24.25% (DHBW), 30.77% (IPLeiria), 23.90% (Metropolia), and 26.03% (UPHF)".

**Proposal**: Universities should offer financial incentives for students and staff to use public transportation.

# Adapt and improve Public Transport Timetables and Routes

**Mobility report finding**:
"The most common reason students cited for not using public transport was ‘inconvenient routes/timetable’ across all four institutions".

**Proposal**: Align public transport schedules with university timetables for seamless connectivity.

# Create Campus Shuttle Services

**Mobility report finding**: "Survey results showed that a significant number of students live within 5–10 minutes of public transport stops but still use private vehicles due to poor last-mile connectivity".

**Proposal**: Implement free or low-cost university shuttle buses connecting campuses and residential areas to complement city public services.

# 2. Active Mobility Promotion

Encouraging walking and cycling as primary means of commuting contributes significantly to sustainability goals.

# Enhance/ complement existing Bicycle Infrastructures

**Mobility report finding**: "The mobility report indicates that a majority of students travel less than 5 km to campus, making cycling a viable and sustainable option. Additionally, a lack of secure bicycle parking was identified as a barrier to increased bicycle use”.

**Proposal**: Expand bicycle lanes and install secure parking and electric bike charging racks to promote cycling in- and to campus.

# Offer free or discounted Bicycle Rentals

**Mobility report finding**: "Students living within 5 km of campus could significantly reduce emissions by switching to bicycles or e-scooters".

**Proposal**: Universities should create, contract or combine existing bicycle sharing solutions to encourage sustainable mobility.

# Promote walking for Short Distances

**Mobility report finding**: "Survey data highlights that a significant portion of students live within walking distance of campus yet opt for cars due to inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and perceived safety concerns".

**Proposal**: Improve pedestrian-friendly infrastructure within and around campuses.

# 3. Personal Vehicle Management and Incentives

To reduce carbon emissions from personal vehicles, universities should implement policies that regulate and incentivize low-carbon commuting.

# Implement Carpooling Programs

**Mobility report finding**: "Survey results indicate that a majority of students who commute by car travel alone. Encouraging carpooling could significantly reduce carbon emissions and alleviate parking congestion".

**Proposal**: Develop digital platforms to encourage carpooling among students and staff.

# Incentivize Electric Vehicles (EVs) for Campus Commutes

**Mobility report finding:**

"Only a small percentage of students (12) reported using an electric car, while 238 used gasoline/diesel vehicles".

**Proposal:** Provide EV charging stations and incentives for students and staff to switch to electric vehicles.


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## Disclaimer

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Sustainable mobility in higher education depends on data, awareness, and collective change.

The EFEU project at IPLeiria proved that adjusting class schedules, promoting shared and active transport, and collaborating with municipalities can significantly reduce emissions and improve quality of life on campus.

Looking ahead, the tools and lessons from WP4 provide a replicable model for universities and cities committed to climate action — transforming pilot actions into lasting strategies for a more sustainable future.

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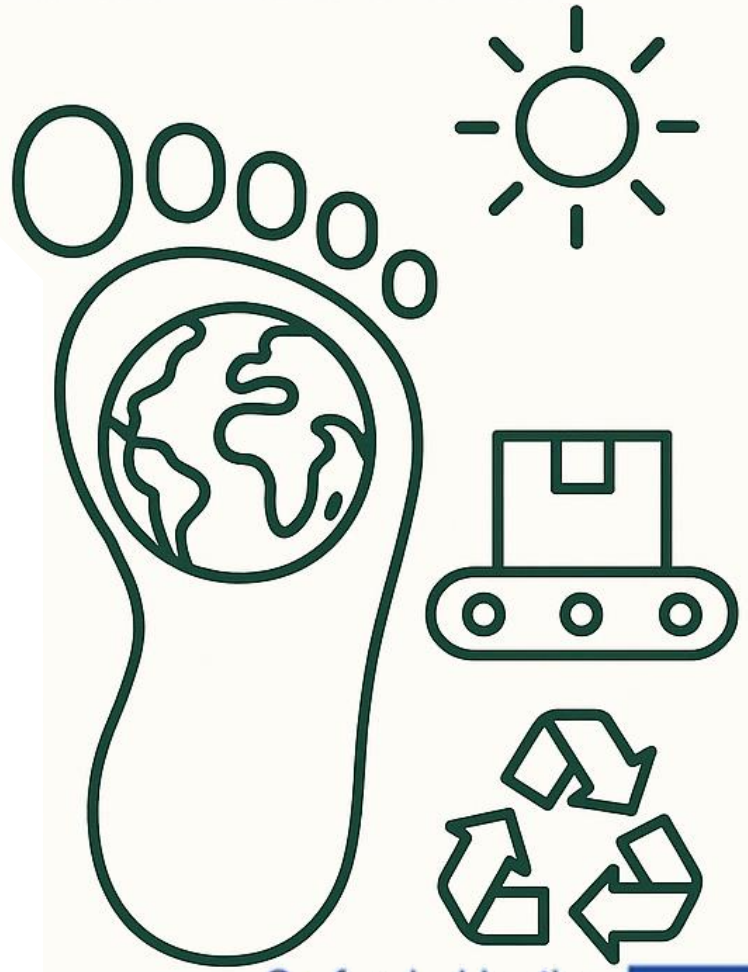

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