

Guidelines for  
**integral ecology**  
at Comillas Pontifical University



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UNIVERSIDAD PONTIFICIA

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Caring for the common home is an urgent task today, with ethical, educational and spiritual dimensions. In a world marked by environmental crisis, universities are called upon to be beacons of hope, critical reflection and social transformation. True to its Ignatian identity and its vocation to serve the common good, Comillas Pontifical University decisively takes on the challenge of integrating integral ecology into all areas of university life. As reflected in the “Conceptual Framework of Integral Ecology” of Comillas Pontifical University, this commitment is an institutional response to the cry of the earth and the poor, as well as an educational proposal that promotes an ecological culture embodied in a new way of inhabiting the planet, opening the self to transcendence, researching, teaching, consuming, moving, and coexisting.

In the Global Compact on Education, Pope Francis proposes to safeguard and cultivate the common home, protecting its resources, adopting more modest lifestyles, and investing in renewable and environment-friendly energies. To this end, he recommends that educators promote activities that address socio-environmental justice, develop admiration and care for our common home, encourage an energy transition based on clean energies, and create green spaces in proportion to the number of members. Since the proposal of the *Laudato si'* Encyclical, in relation to an education that promotes the alliance between humanity and the environment, Comillas Pontifical University, due to its link with knowledge transfer, research, and social transformation, and aligned with the fourth Universal Apostolic Preference of the Society of Jesus to collaborate in the care of our common home, undertakes to contribute critically and constructively to sustainable development.

In the face of the challenges posed by climate change and its profound social consequences, including the increase in inequality and the creation of new forms of poverty, Comillas takes on this ecological responsibility, inspired by the holistic spirit of integral ecology. This commitment translates into a cross-cutting approach that encompasses the various areas of university life: governance, teaching, research, knowledge transfer and social impact, extracurricular activities, and a sustainable campus, with integrated environmental management that includes green purchasing, infrastructure, energy, waste, water, mobility, and food.

## 1. Governance

Comillas declares its intention to make decisions in line with integral ecology, promoting policies that favour the well-being of people and all beings that inhabit the planet, responding to social and environmental challenges. This commitment calls upon the entire university community to participate in the ecological transformation of the institution. In particular, the governing bodies, together with the academic and research staff (PDI) and the administrative and services staff (PAS), are tasked with ensuring ecology in the various strategic areas: teaching, research, knowledge transfer

and social impact, extracurricular activity and the sustainable management of our infrastructures. In addition, the periodic updating of plans related to integral ecology is envisaged in coherence with institutional strategic planning, as well as the periodic review of this commitment through self-diagnosis processes, evaluation, and the communication of results. Comillas takes responsibility for acting with transparency and accountability, and expresses its willingness to collaborate with other institutions to advance social and environmental justice.

## 2. Teaching

One of the missions of the educational project at Comillas is related to helping students discover a life with meaning, vocation, and purpose. To this end, educational quality, highlighted in the fourth SDG (Sustainable Development Goal), is a key element in the student learning process. In an effort to train the best professionals for the world, the University aims to measure excellence by the standard of the greatest service to the human family. The articulation of the competency framework promoted by the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) with integral ecology, the SDGs, Ignatian pedagogy, and teaching innovation contributes to a comprehensive education in which students are able not only to develop the specific competencies of their field of knowledge but also to cultivate other skills related to personal development, social transformation, and the care of our common home. The curricula of the various undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, both transversally and in specific training programmes, aim to include content on integral ecology so that, from the uniqueness of each discipline, students can delve into the interrelationship between human beings and nature, and the challenges posed by sustainability.

## 3. Research

In-depth, rigorous, interdisciplinary, and applied research is an indispensable dimension of Comillas to provide solutions to the challenges of a humanity immersed in the Anthropocene Epoch and the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Accordingly, Comillas undertakes to engage in research activities related to integral ecology, so that knowledge about humanity and the planet continues to develop through the transdisciplinary study of formal sciences, natural sciences, human sciences, social sciences, applied sciences, and philosophical and theological reflection. This work aims to improve the relationship between society and the environment, promoting lives that offer fulfilment and meaning in harmony with the limits of the planet.

The chairs, institutes, departments, and research groups are platforms that have the capacity to address ecological issues in a holistic manner, and to share knowledge and

innovation in the academic field and in the communication of research results through publications and other means of dissemination.

## 4. Knowledge transfer and social impacts

The transformation of society is an intrinsic part of the Comillas mission, with the student as its main agent. Applied research, innovation, and entrepreneurship that aim to address concrete problems of society and the planet from an understanding of the complexity of their causes, as well as cooperation with other civil organisations, businesses, and ecclesiastical entities, establish Comillas as a university that connects with society and seeks to achieve a positive impact on the lives of human beings and nature. Comillas is capable of being a platform for integral human development and an educational institution that works for the betterment of the planet, guiding and inspiring through the principles of integral ecology, and contributing to the local, national, and international implementation of the SDGs. The professional path of alumni and the outreach activities of the teaching staff are capable of creating an ecological culture rooted in justice and the responsible care of our common home.

## 5. Extracurricular activity

In its commitment to holistic education, Comillas views extracurricular activities as an important means for students to find meaning in their lives through experience. Integral education is not only a core aspect of the curriculum, but also a part of other processes of non-formal learning where students can choose a new lifestyle based on ecological ethics. For this reason, Comillas offers a space where students can discover the meaning of their life through a healthy relationship with themselves, with the entire human family, with the natural environment, and with transcendence. Socio-environmental activities not integrated into the academic curriculum are carried out in areas such as solidarity, well-being, art, spirituality, and the holistic care of the individual. These projects include seminars, workshops, voluntary activities and educational experiences that promote an integral ecology rooted in inner depth, commitment, and care for others.

## 6. Sustainable campus

Integral ecology at Comillas is not only focused on teaching, research, knowledge transfer and social impact, but also on extracurricular activities. Comillas has the mission of promoting good policies and sustainable practices consistent with the

principles of integral ecology. In addition to committing to compliance with national and international regulations governing sustainability, Comillas must develop management in terms of integral ecology, using the means at its disposal to minimise the negative effects of human activity and promote the regeneration of its natural environment. In order to achieve a sustainable campus, Comillas undertakes to adopt the necessary measures in the following areas:

- a) In **infrastructures**, with the promotion of environment-friendly urban development through the construction and rehabilitation of structures which, in harmony with nature, improve habitability and facilitate the inclusive settlement of the university community in a safe and sustainable manner. Accordingly, Comillas is obliged to use technologies and materials that reduce energy consumption and minimise environmental impact, adopting practices that not only seek beauty in design, but also create spaces for encounters within the university community that enhance the quality of life for individuals and the conservation of biodiversity. Comillas is also committed to re-naturalising its campuses by increasing green spaces designed with criteria of ecological integration and resource efficiency.
- b) In the field of **energy**, to tackle the fight against climate change and commit to an efficient, sustainable, clean, fair, affordable, and secure energy model. Comillas measures its carbon footprint, sets ambitious targets, and communicates results both internally and externally. Measuring the carbon footprint, minimising greenhouse gas emissions, divesting from fossil fuels, and increasing the use of renewable energy are key tasks that contribute to an ecological transition towards carbon neutrality.
- c) In **water** management, through the commitment to efficient and sustainable administration of water resources which, in addition to considering the water footprint of each member of the university community, also promotes awareness of responsible water consumption, the treatment of wastewater, and the irrigation of green spaces with treated water.
- d) In **green purchasing**, through the incorporation of sustainability criteria in investment, procurement and contracting processes, establishing a general line of ecological purchasing with suppliers who aim to share values consistent with integral ecology. This also includes the prioritisation of investment in projects aligned with the principles of a circular economy and, in general, with socio-environmental justice, which involves a mode of responsible consumption that respects human dignity and the environment.
- e) In **waste**, through care for the environment by reducing, recovering, reusing and recycling waste, focusing particularly on reducing the use of plastic and paper. Hence, measuring the socio-environmental impact of the activities of

the university community is essential to progress towards a consumption model based on sharing responsibility and overcoming the culture of waste.

- f) In **mobility**, with the commitment to a sustainable model that mitigates greenhouse gas emissions from the movements of the university community, directing them towards a greater public and collaborative perspective of transport. This contribution to decarbonisation is made through measures that promote the use of public transport, charging points for electric vehicles, and services that facilitate shared mobility. Walking and cycling promote healthy habits, sports practice, and well-being throughout the university community.
- g) In sustainable and healthy **eating**, through the integration of an ethical model that is consistent with the principles of integral ecology. A healthy diet promotes inclusive and diverse eating that integrates fair trade products and reduces the ecological footprint associated with dietary habits. The responsibility of offering socially and environmentally fair food, also based on ecological production practices, constitutes an educational option that promotes awareness within the university community in this area.

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These guidelines for integral ecology were approved by the Governing Board of Comillas Pontifical University, which met on 24th November 2025.

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