

# **Tallinn University Development Plan 2020–2022**

## **Tallinn University – advocating an intelligent lifestyle**

### **I Mission**

Tallinn University's mission is to support the sustainable development of Estonia through high-quality research and study, education of intellectuals, public discussion and promotion of academic partnership.

By developing research carried out in Estonian language and for the development of Estonia, the University has integrated into the European education and research area, and contributes to the development of Estonia as a country with a smart economy and an astute organisation of society.

According to the TU Academic Charter, the University's basic values are openness, quality, professionalism and unity.

### **II Vision**

Tallinn University plays a leading role in promoting and developing an intelligent lifestyle in Estonia, thus supporting both Estonia's sustainability and the self-actualisation of individuals.

In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we live in an open, culturally intertwined and technologically rapidly changing world. This is a new situation where previously established lifestyles and ways of thinking no longer offer enough support for the proper organisation of life. Everyone must be able to navigate through increasingly abundant information flows and update their knowledge and skills. During their entire life, people have to learn to use constantly changing technologies, forms of communication and technologies of the self. In an open world, we must cope with the diversity of languages and cultures and take part in the social debate, while preserving our own and other people's language, culture, history and mental and physical health.

The culturally intertwined and technologically rapidly changing world is also testing the life arrangements of the Estonian society and state. Coping with environmental changes, the association of geopolitical conflicts with information technology and the media industry, the development of the Estonian cultural area in the midst of openness and globalisation, and many other tasks require smart and knowledge-based policies. In such conditions, a small country can be more flexible and innovative than others, responding more quickly to 21<sup>st</sup> century problems and be at the forefront in the efficient organisation of the affairs of the society and the state. An intelligent lifestyle means life-long learning and knowledge-based living, evidence-based and weighted decision-making, and an open and coordinated development of the society and the state.

### III Strategic goal of Tallinn University for 2020–2022

#### (1) The University develops five knowledge-based focus fields:

- educational innovation,
- digital and media culture,
- cultural competences,
- healthy and sustainable lifestyle,
- society and open governance.

We develop these focus fields in accordance with the University's principles of activity: the University is interdisciplinary and international and demands excellence and sustainability.

1.1. Educational innovation

1.2. Digital and media culture

1.3. Cultural competences

1.4. Healthy and sustainable lifestyle

1.5. Society and open governance

Education system has an important role in supporting social adaptation processes. An efficient education allows the members of the society to assume responsibility and be active citizens. Education faces several challenges: one the one hand, increasing digitalisation of the society requires new skills and exposes us to increasingly complex problems arising from globalisation while on the other hand, we face new difficulties that derive from the demographic situation.

Rapid changes in the society and on the labour market establish new requirements for the education system. We must quickly respond and adapt in order to be better prepared for new social tasks. At the same time, the education system is conservative and innovation requires strong focus on institutional changes and management, new learning and teaching practices, people's attitudes and skills, and efficient infrastructure and policies.

We have been defining and implementing the changing approach to teaching and learning, and shall continue developing and using it in cooperation with education establishments. We view education as a process which influences the integral development of individuals and facilitates the development of their sense of responsibility. We seek learner-centredness in all types and at all levels of education. We support a cross-area approach which is based on scientific research and development, inclusive education policy, cooperation and dialogue with partners in the education area. That ensures high-level teaching competences and – through the example of the University's employees – influences the change of learning culture in the society on a broader scale.

We consider it important to enable teachers and education leaders to make evidence-based decisions on new teaching and learning practices, and support them as the leaders of innovation processes in the field of education. We strengthen inclusive education and promote the differentiation of education in accordance with the individual needs of students. We lead an evidence-based approach and critical monitoring of digital innovations in education, thereby contributing to the development of the digital competences of teachers and learners. We promote and integrate life-long learning in formal, non-formal and informal education. We create a link between educational research and practice in order to implement educational innovations more efficiently and extensively.

1.1. Educational innovation

1.2. Digital and media culture

1.3. Cultural competences

1.4. Healthy and sustainable lifestyle

1.5. Society and open governance

In an increasingly digital multi-platform information space, the new literacy (the skills to create, understand and use digital content) has become unavoidable in learning, everyday communication, using services and products, and creating new content. Beside textual communication, other forms of communication are increasingly important, including verbal, visual, audio and physical communication. The skill to smartly use the possibilities of the digital world as well as innovativeness and the underlying creativity grant a competition advantage to an individual, an institution and the state as well. Digital media has become the economic sector and cultural sphere with the biggest impact on the attitudes and behaviour of people as well as entire social processes.

Our goal is to educate creative professionals and critical and active citizens who have diverse media-related competences, including the ability to create a modern world of images through which to tell stories and integrate different areas to have a say in social development issues and to enrich the Estonian and global culture. We will make the University an important learning and development centre for creative professionals and enterprises. In order to ensure the creative reuse of Estonia's cultural heritage, we carry out digitisation and cultural analytics projects in cooperation with Estonian media and culture institutions.

We actively participate in the critical analysis of Estonian and European media systems and digital service markets and in the development of solutions that meet today's needs. We act as a partner to companies in the media and culture area by studying their strategic challenges on global markets. We initiate and carry out cooperation with the University's academic units in advancing digital literacy, studying the effects of human and computer interaction, and developing digital didactics and digital learning materials. We increase the media competence of the society also by educating teachers in the area. We contribute to the development of innovative information society solutions and the introduction of digital media culture in different areas of life. We will develop a systemic approach to implementing digital environments and digital tools in studies and work life and shall introduce it into University studies.

We aim at giving every graduate and employee of the University the competence to use digital technologies in their field and the skill to critically assess the impact of such digital technologies on the society and culture.

1.1. Educational innovation

1.2. Digital and media culture

1.3. Cultural competences

1.4. Healthy and sustainable lifestyle

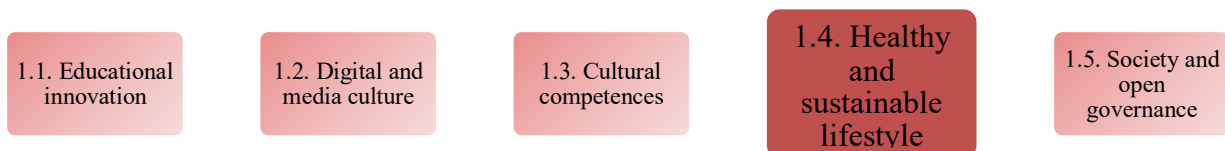
1.5. Society and open governance

In the context of globalisation, we are increasingly open to cultural, political and economic influences which originate from very different societies, their historical development and traditions. Surviving in an open multicultural world is a particularly important task for small cultures.

Relying on Tallinn University’s capabilities in studying and mediating different cultures, languages, history and traditions, we are able to offer all learners and the Estonian society as a whole the knowledge and skills related to different languages, worldviews and cultural traditions.

In a culturally integrating world, knowing the history of Estonia and preserving and developing the Estonian national culture and language, including research terminology, remains essential and requires revolving and more extensive competences. At the same time, we have to be able to accept the new and value the old in communicating with and mediating different cultures. In order to ensure the survival of our language and culture, our self-analysis ability and identity creation fit for today, Tallinn University sees the empirical and theoretical analysis of the Estonian language, history and culture in the global context as an important task. Our goal is to help in developing such a society in Estonia that values languages, cultures and creativity, create possibilities for the Estonian cultural area to evolve in the conditions of openness and for every member of the society to participate in culture. We develop cultural theoretical thinking in order to understand the functioning mechanisms of culture both in Estonia and elsewhere. In order to meet these goals, we study and teach – besides Estonian language, history and culture – the history, languages, cultures, art and thought traditions and societies of other nations. We integrate the knowledge of the languages and cultures and cultural studies of different countries into one interdisciplinary whole.

We consider the development of the cultural competence of all of our employees and students very important in order to better cope in the globalising world.



The development of the society and the wellbeing of the ageing population increasingly depend on the ability to live and work in a way that preserves one’s own health as well as the environment. Smart knowledge-based choices that shape a healthy lifestyle and a sustainable way of thinking help to reduce the burden on nature and the pressure on the social sphere and the healthcare sector. Due to globalisation, the area of health and living environment is prone to stratification also within the society by attitudes, options and behavioural patterns. The goal of Estonia is to protect people’s health, develop human-centred healthcare services integrated into the social care system and use resources economically and optimally. Exercise and creativity support social coherence, intellectuality and positive values in the society, too.

We contribute to shaping attitudes which value healthy lifestyle, wellbeing and a sustainable way of thinking in the Estonian society as well as to the creation and implementation of a social order which takes into account the specifics of e-services. With our activities, we act as a partner in the development of evidence-based recommendations concerning lifestyle, environmental organisation and ecosystems.

We integrate the study and research areas of social and behavioural sciences, personal services, health and wellbeing, education and natural and environmental sciences in order to develop interdisciplinary competences related to healthy and sustainable lifestyle. We develop sustainable interdisciplinary research within the framework of research projects at the Centre of Excellence in Behavioural and Neural Sciences and the School of Natural Sciences and Health. We integrate the topics of health, movement and sustainable development into the study programmes of teacher

education and develop the competences of target group inclusion and information and communication technology. In the focus field of health and sustainability, we teach natural, behavioural, social and health subjects and train high-level experts with interdisciplinary competences. We develop sustainable doctoral study programmes in natural and behavioural sciences. We develop the didactics of teaching natural science and technology subjects and promote the profession of a teacher. To gain novel research outputs, we also use natural science analysis methods in behavioural science research. In order to plan long-term activities, we develop strategies for the sustainable use of environmental resources and ecosystem services. We develop methods and services for supporting health-conscious and sustainable behaviour in the education system, at the workplace and in the community. We research health behaviour, people's abilities for exercise and activity, and curative mud and mud treatment and apply the results in business. In order to support regional development, we engage the Haapsalu College as well as partners from the public sector and the business sector in study activities, including in applied research.

We set an example in the implementation of a healthy and sustainable way of thinking also in the University's own work and study organisation.

1.1. Educational innovation

1.2. Digital and media culture

1.3. Cultural competences

1.4. Healthy and sustainable lifestyle

1.5. Society and open governance

The modern society is characterised by increasing complexity, but also by uncertainty, fragmentation, interdependence and transnationalism. This has been caused by demographic changes, changing lifestyles and values, digitalisation and the transformation of state, politics and governance. Adapting to changes requires the renewal of politics, governance, institutions, communities and the legal system as well as innovative socio-economic forms of business and measures of social protection.

The University is a valued cooperation partner for state and local government institutions. We contribute to science-based policy-making and offer novel analysis and research methods as well as inputs based on those for better decision-making. We render meaning to the renewing social processes and support the development of the 21<sup>st</sup> century society and state powers in the renewal of institutions, governance, politics and legal systems and in the promotion of people's wellbeing for the benefit of a democratic and sustainable society. For that purpose, we combine knowledge in political sciences, international relations, law, sociology, social protection and demography.

We support interdisciplinary and problem-centred research areas which focus on the society, governance, democracy and the legal system, and update and diversify the underlying research methods. We support the rooting of open governance practices at the state and local government level and offer science-based and innovative solutions to public service, politicians, legal practitioners, enterprises, non-governmental organisations and citizens (social and political innovation).

In order to solve problems arising from demographic developments, we develop core demography competences. We develop new prevention and intervention methods to ensure families' and persons' subsistence and wellbeing. We strengthen the knowledge potential that values interdisciplinary human development at the University by valuing both the discipline-based and

interdisciplinary cooperation at the local and international level. We contribute to structuring and updating the Estonian-language study literature and terminology of social sciences.

In order to increase the social influence of the University, we assume the role of a leader in social debates related to the focus field and ensure the communication of research results in the society. We support the development of the University into a role model in open governance.

#### **IV Principles of activity of Tallinn University**

For the purpose of supporting the University's strategic goal, we have defined the underlying principles of activity, which are based on the priorities and developments of the University. Thus, the development of focus fields is supported by the following underlying principles of activity.

##### **(2) The University is interdisciplinary in its activities**

The problems that the society and the state face today require collaboration between different fields. The University's current activities and results create the preconditions for interdisciplinarity to achieve an innovative impact that is important for the society. In advocating intelligent lifestyle, the University therefore relies on the principle of interdisciplinarity in its activities.

As an advocate of intelligent lifestyle, the University offers interdisciplinary solutions to social problems in its research, development and creative activities and promotes these among stakeholders and partners. In study activities, we aim to develop general competences and practical skills through study programme development, giving our graduates digital competences, associating and integrating courses, and increasing the practicality of studies. We support interdisciplinarity in research, development, creative and study activities through financing principles and work organisation both of which support cooperation and the functioning of networks.

As a result:

- the proportion of interdisciplinary research projects and research development services in the University's revenue remains steadily high;
- the volume of funding for research, development and creative activities based on clients' needs has increased;
- the number of knowledge-based services and products offered by the University has grown;
- the number of popular science articles has grown;
- the number of inter-study programme interdisciplinary modules has grown;
- the volume of studies conducted for students of other academic units has increased;
- the satisfaction of academic employees with work organisation that supports interdisciplinarity has improved;
- the number of the University's strategic partners in the private and public sector has increased.

##### **(3) The University is international**

Advocating an intelligent lifestyle in the context of globalisation entails a need for the University to initiate changes in the society and to apply the results of international research and internationally high-level studies for that purpose. Thus it is increasingly more natural to treat all activities of the University on an international level.

As an international university, we place value in the University being a reliable and attractive employer and partner in international research. In order to achieve this, we support the growth of the international competitiveness of the researchers, carry out research projects in international cooperation and with the support of external funding, and purposefully develop our international reputation. At an international university, English language based studies are a natural part of study activities. We value and improve the quality of English language based studies, increase the cooperation and studying possibilities of learners of different cultural backgrounds, and increase the efficiency of international marketing in target countries. We support the participation of the University members in international research and study communities. We develop a bilingual information and work environment at the University and support the capability of non-academic employees to work efficiently in an international working environment.

As a result:

- the volume of funding for international research projects as well as their proportion in RDC revenue has grown;
- the number of foreign post-doctoral fellows has grown;
- the long-term international mobility of doctoral students for the purposes of study and research work has intensified;
- the number of graduates from English language based study programmes has increased;
- the satisfaction of students with the quality of English language based studies has improved;
- the number of study programmes with a mobility window has increased;
- the proportion of students who have participated in studies abroad has increased;
- the proportion of foreign academic employees has increased;
- the proportion of academic employees who have worked abroad for a longer period has increased;
- the satisfaction of foreign employees with the University's English language based information environment has improved.

#### **(4) The University demands excellence and sustainability**

Assuming the role of an advocate of an intelligent lifestyle requires us to be demanding towards ourselves in a way which ensures the survival of the University in a situation where universities have to increasingly compete for both student candidates and financing. Although the extent and volume of activities have been purposefully reduced and restructured in the recent years of activity, demanding excellence and sustainability continues to be an important goal for us.

We strive for high-level and competitive research and therefore support the University's centres of excellence and improve the efficiency of support activities and doctoral studies. We are demanding of our students and lecturers, and our study programmes follow the needs of the society, labour market and students to ensure sustainability. This requires study programme development on the basis of quality requirements, the creation of flexible studying options for different target groups and the increased efficiency of studies. We value and develop the Estonian language, including the research terminology, and culture, also in terms of developing courses and study programmes. We continue to develop and provide public services intended for the society, including in preserving Estonian cultural heritage and making it available to the broader public. We consider the mental riches in Estonian language and related to Estonia very important and contribute to its preservation. In shaping a common identity and a motivated workforce, we implement an inclusive management model, create a favourable development environment for

employees, and ensure the new academic generation. We build an optimal composition of employees and develop an image that supports the goals of the University. We also strive for the financial sustainability of the University and create additional measures to provide motivation for raising additional funds outside activity support.

As a result:

- the number of high-level research publications per academic employee remains stable;
- the number of research publications in Estonian has increased;
- the three years' average volume of RDC funding has increased;
- the number of defended doctoral theses has grown;
- the number of students per academic employee has decreased;
- the proportion of students who have completed their study programme during the nominal period of all the admissions to higher education level studies by study levels has increased;
- the satisfaction of students with the quality and organisation of studies has improved;
- the satisfaction of graduates with the acquired general competences has improved;
- the satisfaction of employees with management has improved;
- the University's income base per employee has grown;
- the average salary of employees has increased.

## **V Implementation and amendment of the Development Plan**

The Development Plan of the University includes the following annexes which specify the bases of preparation, implementation, and execution monitoring:

- (a) Annex 1. Development Plan implementation plan,
- (b) Annex 2. List of key indicators,
- (c) Annex 3. Overview of the operating environment,
- (d) Annex 4. Links to national strategies and development plans.

The achievement of the goals established in the Development Plan is specified by the development plans of academic units. Area-specific strategies may also be prepared for the implementation of the University's Development Plan. For every calendar year, the activity plan of the University and the activity plans of academic units, support units and other units are prepared. The execution of the Development Plan is assessed at the end of the calendar year in management reports where the trends of key indicators are evaluated and the efficiency of the planned activities is analysed.

The Development Plan is amended as necessary.