

# FOCUS FIELDS OF TALLINN UNIVERSITY

## *Annex 2*

---

### EDUCATIONAL INNOVATION

Complex changes in the society also boost changes in the education system. Discussions on the changed approach to teaching and learning have led to the recognition that the first basis for changes is the learning and well-being of the learners. Thus, meaningful changes in the learning process and educational content supported by changes in the activities of teachers and other instructors of learning, supported, in turn, by the changing learning and working arrangements, environment and management, are necessary. The education system plays an important role in supporting the adjustment process of the society. We take education as a process that influences the comprehensive development of a person and endorses their development into a responsible individual fulfilling their potential. A well-considered and efficient education enables the members of the society to take on responsibility and be active citizens.

We are the leaders of the evidence-based method in educational innovation by developing approaches to teaching and learning based on research, and by applying high-level teaching and learning competences as a role model in order to influence the transformation of the learning culture on a wider basis in the society through educational innovation-driven intervention. We claim that it is essential to enable teachers to make evidence-based decisions on new ways of teaching and learning. We support the development of self-directed learners, and explore and develop flexible learning paths. We reinforce inclusive education and advance differentiation in education according to the individual needs of students. We contribute to the formation of a collaborative school culture in creating evidence-based innovations arising from the learners.

### DIGITAL AND MEDIA CULTURE

Digital skills as a new literacy have become inevitable in one's professional life, learning and daily communication. The skill to make a smart use of the possibilities of digital tools, innovativeness and creativity behind it give a competitive advantage to persons, institutions and the whole state. Digital media has evolved into an economic and cultural sector with the greatest impact on people's attitudes and behaviour, and whole societal processes.

Our aim is to train creative professionals, and critical and active citizens who have a versatile digital and media competence, and the ability to contribute to the development of Estonia by integrating different fields. We participate actively in the analysis of Estonian and European media systems and digital service markets, development of solutions supporting digital revolution and the digitisation of Estonian cultural heritage. We co-operate with the institutions and enterprises in the digital, media and cultural sector, other units of the university and schools. We contribute to the development of innovative solutions of the information society, and to the formation of the digital and media culture in different aspects of life, incl. by strengthening the competence of every university graduate and employee to use digital technologies and assess their impact.

## CULTURAL COMPETENCES

Under the conditions of globalisation, we are increasingly open to cultural, political and economic impacts that spring from very different societies, their historical development and traditions. Coping in an open multicultural world is an especially important task for a small culture. Knowledge of the history of Estonia, preservation and development of the Estonian language, incl. academic Estonian, and the national culture requires an ever more renewing and more extensive competence. At the same time, we must be able to accept the new and value the old in the course of communicating with and mediating of different cultures.

We analyse the Estonian language, history and culture in the global context to ensure the survival, ability to self-analyse and contemporary identity creation of our language and culture. Relying on the capacity regarding research in and mediating of different cultures, languages, history and traditions, we offer skills and knowledge of different languages, worldviews and cultural traditions to all learners and to the Estonian society as well; we also develop the understanding of cultural theory in order to grasp the mechanisms of cultural processes. We help to shape a society that values languages, cultures and creativity, create possibilities for the development of Estonian cultural area under the conditions of openness and for the participation of each society member in culture. We support the development of the cultural awareness of our employees and students in order to cope better in the globalising world.

## HEALTHY AND SUSTAINABLE LIFESTYLE

The development of the society and well-being of the aging population increasingly depends on the ability to live and work while protecting one's health and environment. Smart, research-based choices as the factors that shape the healthy lifestyle and sustainable way of thinking help to reduce the burden on nature, pressure on the social sphere and healthcare sector. Because of globalisation, greater stratification within the society by attitudes, possibilities and patterns of behaviour characterises health and the living environment. The aim of Estonia is to protect people's health, develop human-centred health services that are integrated with the social protection system, and to use the resources in a sustainable and optimal manner. Healthy and sustainable lifestyle supports value-based approach to people, society and nature.

In this focus field, we contribute to the development of attitudes valuing a healthy lifestyle, well-being and sustainable way of thinking in Estonian society, and to the creation and implementation of a social organisation where the specificity of e-services is taken into account. We act as a partner in the development of evidence-based recommendations concerning healthy lifestyle, environmental management and the ecosystem. We integrate the study and research areas of social and behavioural sciences, personal services, health and well-being, education, and natural and environmental sciences to develop multidisciplinary competence related to healthy and sustainable lifestyle.

## SOCIETY AND OPEN GOVERNANCE

The modern society is characterised by increasing complexity: uncertainty, fragmentation, mutual dependence, globalisation, transnationalism and securitization. This situation is prompted by changes in the population, changing lifestyle and values, digitisation, and the transformation of states, politics and governance. Adapting to change requires the reflection on changing societal processes, supporting (renewal of) the development of politics, governance, institutions, communities, the social protection and legal system both in Estonia and in Europe and elsewhere, innovative socioeconomic forms of enterprises and social protection measures.

We contribute to knowledge-based policy-making, and offer novel approaches and methods for making better decisions at the level of the state, rural municipality and town, European Union and international level, and in the society. We develop new prevention and intervention measures to ensure the coping and well-being of families and people. We offer research-based and innovative solutions for the politicians, officials, legal practitioners, enterprises, NGOs and citizens. We contribute to the development of educational literature and terminology databases in the Estonian language, public debates and the functioning of the university as a smart organisation. We support the rooting of the practice of open governance, and the development of our employees and students as active responsible democratic citizens. To this end, we combine the knowledge of political sciences, international relations, law, sociology, social protection and demography, and develop multidisciplinary co-operation.