



Vaasan yliopisto  
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

UNIVERSITY OF VAASA STRATEGY 2030

# Sustainable Business, Energy and Society

# University of Vaasa

## Mission

The University of Vaasa creates and disseminates knowledge to advance sustainable business, energy and society. Through innovative and high-quality research and education, we address global challenges that support the sustainable development of our learners, collaborators, ecosystems and society, both regionally and globally.

## Vision

The University of Vaasa is internationally recognised as a high-impact research university. Research in our focus areas contributes significantly to international scholarship, is increasingly multidisciplinary, and informs both policy and practice. The education we provide offers a transformative learner experience for future employment built on teaching excellence, high-quality learning environments, equality and inclusion. We make a positive societal impact on the economy, energy (transition) and governance.

## Values

Our values – courage, community, and responsibility – guide our daily operations, creating the foundation for our future success.

## Profile

The University of Vaasa is an international, business-oriented, multidisciplinary university focused on *sustainable business, energy and society*. Via our multidisciplinary schools and research platforms, we solve complex societal challenges by combining expertise in business, technology and governance. We are a valued partner within Europe's largest energy and environment business cluster, working towards affordable and clean energy, economic growth, industry innovation, and responsible consumption and production. Our modern, beautiful seaside campus is working towards carbon net neutrality and is located in a truly international, student city. The collaborative innovation activities and economic impact of the Vaasa region are recognised nationally and internationally, creating excellent opportunities for our researchers, teachers and students.



Figure 1. The University of Vaasa's mission and focus areas.

# Participative strategy at the University of Vaasa in detail

The University of Vaasa's strategy work was designed to create a common understanding, narrative and action around our vision through a participative process carried out throughout the university and with external stakeholders. The university's strategy was crafted as a joint effort built on the inputs of the University Board, Management Team, Schools, subject areas, administrative and affiliated units, students, and our key ecosystem partners.

**The strategy work was conducted by using five core strategy tools:**

- 1) strategic capabilities,
- 2) customer value promise,
- 3) strategy map,
- 4) the path, and
- 5) programme planning.



# 1. Strategic Capabilities

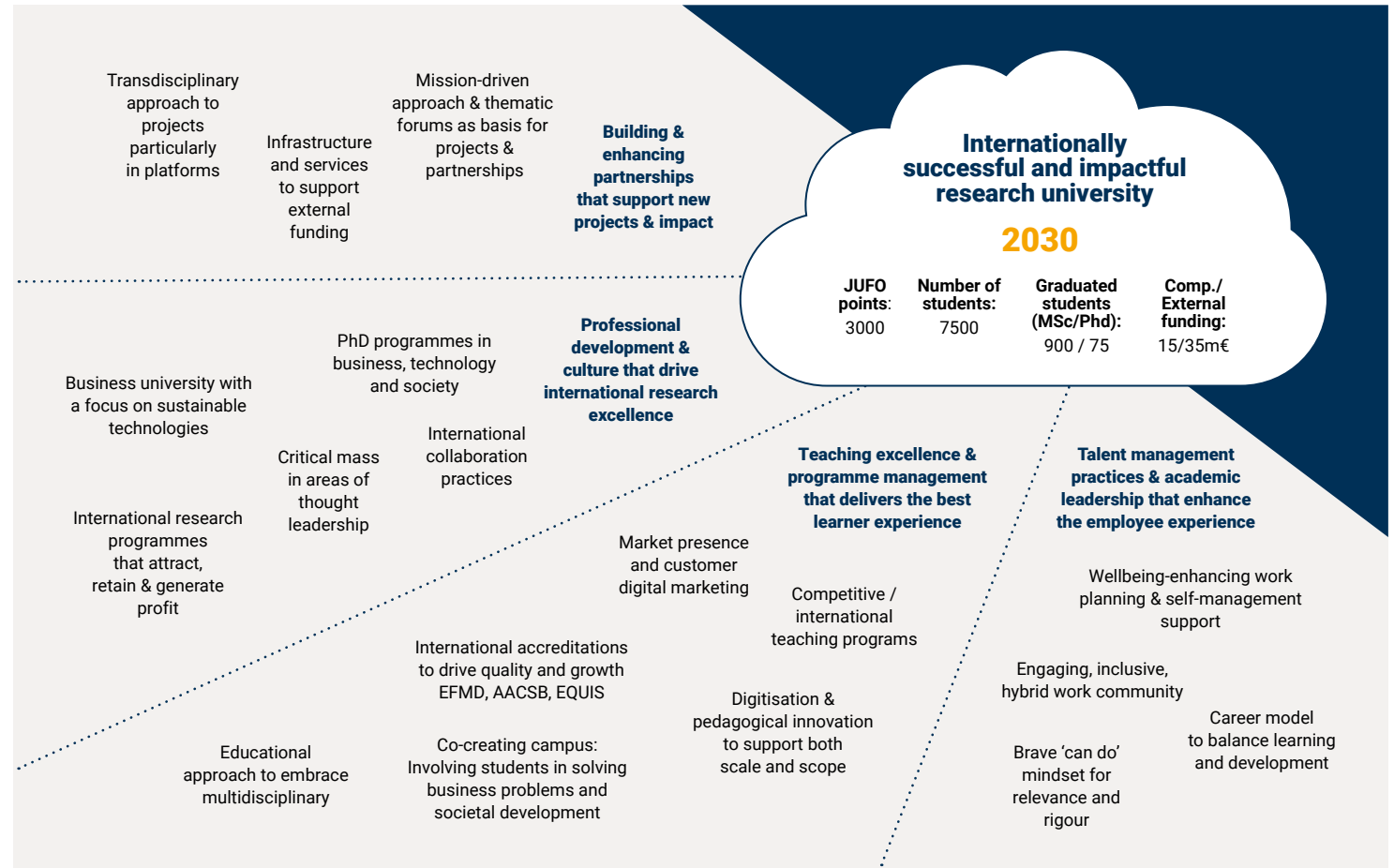
**Figure 2 illustrates the vision, must-win battles, and strategic capabilities of the University of Vaasa.**

The cloud in the top-right corner synthesises the vision up to the end of 2030. The vision has been defined and then operationalised in terms of our primary goals, such as the JUFO points (Overall JUFO: 3000 points / JUFO levels 2-3: 1500 points), the overall number of students (7500) and graduated students (825BSc / 920MSc / 75Phd), and competitive (15m€) and overall external funding (35m€).

On the left side of the cloud, highlighted in bold, we pinpointed the four must-win battles that are essential for achieving our vision. These must-win battles represent the most important strategic challenges of the university and were used to steer the identification of our capabilities.

On the left side of the must-win battles are the capabilities (combinations of resources and processes) needed to achieve our strategic vision.

The university's growth strategy is implemented through international research and teaching excellence, building on our specialised areas of thought leadership and the proactive development of our capabilities (see Figure 2) to thrive in the international markets.

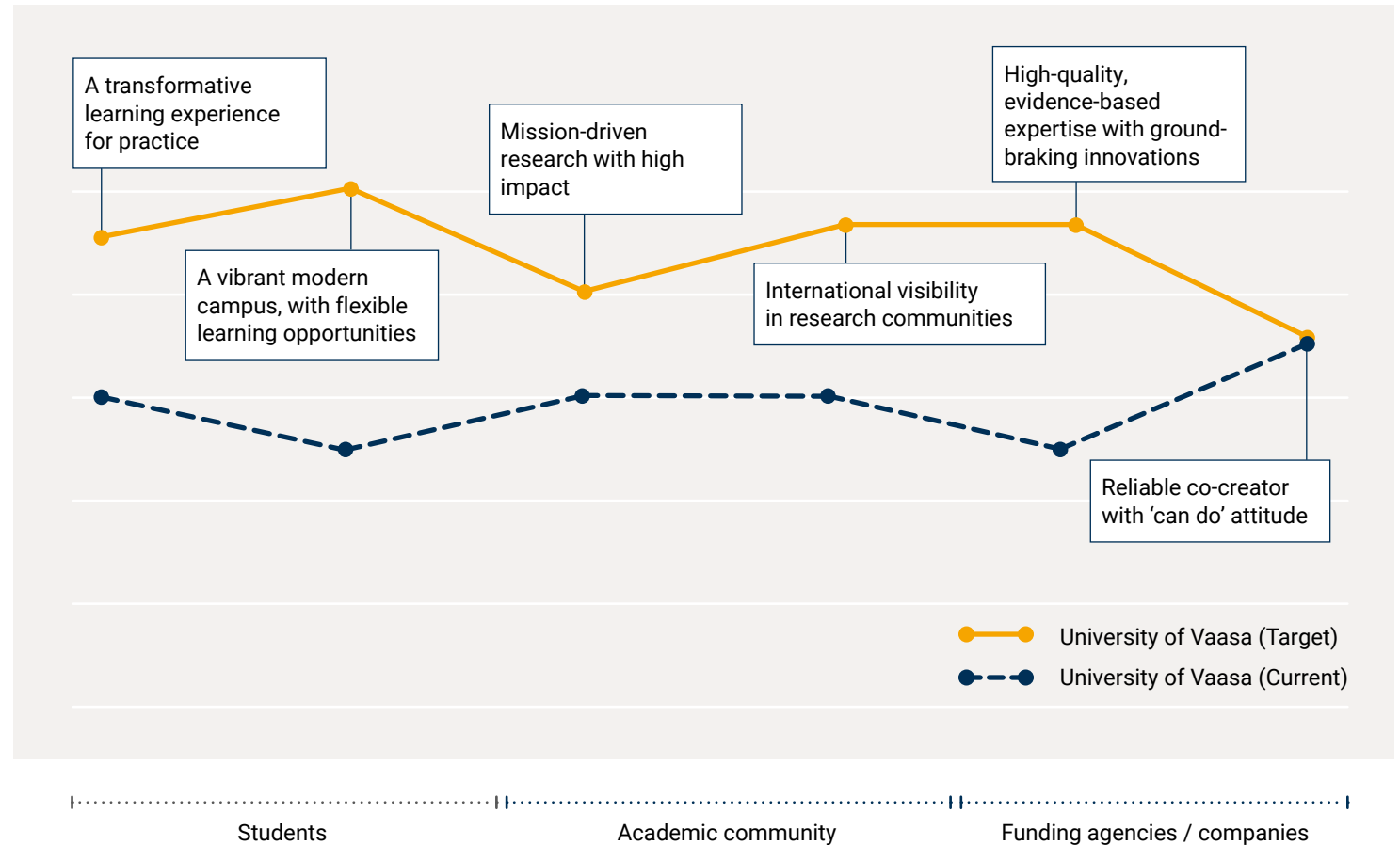


**Figure 2. Vision, must-win battles and capabilities of the University of Vaasa.**

## 2. Customer Value Promise

**Figure 3 illustrates the customer value promise of the University of Vaasa.**

The figure includes the identified customer segments – students, academic community and society (including funding agencies and companies) – and two components of the customer value promise for each segment. The lines describe the target against the current state. Throughout the process, all issues have also been reflected against competitors.



**Figure 3. Customer segments and the value promise for each segment at the University of Vaasa. Comparison of the target against the current state.**

### 3. Strategy Map

Figure 4 illustrates the strategy map of the University of Vaasa.

The strategy map defines the strategic logic of the university and intends to synthesise the strategy in terms of the following dimensions: goals (highest row), segments and customer value promise, processes and activities, and resources and competencies. In this way, the strategy map synthesises the processes and activities that are used to create customer value for the customer segments from those resources and competencies in order to achieve the operationalised targets and, therefore, the vision.

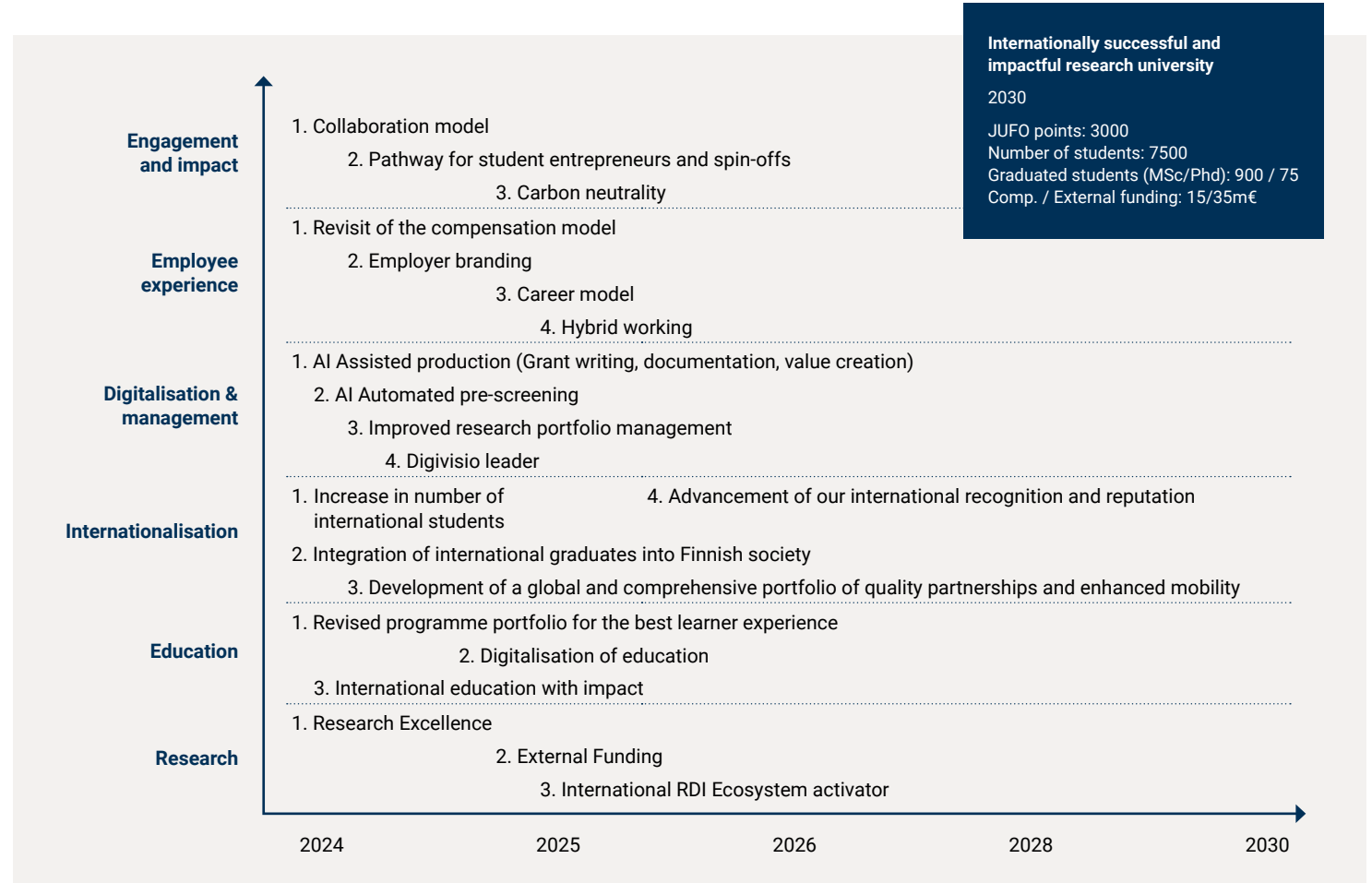
Targets	UNIVERSITY OF VAASA AS AN INTERNATIONALLY SUCCESSFUL AND IMPACTFUL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY					
	Graduated students (Bsc / Msc / Phd) 825/ 920 / 75		Scientific impact 3000 JUFO points		Comp. External funding 15/35M€	
	Students		Academic community		Funding agencies / companies	
	A transformative learning experience for practice	A vibrant modern campus, with flexible learning opportunities	Mission-driven research with high impact	International visibility in research communities	High-quality, evidence-based expertise with ground-braking innovations	Reliable co-creator with 'can do' attitude
Customer values	Assurance of learning	Student integration to companies & society	International collaboration	Open academic community	Improved internal management system	Collaboration model
	Transformative learning experience	EDUWASA service delivery model	Team-science	Performance management & financing model	High-quality research	Well-managed projects
	Career placement services	Double degrees	Mentoring programs	2+2 PhD + Tenure Track model	Risk-sharing	Recruiting and retention
Processes	2-year funding	Vibrant, connected community	Unique campus experience	High-quality data	Glocal ecosystem	Research directors and grant-writing
		Student wellbeing		RDI funding	Partnerships	Competent RDI work
Resources and competencies				High-quality Phd students		

Figure 4. Strategy map of the University of Vaasa.

## 4. The Path (Programme Identification)

By 2030, our research goal is to attain a prominent global position and make a significant impact. This requires us to become a respected participant in local and global innovation networks and work with outstanding international academic research partners. This strategy helps us increase our impact by adopting an ecosystem mindset and improving our academic research contributions.

**Figure 5 depicts the six development programmes** – research, education, internationalisation, digitalisation and management, employee experience, engagement and impact – for implementing the strategy in order to gain international recognition and produce research with a significant impact by the end of 2030. Each development programme has been divided into separate development projects. These development projects include various investments, activities and tasks managed by the responsible directors.



**Figure 5. The six development programmes of the University of Vaasa.**



## 5. Programme Planning

### 5.1. Research

Achieving the university's vision for 2030 necessitates establishing ourselves as an esteemed participant within local and global innovation networks, as well as collaborating with exceptional international academic research partners. This strategy will allow us to enhance our impact by embracing an ecosystem mindset and augment our academic research contributions.

To achieve international recognition and generate research with a significant impact, it is essential to uphold the following criteria:

- Highly cited, internationally co-authored research based on our strong disciplines in a multidisciplinary school structure.
- Challenge- and phenomenon-driven, interdisciplinary research that makes a difference in the real world, addressing global societal challenges, conducted through research platforms. Adopting a 'team science' approach and engaging collaborators from industry and society.
- External funding and engaging external stakeholders are at the core of our research operations. The aim is to access the funding channels with the highest impact: the Academy of Finland, Business Finland, and EU funding, including the European Defence Fund.
- We strive for our research output to be published in the most valuable research channels – in impactful academic journals and in outlets securing our impact in practice: co-creation, patents, trademarks and start-ups.



## 5.2. Education

At its core, the student experience is built on cutting-edge, research-based knowledge, utilising the latest advances in technology and digitalisation, engaging the students in the projects and focusing on flexible study pathways and guidance. We seek to increase our educational offerings and the number of Finnish and international students. Our educational programmes also address the needs of students at different life stages and across their working careers.

We work responsibly towards the integration of domestic and international graduates into Finnish companies, the labour market and society. The university is an important cooperation partner to the City of Vaasa, to the Vaasa innovation ecosystem and to companies, especially those in the Vaasa Energy cluster. We are upscaling our attractive degree programmes according to the blended learning education model in order to serve and reach students in the surrounding regions. The target of our cocreation is a sustainable, growing city and region that is home to a vital university and industries.

The university seeks to move into a revised, lean education portfolio with flexible degree programmes **and substantially increase its domestic and international student numbers – to 7500 by the year 2030**. Modules within our programmes emphasise work-life relevance, employment, and



re-employment in a rapidly changing society. We proactively offer support services to our students through study guidance, mentoring, wellbeing and career development services. We respond to changing educational needs by comprehensively renewing our physical and virtual learning environments.

We are **renewing the entire physical campus, along with the digital infrastructure and communal spaces**, all of which are being carried out in accordance with the principles of sustainable development. An open and thriving campus is integral to the city's development and the region's innovation ecosystem. The campus plays an essential role in bringing together students, researchers, partners, businesses, guests and local citizens alike and enables close cooperation in our educational and research activities. The University of Vaasa is active in the national Digivisio 2030 project, which aims to provide joint digital educational offerings in the higher education sector, including micro-credentials.

To achieve the above ambitions, we have identified the following priorities across three development programmes:

#### **Renewal of the programme portfolio: Best programmes for excellence in teaching and best learner experience**

- Develop our educational offering and its attractiveness internationally and nationally and grow our student number: Revision of our education programme portfolio for larger programmes in focus areas, flexible study pathways

- Extend new international / English-language provision
- Extend the portfolio in dual languages and multi-location education while combining the programmes into larger entities at the same time
- Growth management, resource allocation and effective programme management
- National and international collaboration (including double degrees)
- Advanced, digitally assisted student guidance and education services
- Upscale selected Master programmes using multi-location, blended-learning teaching and education offering
- Lifelong and continuous learning: education offering that addresses the needs of students at different life stages and across their working careers, including open university studies and micro-credentials

#### **Digitalisation**

- Digitalisation of education that supports excellence in teaching and the best learner experience for a growing number of students
- Competence building in blended learning and digitally assisted teaching; encouraging teachers to develop their skills in pedagogy and digital pedagogy (continuous)
- Develop innovative teaching/outsourcing practices for flexible study pathways, including greater recognition of prior learning

- Production of at least three world-class digital UVA showroom courses for open and continuous education target groups
- Digitally assisted, smooth admissions and administrative processes

#### **International education with impact**

- Integrate national and international students in the UVA community and Vaasa Ecosystem: RDI collaboration, mentoring, summer jobs
- Company-integrated education, informed by company projects, work placements, and internships
- Develop selected degree programmes into bilingual programmes
- Establish a smooth rolling admissions process in international student recruitment
- Deepen collaboration in international educational networks with high-quality partners, including the European university alliance EUNICE, and including expansion of double-degree provision
- Support international students as future specialists to integrate into the Finnish labour market and society (Vaasa West Coast Gateway, Talent Hub, Vaasa Spouse Programme)

### 5.3. Internationalisation

In our 2030 strategy, the university expressed its aspiration to become **an internationally recognised research university, with 35% of its students and faculty being international by 2030**. We aim to build this reputation on high-impact research as a highly valued partner within regional and international innovation ecosystems. Our location at the heart of Northern Europe's largest energy and environment cluster, advancing the renewal of the energy sector and mitigating climate change are a core part of our mission. This informs also how we seek to internationalise and build partnerships. As a community, we aim to be internationally recognised for diversity and inclusivity.

To achieve the above ambitions, we have identified strategic goals in the following areas:

- International accreditations
- International rankings
- Develop and grow our international faculty
- Achieve international engagement and impact
- Develop a framework and infrastructure for internationalisation
- Develop our international networks and partnerships





#### 5.4. Digitalisation and Management

The digitalisation and management development programme aims to help us use digital solutions and AI in teaching, administration, admission and student services, research, and university management as effectively as possible. For this purpose, we develop our capabilities to understand how software, hardware and services can be used to automate processes and reuse existing assets (such as AI), ultimately impacting and bringing about change across the university organisation.

To realise these goals, we have identified strategic areas that connect with education and research functions. Enhancing education through digitalisation will improve teaching and provide a better learning experience for an increasing number of students.

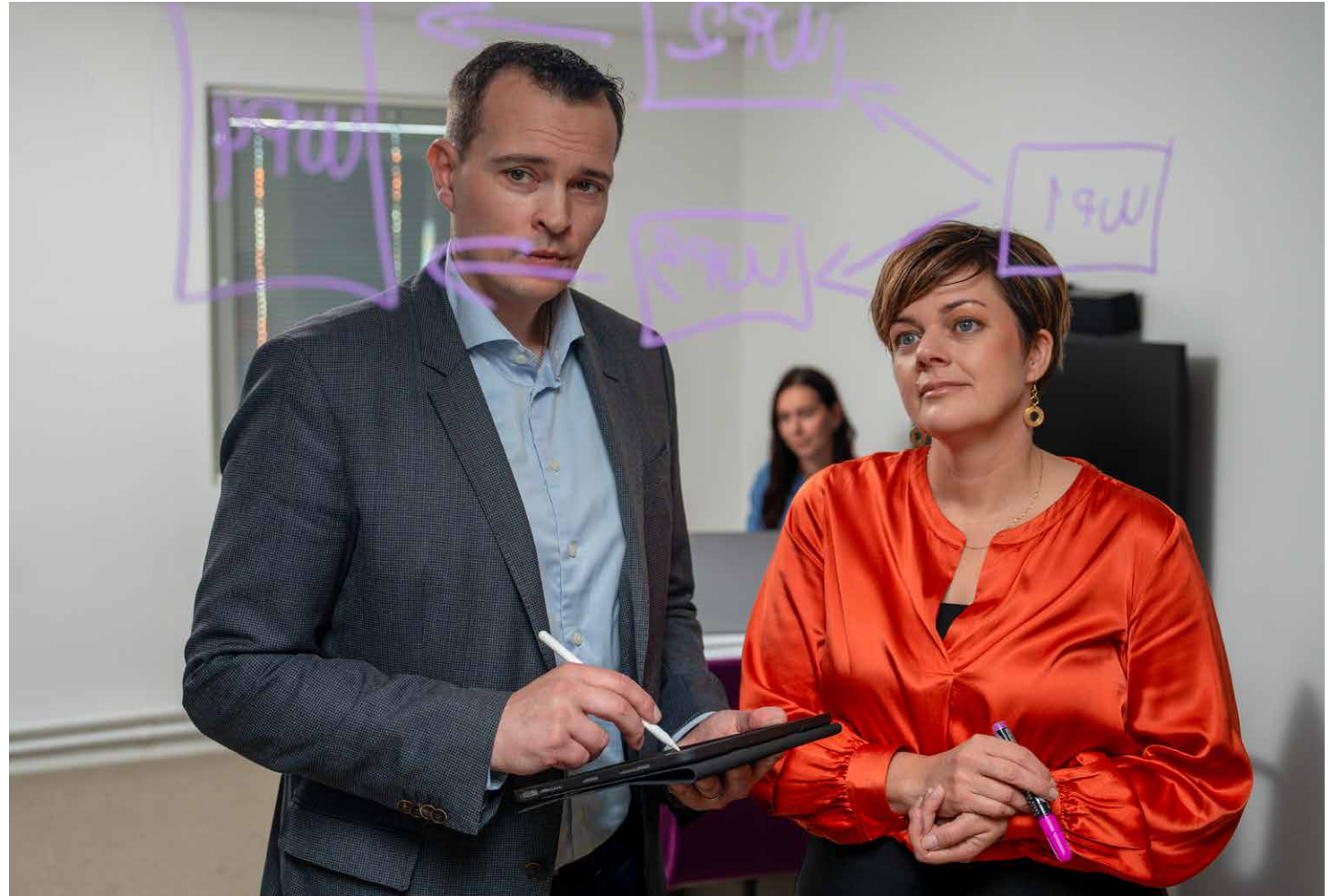
- Competence building in blended learning, digitally assisted teaching; encourage teachers to develop their skills in pedagogy and digital pedagogy (continuous)
- Develop smart own teaching / outsourcing practices for flexible study pathways, including greater recognition of prior learning
- Produce at least three world-class digital UVA showroom courses for open and continuous education target groups
- Digitally assisted, smooth admissions and administrative processes
- Research grant opportunities – finding and forming proposals
- Creating tools for helping networking (Research Dashboard)
- Research project portfolio management

## 5.5. Employee Experience

Our success and results are a direct result of the input of our skilled and committed researchers, teachers and experts. With high-quality HR/people practices, we provide an excellent employee experience and ensure that our academic community attracts talented workforce nationally and internationally. We will continue investing in the wellbeing and career development of our staff and regularly measure satisfaction and engagement to continuously develop our practices. As a work community, we embrace diversity, and our collaborative work culture fosters inclusivity and equality.

To achieve the University of Vaasa's ambitions for growth and development, we have identified strategic goals in the following areas:

- Compensation and benefits
- Employer branding
- Career development
- Hybrid working



## 5.6. Engagement and Impact

The target of the University of Vaasa is high-quality research and education with impact. Given our position in the energy capital of the Nordic countries, it is especially our responsibility to spearhead the promotion of sustainability. Our dedication to sustainability runs deep, with a commitment to incorporating the social, economic and ecological dimensions of sustainability into all aspects of our work. As a renowned research establishment, we actively promote innovation and progress that yield benefits for both industries and society through our research initiatives.

We are devoted to embracing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, focusing on those that align with our expertise and have the greatest potential for positive societal influence:

- Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable, and modern energy for all (goal 7).
- Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all (goal 8).
- Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation (goal 9).
- Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable (goal 11).
- Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns (goal 12).
- Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (goal 16).

The University of Vaasa is committed to Theses on sustainable development and responsibility, as agreed by all Finnish universities at Universities Finland UNIFI. The universities perform systemic follow-up together, as well as plan common steps in implementing the European sustainability competence framework (European GreenComp).

By joining PRME, the University of Vaasa has also made a commitment to advancing the values of sustainability, responsibility and ethics in teaching, research and leadership.

To achieve the above ambitions, we have identified specific strategic goals in the following areas:

- Ecosystem & Partnerships
- Commercialisation & Intellectual Asset Management
- Carbon Neutral University





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