



# Towards Sustainable Business, Energy, and Society

Quality Management Manual of the University of Vaasa



Vaasan yliopisto  
UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

# The quality management system of the University of Vaasa



The University of Vaasa strives for high quality and societal impact in all its activities. Quality management, in accordance with the model for continuous development, is a central part of the university's management. The quality management manual compiles the university's quality system: principles of quality management, elements of the university's developmental culture, the most important guiding regulations and the university's internal rules, as well as the most important processes and responsibilities.

The quality management manual and the quality page online are intended for both the university community and stakeholders. The manual is divided into the following chapters: management system, quality management and strategic management (chapters 1-3), the university's core tasks research and innovation activities (chapter 4), education (chapter 5) and societal interaction (chapter 6). Chapter 7 describes how the university's heart, its staff and community, are developed in alignment with the principles and responsibilities of high-quality development and management. Links to quality management tools in the university's Messi intranet have been compiled at the end of each chapter. The quality management manual has been finalized together with the university's staff, students, and the university's most important stakeholders.

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Rector Minna Martikainen

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# 1. The university and its management system

The University of Vaasa is an international and multidisciplinary research university that focuses on sustainable business, energy, and society. Our strategic focus areas are energy transition and technology, business and management, and governance and society. With our Schools and research platforms, we solve complex societal challenges by combining business, technology, governance, and communication expertise.

The University of Vaasa carries out its tasks guided by its vision, strategy, and values (Figure 1). The university aims for its activities to be internationally high-quality, responsible, and socially impactful. The quality policy defines the university's quality objectives, the key actors in quality management, and the participatory quality culture. The university's quality management is an integral part of the university's management in accordance with the principles of continuous development. The whole is the responsibility of the Rector, and each employee and student is responsible for the quality of results and activities in their own task and role, as part of the university community. Internal and external stakeholders participate in the various stages of continuous development. To support quality management, the university utilizes national and international quality assessments and accreditations. The university monitors and evaluates the realization of quality and impact as part of the reporting of the Ministry of Education and Culture's contract periods.

Our values - courage, community, and responsibility - guide our daily activities and create the basis for our success. As a community, we strive to be internationally recognized for our diversity and inclusiveness. We produce high-quality researched information to support societal decision-making and train professionals for the needs of working life. Our co-operation with the region's global export companies is exceptionally close and impactful. As part of the largest energy technology concentration in the Nordic countries, in one of our country's most successful areas, we produce added value for the surrounding international and national ecosystem.



Figure 1. The key elements in the University of Vaasa's strategy (2023).

The university has four Schools for organizing research and education: School of Management, School of Accounting and Finance, School of Marketing and Communication, and School of Technology and Innovation Management. Through three research platforms – Vaasa Energy Business Innovation Centre VEBIC, Digital Economy, and Innovation and Entrepreneurship InnoLab - the university conducts phenomenon-based, interdisciplinary, and impactful research. With its research, the university responds to global societal challenges. The University Services support the schools in achieving the set targets. There are also three separate institutions, the Language Centre Linginno, the Levón Institute, and the Tritonia Science Library. The university's basic mission, strategy, and values guide activities and the achievement of objectives. The university's 2030 strategy has been drawn up in close cooperation with the university community and stakeholders and is specified based on the needs of society and the analysis of the operating environment.

The University of Vaasa operates as an institution under public law as intended in the University Act. The University Act guarantees universities self-government, which includes the right to decide on matters belonging to internal administration. According to the University Act, the bodies of the University of Vaasa are the University Collegium, the Board, the Rector, and the Management Groups of the Schools and the separate institutions. Other bodies at the University of Vaasa in alignment with the University Act are the Education Council and the Research Council, as well as Vice-Rectors, Deans, Directors of affiliated institutions, and the university's Management Group supporting the Rector. The tasks and responsibilities of the bodies are described in the University of Vaasa's management regulations.

Members of the University Collegium are elected from the university's different staff groups (professors, other teaching and research staff, and other staff). The student union appoints student members. The University Collegium decides on the number of members of the Board and the term of office of the Board and its members. In addition, the University Collegium elects the external members and confirms the appointment of the internal members of the Board. The internal members of the Board and the members of the Management Groups of the Schools are elected in elections in the same way as the members of the University Collegium. The University Collegium elects the members representing the staff groups to the Education Council and the Research Council, and the student union appoints the student members.

The Board decides on the university's strategy and management regulations, matters concerning the university's finances and operations, and other comprehensive plans. The University Collegium elects the university's auditors and approves the financial statements and the annual report and decides on the discharge from liability of the Board and the Rector. The Education Council acts as the body responsible for the quality of education and is responsible for the development of the university's education and quality control and related procedures at the university level. Similarly, the Research Council acts as the body responsible for the quality of research and is responsible for the development of the university's research and quality control and related procedures at the university level. The task of the Management Groups of the Schools is to monitor the quality of the School's activities and make development initiatives and to discuss the School's action plan, budget, and personnel plan. The task of the Management Groups is also to discuss the School's student admission criteria and number of intake. In addition, the task of the Management Groups is to discuss the structure and curricula of the School's degree programmes.

The Rector leads the university's activities and is responsible for the economic and efficient performance of the university. The Rector is also responsible for the implementation, monitoring, and development of the university's strategy. The University Management Group supports the Rector in managing the university as well as preparing and implementing the strategy. The University Management Group includes deans and employer representatives of university services as well as other persons specially invited

by the Rector. The dean is responsible for leading the activities of the School and its economy. Similarly, the Directors of the affiliated institutions and the research platforms lead and are responsible for the economy of their units. The Rector, Vice-Rectors, and the Directors of University Services are responsible for the management and operations of the University Services in accordance with the strategy.

## The most important regulations governing the university's operations

<b>Universities Act</b>	guarantees universities self-governance, which includes the right to make decisions on matters belonging to internal administration. The University Act stipulates, among other things, the tasks and self-administration of universities, research and teaching.
<b>University Regulations</b>	describes the duties and responsibilities of administrative bodies.
<b>Degree Regulations</b>	applies to degrees and studies completed at the University of Vaasa, teaching and studying and, where applicable, to separate studies, open university education and studies organized as continuing education or specialization education.
<b>Election Regulations</b>	are followed when electing members representing the university community to the board as well as members and alternate members to the university collegium and the Management Groups of Schools as well as the research council and the education council.
<b>Financial rules</b>	describes the organization and responsibilities of the financial administration of the University of Vaasa.

## The University of Vaasa's administrative bodies and key responsible parties

ACTORS OR GOVERNING BODY	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>University Collegium</b>	is responsible for the selection process of board members and selects members from outside the university community to the board; selects the university's auditors and approves the university's financial statements and activity report; elects the members representing personnel groups to the Education Council and the Research Council.
<b>University Board</b>	decides on the university's strategy and budget and prepares financial statements; approves contracts that are important for the university's operation and gives opinions on fundamentally important matters concerning the university; approves the target agreement with the Ministry of Education and Culture; elects the principal and vice-principals; approves the governing rules and confirms the organization of the university; makes a proposal to change the university's responsibility for education; decides on the number of students to be admitted to the university.
<b>Rector</b>	manages the university's operations and decides on matters concerning the university that have not been regulated or assigned to another institution; is responsible for the university's finances and the efficiency and effectiveness of operations: is responsible for the preparation and presentation of issues discussed in the board, as well as their implementation; decides on the hiring and dismissal of personnel.
<b>Vice-Rector</b>	is responsible for the set of tasks assigned by the Rector in the management of the university, acts as chairman in the council of his area of responsibility, leads the service units of the university services in his area of responsibility, and resolves matters belonging to the Rector when the Rector is temporarily prevented.

<b>Education Council</b>	is responsible for the development of the university's education and quality control at the university level; decides on the criteria for selecting students and makes a presentation to the board about the number of students to be admitted to the university; decides on the degree requirements of the university's degree programmes and approves the structures of the degree programmes; processes requests for corrections related to academic records according to the executive rule.
<b>Research Council</b>	is responsible for the development of the university's research and quality control at the university level; is responsible for the development of the university's innovation activities at the university level; develops the graduate school and postgraduate education programmes and gives statements about them to the Education Council.
<b>University Management Group</b>	supports the Rector in managing the university and preparing and implementing the strategy; monitors the goals set for the university's result units and their realization and resourcing.
<b>Dean</b>	agrees on the School's performance goals with the principal and is responsible for preparing the School's action plan, personnel plan and budget; is responsible for the quality and development of the School's operations and its effectiveness, as well as the achievement of the goals set for the School and reporting to the principal.
<b>School's Management Group</b>	monitors the quality of the School's operations and takes initiatives to develop operations; handles the School's action plan, budget and personnel plan; deals with the criteria for selecting students for the education programmes under the unit's responsibility and the number of students admitted to the School; handles the structures and curricula of the training programmes under the unit's responsibility.
<b>Director of a Research Platform</b>	manages the research platform, agrees on the results goals of the research platform with the principal and is responsible for achieving the set goals for the principal.
<b>Director of an Affiliated Institution</b>	manages the independent institution, agrees on the results goals of the independent institution with the principal and is responsible for achieving the set goals for the principal.

## Links

- ▶ [Policy and development in higher education and science](#)
- ▶ [University of Vaasa Organisation](#)
- ▶ [The University management and decision making](#)
- ▶ [University of Vaasa Strategy 2030](#)



## 2. Quality Management at the University of Vaasa

### 2.1. University Quality Policy and Quality Management Model

The University of Vaasa defines its quality policy as follows:

The University of Vaasa carries out its tasks guided by its vision, strategy, and values. The university aims for its activities to be internationally high-quality, responsible, and socially impactful.

The university's quality management is an integral part of the university's management in accordance with the principles of continuous development. The overall responsibility lies with the Rector, and each employee and student is responsible for the quality of results and activities in their own task and role, as part of the university community. Internal and external stakeholders participate in the various stages of continuous development. The university utilizes national and international quality assessments and accreditations to support quality management.

The task of the university's quality system is to help and ensure that the university can operate according to its objectives. The quality management manual describes the entirety of the quality system, responsibilities, and key procedures.

The quality policy, which the university's board has approved as part of the comprehensive quality management, defines the university's quality objectives, the key actors in quality management, and the participatory quality culture. Quality management is in line with the European EFQM framework's principle of continuous development, and activities are structured using the quality cycle or PDCA cycle (PLAN, DO, CHECK, ACT) (Figure 2). The university also broadly utilizes the programme-specific, field-specific, and university-specific international quality accreditations in its quality management and quality assessment.

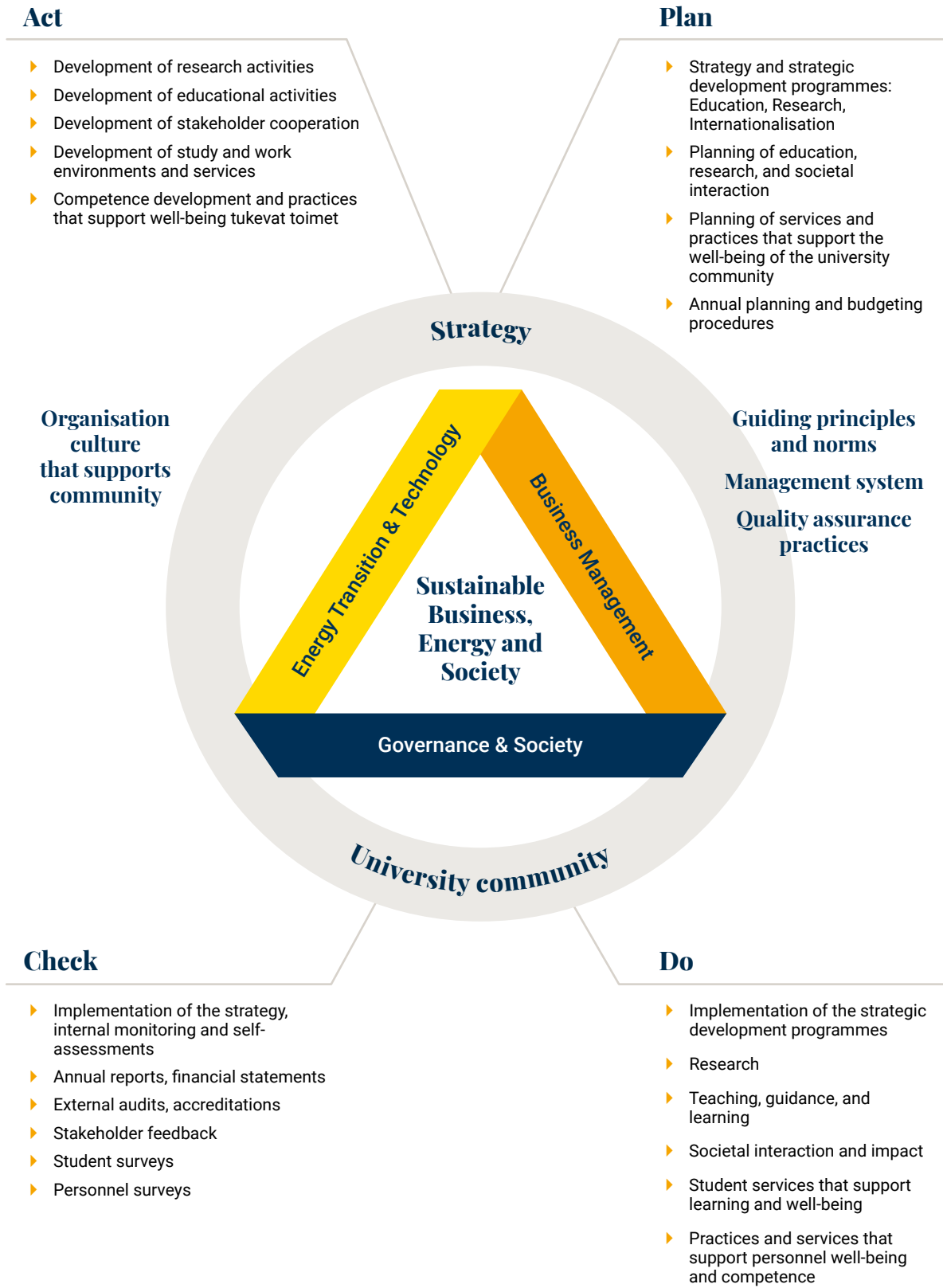


Figure 2. Principles and elements of quality management at the University of Vaasa.

## **2.2. The Quality System Supports the Work of the University Community**

The basis of quality work is the decision-making and management system of the University of Vaasa, according to the university's management regulations, which ensures the responsibilities of quality work as part of the organization's activities and core processes. The main bodies of universities are defined in the University Act. The bodies and their definitions are defined in the University of Vaasa's management regulations and separate decisions.

The Rector leads the realization of the university's quality and reports on it to the board. The University of Vaasa has a university-level quality management and accreditation steering group, whose task is to monitor the operation of the university's quality system as part of the university's decision-making and management system. The group's task is also to develop the quality system as part of the university's management system. The steering group serves as the steering group for the university's audit and accreditation work. The university's accreditation team, which takes care of the internal assessment and external audit and accreditation processes, are responsible for preparing the steering group's matters.

Practical quality management works to achieve common tasks and objectives and systematic, participatory, and knowledge-based improvement of activities. The guidelines and practices guiding the university's activities are accessible in the university's intranet Messi. The head of a profit center is responsible for the quality management of the unit, in accordance with the university's instructions. Each member of the university community is responsible for the quality in their task and role.

## **2.3. Monitoring and Assessments Support the Development of Activities**

The University of Vaasa monitors and evaluates the realization of quality and impact as part of the contract period reporting to the Ministry of Education and Culture. Monitoring and evaluation are based on the criteria of the universities' funding model, which includes, among other things, student feedback. Monitoring and evaluation take place through result management, i.e., the quantitative and qualitative objectives of the units, through stakeholder feedback reviews and within other agreed development groups. Assessments are reported and decisions on development measures are made according to the university's management and quality system. A central tool is the university's annual planning process, as part of which the quality and impact of the university's activities are systematically evaluated, and development measures are planned and implemented.

The monitoring and reporting included in the contract procedure of the Ministry of Education and Culture guide the university to strengthen the effectiveness of its activities. The Ministry's guidance is based on four-year contract periods, and the realization of the agreed objectives is monitored regularly during the contract period through written reporting and/or higher education visits. The assessment of the quality and impact of research is based on academic peer review and national and international principles of research (Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), funding applications, research results). The working and research conditions and environment of researchers are monitored in the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) programme. The quality and impact of degree education are evaluated in relation to the objectives and positioning statistics of the Ministry of Education and Culture and through direct feedback surveys. The degree programmes are evaluated periodically as part of curriculum work.

The university participates in external audits, accreditations, and rankings, and utilizes the valuable peer feedback received to develop its activities. In recent years, the University of Vaasa has utilized international accreditations as one of the key means to improve the quality of its activities. The goal is for all the university's degree programmes to receive an international quality label in the future. Three business programmes (International Business, Finance, and Strategic Business Development) have been awarded the international EFMD accreditation emphasizing internationality. The international accreditation of the German ASIIN organization is mainly intended for technical-scientific and natural science degree programmes, and the University of Vaasa has a total of seven ASIIN-accredited bachelor's and master's programmes in technology. The AACSB accreditation process in the field of business started at the University of Vaasa in the fall of 2017, and the accreditation decision is expected in August 2024. The university is currently in the implementation phase of the development measures identified in the recent self-assessment.

## **2.4. Continuous Development Ensures and Improves Quality**

The University of Vaasa utilizes quality assessment and feedback from stakeholders to improve the quality of its activities and increase its impact. The task of the quality management procedures is to produce an understanding of the current situation and the necessary actions for achieving the set objectives, and thereby strengthen the impact of activities.

The university enhances its the impact and social responsibility by following the views and expectations of stakeholders, such as ministries, partners, applicants, alumni, and the general public. Especially closely the university monitors the views and expectations of the international export companies that are operating in the innovation ecosystem and crucial for the Finnish economy. The university strongly invests in industry cooperation

that serves the entire innovation ecosystem. Stakeholders also contribute through evaluations, bodies, and advisory boards. The university widely uses the Advisory Boards to identify partners' expectations in degree programmes, research platforms, and more broadly in the university's strategic management.

The task of the university's management is to support the management of the university and the activities of the bodies and, together with the university community, to identify the strengths, areas for improvement, and possible development ideas. The management is responsible for planning, prioritizing, scheduling, communicating, and financing development measures. The opportunities for members of the university community to influence are secured in various ways which promotes the commitment of the university community to improve the quality of activities. Communication and discussion in the university community take place, among other things, through regular Rector's information sessions, unit-specific events, and personal discussions. Special attention is paid to equality, accessibility, and the multiculturalism of the community when it comes to opportunities for influence, communication, and discussion

## Links

- ▶ [Quality Management in the University of Vaasa](#)

## 3. Strategic Management and Planning Processes

The University Act defines the tasks of universities. The activities of universities are guided by the four-year contract periods of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Ministry agrees in more detail for each contract period on the common objectives of the universities and, on a university-specific basis, based on each university's strategy, the university's profile, strengths and emerging fields, degree objectives, and strategic development targets and strategic development funding. The Ministry and the universities agree on the key monitoring indicators of strategic development measures. The goal-oriented strategic management is complemented by the universities' funding model and its quantitative indicators.

Strategic management of activities at the University of Vaasa means the systematic implementation of the university's strategy through the management system. The task of the management system is to create structures, define responsibilities and procedures, and ensure a consistent connection between the organization's strategy and objectives and results. By implementing its strategy, the university at the same time responds to the objectives agreed upon in the contract with the Ministry of Education and Culture.

A central part of strategic management is the university's annual planning process, which starts with the University Management Group's planning meeting. The annual plans concretize the actions by which the profit centers advance the implementation of the university's strategy in education, research, and societal interaction. Based on the Rector's instructions, the profit centers draw up an annual plan of their activities, including the unit's personnel plan and budget proposal. In connection with annual planning, the university's management and all profit centers evaluate the development of activities and results both quantitatively and qualitatively, engage in dialogue about the objectives, priorities, and measures of activities, and agree on the activities and objectives for the next year. The annual plan prioritizes, schedules, and resources development measures and takes care of long-term strategic personnel planning. As part of annual planning, the university's risk management process, which identifies risks and plans and monitors corrective measures, is also linked as part of annual activity planning.

As part of the annual planning process, development programmes related to the implementation of the strategy are also defined. Development programmes concretize strategic objectives, means to achieve them, and necessary investments. The funding framework for development programmes prepared under the leadership of the Rector is confirmed by the Board. The Rector is responsible for the more detailed implementation

of the programmes. The implementation of the programmes is monitored regularly, for example, by reporting on them to the Board and as part of the Management Group’s work. Multi-year programmes are specified based on monitoring, taking into account changes in the regulations and directives guiding the university’s activities and expectations in the surrounding society.

The University Regulations guide decision-making processes and the responsibilities of the university’s quality system follow the management system. The responsibility for the quality of activities and its development belongs to everyone according to their own task. The Board and operational management regularly evaluate the implementation of the strategy, the results of activities, and changes in the operating environment, and agree on necessary measures in connection with the annual planning process. The University’s Management Group actively monitors the entirety, functionality, and development needs of the quality system. The task of the quality work group is to monitor the operation of the quality management system at the university level and to make initiatives to develop the quality system. The Rector reports on the quality system and its functionality to the Board.

## Quality management responsibilities

ACTORS OR GOVERNING BODY	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Member of the University community</b>	responsible for the quality of its own operations and its development.
<b>School’s Management Group</b>	monitors the quality of the School’s operations and initiates actions for development; handles the School’s operational plan, budget, and personnel plan.
<b>Education Council</b>	acts as the administrative body responsible for the quality of education.
<b>Research Council</b>	acts as the administrative body responsible for the quality of research.
<b>Dean, Director of units and Director of the University Services</b>	responsible for the quality and effectiveness of the unit’s operations and for the continuous development of operations in accordance with the university’s common principles and guidelines.
<b>University Management Group</b>	continuously evaluates the entirety and functionality of the quality system as part of the management system and handles development measures.
<b>Quality working group</b>	responsible for monitoring and developing the operation of the quality management system.
<b>Rector</b>	responsible for the entirety and functionality of the quality system; reports on the quality system and its functionality to the university board.

## 4. High-quality and impactful research

The university's strategy and focus areas form the basis for planning and managing research activities. Our strategy, developed together with the university community, outlines as follows: we conduct internationally high-quality research in our focus areas. The university's key themes are sustainable business, energy, and society. The university conducts phenomenon-based, interdisciplinary, and impactful research through its research platforms, which responds to global societal challenges. We consider it important to engage industry and societal partners in our research activities. The university's location in the heart of Northern Europe's largest energy and environmental technology cluster is reflected in its goal to be at the forefront of sustainable development.

The aim of quality work is to support these strategic goals and ensure that research and innovation activities are impactful, high-quality, and responsible. The university promotes sustainable development with its research and helps to solve global future challenges. The university conducts ethically sustainable and responsible research and adheres to the principles of open science.

The Research Council is the university's main academic actor responsible for quality control of research. The quality of research is evaluated by the national and international scientific community using peer review methods (funding calls, job fillings, progress evaluations, publishing activities, and other external evaluations).

The task of quality management is to support the achievement of the goals set for research and the development of activities using the quality management cycle (PDCA, Plan-Do-Check-Act). Elements and measures of quality management are updated as needed, for example, due to changes in the operating environment.

### 4.1. Research activity planning

The university's basic mission and strategy guide planning, and the units are responsible for planning their own research activities. It is important that the plans are commensurate and measurable but taking into account the diversity of research fields and the importance of impact, which is often described through qualitative attributes. The plans and research activity guidelines drawn up annually by the units support the university's goals, especially when planning new initiatives.



The planning of the university's and the units' research activities is based on the strategy and the strategy implementation plan, and on the plans for the agreement to be made with the Ministry of Education and Culture. Research activities are also planned as part of the university's profiling measures and together with key stakeholders.

The management system ensures adequate dialogue with the academic community, strategic compatibilities and resources, and operation according to the PDCA model.

## **4.2. Implementation and prerequisites of research**

The research groups of the Schools conduct high-quality research, implement research projects, and supervise doctoral students. Research groups include professors, post-doc researchers, and doctoral students preparing their dissertations, as well as project researchers.

The units implement the planned research activities. The persons in charge ensure that the activities are in line with the strategy and that the resources are sufficient. During the implementation, various indicators are monitored, such as the number and quality of publications, the completion of doctoral degrees, and international mobility.

The university's research platforms operate in extensive cooperation with companies and the public sector. These three open, multidisciplinary, and phenomenon-based research platforms complement the university's strong discipline-specific research, for example, by acquiring external research funding.

Ensuring the prerequisites for conducting research is part of ensuring the quality of research. The Vice-Rector for Research leads the research services and the Graduate School, as well as the Research Council, whose task is to act as the administrative body responsible for the quality of research. Researchers follow the funder's guidelines and the project management guidelines confirmed annually by the Rector in all their research projects.

The management group of the Graduate School reports to the Council of Research. Its task is to develop doctoral education under the leadership of the Vice-Rector for Research and coordinate the processes of doctoral education from the application procedure to the granting of a doctoral degree. The Graduate School is responsible for the quality of processes and activities and is thus a key actor in the university's quality system. The management group is made up of representatives of Schools.

The University of Vaasa is committed to national and international open science and research ethics guidelines and principles. The university has an open science policy and an open science steering group, guidance for open science and research ethical processes,

and a research ethics committee. The university's own publishing activities are the responsibility of the publishing committee.

Researchers' prerequisites for conducting impactful and high-quality research are supported by doctoral education, the tenure track career system, and support for international mobility, as well as by encouraging team science thinking. Several units of University Services regularly produce services and training related to, for example, databases and systems, data management, and research ethical issues.

### **4.3. Responsible evaluation and monitoring**

The university is committed to key national and international guidelines and recommendations for responsible evaluation of research and researchers, such as the Dora Declaration and CoARA. The university is committed to developing the working conditions of its researchers and promoting responsible, open, ethical, and impactful scientific research in accordance with the European Commission's Human Resources Strategy for Researchers (HRS4R) quality programme. The implementation of HRS4R measures is monitored regularly.

The University of Vaasa and its units regularly evaluate their own research activities as part of annual activity monitoring (annual reports, statistics) and through an external overall evaluation carried out every five years. Annually, the University's Management Group and the Board monitor, among other things, the following research indicators: doctoral degrees, the number and quality of scientific publications and openness, international mobility of teachers and researchers, societal impact, and supplementary research funding.

External peer reviews at both the university and researcher level help to strengthen quality and further develop the conditions for conducting research. Research activities and impact are evaluated at all levels, taking into account the specificity of the field and the entire research process. The evaluation of researchers is based on the tenure track criteria and annual development discussions, which are guided by the appointment committee and personnel services.

In the overall evaluation of research, the quality of research, the research environment, and the conditions for research activities are evaluated regularly using external national and international peer reviews. The aim of the evaluation is to strengthen the quality of research internationally, promote the academic and societal impacts of research, and further develop the conditions for conducting research.

The Research Council serves as a central forum for monitoring research and impact. Each unit also evaluates its activities annually in relation to the set goals. Various monitoring tools and solutions are continuously developed at the university.

## 4.4. Research activity development

The University of Vaasa continuously develops its operations and strives to respond to the changing needs of society and research. Development measures are based on monitoring the achievement of goals at all levels. As part of annual planning, units propose development targets for the coming period, new initiatives for research activities and external funding, and their plans.

The university's research activities are strategically developed with externally funded projects, which are planned as part of the annual action plan of the units. Ensuring the conditions for research activities also involves the continuous development of research infrastructure and ensuring the adequacy of support services.

The Rector makes decisions related to resources, structures, and procedures at the university level, while the heads of units do so at the unit level. University services provide support services and take care of the preparation of decisions and guidelines together with academic administrative bodies.

Impact is a central part of research activities, and its monitoring is essential both for career tracking of researchers and for the follow-up use of research projects. The impact description (impact portfolio) is a concept that can describe the impact and achievements of research and a researcher broadly, taking into account also other than quantitative criteria. The impact description is used to describe research results and their follow-up use in career tracking, including evaluations, and to describe research, for example, with societal impact, an example being the use of descriptions of sustainable development goals or SDG descriptions. The utilization of research results is important for the university, and the impact description includes a description of how research results have been applied in practice, for example, in companies, society, or other fields. Researchers document how their research results have been utilized and what kind of impacts they have achieved.

Several different actors are responsible for the high-quality and impactful research activities of the university.

## Responsibilities of the research quality management

ACTORS OR GOVERNING BODY	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Researcher</b>	responsible for conducting responsible, high-quality, and impactful research and for complying with the funder's guidelines.
<b>Research group</b>	responsible for responsible, high-quality, and impactful research; implements research projects in accordance with the funder's guidelines; supervises doctoral students.
<b>Science Library Tritonia</b>	responsible for the planning, organization, and development of research support services related to their own area of responsibility.
<b>Director and Manager of the University Services</b>	responsible for services related to their own area of research activity, their adequacy and processes, as well as quality management and development.
<b>HR Director</b>	responsible for managing personnel matters related to research activities.
<b>Director of Finance</b>	responsible for monitoring finances and developing indicators for research and impact assessment.
<b>Dean and the Director of a Research Platform</b>	responsible for the quality of the unit's research activities; responsible for cooperation related to the unit's research with companies, public sector, and third sector organizations.
<b>Research Council</b>	responsible for quality control and development of research, doctoral training, and innovation activities; monitors and develops publication activities, research funding, and research cooperation as well as quality management of research projects; monitors and develops practices of research ethics, good scientific practice, open science, and research communication as well as procedures related to research tasks' career structures; monitors research services and makes related development proposals.
<b>Vice-Rector of Research</b>	responsible for managing and developing research activities in accordance with the strategy and also for evaluation and monitoring through its role.
<b>University management group</b>	monitors and develops the entirety, impact, and quality of research activities.
<b>Rector</b>	responsible for managing the university's operations and finances, including managing research activities.
<b>University Board</b>	decides on the university's strategy and matters concerning the university's operations and finances; monitors the results of research activities.

## Links

- ▶ [Research Council](#)
- ▶ [Research evaluation](#)
- ▶ [Researcher's Toolbox](#)
- ▶ [Research Services](#)
- ▶ [RAE evaluation report](#)

## 5. Research-based education

The education at the University of Vaasa is built according to the university's profile and strategy. The education emphasizes a learning experience that prepares for working life and is based on high-quality teaching, high-quality learning environments, equality and non-discrimination, and community. The education is built on cutting-edge, up-to-date research findings, the use of technology and digitalization, student-involved projects and teaching methods, and flexible study paths and guidance.

The tasks of the university, as well as the university's vision, values, and strategy, form the basis for the education. At the Schools of the University of Vaasa, teaching and studying are conducted in four different fields of education in Finnish and English. In addition, teaching is provided at the Language Centre Linginno, the Tritonia Science Library, and multidisciplinary research platforms, as well as at the Open University. University legislation, strategy, rules of procedure, and degree regulations with supplementary instructions, as well as the agreement between the university and the Ministry of Education and Culture, guide the implementation and organization of education.

The task of quality management of degree education is to ensure future-oriented education, which is based on research and societal and working life needs. Quality management covers all university education from basic and postgraduate education to continuous learning. Quality management of education consists of goal-based planning of education, learner-centred implementation of education, evaluation of education that ensures goals and quality assurance, and continuous development of education to improve quality (PDCA). The aim of quality management is

- to ensure the development of the learner's competence and expertise, well-being, participation, and smooth completion of the degree,
- to give the teacher support and methods to plan, implement, and develop teaching through evaluation
- to give the programme manager support and methods to plan, implement, and develop the programme through evaluation,
- to give the units and the university management support and methods to lead education through evaluation and development.

Education is managed and developed within the responsibilities and bodies of the university, doing so in cooperation with the university community and stakeholders. Operational control and annual planning combine quality management and development of education with the university's strategic management. The most important process of quality and its management in education is curriculum planning Curriculum planning

and the programmes that result from the planning are the key features of the quality and quality management in education.

The university offers opportunities for continuous learning and self-development. The needs of working life and societal trends are closely monitored to develop new research topics and education for the changing needs of different customers and target groups. In addition to Vaasa Executive Education, which offers supplementary education, the Open University of the University of Vaasa and the services of continuous learning coordinate and support the provision of continuous education for graduates and others. Continuous learning opportunities are offered in four different ways:

- Open University studies, which have the same goals, curricula, and requirements as the university's degree studies. Studies are mainly organized flexibly online. The Open University's pathway to degree programmes is aimed at learners without a higher education degree. The growing English-language study offering supports immigrants' access to university studies.
- Executive Education offers Executive MBA programme and modules, tailored programmes, and (time and location independent) online courses.
- Alumni's right to study, which is free of charge for the academic year following graduation. Studies enable the complementing of a degree with open university studies.
- The Ostrobothnia LUMA Center promotes the teaching and learning of natural sciences, mathematics, and technology for children and young people. The center is part of the nationwide LUMA Center Finland.

## **5.1. Strategy-based education planning**

Curriculum planning is based on legislation and the university's degree regulations with detailed instructions. The Decree on University Degrees and the Degree Regulations define the national qualifications framework and the objectives of degrees at levels 6-8 of other competence levels. In addition, the planning is guided by the agreement between the university and the Ministry of Education and Culture, the university's strategy and its implementation programmes, and more detailed guidance at the university level for each curriculum cycle. As part of the annual planning of the units, goals and measures are agreed upon, as well as resources in connection with the university's financial, operational, and personnel planning. Principles of programme management have been prepared for the planning of study programmes, which emphasize the importance of programme management in providing high-quality teaching and learner experience.

The planning of education is led by the Vice-Rector responsible for education in cooperation with the Rectorate, Deans, Management Groups of the units, and the joint education development group. In the study programmes, the programme manager

and the programme steering group are responsible for the planning. The Education Council approves the learning goals and curricula. Deans, managers, and vice-Rectors approve more detailed plans for their area of responsibility. Student representatives regularly meet with the university's management and are represented at all levels of the university's decision-making. Doctoral education planning is carried out in the Graduate School and the doctoral programme, according to the guidelines of the Research Council led by the Vice-Rector responsible for research.

## Strategic Management & Quality Assurance bodies Education

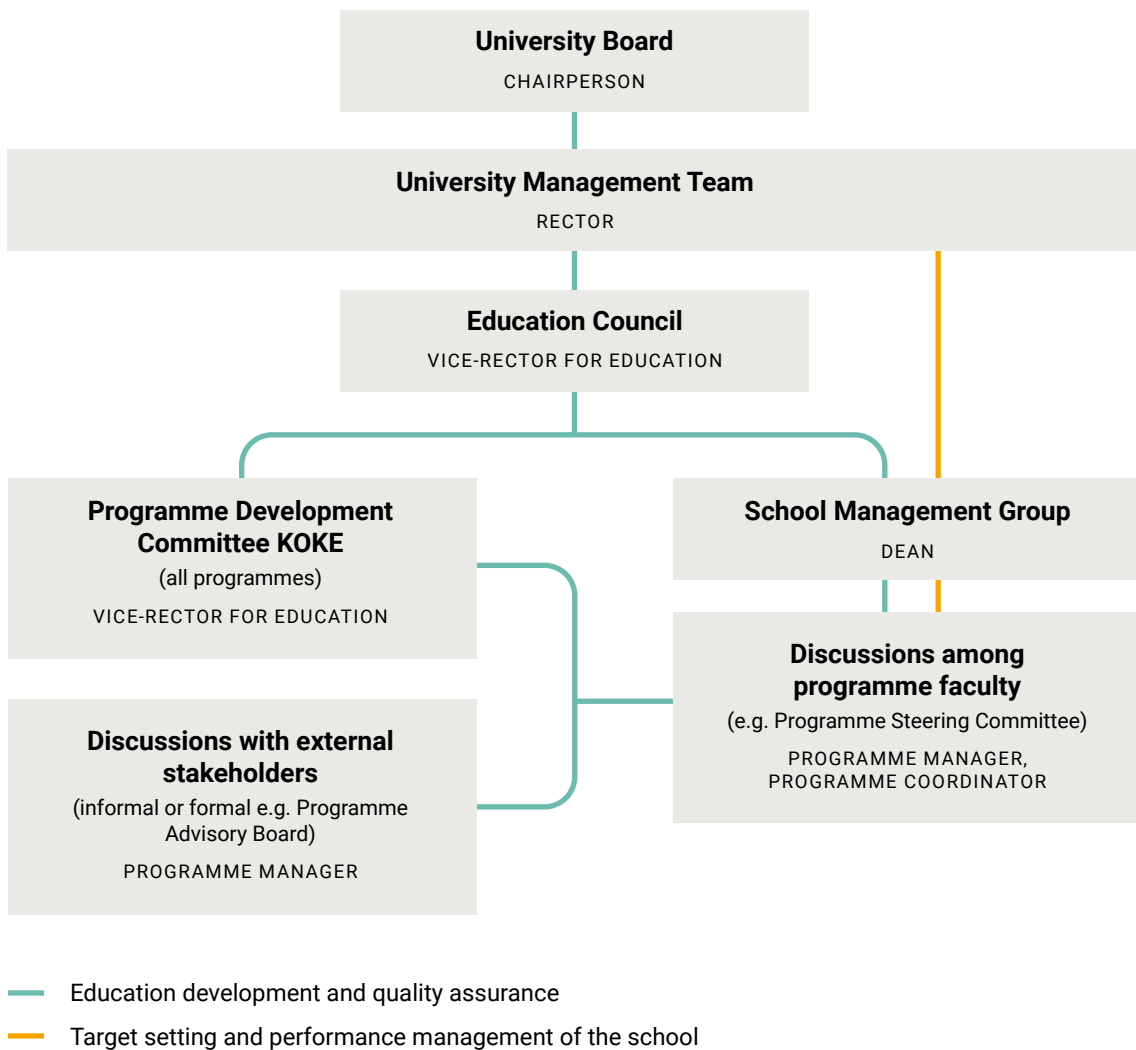


Figure 3. Strategic Management and Quality Assurance in Education.

Students are selected into the degree programmes taking into account the agreed degree objectives and student numbers, as well as future competence needs. The university participates in the national development of student selections and takes into account national selection criteria recommendations in the selections. The university's Board decides on the annual intake number based on the proposal of the Education Council, and the Education Council decides on the criteria for student selection. The preparation is done in the Schools and study programmes according to the guidelines of the university's management and possible separate instructions. Selection decisions are made based on confirmed selection criteria. The university ensures transparent, equal, fair, selection criteria, diverse selection methods, and a smooth selection process. Admission Services and International Services implement and support student selection from admission criteria to guidance of applicants.

The university has principles and a process for establishing and discontinuing education. Students are always given a reasonable transition period to complete their studies. The curriculum process begins in the autumn semester in study programmes (the steering group of the study programme, led by the programme manager), where the curriculum and teaching offering are prepared in cooperation with teachers. The curricula are proposed to the School Management Group, led by the dean, and to the approval process. The curriculum of the language centre is prepared by the Director of the language centre in cooperation with the staff. The curriculum is discussed in the management group of the language centre and is approved by the Vice-Rector responsible for education. Curriculum mapping is used to define the intended learning outcomes and monitoring of the curriculum and the compatibility of individual courses with these. The aim is to ensure that course plans, teaching and assessment methods, and virtual and renovated physical learning environments support the learner experience and the achievement of defined learning goals and objectives. The University of Vaasa emphasizes the importance of working life and employment by including cooperation with companies and organizations in the curriculum, real-life applications and learning opportunities, and enabling work-based learning to be included in the degree and the completion of theses with companies.

The curriculum includes the objectives and information of the study programme and other education, which are necessary for the implementation of teaching, planning of studies, smooth progress of studies and graduation within the target time, and evaluation of learning so that the defined competence is achieved. Competence-based curricula are based on the ECTS system. Curricula take into account the systematic development of competence and expertise as well as the development of research, working life, and sustainable development skills. The curricula also show the School and teacher responsible for the study programme, study module, and individual study unit, etc. Feedback from students, graduates, and stakeholders, etc., is utilized in curriculum planning work, and the purpose, content, and implementation of education are evaluated, and education is developed based on these and research. In addition to the curricula, at the beginning of the study unit, students are offered a Syllabus, a more detailed



description of the organization, literature, performance, and evaluation of the study unit. Student and education services support curriculum planning and development in both the feedback and curriculum process and in teaching development.

### Annual curriculum management

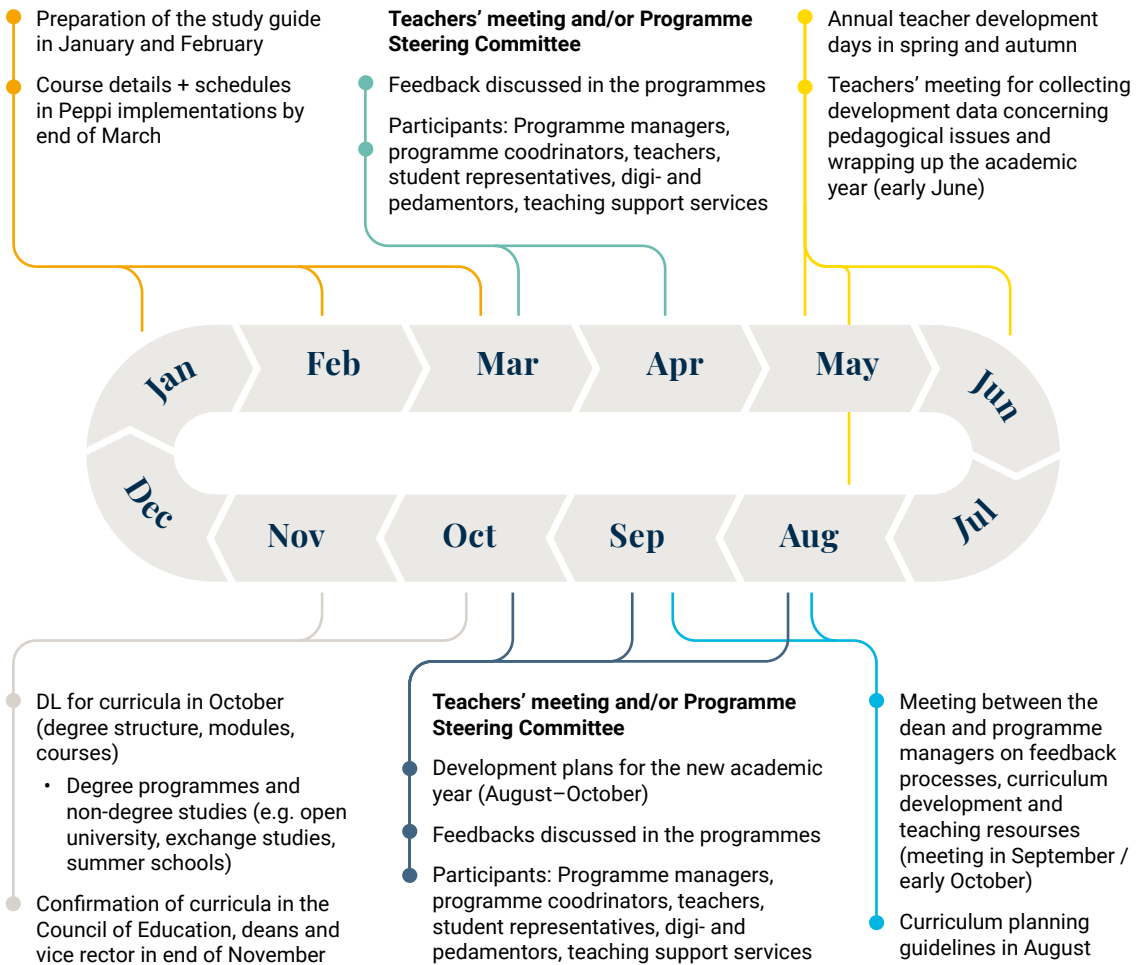


Figure 4. Annual curriculum management.

The aim of the University of Vaasa is to respond to global challenges with innovative and high-quality research-based education. Quality management ensures the quality of teaching, pedagogical solutions that support learning and learner experience, smooth progress of studies, and the development of learner competence and expertise.

Study programmes are built around the university's profile - sustainable business, energy, and society - and the corresponding three strategic focus areas: Business and Management, Energy Transition and Technology, and Governance and Society.

The planning of education and the degree portfolio involves a systematic input from various stakeholders, such as the City of Vaasa, the surrounding area, alumni, and representatives of industry (e.g., through the university's and programme's advisory boards), research groups, and students.

The university implements three development programmes according to its strategy, which support the achievement of the best learning experience, increasing the attractiveness of education, and implementing high-quality education for growing student numbers when resources are limited. The development programmes are Renewing the Study Programme Portfolio, Digitalization of Education, and Impactful International Education.

Courses are planned based on research. Most of the teachers in the study programmes have completed a doctoral degree and are actively involved in research groups. Research is integrated into teaching through examples, project work, and the use of research articles as learning material. Education prepares students for an academic career and encourages them to actively participate in research projects during their studies. The university's ethical guidelines guide ethically sustainable and responsible education, teaching, and learning.

## **5.2. Learner-centered education implementation**

The University of Vaasa emphasizes a learning and learner-centered experience and community in learning, planning studies, developing competence, and progressing smoothly in studies. The student is responsible for creating, implementing, and updating their personal study plan and providing feedback. The university offers flexible study paths for studies and tailoring studies according to individual needs and interests. The programme manager and the experts of education and study services help students find opportunities to utilize the university's multidisciplinary study offering as part of their studies. The student can increase international competence through home internationalization (e.g., studies, international teacher and student community), double and joint degrees, student exchange, and international internships. To develop working life skills, it is possible to include work-based learning in the degree. The goal of the University of Vaasa, in line with its profile, is to integrate students into companies and network with employers right from the start of their studies. Working life connections are especially important in integrating international students into Finnish society. Student services offer career courses as well as career guidance and mentoring programmes where students can get to know companies.

The study guide describes the curricula with intended learning outcomes and teaching offerings, which create the basis for learning and smooth progress of studies. The teaching and assessment methods planned for courses are in line with the competence objectives, content, and workload defined for the study programme and study unit. Teaching methods

are designed to be diverse and at the same time support students' ownership of their learning processes and their ability to achieve the set learning outcomes.

Competence assessment is based on the competence objectives of the study programme, course, or other part of education, which are reflected in the curricula. Theses and AoL (Assurance of Learning) checkpoints verify the quality of education. Exercises, assignments and theses are checked with a plagiarism detection software before assessment. The university has principles and procedures for recognizing previously acquired competence and other competence (AHOT) based on competence objectives. The teacher responsible for the course is responsible for the assessment of the study performance and the recognition of previously acquired competence. The degree regulations and the supplementary instructions "Completion and Assessment of Studies" and "Recognition of Studies and Other Competence" guide the competence assessment, approval, and appeal procedures. Suspicions of violations of the ethical guidelines for studying and good scientific practice are dealt with according to the university's common guidelines and procedures or the procedures of the research ethics committee.

Teaching arrangements, learning environments, and systems support students' opportunities to complete their studies smoothly in a timely manner in an appropriate order. Pedagogical solutions and digital innovations support teaching and learning. The aim is for teachers and students to have an even workload during the academic year. Education emphasizes community campus learning with appropriate distance learning opportunities and supported by digitalization. Teaching creates opportunities for learning together. An accessible and modern campus provides high-quality facilities for studying.

Students' ability to study and well-being support learning. The university has an equality and non-discrimination plan, an accessibility plan, and other guidelines and procedures that ensure students' legal protection and equal treatment. The university supports students' journey from application to graduation and transition to working life. In the orientations at the beginning of the studies and in the tutor activities organized with the student union, students are introduced to university studies and practices and the study environment and welcomed to the university community. Students are supported throughout their studies with sufficient, diverse, and timely forms of guidance and communication.

The teaching staff supports and guides students in their studies and theses. Teaching and guidance skills are evaluated as part of the recruitment process. Teachers are encouraged to develop pedagogically with pedagogical training, current short training, peer learning, an internal career model, and recognition of merits related to pedagogical development. The teaching development support team supports teachers in pedagogical and digital pedagogical competence, planning, and implementation of education.

University Services offer students guidance and support services throughout their study journey, including guidance for study programmes, study psychologist services, well-being and sports services, international mobility services, and career services. Students

are offered individual study arrangements according to their special needs. Students are supported with close cooperation with the Finnish Student Health Service, the City of Vaasa, and other service providers by promoting the availability and awareness of students' well-being, health, and other services. According to the service promise of the University Services, "Smooth service with a big heart and teamwork", expert support is based on active interaction and the development of services with customer groups and the entire university community.

## Guidance and Well-being Services



Figure 5. Map of student guidance, guidance and well-being services.

### **5.3. Monitoring and evaluation of education quality**

The university utilizes various evaluation and quality assurance processes in monitoring, evaluating, and analysing the results of competence and learning. These processes provide an understanding of the current situation and information for planning necessary development actions. These processes include internal and external evaluations, as well as programme, field of education, and university-level planning and evaluation processes. The university also uses international accreditation and evaluation processes (AACSB, EFMD, EQUIS, BSIS, ASIIN, KARVI) for continuous improvement of education quality. Rankings also provide information for development.

The objectives and results of education are evaluated as part of annual planning, curriculum planning, and the agreement procedure with the Ministry of Education and Culture. The university's board monitors performance targets monthly. The success, results, quality, and impact of education are evaluated at the university level in the Rectorate and Management Group, the education council (as well as the research council and the steering group of the graduate school), academic and other units, and by the steering group and programme manager of the study programme. Internal self-evaluations at the study programme level are carried out at most every five years. The quality management and accreditation steering group supports the development of quality management processes and the implementation of evaluations and accreditations.

The university develops monitoring tools and practices. The evaluation identifies strengths and good practices, as well as areas for development and necessary actions. Units organize joint interactive development events (teacher or study programme meetings, etc.). Students participate in the evaluation process.

The university utilizes national feedback information (bachelor feedback, graduation feedback, career follow-ups) as well as numerical and comparable monitoring information (Vipunen, e.g., applicant and degree numbers, graduation, employment, satisfaction with education). Programme, study direction, and field of education managers review feedback annually in connection with teaching planning and development. This national information is supplemented by the university's own data production on applicants, students, and studies. The quality of teaching and guidance is monitored in connection with teaching and guidance and with various surveys. The teacher evaluates and develops their teaching based on course feedback and continuous feedback as part of curriculum planning and more detailed planning of teaching. In study programmes, the progress of studies, students' learning, and competence development are monitored. Course feedback is discussed in the steering groups of study programmes and teacher meetings.

The university's cooperation with the surrounding employer ecosystem plays an important role in developing competence objectives. University and study programme

level advisory boards provide information on working life trends and emerging competence needs. International partnerships through various networks influence the development and continuous improvement of education.

The learning goals of study programmes are planned based on the principles of programme management to ensure that graduates have the necessary knowledge, skills, and qualifications to succeed in the labour market of graduates and competence for continuous self-development in a changing work environment. The principles of programme management also require that the programme's curriculum and delivery include multidisciplinary aspects of ethics, responsibility, sustainability, international perspective, and community. The university has introduced the AoL system in all business education programmes, which measures the achievement of individual student learning objectives.

Students receive feedback on their learning through competence assessment (assessment of study performances) and feedback on assignments and exercises in studies. Feedback supports students in achieving the intended learning outcomes. Supervisors and programme managers monitor the study progress. The Peppi information system has a Fokus tool attached for as real-time monitoring of study progress as possible.

Students give feedback on studies, and feedback supports the continuous development of education. Before starting studies, an applicant survey is conducted, and after the start of studies, a survey of new students. These support statistical information on the success of student recruitment and selection monitoring. Study programmes, units, and the education council evaluate the development needs of student selection annually. Feedback is collected from all study units. At the graduation stage, students give feedback in the bachelor's survey or master's graduation survey. During the studies, there are also other possible surveys, such as exchange study surveys, internship surveys, or surveys related to various development projects. Students are informed about the utilization of feedback and development measures.

## **5.4. Joint development of education**

The whole of education is developed based on the university's mission, strategy, and societal and competence needs. Unit-specific education-related goals and development targets are agreed annually in annual planning or are instructed by management as separate instructions (e.g., strategy development programmes). International accreditation and evaluation processes (AACSB, EFMD, EQUIS, BSIS, ASIIN, Karvi) are used for the continuous improvement of education quality, emphasizing internationalization. Curricula and teaching offerings are developed as part of the curriculum planning process.

The university's management monitors the whole of education, its impact, and quality and gives guidelines and instructions if necessary. Degree education and student

selections are monitored and developed cyclically and according to the phase of the contract period. The Rector confirms new and discontinued education based on the proposal of the education council. The education council decides on the competence objectives and entities of education. Deans, vice-Rectors, and unit managers confirm more detailed curricula with changes.

The university community is involved in developing activities in education planning and steering groups, education and research councils, Management Groups, and quality management and accreditation steering groups. Students participate in the development of education as part of their studies by giving feedback, acting in the student union or subject organization, or as a student representative in the university, unit, or study programme bodies or working groups. The university's Rectorate, deans, and heads of study and education services work closely with the student union and subject-specific student organizations on a monthly basis. Students' own activities are also supported to strengthen the community.

## Education quality management responsibilities

ACTORS OR GOVERNING BODY	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>Student</b>	is responsible for planning and implementing their studies and giving feedback as part of teaching.
<b>Teacher</b>	is responsible for the content and pedagogical implementation and development of their teaching and competence, as well as the utilization of feedback and monitoring information.
<b>Director of an Affiliated Institution or a Service unit</b>	is responsible for planning, organizing, and developing education or education services related to their own area of responsibility.
<b>Doctoral programme and Programme Steering group</b>	supports the programme manager in leading the study programme and in the strategic and qualitative development of the study programme.
<b>Basic Degree Programme Manager</b>	leads the steering group of the study programme and tasks related to the planning, evaluation, quality, and development of the study programme.
<b>Doctoral Programme Manager</b>	leads the steering group of the doctoral programme; is responsible for tasks related to the planning, evaluation, quality, and development of the doctoral programme.
<b>School's Management Group</b>	monitors the quality of the unit's education and makes initiatives for its development; processes and comments on the criteria and quantity of the unit's student selection; processes and comments on the structures and curricula of the study programmes under the unit's responsibility.
<b>Dean</b>	is responsible for the quality, development, and effectiveness of the School's operations and for achieving the set goals and reporting to the Rector; is responsible for the School's finances; decides on the unit's goals and budgets; coordinates the unit's operations; is responsible for preparing the matters of the education council and research council and the unit's Management Group; develops and monitors the quality of study programmes; appoints the programme managers and steering group of study programmes; approves new students and resolves appeals concerning student selection; decides on study rights; confirms the grades of theses included in advanced studies; grants degrees and issues certificates of degrees and other studies.

<b>Graduate School</b>	develops and coordinates doctoral education in accordance with the guidelines of the education and research councils.
<b>Research Council</b>	develops the graduate school and postgraduate study programmes and gives statements about them to the education council.
<b>Education Council</b>	acts as the administrative body responsible for the quality and quality control of education; is responsible for the development of education; decides on the degree requirements of the university's study programmes and approves the structures of study programmes; decides on the criteria for student selection and makes a proposal to the board on the number of students to be admitted to the university; monitors the realization of student selections and study objectives; supervises the evaluation of theses and resolves appeals concerning the evaluation of theses and study performances and the recognition of competence; monitors study and teaching services and makes related development proposals; monitors and develops procedures related to the career structures of teaching tasks; handles other matters related to the legal protection of students and gives statements on them.
<b>Vice-Rector</b>	is responsible for the pedagogical and strategic development of education; appoints the programme manager and steering group of the doctoral programme; makes decisions on joint study programmes of the units; approves the curricula of the Language Centre Linginno and the graduate school; approves more detailed regulations on degrees, studies, and teaching.
<b>Rector</b>	is responsible for managing the university's operations and finances, including the management of education; decides on the establishment and discontinuation of the study programme and study direction as well as the subject; defines the academic responsibility units for study programmes, study entities, and subjects; gives more detailed regulations on degrees, studies, and teaching; decides on the distribution of the number of students between Schools in student selections; decides on the start and end dates of the academic year and its division; decides on the warning given to the student.
<b>University Board</b>	decides on the university's strategy and matters concerning the university's operations and finances; monitors the results of education activities.

## Links

- ▶ [Education Council](#)
- ▶ [Education development projects](#)
- ▶ [Teacher's Toolbox](#)
- ▶ [Study and Education Services](#)
- ▶ [Services for Students](#)



## 6. Interaction for building a sustainable society

The research and education profiles of the University of Vaasa, as well as its location in one of Finland's most important export areas and in the middle of the most significant energy cluster in the Nordic countries, emphasize the university's business cooperation and role as a driver of the green transition. The university's disciplines - business studies, technology, administrative sciences, and communication science - complement each other and support the sustainable development of both business and public sector activities, such as social and health care.

### 6.1. Leadership and planning of societal interaction (YVV) actions

The Rector is responsible for leading the entirety of societal interaction, with each vice-Rector responsible for developing their own area. The university's board monitors the implementation of the strategy. The University of Vaasa has an international Advisory Board, which serves as both a scientific and YVV-guiding and monitoring group.

The goals of societal impact are included in the University of Vaasa's strategy and strategic development programmes. YVV goals cover education, research, and innovation activities as well as internationalization. The university implements its goals through an annual action plan and budgeting and personnel planning that support it.

The University of Vaasa's societal interaction and impact (YVV) strategic frameworks utilize the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially goals 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, and 16 (Table 1). We also use as frameworks the Theses on Sustainable Development and Responsibility (2020) by the Finnish Council of University Rectors (UNIFI), as well as recommendations given by audits and accreditations.

**Table 1. Key sustainable development goals at the University of Vaasa**

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

## **6.2. Diverse practices of societal interaction**

The university emphasizes the tightening of working life and business cooperation relationships in both education and research. Research platforms Vaasa Energy Business Innovation Centre VEBIC, Digital Economy, and InnoLab, operating alongside Schools, support cooperation with the world of science and the private, public, and third sectors. Stakeholder cooperation is a basic part of project activities, service research, and researcher training. The Collaborative Doctoral Partnership (CoDoc) model reforms doctoral training to serve both academic and business and innovation ecosystem needs better. The university works closely with university and business partners, development companies, and the European EUNICE4U university network to implement joint funding applications and projects. The University of Vaasa establishes, uses, and develops research and RDI infrastructures in cooperation with different actors of the innovation ecosystem. Shared RDI infrastructures are the Technobothnia teaching and research infrastructure (University of Vaasa, Vaasa University of Applied Sciences, Novia University of Applied Sciences), EnergyLab Ky, the Space laboratory established with the European Space Agency ESA, the Advanced Manufacturing laboratory serving business cooperation, and the Wasa Zero Emission Data Center (WSTAR).

The University of Vaasa's InnoEco team supports researchers and students in developing and commercializing innovations. Business incubation activities are carried out in cooperation with Vaasa University of Applied Sciences (West Coast Startup), the Vaasa student entrepreneur association VES, and the ESA BIC Finland Vaasa Site incubator. The university hosts the Ostrobothnia LUMA Center, whose task is to inspire and encourage children and young people to study mathematics, natural sciences, and technology.

The University of Vaasa works closely with the City of Vaasa and other municipalities, the Ostrobothnia Regional Council and other regional councils, the ELY Center, and business interest groups and development companies in both research and development projects and education. The university increases its international advocacy work, and it has its own advisor in Brussels.

## **6.3. Accessible and international education of the University of Vaasa**

The University of Vaasa invests in students' work-life integration through internships and summer jobs, mentoring and career coaching, and project and thesis work. International students are aimed to be integrated into business cooperation right from the first year of study. The university offers open university and studies, also enabling a degree-leading pathway. The university also produces and develops paid continuous learning services. The university's MBA education is provided by the University of Vaasa's Executive Education Oy.

The University of Vaasa increases the accessibility of education in addition to the Palosaari main campus at the university centers of Kokkola and Seinäjoki. The university also offers studies in Helsinki and from 2024 onwards in Pori. The university actively participates in the Digivision 2030 development work. The University of Vaasa's international education offers flexible study paths, double degree opportunities, an Erasmus Mundus master's programme, and studies offered through the EUNICE (European University for Customised Education) university alliance.

The University of Vaasa promotes the integration of foreign students and experts into Finnish society and the labour market. The university coordinates Talent Hub activities, examples of which are the West Coast Gateway operating model and the Vaasa Spouse Programme. The university invests in international researcher, teacher, and student mobility, visiting professor programmes, and international double degrees. The university has up-to-date accessibility as well as equality and non-discrimination plans. Through the Supporting Immigrants in Higher Education (SIMHE) programme, language training and guidance are offered to potential international students.

The University of Vaasa's Tritonia Science Library provides library services, including publishing, open science and RDI, and data management services for Vaasa University of Applied Sciences and Novia University of Applied Sciences.

## **6.4. Expert tasks increase impact**

The university encourages and actively seeks roles for members of the university community in Finnish and European science and higher education policy trust positions and working groups, among others, through Unifi, Sivista, the European University Association (EUA), and other European networks.

The University of Vaasa has developed an innovative career model, which also includes a teaching-focused career path. The university has developed a model for a researcher's impact portfolio, which will be piloted in 2024. The HRS4R quality programme is used to develop responsible evaluation practices.

## **6.5. Communication and events are our showcase**

The university's management and experts engage in societal discussion in a versatile manner. Parliament, ministries, and other actors regularly hear from our experts, and we produce high-quality researched information to support societal decision-making. We make the university's multidisciplinary research and education known both domestically and internationally with multichannel communication. The University of Vaasa has adopted the national Transparency Register.

The University of Vaasa is a partner in the annually held EnergyWeek, which is Finland's leading international four-day energy conference for companies, public actors, and research and education actors. The university also participates in the organization of the annual Wasa Future Festival week and the Science Carnival organized every other year by the region's higher education institutions. The Palosaari campus is developed for organizing various conferences, events, and events and as a forum for art and culture. This strengthens the university's position and openness as part of stakeholder activities and the cityscape. The student union of the University of Vaasa and the student subject organizations also play a significant role in promoting dialogue between the university and students and between students and working life.

## **6.6. Monitoring and evaluation of societal interaction and impact**

The University of Vaasa reports on societal impact to its board and the Ministry of Education and Culture. Key indicators include the development of the research ecosystem and partnerships, national bachelor's feedback, and career tracking of masters and doctors, the proportion of international students, and the employment of international experts. The university monitors the views of stakeholders and the reputation and visibility of the university through feedback, surveys, and media monitoring. The feedback received is utilized in planning operations.

The university collects information on the societal expert tasks of the staff through an annual survey and the SoleCris research database. The tenure track system includes monitoring of societal interaction and impact. Based on the international evaluation of the University of Vaasa's research (Research Assessment Exercise, RAE, 2023), the university's incentive system was reformed to take into account also project management. This encourages and supports project work that aims at societal interaction and impact. The practices and results of the university's societal interaction and impact are evaluated in national and international audits and accreditations. The Karvi audit will be carried out in 2024, and the university has initiated an accreditation process according to the EFMD's Business School Impact System (BSIS) in the same year. The university is actively involved in quality and impact measuring university rankings.

## **6.7. Development of societal interaction and impact**

The University of Vaasa develops structures and practices with which it increases its societal footprint. The entire university community is involved in the discussion on impact. The funding base is diversified by utilizing research platforms. Students

are encouraged to do course and thesis work in cooperation with companies and other organizations. The visibility of societal interaction and impact is increased in the university's internal and external communication. Alumni activities are developed more systematically, and the university renews its feedback processes. The university develops the management of societal interaction with the support of its Advisory Board.

## Yhteiskunnallisen vuorovaikutuksen laadunhallinnan vastuut

TOIMIJAT TAI HALLINTOELIN	VASTUUTEHTÄVÄT
<b>Student</b>	participates in studies, the student union, and student subject organizations, and in the bodies and development groups of the university in interaction with different actors in society; supports the orientation of new students and the growth of students into working life and active citizenship through student organizations.
<b>Teaching and research staff, University Services staff</b>	implements and develops societal interaction related to their task and expertise: teaching, research and innovation activities, RDI projects, working life connections, student guidance, career coaching, communication, events, YVV reporting. Visiting professors and working life professors bring new knowledge and connections through their own research area and working life background.
<b>Director of an Affiliated Institution or a Service unit</b>	is responsible for developing societal interaction and impact related to their area of responsibility.
<b>School's Management Group</b>	monitors and develops the societal interaction, impact, and quality of the School.
<b>Director, strategic preparation and legal affairs</b>	supports the Rector in the practical management of the university's strategic management: negotiations with the Ministry of Education and Culture, preparation of the action plan; supports the Rectorate in the strategic planning, monitoring, and reporting of the societal mission; is responsible for the preparation of partnership and cooperation agreements.
<b>Director of Finance</b>	is responsible for monitoring the economy and developing economic impact indicators.
<b>HR Director</b>	is responsible for developing societal impact related to personnel matters.
<b>Director of Sustainability and Ethics</b>	coordinates measures promoting sustainable development and corporate responsibility; is responsible for collecting evidence of responsibility work and responsibility reporting and promoting the achievement of responsibility goals.
<b>Director of Marketing and Communication</b>	is responsible for developing the impact related to the university's marketing, communication, and brand work.
<b>Director of a Research Platform</b>	is responsible for planning the cooperation of their research projects and obtaining external RDI funding from research partners and companies; promotes ecosystem cooperation.
<b>Dean</b>	is responsible for the cooperation of the School's research, study programmes, and other activities with companies, the public sector, and third sector organizations.
<b>Education Council</b>	is responsible for developing societal impact related to education.
<b>Research Council</b>	is responsible for developing the societal impact of research activities.
<b>Vice-Rector</b>	is responsible for developing societal impact related to their area of responsibility.

<b>Rector</b>	is responsible for managing the university's operations and finances, including the management of societal interaction and impact (YVV).
<b>Management Group</b>	guides and monitors the development of societal impact.
<b>University Board</b>	decides on the university's strategy, matters concerning the university's operations and finances; monitors the impact of operations and societal interaction.
<b>University Collegium</b>	selects the external members of the university's board; confirms the selections of the university community groups as members of the board; confirms the university's financial statements and annual report.

## Links

- ▶ [Sustainability and responsibility](#)
- ▶ [The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#)
- ▶ [UNIFI's theses on sustainable development and responsibility](#)
- ▶ [The Code of Conduct of the University of Vaasa](#)
- ▶ [Rankings, accreditations and evaluations](#)

## 7. Competent, communal, and well-being university

The goal is for the University of Vaasa to provide its staff and students with an environment where meaningful work is done as part of a well-being university community. The staff has the opportunity to build a university career in an international and diverse community. Our values - courage, community, and responsibility - guide our university's daily operations and lay the foundation for common well-being. Students are members and actors of the university community.

Our university's participatory strategic process is based on the cooperation of the university's board, Management Group, schools, disciplines, administrative and service units, students, and key partners. The aim is that transparent processes, continuous interaction, diverse opportunities for participation, and an equal and non-discriminatory operating culture are part of the university's daily operations. The university's personnel programme, based on the university's strategy, is a key guiding tool for strategic personnel management and includes key guidelines, goals, and measures for personnel.

The University of Vaasa operates in accordance with laws concerning various functions and matters and complies with the general collective agreement for universities. The general collective agreement for universities has been signed by the employer representative Sivista and the employee representatives JUKO, Pro, and JHL. The university and the representatives of the personnel draw up an agreement on cooperation to support the development of operations and the participation of personnel in decision-making concerning work and working conditions. The negotiations on the agreement are underway in the spring of 2024. The workplace development plan based on the Act on Cooperation is a supportive tool for organizing dialogue on the structure of personnel, the needs for competence and its development, and the maintenance of occupational well-being. The plan is a dynamic document, the content of which can be updated in cooperation with the representatives of the personnel if necessary. The document also describes the participation and influence opportunities of the personnel.

## Inclusion of personnel and possibilities to influence

### PERSONNEL COMMUNICATIONS

- [Personnel communication | Intranet \(uwasa.fi\)](#)
- Intranet Messi
- Meetings (internal meetings, etc.)
- E-mail communication
- Personnel meetings organised by the Rector
- Internal communication channel Viva Engage

### COMMITTEE AND SHOP STEWARD MEETINGS

- [Committee | Intranet \(uwasa.fi\)](#)
- There is a joint committee for the employer and the representatives of personnel groups in the University of Vaasa. The committee monitors the employer and personnel cooperation in the University and handles the cooperative issues concerning the whole University and its personnel

### ADMINISTRATIVE BODIES AND ELECTIONS

- [Election of administrative bodies | Intranet \(uwasa.fi\)](#)
- Members representing the university community (staff and students) to the **University Collegium, the Board and the Schools' Management Groups** are elected by elections held in accordance with the Universities Act and the election regulations of the University of Vaasa.

### OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH

- [Occupational Safety and Health Committee | Intranet \(uwasa.fi\)](#)
- The Occupational Safety and Health Committee of the University of Vaasa consists of representatives of the employer and employees, as well as an Occupational Safety and Health Manager and the Occupational Safety and Health Representative. The Committee discusses and decides on occupational safety and health issues. It has 3 working groups: an occupational safety and health working group, an equality and non-discrimination working group and a welfare working group.
- The goal is to establish working groups also for indoor air and accessibility

### PERSONNEL SURVEYS

- Surveys for the university community on different topics are organised individually or regularly
- Results of the regularly organised workplace well-being survey are widely used in planning and carrying out unit-specific and university-level well-being actions. [Workplace well-being surveys and results | \(uwasa.fi\)](#)

### FEEDBACK CHANNELS

- [Feedback channels for staff | Intranet \(uwasa.fi\)](#)
- Whistleblowing channel for activities that violate the legislation in work or in connection with it
- Idea channel can be used to give ideas, suggestions or thoughts regarding any university activity, with one's own name or anonymously
- Feedback on facilities and safety
- Information-security incidents
- Research integrity advisor

Figure 6. Involvement and influence opportunities of the personnel. Workplace development plan.



The University of Vaasa is committed to the European Commission's HR Excellence in Research quality programme (HRS4R). A prerequisite for obtaining the quality label is that the university commits to common European recommendations and principles in its practices aimed at improving researchers' working conditions and the transparency and transparency of recruitment practices. The evaluation involves a wide range of staff from the university's various functions and units.

At the University of Vaasa, the personnel plan is made in the autumn as part of the annual operational and financial planning. Operational and financial planning (TTS) refers to those measures by which goals are set for operations and operations are planned and resourced to achieve the goals. The purpose of the personnel plan is to outline personnel-related measures based on current needs and longer-term needs, taking into account in particular the university's strategy, priorities, and related reforms and development measures. The personnel plan also takes a stand on the development of the personnel structure and recruitment needs of the units.

Recruitment procedures for teaching and research tasks are defined in the university's rules of procedure and more specifically in the Rector's decision on the general principles and recruitment procedure of the teaching and research staff's career structure. Recruitment procedures for tenure track positions are defined in the Tenure Track procedure at the University of Vaasa guide. External evaluators are used in the recruitments of teaching and research staff in the ways defined in the instructions. Recruitments focus on timely applicant communication.

The task of occupational safety and health is to ensure safe working conditions and tools, and to prevent, reduce, and eliminate accidents, occupational diseases, and harmful physical and mental strain caused by work or working conditions. Occupational safety and health also improve the community and comfort of the staff. The University of Vaasa's occupational safety and health organization consists of the occupational safety and health committee and its subordinate subgroups, which include representatives of the employer, employees, and students. The working groups are the occupational safety and health and safety working group, the equality and non-discrimination working group, and the recreation committee, which report to the occupational safety and health committee.

The University of Vaasa's occupational safety and health action programme supports the employer in implementing proactive occupational safety and health and developing working conditions systematically according to the needs of the workplace. The occupational health care action plan prepared by the employer and the occupational health care service provider is based on periodic workplace surveys and the risks identified in them. The action plan is discussed in cooperation with the employees in the university's occupational safety and health committee.

The equality and non-discrimination plan prepared by the equality and non-discrimination group includes both measures promoting gender equality and measures required by the Non-Discrimination Act. The main objective of the plan is to strengthen an equality-positive atmosphere, monitor the realization of equality and non-discrimination, and inform about equality and non-discrimination issues to the students and staff of the University of Vaasa. The plan covers both the area of responsibility of the education provider and the employer.

The University of Vaasa has prepared an accessibility plan, the aim of which is to support and promote accessibility in the university's operations. The accessibility plan aims to promote practices and ways of working that support the realization of accessibility and support as participatory accessibility development work as possible. The aim of accessibility work is to produce and distribute information, understanding, and skills related to accessibility to both the university's employees and students.

The target and development discussion is a confidential discussion between the employee and the supervisor, concerning the employee's work, goals, competence, and their development, as well as the employee's well-being, held regularly. For teaching and research staff, discussions can, for example, be held in connection with full-time work planning. The university's electronic development discussion form supports the discussion. In addition to the target and development discussion, the university recommends that teaching and research staff have a so-called longer-term, term plan and goals discussion, in which goals are set for several years depending on the task and its duration.

At the University of Vaasa, the competent staff of university services supports and develops support services for teachers, researchers, students, and other expert and support staff. The development work is continuous, as this ensures the high-quality operation of the university.

HR services prepare an annual personnel report, which discusses significant achievements, changes related to personnel during the year, and monitors the development of the personnel situation through surveys and statistics. The personnel report is discussed in the university's board, the college, and in accordance with the Act on Cooperation with personnel organization representatives.

## **7.1. Work Well-being and Community**

The continuous development of work, working conditions, and overall community is important to the University of Vaasa. The well-being of the staff is a prerequisite for the success of the university's operations. In a changing work life, the resource and strain factors of work also change, making it important to keep up with the change and support

the staff with various support measures. The university regularly monitors the work well-being of its staff through work well-being surveys and workplace surveys carried out in cooperation with occupational health.

Work well-being surveys collect information on the endurance and work well-being of the university's staff. A comprehensive work well-being survey common to universities is carried out regularly every two years. The university complements the monitoring of work well-being with a narrower pulse survey carried out in the intervening years. Work well-being surveys and their results are widely utilized in both unit-level and university-level work well-being operations for long-term planning and implementation, for example:

- in the provision of training and coaching aimed at staff and supervisors;
- in the planning of common events and well-being programmes;
- in the development of services aimed at staff in cooperation with various stakeholders, such as occupational health, occupational safety, the well-being working group, and sports services;
- in the implementation of well-being measures tailored to units, and
- in the development of the university's internal processes and guidelines; e.g., early support model, conflict resolution model, employment benefits, and common rules of play

Occupational health care is an activity organized and funded by the employer that supports the work ability of employees. Occupational health care promotes a healthy work environment and safe working conditions. Occupational health care and the university's occupational safety carry out workplace surveys. The workplace survey is part of statutory occupational health care and it is used to assess the effects of work, the work community, and the work environment on health and work ability. The content and planning of occupational health care are based on workplace surveys. Surveys are carried out at regular intervals and are always done in cooperation between the workplace and occupational health care. In connection with workplace surveys, occupational health care carries out occupational health checks. In addition, the employer has arranged for its staff additional opportunities to go for an occupational health check.

The Well-being Week is an annual event focusing on well-being for staff and students, organized in cooperation by the University of Vaasa, the Student Union of the University of Vaasa, and cooperation partners. During the Well-being Week, lectures related to well-being, a mini fair of well-being, and an introduction to well-being services offered by various cooperation partners are organized for staff and students. Staff and students also have the opportunity to participate in the university's sports services by participating in different sports shifts for free.

The recreation committee under occupational safety coordinates the recreational activities of the University of Vaasa. It organizes various cultural and sports events, parties, and other events for the staff. The aim is to strengthen the community of the university.

The well-being and work ability of the staff are also supported by various well-being-supporting coaching, sports and culture vouchers, and preventive occupational health care services. The balance between work and family life is taken care of with family and other leaves and flexible working time arrangements.

## **7.2. Competence Development**

The units and their staff are responsible for the development of their own professional competence. Supervisors draw up a development plan for their own operations and staff in connection with operational and financial planning (TTS) and implement additional measures within the framework of their own budget (e.g., joint internal development and training events or participation fees for individual employees). A plan for competence development is drawn up for each employee in connection with the target and development discussion. The supervisor enables and supports the employee's participation in training according to the plan. An individual employee is also required to be active and proactive in developing knowledge and skills. Other actors of university services, such as research services and the graduate school, communication, IT services, also participate in the development of staff competence.

Personnel services organize annual staff training for the needs of the University of Vaasa. The annual training offering is influenced by, among other things, the training plan, the budget allocated for training, the HRM strategy action plan, the Human Resources Strategy for Researchers development plan (HRS4R), training wishes emerged in the work well-being survey, statements by personnel organization representatives, and wishes received from employees and supervisors. The training organized by personnel services aims to meet the training needs of large target groups. Staff training can be related to well-being and endurance, the work and management of the supervisor, tools, ways of working, interaction and cooperation skills, or language skills. Staff training is targeted as needed either open to the entire staff or to a certain group, for example, by unit or for supervisors. Personnel services do not organize vocational training, but the development of vocational competence is the responsibility of the units.

The university supports the staff's self-directed, self-study Finnish, Swedish, or English language studies. The staff can choose a course that is necessary and enjoyable for them, for example, from the offerings of the folk high school. Compensation can also be obtained for participation fees for nationally/internationally recognized

language proficiency tests as part of self-directed language studies. Compensation for self-directed language study can be obtained a maximum of 4 times/person. The university also offers credit-bearing Finnish study units and the staff's Language Bridge programme for its international staff.

### **7.3. Rewarding and Recognizing Staff**

In accordance with the general collective agreement for universities, the University of Vaasa uses the universities' salary system (YPJ), where the salary is based on the evaluation of the job's demands and personal job performance. In addition to these salary components, a demand supplement can be paid. The salary system is divided into an evaluation system applicable to teaching and research staff (ophe) and an evaluation system applicable to other expert and support staff.

The evaluation discussion on the level of job demands is held between the individual and their supervisor. The evaluation is also commented on by higher-level supervisors. Evaluation groups handle job demand evaluations and define their stance on them. Job descriptions are handled anonymously in the evaluation group, and the final decision on the level of job demands is made by the employer.

Personal performance is evaluated in relation to job duties and the work plan or equivalent targets according to the scale defined in the collective agreement. Personal job performance and performance percentage are reviewed in evaluation discussions between the individual and their supervisor. Performance evaluation concerns the individual's performance in their job and the targets set for them. Based on the evaluation they have performed, the supervisor makes their proposal for the size of the personal salary component, after which higher-level supervisors take a stance on the proposal. The final decision on the evaluation is made by the employer, who evaluates performance by comparing the merits related to job duties with the merits of others in similar fields, in the same demand groups, and in similar types of jobs. For doctoral researchers employed by the University of Vaasa, the level of job demands and progress according to the personal study plan (HOPS) are evaluated annually in the spring.

The University of Vaasa's performance bonus system has been reformed and it covers the entire staff. Performance rewarding consists of four areas, which are publication bonus, training bonus, project management bonus, and other rewards. The university also recognizes its staff by rewarding individuals who have been in the service of the university for 20 and 30 years, and by awarding the research act of the year, teaching act of the year, and good teacher awards. The Big Heart award is the University of Vaasa's equality and non-discrimination award, which can be awarded to an individual or a group that has promoted the realization of equality and non-discrimination in the university community.

## Responsibilities for the development of staff competence and well-being

ACTORS OR GOVERNING BODY	KEY RESPONSIBILITIES
<b>HR Director</b>	is responsible for the university's personnel policy and personnel practices as well as the fulfillment of statutory obligations.
<b>Director of Finance</b>	is responsible for the university's finances, the well-being of its unit's staff, and the development of competence.
<b>Director, strategic preparation and legal affairs</b>	participates in HR activities as appropriate; supports in interpreting legal matters and in developing well-being and competence.
<b>Director of an Affiliated Institution or a Service unit</b>	is responsible for adhering to the personnel policy of their own unit, the well-being of the staff, and the development of competence.
<b>Director of a Research Platform</b>	decides on the appointment of staff in the manner determined by the Rector; acts as the supervisor of the research platform's employees; is responsible for the personnel management of the research platform.
<b>Dean</b>	is responsible for the well-being of the School's staff and acts as the supervisor of the unit's employees, especially the programme managers; appoints supervisors to teaching and research teams; resolves a matter belonging to the supervisor in case of their disqualification or incapacity.
<b>Management Group</b>	supports the Rector in the management of the university's personnel, the preparation and implementation of the strategy; monitors the goals and realization as well as resourcing of the university's result units.
<b>Vice-Rector</b>	acts as the supervisor of university services related to their own area of responsibility.
<b>Rector</b>	leads the university as well as the preparation and implementation of the strategy; acts as the supervisor of the managers directly subordinate to the Rector; appoints the managers who are directly subordinate to the Rector.
<b>University Board</b>	appoints the Rector on the proposal of the chairman of the board; decides on the Rector's term of office and the terms of the employment relationship.
<b>University Collegium</b>	appoints and confirms the members of the education council and the research council; decides on the remuneration of the board members.

## Links

- ▶ [General collective agreement for universities](#)
- ▶ [University of Vaasa regulations](#)
- ▶ [HR Excellence in research \(HRS4R\)](#)
- ▶ [Occupational safety and health](#)
- ▶ [Career structure and tenure track](#)
- ▶ [Equality plan](#)



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