



**We care for the society  
of today and the future**

**Åbo Akademi University  
Strategy 2030**

# Our Mission

Åbo Akademi University will take responsibility for present and future societies through research and education. With particular responsibility for the Swedish-speaking community in Finland, we provide education, scientific training, research and expertise nationally and internationally. Through our work, we promote respect for knowledge, social cohesion and democracy in society.

## *Explanatory text*

Åbo Akademi University fulfils its mission of ensuring education, scientific training and research for the Swedish-speaking population in Finland at the institutional level. By undertaking our mission in the best possible way, we also guarantee the vitality of the Swedish language in everyday life, and in a multilingual Finland. We are responsible for ensuring that Swedish is included as a language of education and science in our country.

By working for the Swedish-speaking population in Finland, we simultaneously contribute to an open, democratic society together with other Finnish universities. Academic activities that focus on freedom of thought, speech, teaching and research foster active citizenship, human rights, equality, diversity, openness, education and critical thinking.

# Our Goals for 2030

By 2030, we will:

1. be an institution, where the task of promoting the needs of the Swedish-speaking population increasingly includes aspects of multilingualism. The goal is that 60% of our students will have a Swedish language background, 20% Finnish and 20% some other language.

## *Explanatory text*

In recruiting students, greater emphasis will be placed on increasing the number of applicants. Research shows that age groups will decrease from 2028. We will therefore continue to recruit students, whose mother tongue is Finnish. We also need to increase the international presence at the university and create better conditions for integrating people with other native languages than Swedish. Our goal is that 60% of our students have Swedish as their mother tongue, 20% Finnish and 20% a mother tongue other than Swedish or Finnish. This goal contributes to a more dynamic research and study environment, with a diverse approach to our cultural and societal responsibilities.

2. have an economy that shows a clear positive result, thus enabling us to promote the operational objectives we have set for research, education, collaboration and a thriving organisation.

## *Explanatory text*

Healthy finances are essential to Åbo Akademi University's mission of being a societal actor for the Swedish language and community in Finland. We are committed to achieving long-term sustainable and balanced finances with a solid foundation. Long-term economic planning, economic awareness and focus on identifying new economic opportunities are an increasingly prominent part of our activities.

3. have increased the percentage of degrees completed within the allotted time by 15% from the level in 2023.

## *Explanatory text*

Our degree programmes must be well designed and quality-driven. In order for examinations to be completed in the allotted time, we need to ensure that we have well-planned, attractive and relevant programmes.

#### 4. have at least two externally recognised centres of excellence in research.

##### *Explanatory text*

We are committed to identifying excellence through agreed and transparent evaluation processes. We expect all education provided at the university to be research-based and therefore, all research should be of high quality.

#### 5. have increased external competitive research funding by 25% from the 2023 level.

##### *Explanatory text*

Obtaining competitive research funding is in itself a measure of high-quality activities. In order to compete for such funding, all areas of activity must be well-developed: recruitment of the right people, time for research, necessary infrastructure for research and a highly competent support organisation.

#### 6. have increased the number of credits awarded in continuous and lifelong learning by 20% from the 2023 level, as well as improved profitability through the sale of education.

##### *Explanatory text*

Åbo Akademi University plays a central role in developing programmes for continuous and lifelong learning in Swedish. We evaluate and create new opportunities for academic development in cooperation with our partners and stakeholders. Selling training courses and modules generates new revenue and therefore requires conscious effort.

#### 7. have eight long-term strategic partnerships with credible partners.

##### *Explanatory text*

Alongside our mission within education and research, synergy has established itself as a specific form of activity. Long-term, strategically important partnerships strengthen our activities. A strategic partnership involves broad-based cross-disciplinary cooperation, such as cooperation in education, internships and the promotion of working life relevance in education, as well as research cooperation and funding.

#### 8. have an organisational structure that includes clearly documented roles, mandates and responsibilities for all our staff. Research and teaching staff will account for at least 60% of all staff at the university.

##### *Explanatory text*

As a small university, our complex activities call for a flexible organisation with highly visible leadership and a clear mandate for decision-making and accountability throughout the organisation, while guaranteeing the ability of the academic organisation to fulfil our scientific mission. To highlight the importance of core activities, 60% of the staff consists of researchers and teachers, corresponding to the national average among all universities.

#### 9. obtain a quality certificate (or equivalent) for high-quality workplace and employee experience.

##### *Explanatory text*

Within the organisation, we maintain arenas for community and peer activities that support the core operations and add value to them. The university brand is associated with staff, who have a high level of affinity throughout the organisation and with each other.

# Our identity

The description of our identity sets the tone for our activities and states what is relevant about us, our context and our mission:

1. We are the Swedish-speaking university in Finland and we operate in many languages. Our history has primarily been influenced by German and Nordic scientific and cultural traditions. Although the Nordic countries are an important reference point in all our activities, we also attentively follow and take part in international developments.

#### *Explanatory text*

Our identity stems from the contexts of which we are part: historically, presently and with an eye to the future. Based on our status, our historical context and our Scandinavian language, we are part of a network of universities in the Nordic countries. Contact with universities and research funding organisations in Sweden is particularly important.

2. We offer an international context for study, research and collaboration.

#### *Explanatory text*

Our mission is based on responsibility for the Swedish-speaking population, but we also offer an international context for education and research. International research, our Masters' programmes given in English and vital student exchanges provide continuous input. Given our Swedish context, we want to strengthen and raise the profile of the international presence at Åbo Akademi University.

3. Our regional, national and international networks offer much more than who and what we are alone.

#### *Explanatory text*

We are regionally connected in networks and in collaboration with universities operating in our campus cities. Our research is diversified in collaboration with universities as well as businesses, industries and other organisations. We are part of national and international collaborations, including UniFi, TENK, Nordic and European university administration networks, the Coimbra Group University Network, the CHARM-EU University Alliance and the European University Association.

To guide the identity-creating work of the university, we maintain the **Roadmap for Linguistic Responsibility 2025–2030** that specifies our language practices, requirements for recruitment, educational opportunities and our interpretations of our responsibilities for the Swedish language and community in Finland.

# Our values

The values we choose to emphasise in our strategy set the tone for our way of working:

**1. Knowledge:** we take responsibility for safeguarding critical academic thinking, open science and the processes of credible knowledge production.

*Explanatory text*

If the understanding of academic research is weakened, the position and importance of science in society may be increasingly called into question. The university's task is to produce and communicate credible knowledge. We value the autonomy of science, transparent and responsible production of knowledge and making scientific knowledge available.

**2. Community:** we take responsibility for creating a sense of community in our activities, where our relatively small size and concentrated campus environments allow flexible interaction between students and staff. We support our diverse student association activities.

*Explanatory text*

The special conditions in which Åbo Akademi University operates provide us with plenty of opportunities to take advantage of our relatively small size. Closeness and seamless interaction between teachers and students are such advantages. Small study groups make it easier for people to get to know each other. We emphasise the positive aspects of an informal context and the potential of low thresholds in forming the ÅAU community. The free and independently organised association activities that students enjoy are a valuable part of the ÅAU culture.

**3. Enabling:** we take responsibility for providing competence development for tomorrow's needs in an innovative environment.

*Explanatory text*

People of different ages attend university. We want to support and equip them with knowledge and skills for the future, including digital transformation. Similarly, our research environments provide researchers at different career stages with platforms in which they can develop their abilities and knowledge. We are also a dynamic and diverse organisation that enables personal development through work experience, skilled colleagues and continuous training. networks, the Coimbra Group University Network, the CHARM-EU University Alliance and the European University Association.

**4. Sustainability:** through our activities, we take responsibility for contributing to economic, social, ecological, technological and cultural sustainability and we apply the principles in our own activities.

*Explanatory text*

We are responsible for ensuring that we are professional, purposeful and far-sighted in our management of funds, assets and investment activities. Social sustainability is evident in the way we manage gender equality, accessibility, equal treatment, fairness and support for study and work skills, health and well-being. It can also be seen in our continuous efforts to eliminate all forms of discrimination, harassment and hate speech. To promote ecological sustainability, we apply the theses on sustainability development and responsibility laid out by Unifi (the Council of Rectors of Finnish Universities) and will strive to achieve carbon neutrality during the strategy period. Cultural sustainability vis-à-vis the vitality and social function of Swedish is built into both our responsibility and our mission. Cultural sustainability also means managing the cultural heritage that belongs to us, making it available, and contributing to its development. Diversity is an asset.

Our **Roadmap for Implementing Our Values for 2025–2030** defines our priorities, working methods and objectives.

# Our Strategic Choices

## Research

We focus on:

**1. the prerequisites for obtaining competitive external funding, research excellence in certain areas, high-quality research in all our fields and the basic research that society needs in the long term.**

### *Explanatory text*

The search for excellence is a powerful driving force in university research. The prerequisites for excellence and competitive funding are important assessment criteria when recruiting researchers and professors. In addition, much effort is needed to support research funding, infrastructure and a credible evaluation process that identifies research environments with the potential to reach international excellence. Different areas of science have different criteria for development, depending on their traditions and social context. However, everyone has the opportunity to obtain external competitive research funding. In areas where access to excellence is difficult, high-quality research is required, on one hand, to respond to the needs of society and, on the other, to meet our responsibility for the Swedish community in Finland and all our education programmes. Postgraduate research studies should continue to be possible in the small yet socially and culturally significant areas that are of particular importance to the Swedish-speaking community in Finland. We increase the impact and relevance of research in society when we make research results available in various forms.

**2. inter- and multidisciplinary research to address global sustainability challenges**

### *Explanatory text*

Our research profiles are currently Minority Research, The Sea, Solutions for Health and Technologies for a Sustainable Future. Those profiles go beyond faculty boundaries, are naturally interdisciplinary and dynamically changing. Continuous analysis of the focus, theme and relevance of research profiles is a natural part of our activities. The explicit aim of our profiles is to address the major and complex wicked problems facing humanity and our world. Their continued integration into the faculties' research activities and well utilized internal centres of excellence helps us to achieve excellence in certain areas.

**3. socially-relevant research with established and new partners**

### *Explanatory text*

The university's responsibility for the Swedish-speaking community in Finland can be expressed through focused research. Together with key societal institutions, we contribute to the production of relevant knowledge. Research for socially and scientifically relevant innovations supports our ambitions. Strategic and long-term partnerships foster the implementation and dissemination of research results.

**4. high-level and effective post-graduate education that provides our doctoral students with a solid foundation for a continued career in contexts where the acquired research training contributes to society or the academic community, both nationally and internationally**

### *Explanatory text*

The focus of post-graduate education is to offer society higher academic competence. Our post-graduate education is the basis for an academic career. By investing in post-graduate education, we create conditions for promising researchers to advance in their careers in Finland or internationally. Post-graduate education is structured so that its activities are effective, quality-oriented and managed responsibly.

## 5. clear processes to follow up, develop and ensure the quality of our research and post-graduate education.

### *Explanatory text*

The university has a well-defined model for quality assurance that clarifies responsibilities and mandates. The tools used for reporting and follow-up are highly functional and promote the economic sustainability of our research projects. Based on this model, our post-graduate education and research is continuously monitored and evaluated.

Our **Roadmap for Research 2025–2030** further specifies our strategic choices and focus areas.

## Degree programmes

We focus on:

### 1. at least seven internationally certified degree programmes and economically viable education throughout the organisation

#### *Explanatory text*

Our courses have clear structures that allow for quality examinations and a high academic standard. We also strive to create environments of excellence in education, for instance through external evaluation. Systematic use of planning and evaluation functions ensures quality, relevance and attraction. Teaching is done based on economic viability and is properly dimensioned.

### 2. safe, secure and modern study and work environments for our students and staff

#### *Explanatory text*

Study environments comprise physical facilities as well as virtual and social communities. The university purposefully invests in the development of campus areas and physical facilities continue to be the arena for learning, knowledge production and socialising. Contact between students and staff is easy to maintain in our study environments. We have clearly defined rules and treat each other equally and respectfully in the course of our activities.

### 3. relevant and flexible study programmes for continuous learning and competence development, especially in Swedish and other selected areas

#### *Explanatory text*

Based on an analysis of what future society needs, the university has prioritised a number of areas in continuous and lifelong learning. In addition, within the framework of the opportunities that Digivisio 2030 offers, we need to strengthen our offering in areas that are culturally and socially important to the Swedish-speaking community in Finland. Because the target group for lifelong and continuous learning is broad and heterogeneous, study programmes are designed so that it will be possible to study alongside full-time employment and in other circumstances that require a high degree of flexibility.

#### 4. pedagogical and digital competence development for all teachers

*Explanatory text*

The educational skills of our staff are evaluated based on the needs of our students, legislation and constant changes in society. High-quality education and training presupposes that the latest research is linked not only to education, but also updated pedagogical knowledge. Likewise, the need for skills in special (university) education must also be taken into account in our education. Consequently, Åbo Akademi University invests in multifaceted, compulsory pedagogical and digital competence development for its teachers.

#### 5. clear processes for monitoring, evaluating and assuring quality of our pedagogical activities

*Explanatory text*

The university has a well-defined model for quality assurance that clarifies responsibilities and mandates. The tools used for reporting and follow-up are highly functional and promote the economic sustainability of our research projects. Based on this model, our post-graduate education and research is continuously monitored and evaluated.

**Our Roadmap for Education 2025–2030** further specifies our strategic choices and focus areas.

## Collaboration

We focus on:

1. selected, long-term, strategic partnerships of various kinds. Collaboration with the Åbo Akademi University Foundation is fundamental and helps us to fulfil our mission.

*Explanatory text*

Long-term and strategically selected partnerships create opportunities and added value for students, teachers and researchers. When we work together over time and with purpose, we create optimal conditions for nationally and internationally viable education that is relevant to society and the future, along with advanced and socially-relevant research. Ever since the founding of Åbo Akademi University in 1918, the Foundation has played a crucial role. Our collaboration is just as important today as it has ever been. The Foundation's primary mission is to contribute financially to the upkeep of the university.

2. highly functional relationships with key actors in the regions, in which we operate.

*Explanatory text*

As far as the university is concerned, regions are more than specific geographical areas. Given that our identity is closely aligned with the Nordic perspective and that we have a linguistic and culture-bearing responsibility in Finland, our mandate is broad. We also have a clear geographical base in our campuses in Turku and Vaasa, making it imperative to continuously raise our profile and increase our active interaction with local actors.



### 3. a continuous and strengthened dialogue with culture, working life and the business sector in order to enhance the relevance of education and research towards achieving significant societal impact.

#### *Explanatory text*

Maintaining a dialogue with culture, working life and the business sector is key to ensuring the societal and professional significance of our degree programmes, as well as when planning continuous skills development and conducting research. All of this contributes to new knowledge, skills and innovation. We develop strategic partnerships with selected partners in all areas of activity and maintain an active dialogue with them to identify relevant development needs in cooperation.

### 4. mutually enriching relationships with our alumni and students.

#### *Explanatory text*

Our students are important to us. The basis for credible marketing is the experience of students and staff. Alumni who enjoyed their experience with us never leave the university. We are strengthening and systematising our alumni activities in an effort to encourage alumni to make contributions to Åbo Akademi University. During the course of their studies, our students learn what it means to be an alumnus. Our alumni are given a context and the means to contribute with their skills and experience.

### 5. synergies through collaboration with other higher education institutions and universities nationally and internationally. Our collaboration with the Novia University of Applied Sciences falls into a special category. This group collaboration ensures mutual and complementary higher education activities in Swedish in Finland.

#### *Explanatory text*

Åbo Akademi University's collaboration with the universities and higher education institutions that operate in our campus towns of Vaasa and Turku is of particular importance to us. At the national level, collaboration in the Coordination Body for Swedish-language Higher Education in Finland is important, as the dialogue on higher education in Swedish in Finland takes place there. The CHARM-EU European University Alliance offers us opportunities for international cooperation with top universities in Europe. The Digivisio 2030 project enables new forms of collaboration with universities in Finland and internationally, especially in education and continuous learning. However, collaborations - especially with the University of Turku - that are based on complementary relationships vis-à-vis education, research and resource-efficient research infrastructures are crucial to our ability to conduct high-quality activities. Such collaborations mean that we must take a clear lead and act as credible partners. Åbo Akademi University is the owner of Novia University of Applied Sciences, and together the two form a joint group. This structure creates opportunities for synergies within our organisations, study paths in certain areas of education and competence development.

Our **Roadmap for Collaboration 2025–2030** further specifies our strategic choices and focus areas.

# University Organisation

We focus on:

## 1. properly dimensioned and professional leadership with clear mandates, responsibilities and other prerequisites to lead university activities with regard to both organisational and academic conditions

### *Explanatory text*

The leadership that the organisation needs includes courage, responsibility and responsiveness, along with sustainable conditions. Distinctive structures, well-defined roles and mandates with a direct link to financial responsibility at different levels of activity enable effective and accountable leadership.

The allocation of responsibilities and mandates by the line organisation is strongly geared towards having a coherent and well-defined management organisation. The principle of freedom of research and teaching as a prerequisite for academic operations must also be given a distinct organisational framework.

## 2. result-oriented, knowledge-based and standardised ways to plan, organise and follow up our operations

### *Explanatory text*

Our activities require well-planned use of resources and a well-defined organisation. We make strategic choices based on proven experience, knowledge and credible forecasts. We systematise our business and decision-making processes, including the ways in which working groups, councils and committees operate. Åbo Akademi University has a clearly defined model for quality assurance that includes actors and their responsibilities and mandates. The tools used for reporting and follow-up are highly functional. Based on the quality assurance model, we continuously monitor and evaluate our approaches to planning, implementing and following up our activities, as well as how we deal with irregularities.

## 3. structures that support smooth change management

### *Explanatory text*

Change is challenging, but necessary and constantly recurring. If we want to be prepared for dealing with change, we need to identify needs through continuous monitoring and evaluation, and through continuous analysis of the future and the world around us. We need to purposefully work towards an operating culture that safeguards respect, compliance with regulations and an awareness of economic realities. Clearly defined processes for working effectively over the long term while remaining grounded in reality lay a solid foundation for well-being. The internal supply of skills must be effective and goal-oriented in order for us to best address identified needs for change and foster security and well-being.

## 4. effective, highly functional and appealing physical and digital campus environments combining rich academic traditions and dynamic arenas for activity and synergy

### *Explanatory text*

Åbo Akademi University seeks to reconcile the positive aspects of campus-based activities with the flexibility offered by digital environments. We need to be clear about how we work in both environments. Our physical campus environments in Turku and Vaasa must be inviting, inclusive and accessible meeting places for students, academic discussion, creativity and collaboration. A campus should provide versatile spaces for study, work, free time and student culture. Digitalisation should be used when it offers added value. By clearly defining the objectives and target group for our activities, primarily education, we must choose a clear strategy for each activity.

## 5. clear job descriptions for staff and a reasonable workload.

### *Explanatory text*

We strive to create clearly defined job descriptions for all our employees and ensure a reasonable workload for each and every one. Work profiles must be reviewed at regular intervals to take changes in tasks and workload into account.

Our **Roadmap for the University Organisation 2025–2030** further specifies our strategic choices and focus areas.