



# *A university of the future*

Strategy of the University of Eastern Finland



UNIVERSITY OF  
EASTERN FINLAND

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*Board of the University of Eastern Finland*  
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Over the past few years, the global research and innovation environment has gone through a rapid change and become more compact in nature. In order for universities to succeed in the new environment, a high level of expertise and international networking is expected of them. Moreover, research universities have moved to a central role and they are expected face new challenges, such as the ageing population, social inequalities, increased significance of service production, internationalisation and environmental values and risks, through proactive research and flexible modes of operation.

Two strong universities, the University of Joensuu and the University of Kuopio, merged to constitute the multidisciplinary University of Eastern Finland. The open-minded merger of the universities enables the new university to better react to the changing needs of science and society and to meet the demands of operational efficiency.

The University of Eastern Finland operates on two main campuses, in Joensuu and Kuopio, and the university also has a campus in Savonlinna. Each of the campuses has a distinct profile and cooperation between the campuses in research, education and supporting services is close, based on commonly agreed principles and relying on effective communication solutions. The operational integration of the campuses lays the foundations for a strong and competitive, research-based competence cluster in eastern Finland.

## 2. UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND IN 2015

### VALUES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

*Freedom of science, ethicality and justice*

**T**he profile of the university underscores multidisciplinary, which creates new fields of research at the interfaces of the disciplines. The university participates in various national and international networks and enjoys international recognition in its areas of expertise.

### MISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

*The University of Eastern Finland conducts internationally recognised research and its training provision is of a high international standard. The university has a strong profile in its areas of expertise and takes a particular interest in promoting the regional development of eastern Finland.*

**T**he strategy of the University of Eastern Finland faces the international challenges in research and education and meets the changing information and training needs of society.

### VISION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

*The University of Eastern Finland is an internationally recognised research and teaching university, which is among the three most important universities in Finland and among the leading 200 universities in the world.*

### 3. A COMPETITIVE RESEARCH AND TEACHING UNIVERSITY

**T**he University of Eastern Finland is a multidisciplinary research university which is internationally recognised for its competitive research and education. Research in the university's areas of expertise is of a high international standard. Moreover, the university's education is attractive and it maintains the national intellectual capital and produces scientific research findings which are significant for both society, and trade and industry. Research in the university's areas of expertise is linked to the national strategic centres of excellence and, together with state research institutes and end users of research findings, the areas of expertise constitute an innovation cluster in eastern Finland.

The University of Eastern Finland targets significant strategic resources to the areas of expertise which enhance the university's profile. Moreover, in addition to the areas of expertise, the university also has other socially significant, strong fields of research. The university makes particular investments in the renewal of its research activities, thus ensuring and creating possibilities for strong research also in the future.

#### 3.1 AREAS OF EXPERTISE IN RESEARCH OF THE UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN FINLAND

##### **Forests and the environment**

The University of Eastern Finland is a national leader in research relating to forests. The extensive research carried out by the university on forests and the climate, and on natural resources and the human habitat in natural sciences, health sciences and social sciences emphasises the sustainable use of natural resources and constitutes an internationally unique research cluster in the field. The societal significance of this area of expertise is enhanced by research pertaining to environmental law, as well as by research relating to operating environments and the general impact of this field on society at large.

##### **Health and well-being**

Health and well-being are the cornerstones of all human activity. The university conducts research in molecular medicine to uncover the basic mechanisms behind various endemic diseases. Combined with clinical and population-based research, research in the field creates new prerequisites for the development of new prevention, diagnostics and treatment methods, as well as for research addressing topics of interest to social sciences. Furthermore, the role of nutrition, exercise, other lifestyle choices and well-being in maintaining health constitutes an important field of research.

##### **New technologies and materials**

Technological research based on natural sciences is the key factor behind the future economic prosperity of Finland. The high standard of basic research in natural sciences at the University of Eastern Finland serves as a foundation for

### 3. A COMPETITIVE RESEARCH AND TEACHING UNIVERSITY

developing new technologies and applications in biosciences, information sciences, materials sciences and nano sciences. Research in the area of expertise creates new knowledge and exploitability relating to medicine, information and communication technologies and the human habitat, as well as to the related technologies for their production and application.

The university selects 2–3 spearhead projects in research (research programmes, consortia, etc.) for each of the areas of expertise. The spearhead projects are selected through an open internal call, and the university will allocate significant strategic additional funding to the selected projects.

#### **Renewal of research activities**

To support the renewal of its research activities, the university encourages the establishment of multi- and cross-disciplinary research groups and consortia, for which the university allocates strategic funding through internal competition. The research groups for which strategic funding is allocated will create new, internationally interesting and significant openings.

In compliance with its post-doctoral researcher programme, the university recruits new post-doctoral researchers every year, primarily from outside the university. In doing so, the university aims at the renewal of its research activities and at the internationalisation of its research staff. The university uses special temporary funding to support the launch of the research activities of researchers recruited from outside the university.

#### **Researcher training**

To further improve the university's researcher training and to ensure its quality, the university

will launch the Graduate School of the University of Eastern Finland to which all the postgraduate students of the university will belong. The university's graduate school is a cost-efficient means of offering the doctoral programmes involved both shared study modules and various coordination and supporting services needed in researcher training.

#### **3.2 HIGH STANDARD AND VERSATILE EDUCATION**

Measured by the number of fields in which the University of Eastern Finland has the right to confer degrees (12), the university is one of the most multidisciplinary universities in Finland and it works actively to recruit new students. The university will launch a thorough reorganisation of its major subjects and degree programmes to ensure that it is sufficiently strong in all the fields in which it has the right to confer degrees. Moreover, the number of the major subjects and degree programmes will be significantly reduced in the upcoming few years. This reorganisation and a careful core content analysis of the university's teaching constitute a means of creating Bachelor's degree programmes which are more extensive than before and which better meet today's requirements. The university will also remove any overlaps in the teaching offered on the Kuopio and Joensuu campuses. A versatile selection of Master's degree programmes, including the university's international Master's degree programmes, offer flexible study paths for the students to take after their Bachelor's level studies.

To further develop education, the University of Eastern Finland seeks to be involved in promoting stronger national cooperation in the field of education.

### 3. A COMPETITIVE RESEARCH AND TEACHING UNIVERSITY

#### 3.3 ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW AREAS OF EXPERTISE IN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

In addition to the above mentioned areas of expertise in research, the University of Eastern Finland has also selected two regionally and nationally significant fields in which research and education will be further strengthened. These fields are Broad-Based Expertise Pertaining to Russia, and Selected Fields of Teacher Education.

Broad-based expertise pertaining to Russia and cross-border cooperation are among the central goals of the University of Eastern Finland. In research relating to Russia, European borders, border regions and fringe areas, the university seeks to gain international recognition as one of the leading experts in the field. Furthermore, the university is strengthening its research and education pertaining to the Russian language, culture, industry and commerce. The university develops its cooperation with Russia especially through the expertise found in the areas of expertise in education and research.

The University of Eastern Finland offers extensive and versatile teacher training. The university's particular strengths in teacher education include the development of special education and guidance counselling, as well as the improvement of the preconditions for subject teacher training in natural sciences. In research relating to learning, modern learning environments and technologies and their introduction are emphasised and the goal is also to simultaneously improve the research and teaching infrastructure between the university campuses.

The university will place special emphasis on these fields through strategic funding and through a comprehensive development plan addressing the university's teaching and research.

#### 3.4 INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Through being part of the international scientific community, the university ensures a high standard of research and teaching and the university works actively to find new ways and means for international cooperation. These include, e.g., education and research activities at the university's overseas campuses, cooperation with international partners in Finland, tailor-made trainings, and degree-oriented education for which tuition fees are charged.

The university's research groups are international and well-networked with leading international universities and research institutes. The international cooperation of the university's research groups is self-directed and the areas of cooperation are defined on the basis of academic research interests. The university works actively to recruit leading international researchers and supports the international mobility of its own research staff.

The university's strategic areas of cooperation in research and education include Europe, North America, Russia, China, and southern Africa in particular. Moreover, the university investigates the possibilities for launching 1–2 overseas campus projects with its international partners. The university also evaluates the activities of the Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University thus far and re-focuses them based on the university's areas of expertise.

## 4. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

**T**he activities of the University of Eastern Finland are characterised by internationality, multidisciplinary, and high standards. The university's research and education are focused on its areas of expertise, which are supported by a sufficiently large discipline base. The university supports the systematic development of all its activities in compliance with the principles of a learning quality organisation and it is committed to the development and further improvement of the expertise of its staff. The foundations of the university's teaching lie in research-based, pedagogically high-quality education, student well-being and support for their graduation.

### 4.1 RESEARCH

Research at the University of Eastern Finland is of an internationally recognised high standard. By investing in the areas of expertise, in the renewal of the research activities, and in the establishment of new, strategically significant areas of expertise in education and research, the role of the university is strengthened in the national and international innovation system. The university's research meets the needs of society and respects academic freedom.

1. The university's research is of a high international standard.
2. The university's postgraduate education is of a high quality and the university's research careers are attractive.
3. The university's research environments are modern and meet high standards.
4. The university's research funding rests on a solid base.

### 4.2 EDUCATION

The University of Eastern Finland is an attractive and sought-after place at which to study, and the university's teaching is developed towards student-oriented learning processes. The university's teaching is of a uniformly high pedagogical standard and the teaching methods used are versatile. Furthermore, the university's provision of adult education is extensive.

The university's structure of academic subjects is evaluated and developed from the viewpoints of their scientific standard, efficiency of education, needs of society and attractiveness. Furthermore, the university participates in national and international networks in its areas of expertise.

The University of Eastern Finland supports the future career opportunities of its students by, among other things, establishing working life connections in their fields of study.

1. The university's teaching is of a high standard and meets the needs of society.
2. The university's teaching-related processes are efficient.
3. The university's educational structures are flexible.
4. The university's teaching is international in nature.
5. The principle of life-long learning is observed in all education provided by the university.
6. As a rule, the students can flexibly choose their minor subjects.
7. The university places heavy emphasis on student well-being and on their timely graduation.

## 4. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

### 4.3 SOCIETAL SERVICE MISSION AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

The University of Eastern Finland operates as an integral part of the research, development and innovation systems and engages in cooperation with trade and industry, state research institutes, polytechnics and vocational institutes. This close cooperation promotes and provides support for Finnish society, trade and industry, and the international competitiveness of Finland as a whole.

The activities of the University of Eastern Finland are guided by concern for the environment. Indeed, the ecological, social, economic and ethical aspects of sustainable development are taken into consideration in the development of the university's activities.

1. The university and its stakeholder groups are responsible for meeting future expertise needs.
2. The university's research and education play a significant role in the cooperation between Finland, the European Union and Russia.
3. The university strengthens cooperation with companies and working life.
4. The university further develops broad-based cooperation with its stakeholder groups.
5. The university supports the internationalisation of the region together with other actors.
6. The university further enhances exploitation of inventions and innovations.
7. The university promotes and supports academic entrepreneurship and research-driven new businesses.
8. The university participates in social dialogue in the role of an expert and thus affects decision-making within society.

9. The university operates in compliance with the principles of sustainable development.

### 4.4 HUMAN RESOURCES

The human resources policy of the University of Eastern Finland is both people-oriented and competitive. The foundations of the university's human resources policy rest on well-being at work, respect for academic freedom and professional leadership. The university's staff members, students and partners are involved in the building and development of an inspirational and competitive university, the activities and results of which provide inspiration for scientific research and a high quality of teaching and learning. Furthermore, student well-being is among the primary concerns of the university in all teaching and teaching-related activities.

The activities of the university community are based on transparent decision-making, respect for individuals, accessibility and the promotion of staff and student well-being. The work carried out by the members of the community is equally important and provides support for their intellectual growth.

1. The university is an attractive place to work and study in both on national and international comparison.
2. The university has adopted a four-stage career model for the teaching and research staff.
3. The duties of the teaching and research staff comprise both teaching and research.
4. The university promotes equal opportunities, gender equality and career possibilities of all members of the university community.

## 4. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

### 4.5 MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

The management system of the University of Eastern Finland is clear. The university's administration works transparently and the administrative organisation is light. The operational culture is uniform throughout the university, thus providing support for the university's central processes. By further enhancing the supporting services and by clarifying the division of tasks, the university improves the possibilities of the staff to focus on their core duties.

The university comprises four strong faculties, and its administrative and supporting services are divided equally between the Joensuu and Kuopio campuses. The university's solid financial standing and future-oriented operations management constitute the cornerstones of strategic management.

1. The university's administrative and supporting services are productive and cost-effective. Resources becoming available from these services are re-targeted towards teaching and research activities.
2. The role of the faculties is strengthened by re-targeting resources from the central administration and current departmental administration to the faculty level.
3. The administrative routines are bureaucratically light.
4. The service processes are carried out in compliance with the principle of proximity.

### 4.6 COMMUNICATIONS

Communications constitute an integral part of all activities of the university. Moreover, openness and smooth communications practices are one of the university's resources. Communications

support the university's core processes and the achievement of the strategic goals, and are a means of raising awareness of the University of Eastern Finland. Information about the activities of the university is actively disseminated to the staff, students, stakeholder groups and public alike.

1. The university's communications are open and transparent.
2. The university's internal communications strengthen communality and the execution of the core activities, and constitute a central part of management and supervisory work at the university.
3. Communications are used to raise awareness of the university.
4. The university invests in international communications and marketing.
5. Electronic communications play a central role when disseminating information about the university's activities both within and outside the university.

### 4.7 UNIVERSITY CAMPUSES

The working and studying environments on the University of Eastern Finland campuses are attractive. Moving about the campus areas is easy, and the viewpoint of accessibility has been taken into consideration in the campus buildings, which meet today's requirements. The university campuses are welcoming and characterised by the presence of nature.

The studying and working environments on the university campuses are diverse and innovative. The university campuses also host partners of the university and there exist strong expert networks in the university's shared teaching

## 4. DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

and research facilities. The university engages in close cooperation with the cities of Joensuu, Kuopio and Savonlinna to ensure that the working and studying environments are as attractive as possible.

1. The use of the university facilities is efficient.
2. The university increasingly engages in cooperation with polytechnics in the use of the university facilities and the placement of its activities.
3. New partners supporting the university's areas of expertise in research and education are sought for the university campuses.
4. The university campuses have uniform IT systems and services, which support the activities of the university.
5. The atmosphere on the university campuses is international, active and appreciative of multicultural values.
6. The university engages in active cooperation with the Student Union to improve the conditions of the students.

### 4.8 FINANCIAL RESOURCES

The university's basic funding and external funding form an entity which supports the university in carrying out its core mission. The acquisition of competed national and international funding for research and education is enhanced

by investing in the efficiency of the university's research and teaching and by supporting researchers in the acquisition of research funding from the Academy of Finland, the Finnish Funding Agency for Technology and Innovation, Tekes, and the EU in particular. Furthermore, international degree programmes, tailor-made trainings and adult education constitute means for the university to acquire international and national funding from external sources. On the whole, the acquisition of private funding is a major challenge for universities.

1. The principles of allocating financial resources within the university are supportive and transparent.
2. Financial resources are allocated within the university in accordance with the principle of fairness.
3. The university's strategic funding is used to strengthen the international and national standing of the university.
4. The university's strategic funding is allocated using as criteria cost-efficiency and quality.
5. The university further improves its financial solidity and liquidity and raises its own capital.
6. The university creates new funding instruments to acquire both private and international funding.

## 5. ENFORCEMENT AND MONITORING OF THE STRATEGY

**T**he strategy of the University of Eastern Finland is complemented by sub-strategies and various programmes, and selected indicators are used to monitor the realisation of the strategy. Audits, management reviews and internal performance negotiations carried out every year play a central role in the realisation and monitoring of the strategy. The strategy serves as a foundation for the university's annually updated action plan, which defines the concrete performance and operational goals for the upcoming years.

The realisation of the strategy rests on transparent information dissemination to both the university community and the external stakeholder groups and it emphasises the significance of all the parties involved in reaching the goals of the university. Moreover, the university's strategic development work is a continuous, interactive process.

1. An audit by the Finnish Higher Education Evaluation Council will be carried out at the university in 2010.
2. In 2015, the university will participate in an international evaluation of all its activities.
3. The evaluations are a means for the university to monitor the achievement of its set goals and the possible re-structuring of its activities.
4. Internal audits and annual management reviews are carried out in compliance with the university's quality management system.
5. The Board of the university decides on any discipline-specific evaluations to be carried out for the strategic development of the university.
6. The university's information systems are improved to better support the evaluations of the university's education and research.



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