

 UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

# Strategy 2006-2012

The University of Turku

# STRATEGY 2006–2012

## SPHERE OF ACTIVITIES AND VISION 2012

### **Sphere of Activities**

The University of Turku is an international, multidisciplinary scientific University, which offers an academic education and research-based instruction. Activities based on high quality and multidisciplinary create the preconditions for the University's profile internationally, nationally and regionally.

The University produces new knowledge and critically examines the phenomena of the society and the environment from the points of views of different disciplines, and responds to the society's needs for education and information.

In the forefront of the region's innovation system, the University promotes the development of the surrounding society and especially that of Southwest Finland. The University creates the preconditions for forming and developing co-operational networks in research and education.

### **Vision 2012**

The University is internationally known and recognised for its research and education. The University is in all its operational functions among the top Finnish universities, and internationally, in its areas of strength, it belongs to the group of the best universities. In addition, research groups that are the best in the world in their own special field work at the University.

The University offers a versatile, inspiring and attractive academic environment in which the most talented and skilled people in their field, who are committed to the University community, study and work.

### **University's values**

The activities of the University are based on a long academic tradition, which began in Turku in the 1640's. Established after Finland gained its independence, the University of Turku, the first Finnish-speaking University, has from the beginning upheld its founding message *from a free people to free science and learning* as its starting point. Freedom of education and research prevails at the University, and it can decide how the jointly chosen goals are pursued.

The University operates according to ethical, critical, creative and communal values.

In all the activities of the University, *ethical values* are present: pursuing good and correct solutions. In both research and other activities, the University staff and students follow the principles of high-standard professional ethics and best scientific practice.

*A critical approach* is the basis of academic education. This means pursuing the truth by questioning certainties, and accurate research in all activities. Thus, a genuine critical approach also results in high quality and reliability.

The activities of the University are based on seeking new information and meanings, and mediating them onwards. *Creativity* means the ability to see and do things in a new way, so that individuals or the community gain both benefits and intellectual satisfaction from what they do, and are ready to face new challenges.

Along with the University community's pressure for change, commitment to the community and its development are of primary importance. The important themes of *communal values* are openness, trust, commitment, motivation and collaboration.

## **MISSIONS**

### **Research and postgraduate education**

#### **Significance and nature of research**

High-standard, multi- and interdisciplinary research forms the basis of the University's activities, and in turn, education and societal impact are built on this basis. The research guarantees the development of the University as an international research-led University, and enables the combining of social and technological innovations.

The research done at the University is free and depends on the scholar. The goal is that with the stability provided by basic funding, even research involving a risk of failure can be conducted. This enables the creation of significant innovations and the stabilisation of the position of basic research.

#### **Areas of strength**

The University of Turku recognises areas of strength in research, and searches for promising, strongly developing areas; special investments are directed toward these areas, through which the University profiles itself. Defining the areas of strength is based on the University's own starting points, collaborative possibilities, future scenarios and society's needs. Defining the areas is revised on the basis of follow-up and evaluation.

The widest area of strength with the most numerous disciplines is the *biosciences*. Other recognised areas of strength are *the research of processes related to interaction of culture and society, mathematical research, research of learning and education, and astronomy and space research*.

Strongly developing areas, and possible areas of strength in the future, are *the study of interdisciplinary social innovations, research related to materials research and information technology*.

### **Strengthening postgraduate education**

The University profiles itself as an institution offering high-quality postgraduate education, creating the preconditions for the more efficient recruitment of students who are talented and interested in research. The operational preconditions for postgraduate schools are improved, and schools are founded with separate funding from the Ministry of Education or from the University's own budget. Recruiting international students into postgraduate education is promoted, while postgraduate schools are encouraged to join both national and international networks. In the planning and realisation of postgraduate education, the needs of the University and also those of business life and of society are taken into consideration. The quality and amount of postgraduate guidance are assessed as part of the quality assessment of teaching.

### **Attaching scholars to the University**

To strengthen its position as a research-led University, the University considers it of central importance that scholars of high international standing, in different phases of their career, can be recognised, recruited and attached to the University of Turku. If necessary, when recruiting outstanding scholars, special investments are made.

The University guarantees all its scholars the basic preconditions for conducting good research. In addition, the University maintains the material and immaterial research infrastructure.

### **Career development of scholars**

The scholars' possibilities for career development are improved. The University supports especially scholars doing independent research and those who are gathering their own research group. The nomenclature of University posts is developed so that outstanding scholars have natural possibilities to advance in their career.

### **Regional, national and international collaboration in research**

The regionally compact research community formed by the universities, the polytechnics, the state sector research institutes, the University hospital and enterprises is, in its variety, a special strength of the Turku area, and this is exploited, supported and developed by the University through the creation of shared structures.

Infrastructural units requiring significant resources and special skills are developed in collaboration with different organisations regionally, nationally and internationally. Efforts are made for them to gain the position of national units and continuous funding. The University promotes the development of the scholars' own consortiums, networks and other forms of collaboration.

### **Research with external funding**

The University considers it important, in addition to basic research, to conduct service research that is jointly funded, or wholly externally funded. Thus, the position of applied research is ensured, and the University's regional impact is strengthened. However, the University makes sure that the applied research and research serving external goals support the basic activities of the University.

## **Education and learning**

### **Science-based education**

A close connection between scientific research and education is the starting point of the education at the University. This can be seen, for example, in that the best scholars in each discipline also give basic instruction. The goal is that students will adopt an academic way of thinking, which emphasises aiming at creating something new, at a critical approach and at an ethical responsibility. To achieve the goals set for learning, the University aims at developing the education of each discipline as dynamically as their research.

### **High quality**

The University participates in the development of academic education as part of national and international networks. Teachers are allowed time to develop their own teaching and to educate themselves pedagogically. Pedagogic education and guidance are increased and developed both centrally and by faculty.

The curricula, teaching arrangements and support services for students are developed through the descriptions of activities, the gathered feed-back, and national and international assessments, the goal being a high quality of instruction, studying and learning. Merits for giving high-quality instruction, and acquired pedagogical education and skills (teaching portfolio) are important factors when filling the University's teaching posts and when defining the income level of the person.

**Multidisciplinarity**

The University supports the students' possibilities for multidisciplinary studies so that studies in different faculties and universities can be flexibly included in their degrees. The development of new types of study modules is promoted by supporting multidisciplinary collaboration in education among the institutions of higher education and the faculties.

**Internationality**

The studies at the University of Turku give the students an international perspective on science and on their own discipline's professional practices. By promoting international teacher exchange and recruitment of foreign teachers, the teaching community is strengthened, and the students are offered the possibility to internalise the principles of an internationally oriented academic community.

Students are offered a variety of possibilities for international exchange in the collaborating Universities in different parts of the world. The preconditions for student mobility are guaranteed by collaboration and networking with internationally known Universities that offer high-quality education. The starting point is that studies in the foreign Universities are fully included in the degree completed at the University of Turku.

The amount and quality of foreign-language instruction is developed to correspond to the needs of students. The number of foreign degree students is increased by starting international Master's programmes especially in the University's areas of strength. The instruction in Finnish language and culture for international students is increased, in order to strengthen the education's relevance to working life, and to facilitate the students' integration into Finnish society.

**Change in working life and the challenges of society**

In addition to academic thinking, in the development of education, the new requirements that working life and societal change set to academic professionalism are taken into consideration. In the development of education, connections to working life, alumni and other actors are exploited to ensure the education's relevance to working life.

**Exploiting information and communication technology**

The possibilities offered by information and communication technology, and the network of collaboration between universities, are widely exploited in education. The University offers and develops virtual education both nationally and internationally.

### **The profile of adult education**

The education offered by the University is based on the principle of life-long learning. Open University education, basic education, and supplementary education in connection with it are developed, aiming at flexible educational structures, well-defined student statuses and individual study paths.

The profile of academic adult education is clarified, and the operational preconditions of supplementary education are improved by developing fee-paying specialisation studies as a valuable path of supplementary studies.

## **Societal impact**

### **Exploiting research and education**

The basic starting point of the University's societal impact is the exploitation of research and education. Having societal and regional impact is considered to be part of the University's basic mission.

At the University, the research and development projects that operate according to the principles of a fee-paying service activity are carried out so as to ensure their impact and financial viability. The projects should be based on the University's know-how and support its basic activities.

In addition to the province of Varsinais-Suomi, the University is a significant regional actor in the province of Satakunta, where the activities are co-ordinated through the units of Rauma and those of the University Consortium of Pori, as well as in Salo, where the activities are developed in close collaboration with Turku Polytechnic and the town of Salo.

### **Exploiting innovations**

The University supports the innovations' transfer into practical applications, and ensures that it gains a fair benefit from innovations developed within its sphere. A natural, and from the point of view of risk control, a safe way to achieve this goal is through partnership in professionally led companies that exploit the University's innovations. The University participates in creating, supporting and promoting such entrepreneurship. The University uses the resources from the entrepreneurship to fund strategically central activities. The University directs special resources toward patent expenses at the early stage, as these have been a critical factor in the transfer of innovations.

In addition to exploiting the innovations commercially, the University aims at more effective impact by giving information on academically and socially significant research results and innovations, and by exploiting them in the expert services and education it offers.

### **Collaboration with interest groups**

The University develops its collaboration with interest groups and its forms of collaboration to be able to more flexibly react to environmental changes and to the challenges they set. It actively participates in the development of Southwest Finland by interacting with regional actors, and takes their expectations and needs into account when finding strategic solutions.

To develop high technology and to guarantee the functioning of the innovation chain, the University collaborates with the region's intermediary organisations. Along with the region's public sector and other actors promoting entrepreneurship, the University participates in promoting a positive culture of entrepreneurship.

Collaboration with other universities and polytechnics is intensified, while new forms of activities to structure collaboration are sought. Using its international connections and research, the University creates, in collaboration with the region's other institutions of higher education, a wide international community, which supports the region's creativity, attraction and innovativeness, as well as strengthening the region's international profile and visibility as a centre of high-quality know-how.

A central interest group is formed by the University alumni. The goals of alumni activities are activating the connections to working life, disseminating research information, developing collaboration in research and mediating new stimuli.

## **COMMUNITY**

### **Personnel**

#### **The University as a working community**

The University is an organisation of experts. In its activities, it is essential that the structure of the personnel is correctly weighted, and that its members are skilled and consider their work meaningful. The University's personnel policy flexibly supports its basic activities and creates the prerequisites for high-quality education and research.

The University, as an employer, selects the most qualified and most professionally skilled person for each post, familiarises new employees with their working environment, and maintains an open culture of activities by emphasising skilful, responsible and productive management. It aims at permanent employment, and enables the circulation of work, career advancement and the development of the personnel's own professional skills.

Co-operation procedures are exploited when preparing decisions on personnel, and in intensifying the interaction between employer and personnel, and the interaction among the personnel.

### **Skills development**

The expertise of the personnel is the key factor in the University's success. The personnel are encouraged to maintain and develop their own professional skills and to take initiatives to develop them. Development discussions are established as part of the community's activities, and they are used to support both the management of units and the work, development and career advancement of the personnel.

The needs concerning the methods and contents for the development of the University personnel are assessed, and the possibilities of the University personnel's development are diversified on the basis of assessments, taking into account, e.g. the increasing internationalisation. For the development of the personnel, both university-level education and unit-specific development projects are organised.

### **Personnel planning**

The University carries out deliberate and long-term personnel planning, which involves the whole personnel. As the competition for skilled personnel intensifies, the University pays special attention to creating a positive image as an employer, to successfully recruiting new personnel, and to making sure that the personnel are committed to their work.

The University clarifies the preconditions for forming an employee pool to carry out the support activities of education and research. The employees would be permanently employed in this pool, but their position could change within the University.

### **Promoting well-being at work**

Promoting well-being at work is, in addition to skills development, a corner stone of the University's personnel policy. An essential partial factor of well-being is the working atmosphere, which is improved, e.g. by developing leadership skills. In addition, the University promotes well-being at work through procedures aiming at the improvement of working capacity, occupational health and occupational safety.

## **Students**

### **Recruitment of students**

The University of Turku recruits new students from all over Finland. The recruitment of international students is intensified and it is directed toward selected target groups. The best way to recruit a motivated and talented student body is to successfully communicate the continuous development of instruction and of learning environments, the high quality of academic research, and the education's relevance to working life.

When developing the selection and recruitment of students, it is ensured that the applicants are equally and fairly treated regardless of age, gender or other personal characteristics.

### **Promoting the progress of studies**

The University creates a system enabling the detection of problems in the progress of studies, and giving the required guidance at the earliest stage possible. The students are also encouraged to actively bring up obstacles in study progress. The study guidance and teaching arrangements are developed on the basis of each discipline's own practices, so that the students' individual needs and life situation are taken into account.

The assessment of curricula and the length and width of studies is a part of the University's normal activities. The goal of the assessment is to develop the operation so that the students are guaranteed high-quality education and the relevant study modules, as well as the prerequisites to flexibly complete their studies.

### **Legal protection of students**

The University charts the problems in the legal protection of students, and creates clear operational models for dealing with them. By supporting the students' possibilities to contribute and the internalisation of the principles of good administration, the University organisation also promotes the quality of work at the University.

### **Developing the studying environment**

The University develops the studying environment by supporting the students' physical, mental and social health, and monitoring their well-being. The goal of the guidance systems and the support services is to support the students' growth into the academic community. The student perspective is taken into account in the development of the community and in the quality work.

## **ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION**

### **Processes and structures**

#### **Administering the working community**

To respond to the challenges set for universities, the University should be able to operate more autonomously and with more responsibility than today. Success in this field requires the adoption of a new culture of administration and decision-making that applies to the scientific community. The task of superiors is to recognise the requirements set for administration, both within and outside the working community, and to skilfully respond to them.

The University is responsible for making sure that those in superior positions are familiar with understanding the tasks, roles and sectors of administration. Special attention is paid to the development of individual leadership, which

emphasises the skills needed in interaction and in controlling conflict situations; equality, fairness, openness, and the development of a feeling of community.

### **Organisation leadership**

A high-quality and efficient decision-making and management culture is the basic prerequisite for leadership. To achieve this, the University develops the tools of administration, and furthermore, clarifies the distribution of work between the administration and the academic leaders, as well as the power and responsibility relations of those in superior positions.

When developing leadership, a balance is sought between collegial decision-making, and individual leadership, as well as between the requirements of the authorities and the academic activities. The distribution of work between the administrative and teaching staff is rendered appropriate, so that the teaching and research personnel can focus on their basic tasks.

### **Financial leadership**

The basis for securing and developing the University's activities is a well-balanced economy. In financial leadership, efforts are made to introduce a developed administrative accountancy. The systems of financial leadership and the financial monitoring are developed at all levels of the University. The aim is to more clearly connect financial planning and monitoring to operational responsibility at all levels of University organisation.

### **Quality work**

Assessments and peer review have traditionally been a part of the academic community. Research, instruction and learning are assessed by many criteria. In addition to these traditional quality control mechanisms, the University establishes a quality assurance system covering all its activities as a part of its normal operation.

A quality policy is created for the University, and the University leadership ensures that quality goals are set at different levels of the organisation. The University monitors and analyses its activities, with the help of, e.g., internal and external audits, and develops its activities to ensure the implementation of the strategy.

## **MATERIAL RESOURCES**

### **Finance**

**Development of the financial basis**

The University aims at increasing its financial autonomy and the share of unallocated resources so that the University's independent development activities can be strengthened. Instead of extending education widely, resources are directed toward targets assessed to be strategically important. In which case, it is central to direct the resources toward developing fields at the right time. In projects presented to the Ministry of Education, attention is paid to the fact that they are based on the University's expertise, and that they profile and renew the University's activities.

The University's goal is to guarantee the stable development of resources, thus securing the University's basic activities and long-term development. Budget funding and external funding form an entity that supports the realisation of the University's missions. Efforts are made to increase especially basic funding in order to guarantee the preconditions for long-term research.

The University continues to develop a transparent steering system that is based on target-setting, results and negotiations. Critical examination of the activity and rewarding results are part of the development process of the activity.

**Control of costs**

The acquisitions of the University are developed and centralised so that cost savings are gained from acquisitions. In acquisition decisions, the short-term and long-term cost effects are taken into consideration. Special attention is paid to the effects and control of personnel and property costs.

To control property costs the use of premises is enhanced. Rent costs are directed to the users of the premises. Controlling the running costs of properties is improved by periodically inviting offers from the providers of the service activities. When assessing the costs, in addition to property costs, equipment costs are also taken into account

**Premises****Harmonious and recognisable campus area**

The University premises in Turku, Rauma, Pori and Salo are strategically well situated close to the towns' centres. In Turku, the University, together with Åbo Akademi and the Turku School of Economics and Business Administration, forms a wide and harmonious campus area. The University develops its campus as an entity, so that the University area is distinguishable in the town structure, and its harmonious appearance can be recognised in the townscape.

**Location of activities**

Renewing and extending its premises, the University gathers dispersed activities into entities, where, e.g., the departments of closely related disciplines are situated. The basic activities of the University are situated in premises that

are permanent, and considering tenancy, stable. In the strategy concerning premises, the University also aims at bringing together and standardising the operational environments of extensive and long-term projects.

### **Development of premises**

The central starting point of the strategy concerning premises is to organise appropriate, healthy and comfortable working spaces for the University personnel and students. The University personnel and students are encouraged to participate in planning renovation and changes, and to taking initiatives and making proposals for improvement. In the planning of the premises, attention is paid to safety and to absence of restrictions.

The development plans of the University premises are implemented through a building programme. The University formulates an environmental plan for its area, and connects it with its environment policy programme.

## **Support services**

### **Offering support services**

The University's success in its basic missions requires functioning support services for research and instruction. Since it is an organisation of experts, information services are especially important to the University. The University guarantees the required level of these services.

The competition between the institutions of higher education for financial resources, competent personnel and students is intensifying, and therefore, the University should be able to efficiently communicate its own strengths and market its know-how. Here, centralised communication has a significant role, but in addition to that, special attention is paid to the readiness and preconditions of the University community members to make the University well known.

### **Development of service processes**

The University clarifies responsibilities and the distribution of work between units, and abolishes overlapping activities. The starting points for renewing administrative and other support services are flexibility, customer-orientation and efficiency, within the limits of the norms regulating activities of the authorities. It is essential to emphasise the ability to regenerate, and to anticipate activities, and also to emphasise the organisation's internal communication and transparency

## **FOLLOW-UP**

In the University's annually updated operational and financial plan, methods to implement the strategic policy guidelines and goals are presented. The University's overall strategy is also carried out and specified by the University's partial strategies and implementation plans, in which each sector's own policy guidelines are discussed in more detail. In addition, it is required that the faculties and departments update their own strategies to support that of the University.

The University develops follow-up criteria for the implementation of the strategy. The information produced for performance management and for the KOTA database, maintained by the Ministry of Education, about the status of the University, function as the basis for the follow-up. The University makes assessments, creates feedback mechanisms, and exploits the information produced by the quality system to be able to analyse developments even with respect to those goals that are difficult to measure.

In the University's internal annual performance negotiations, the implementation of the strategy in each performance unit is examined. The implementation of different parts of the strategy is reported annually in the University's annual report and financial statement.

During 2008 the strategy's follow-up and an intermediate analysis will be carried out.

FROM A FREE PEOPLE TO FREE SCIENCE AND LEARNING



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