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2019/
2023

STRATEGIC
PLAN
UNIVERSITY
OF COIMBRA



2019/
2023

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PLAN
UNIVERSITY
OF COIMBRA



/introductory note

João Caração

President of the General Council
of the University of Coimbra

Designing a strategy is the core element of the assertion of the Rector in what concerns leadership and commitment to evolving his University in the Higher Education ecosystem. The strategy consists in the consubstantiation of the vision of the future announced during his candidacy. It contains everything that falls within the scope of the design, decision, conduct and content of the actions to be undertaken during his term of office. It is a key element that connects the present to the future.

A new thing is not produced by spontaneous generation.

It must be created, protected, supported, and strengthened. Then maybe it can succeed, thrive and emerge as an innovation or a factor of profound transformation. There are no discontinuities in life. To determine when something starts is as difficult as to determine when it ends. However, if we are attentive, we may observe some signs of the upcoming change, or indications that warn us about a possible change of what was anticipated.

Any era is a transition period for the individuals who live it, in which the interests and the fears of the past are confronted with the aspirations and the enthusiasms of the future, and in which the illusions of autonomy intersect with the forces that impose the chains on the present. Nevertheless, opportunities emerge in this melting pot of conflicts and crises.

A keen observer understands that the solution to our era is not just technological: it is mainly political and social, that is, it is eminently cultural.

Therefore, a culture of questioning the past, present and future has to be valued, as well as a culture of improving individuals' own capabilities. That is, a culture that welcomes history, values social solidarity and fosters political intervention, a culture that stimulates prospective analysis.

This encouragement of critical thinking and freedom of action is the essence of the University's mission.

An institution has never changed or developed by looking

inside itself. A change has begun and sustained exactly when internal constraints were confronted, and when new procedures were created in response to blocked situations,—replicating others or trying to overcome them.

An institution evolves when it calls itself into question, when it opens up to the outside and questions the future. The secret of moving forward lies in the balance between what must be preserved and what must be necessarily changed.

Today, extreme poverty and the misery of many millions of human beings live side by side with the abundance and the economic power of some restricted and fortunate higher circles.

However, the promise brought by science, after World War II, and the new scientific technologies it originated was that they would be the basis of and lead to social progress. Realising that this belief is, after all, a mirage, which social practice dispelled, has shown that the relationships and interactions which support historical reality are much more complex than the simple analyses that fill the major portion of the contemporary political speech.

The complexity of our nature as social beings implies that no discipline alone can describe categorically the behaviour of the human beings and, therefore, provide a definitive guide for action in order to achieve more and better social justice. Accordingly, it becomes necessary to combine different perspectives and practices in order to approach interconnected issues. The University must fully play its role also in this field as a far-reaching beacon and propose new behaviours to be adopted, by giving a reliable and credible example of them.

By approving the present Plan, the General Council decided it should urge and support the Rectorate's efforts to define metrics that will motivate the University and propel it into a positive and promising direction, monitoring the path taken to reach the objectives that have been selected.

Because, according to what the great António Vieira wrote, "In order to evaluate hope, one has to measure the future".



Broadly approved at the
General Council's meeting
of 16th December 2019

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Amílcar Falcão
Rector

/citius, altius, fortius

The reason why a
Strategic Plan is crucial:
to better identify the best
ideas and monitor their
implementation.

The motto underlying the action plan, which this guiding document intends to inspire, mirrors the Olympic spirit to the precise extent that it was defined by Pierre de Coubertin: "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*" ("faster, higher, stronger").

Individual resilience is an absolute value. Collective resilience is also an absolute value. It is obviously possible to compare personal and collective performances. However, the challenge we face is to bring out the best in each of us, expecting that the final collective result will be far greater than the sum of its parts.

Getting positive results is usually associated with some inspiration and a lot of perspiration. There are plenty of (good) ideas, but implemented ideas are scarce. In order to assert ourselves as a research university, it is necessary to come up with ideas and implement them. That is why a Strategic Plan is absolutely essential in order to identify the best ideas and to monitor their implementation.

Since I believe we can always do more and better, our main focus should be on people. Valuing and caring for the academic community must be our priority. If we are able to motivate and unite people around a collective project, then we will be stronger and can undoubtedly say that the future of the University of Coimbra lies in our hands.

/framework

The process of the 2019-2023 strategic planning is a vital tool for the University of Coimbra and aims to ensure a systematic, structured, multidisciplinary and cross-cutting approach to the challenges of the present and future.

Strategic thinking, self-knowledge and listening to others, combined with prospective analysis and consideration of exogenous factors, contribute to the definition of the starting point, the pathway and goals to be achieved. Knowing your starting point and what you want to achieve is extremely important; hence, combining both of them with the knowledge on how to develop the best way to get it by means of a constant planning process, implementation, monitoring, assessment and action in real-time, is crucial.

Strategic Planning in high-performance institutions such as the University of Coimbra (UC) is thus a dynamic and living focus that points out the pathway which, in light of current knowledge, best enables it to achieve the wanted and plausibly designed results.

The development of this process, as of now and throughout the 2019-2023 strategic cycle, will enable to identify, change and strengthen the University's position, increasing the assertiveness of the decisions to be taken and adding them rationality and objectivity, as they are based on measurable and measured data. At the same time, it will provide a more effective signalling of the prioritisation of actions and an allocation of resources to the areas identified as strategic, and will also foster the participation of the

academic community, by attesting it as an active part of the process and co-responsible for the design and implementation of the defined path.

With the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan the UC intends to be a University (increasingly) empowered to build the future, embodying its vision and goals in a sustainable and socially responsible way.

Nevertheless, however well-defined a strategy may be, it will always be doomed to failure if its operationalisation is not duly implemented; and however well-designed it may be, it will only succeed if it is implemented with people and for people. People are thus the most valuable component of the adopted strategy and all of them are important to achieve success. That is why they should be heard, involved, valued and informed. If each person feels part of the strategy, from its design to its operationalisation, the collective strength will be reinforced. In order to ensure a successful strategy, in which people's involvement is indispensable, a broad set of sessions and moments of reflection entitled "The Future of the UC in our Hands" was organised by the UC, between May and November 2019, with the active participation of the academic community. Additionally, these reflection sessions included, simultaneously, academic partners and external agents, in order to contribute also to the strengthening of the relationships between the UC and different external stakeholders. Always focusing on issues that represent concerns of each participant, the goal of such a broad, participatory, cross-cutting and multicultural approach was to include different perspectives and contributions.

Since the UC belongs to a comprehensive external context, the design of the strategy should be preceded by a comparative analysis and a risk analysis. The success in implementing the strategy will depend on the capacity to adapt to external circumstances, so it is crucial that the UC is prepared to face different scenarios in the evolution of the surrounding environment.



Accordingly, the adopted methodology has comprised the prospective analysis and the exploration of framework scenarios of the environment in which the UC will compete and cooperate in the medium and long-term, and in this regard two brainstorming sessions, included in the programme "The Future of the UC in our Hands", were held by the UC.

The present Strategic Plan establishes the main guidelines for the University of Coimbra's activities during the 2019-2023 quadrennium, and starts a new monitoring and assessment cycle. The previous strategic planning processes enabled the development and incorporation of a culture of permanent monitoring and regular supervision of the UC activity, based on the compliance with the principle of improvement. Notwithstanding the improvement already achieved, even better indicators and stronger information gathering mechanisms will be developed, since in order to make the right decisions, the right people must have the right data in due course.

In the first part of this document, after this brief Framework, the statutorily defined mission and values of the University of Coimbra are recalled, followed by the explanation of the vision that will guide the UC activity in the upcoming years.

In the analysis of the background and surrounding environment a reference is made to the study of the stakeholders, the participatory process "The Future of the UC in our hands", the SWOT analysis, and the prospective analysis and exploration of scenarios.

Within the scope of the strategic formulation, the reference framework of the University of Coimbra for the 2019-2023 quadrennium is defined, which is structured according to mission pillars and axes. The pillars, which are directly related to the core goals of the University (Research & Innovation, Teaching and Societal Challenges), are intersected by the relevant mission pillar Internationalisation. The axes correspond to the

necessary resources to achieve the aforementioned goals, and are organised into five aspects: People, Quality, Facilities, Funding and Communication.

The concerns about sustainability and social responsibility will be present in every area of activity of the UC. A special emphasis will be given to the Environment and Climate Action, and to Citizenship, Equality and Inclusiveness, which are specific areas of unequivocal importance today. These aspects assume a fundamental nature which is intersected with all the mission pillars and axes.

For each pillar, axis and area, the respective vision is explained and the strategic guidelines to be followed until 2023 are presented, exploring a set of initiatives to be developed and determining the goals to be achieved, based on the main challenges and most important objectives to be reached by the UC in this timeframe.

In conclusion, the methodology to be followed by the UC to monitor and assess the implementation of the strategy is patented.

The Strategic Plan will be complemented by a set of actions to be institutionally developed under the responsibility of the Rector's Team and rendered into an Action Plan. However, the transition from strategy to action and the achievement of the proposed goals will depend on the contribution of the whole community and the alignment of the actions to be developed by the organisational units and other units in their respective Action Plans.

At last, we mention here an acknowledgment to the academic community. People are the most important asset of the University of Coimbra and we count on all of them in the journey towards a University under the motto "*Citius, Altius, Fortius*" ("faster, higher, stronger")!

The Future of the UC is in our hands!

/mission,
values
and vision



/mission

The University has a duty to contribute to:

Statutes of the University of Coimbra
[article 2]

The University of Coimbra is an institution for creation, critical analysis, transmission and dissemination of culture, science and technology which, by means of research, teaching and community services provision, contributes to the economic and social development, the environmental protection, the promotion of social justice and informed and responsible citizenship, and the consolidation of knowledge-based sovereignty.

The public understanding of humanities, arts, science and technology, by promoting and organising actions to support the dissemination of the humanistic, artistic, scientific and technological culture, and providing the necessary resources for these purposes;

The development of activities related to society, namely the dissemination and transfer of knowledge, as well as the economic valorisation of scientific knowledge;

The promotion of the actual mobility of professors and researchers, students and graduates, at both the national and international levels, namely in the European Higher Education Area and in the Community of Portuguese Language Countries.

/values

*The University is governed by the principles of **academic solidarity** and ensures the freedom to teach, learn, research, innovate and undertake initiatives.*

Statutes of the University of Coimbra [Article 3, paragraph 3]

*The University of Coimbra, as depositary of a multi-century-old historical legacy and a cultural matrix of the Lusophone space is, in the tradition of European humanism, an institution that has always been **open to the world**, to the **cooperation** between peoples and to the **interaction of cultures**, respecting the values of **independence**, **tolerance** and **dialogue**, proclaimed in the Magna Carta of European Universities.*

*The University of Coimbra asserts itself by means of the combination of **tradition**, **contemporaneity** and **innovation**.*

*The University **values** the work of its professors, researchers, students and non-teaching and non-research staff, and commits itself to providing everyone with an environment that combines **intellectual rigour** and university ethics with **freedom of opinion**, spirit of **tolerance** and **scientific humility**, **stimulation of creativity** and innovation, as well as the **acknowledgement and promotion of merit at all levels**.*

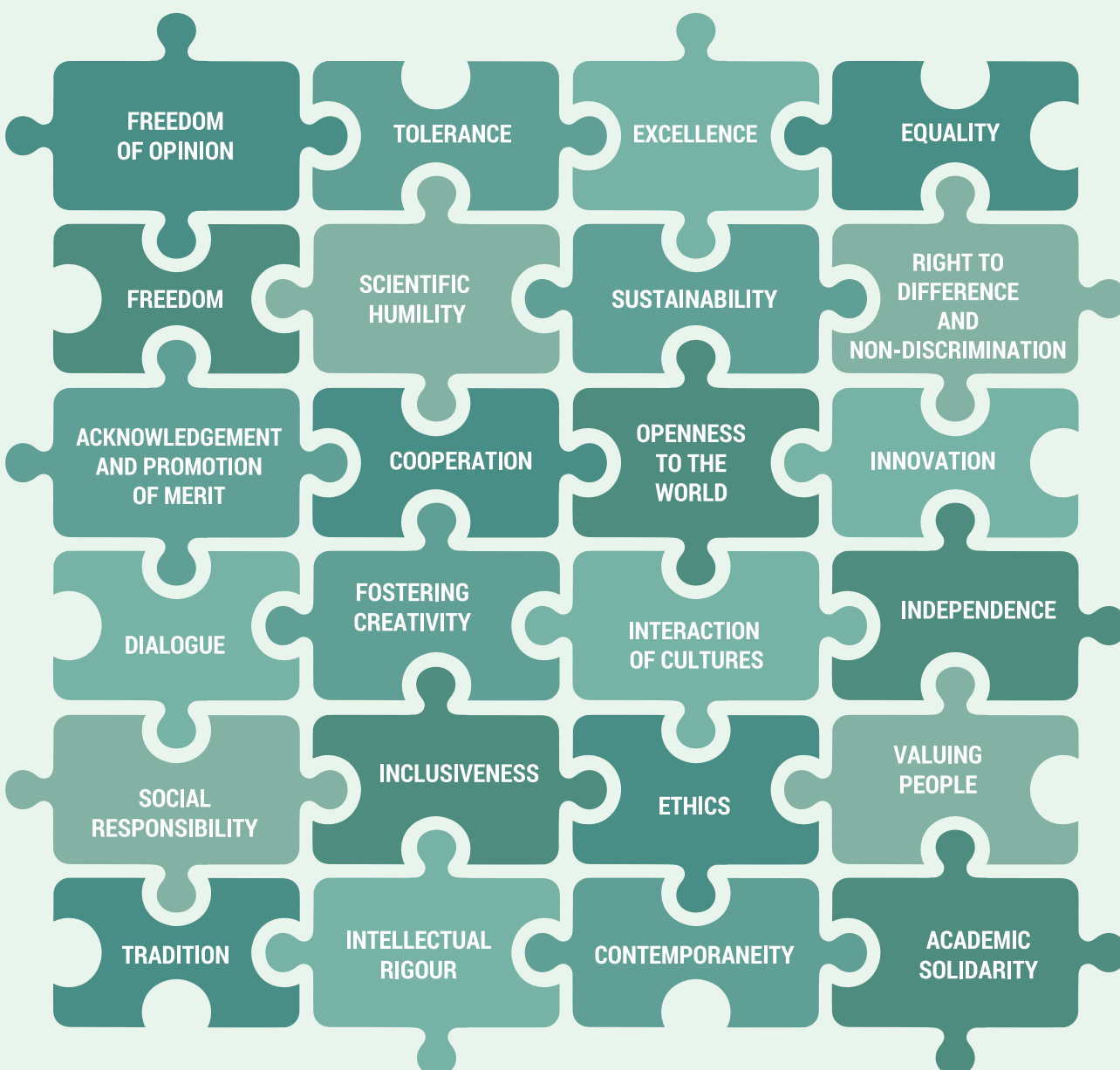
Statutes of the University of Coimbra [article 4, paragraphs 1 to 3]

*The purposes of the University of Coimbra are: (...) d) Contribution to the implementation of a policy of **sustainable economic and social development** (...)*

Statutes of the University of Coimbra [Article 5]

Besides the values explicitly defined in the statutes, the University of Coimbra must position itself as a **socially responsible** institution and reinforce, in its identity matrix, the principles leading to a civilised advanced society. The UC asserts itself as an **inclusive** institution that values diversity. By means of its policies and practices, the University is responsible for promoting and ensuring **equality** and **fighting discrimination**, namely, concerning gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, age, disability, racial and ethnic origin, nationality, religion or belief. Since the UC commits itself to ensuring an inclusive, stimulating and solidary environment, which respects the rights and dignity of all community members, the right to difference must be respected.

The University of Coimbra should always be ruled by **excellence** in all its fields of action.



/ vision

To be internationally recognised as a research university, in which the production of high quality knowledge influences the educational process and increases the sharing of knowledge with society, and respond to each and every one's problems, and contribute without reservations to a sustainable development.

With its statutorily defined mission, the University of Coimbra, as a reference institution, needs an innovative, modern and creative strategic vision that enables it to anticipate the future and reach higher and more consistent quality levels.

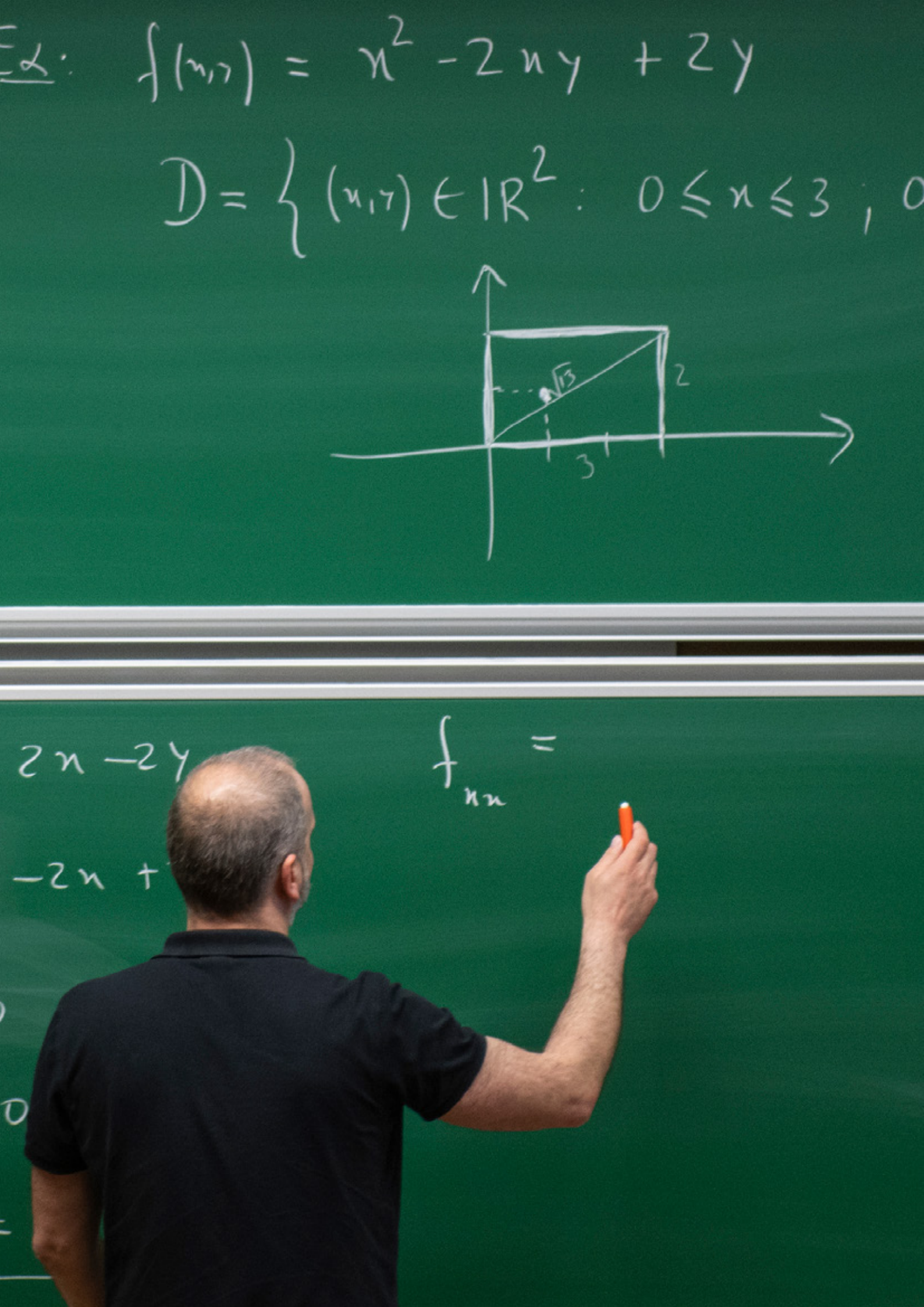
In order to become truly competitive on the national and international scene, the UC must assert itself globally as a research university. With a strong focus on high quality research and knowledge production, education and knowledge transfer to society will be strengthened and gain another dimension – one does not teach what one does not know and one does not transfer what one does not have. The University of Coimbra will thus be better placed to train competent people and to be proactive in its connection to society.

In a constantly changing world, teaching faces huge challenges. In addition, strengthening and stimulating the link between teaching and research, as well as introducing teaching and learning processes that are more appropriate to the profile of current students and the new features of social and labour contexts, will benefit students, the institution and potentially society.

The strengthening of research activities is therefore crucial for the University to be able to assume an absolutely decisive role as a prime mover of society, helping to transform citizens' lives and boosting areas such as education, science and technology, culture, sport, economy, justice and health, among others. The opening of the University to society will be encouraged and valued.

While it is true that the University's connection to the city will be strengthened in this way – the local level is the first to benefit from an in-depth connection to society –, a research university is by nature a university in which internationalisation reaches very high levels. The UC can assert itself as a research university only if it focuses on an increasingly proactive internationalisation policy; and being a true research university will certainly contribute to the strengthening of a global University of Coimbra.

In order to pursue this goal, involving, valuing and caring for the academic community becomes essential, with the complete conviction that all people are important to achieve success and that only with collective awareness and commitment the desired future will be achieved!



/context analysis

In an era of intense and rapid globalisation, in which organisations live in a clearly international context, the concept of territory is no longer merely physical and the notion of proximity gains a different expression and impact. In this highly dynamic and permanently changing context, the needs of the **stakeholders** are increasingly demanding, making it fundamental to continuously (re)assess the capacity they have to influence the University of Coimbra, directly or indirectly, and the relevance that the UC activities have for each of them.

Involving and considering the expectations and needs of different stakeholders enables and maximises the quality of the Strategic Plan's results, and provides simultaneously the alignment of all the parties involved. As this involvement is a success factor, the **extensive process of listening** – expression of a continuous intercommunication with the academic community and external partners – was crucial.

Contextual analysis implies necessarily a thorough – self and hetero – diagnosis in order to know the strengths and weaknesses of the University, and the study of its surroundings, with the aim of being able to enjoy favourable circumstances and opportunities, and to anticipate risks and threats that may arise.

Furthermore, in face of the construction of a future path, the University of Coimbra will be better prepared if it uses prospective analysis and scenario building, which enables it to include the risk analysis component in its strategy. The use of these methodologies will help to illuminate the present towards the future, helping to choose the most appropriate options and alternatives at each moment.

/stakeholders and strategic reflection sessions

Recognising stakeholders – people, groups, entities and organisations that affect and/or may be affected by the UC, by its missions, activities and projects –, analysing their needs and expectations and assessing their positioning towards the University of Coimbra enables the organisation, monitoring and enhancement of the inherent correlations. The constant monitoring of the positioning of each stakeholder towards the UC gives support and objectivity to decision-making and strategic options.

Being aware of the strategic character of stakeholders' management and the importance of implementing its model for a consistent assessment of organisational performance, its mapping is reviewed annually within the scope of the University of Coimbra Management System. Fifty internal and external stakeholders were identified at the time of preparation of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

After their identification, the assessment of the positioning of each stakeholder was made, bearing in mind the capacity to regulate and/or influence the activities to be carried out by the University of Coimbra (power) and the level of concern about the results and relevance or utility that the UC activities have for each of them (interest). Based on the categorisation of each stakeholder according to their position in the power/interest binomial, the following groups were identified:

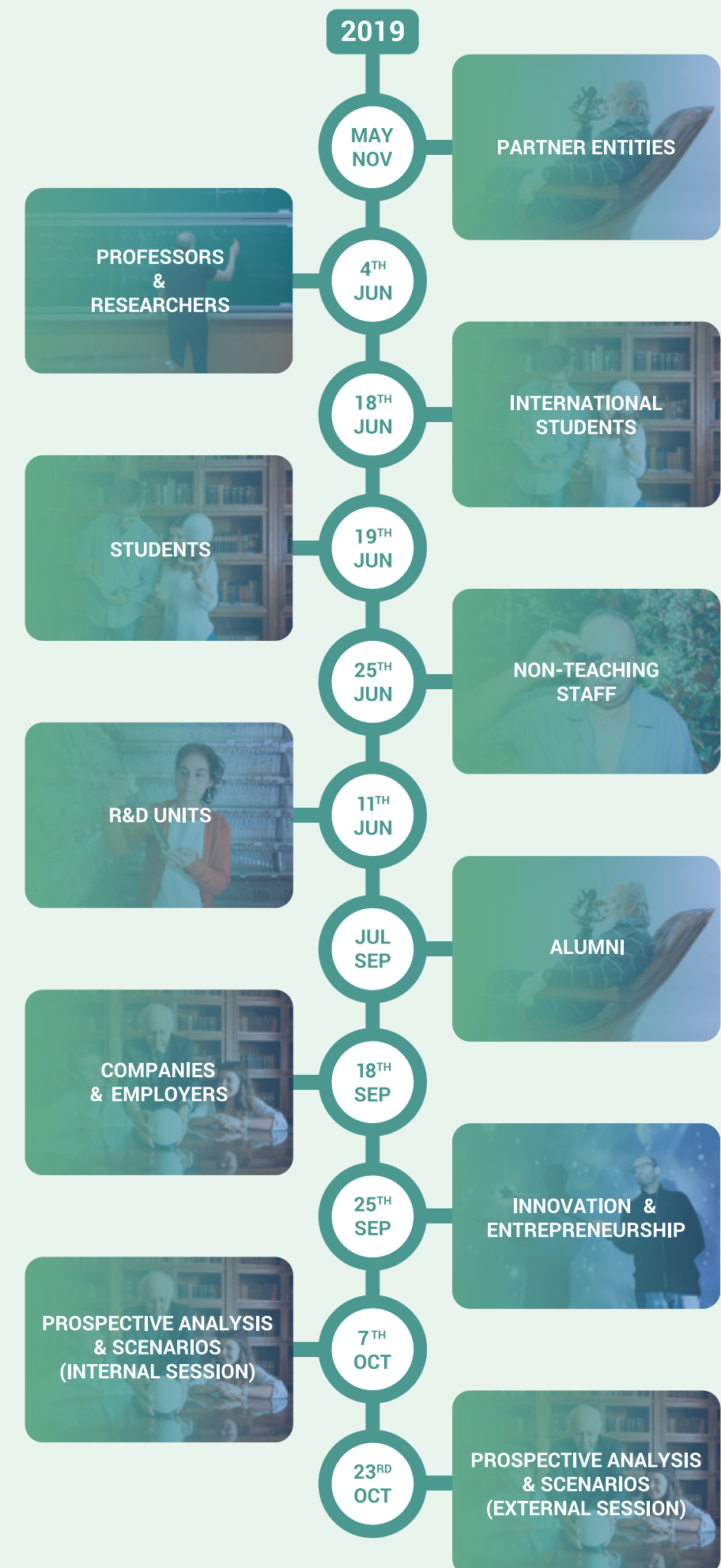
- High power and interest: stakeholders that should be actively managed, and demand a great commitment and effort by the UC towards their satisfaction;
- High power and low interest: the UC should make a sufficient effort to keep these stakeholders satisfied, but this effort should be measured so as not to be perceived as exaggerated;
- Low power and high interest: the UC should keep these stakeholders adequately informed;

- Low power and interest: monitoring these stakeholders is important without incurring excessive communication.

Given the importance of the involvement and alignment of people, a broad, cross-cutting and multicultural participatory approach has been implemented, targeting audiences identified within the scope of the UC Management System as stakeholders with high power and interest. In this context, spaces and meeting moments were created for diagnosis, reflection and debate, developing multidirectional exchanges of perspectives and ideas between people who are part of the academic community and others who, despite not integrating this community, interconnect with it. The door to reflection, restlessness, and will to overcome was opened, gathering the academic community, the city, the region and the country in a set of strategic reflection sessions which embodied the aforementioned "The Future of the UC in our hands", and contributed in general to a clearer vision of the future and the more adequate way to achieve it.

Besides the faculties and other units of the UC, the strategic planning programme involved national and international students, teaching and research staff, technical staff, R&D units, *alumni*, companies and employers, entities and companies from the innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, and, throughout the process, some of UC's (national and international) main partners.

The face-to-face sessions were based on a methodology centred on the brainstorming and discussion of ideas and tangible proposals concerning the pillars and mission axes of the UC, and focused on themes that are the concern of each universe, thus contributing to the enrichment of the University's strategy for the 2019-2023 quadrennium.





Notwithstanding this general objective of proposing tangible actions to be developed, there were moments of reflection in which specific themes were approached, according to the target audience. For instance, the participation of *alumni*, carried out by means of a survey, also enabled to take soundings about the perceptions of the skills to be privileged in the academic pathways of the students of the UC in the upcoming years, the strengthening of the connection and participation of the *alumni* in the University life, and the aspects to be prioritised in order to get a national and international visibility that may enhance the UC's attractiveness.

Companies and employers were also called to participate in a first phase (previous to the face-to-face reflection sessions) by means of a questionnaire, from which important information was obtained about the skills valued in staff selection, about the connection between the UC, society and the business community, and about the more or less positive aspects of the UC activity.

The questionnaires presented to these two stakeholders were designed and constructed keeping in mind the need to compare and cross-check statistical data between groups to obtain a more solid and consistent contribution to the Plan. The soundings taken from partner entities by means of bilateral meetings has enabled, on the one hand, to hear their managers' opinion about the current state of institutional relations and the image of the UC, and, on the other hand, about the priorities for the upcoming years, the challenges to be overcome and the opportunities to be seized.

In total the process involved around 1,780 participants,

spread over nine face-to-face sessions, two soundings by means of a questionnaire and other feedback received by means of other channels – meetings with external partners, discussion papers sent by members of the General Council or suggestions sent to the UC strategic planning team. Nearly 2,000 ideas were created as well as more than 650 tangible actions, 244 of which were considered to be the most important by the participants in the face-to-face sessions.

The strategic planning process for 2019-2023, organised by the Rector and the Rector's Team, and accompanied by the General Council, the Senate and the Student Ombudsman, also included the involvement of the Deans of the Faculties and other organisational units, and the Heads of other units. Therefore, a continuously monitored process has been developed which counted on the strong commitment of everyone, thus ensuring the involvement, participation and alignment in all its phases.

During the discussion period of the basic document of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, a set of contributions and suggestions was also collected, which reflect the involvement and interest of the academic community in actively participating in the definition of the UC strategy.

The website of the Strategic Plan – www.uc.pt/planeamento – which has been constantly updated, provides information concerning each session and will be a dynamic repository throughout the whole 2019-2023 Strategic Plan cycle.

A background image of a volleyball player in a blue jersey with the name 'TEN ASBROEK' and the number '2' on the back, reaching up to hit a yellow and blue volleyball. The image is overlaid with a light blue semi-transparent filter.

/swot analysis

The definition of a strategy for the University of Coimbra requires an in-depth knowledge of the aspects in which it is stronger, and the constraints of its activity that must be overcome, as well as an analysis of the external environment which enables to identify opportunities that should be seized and anticipate potential threats to which it may be subject and which may constrain its action.

The SWOT analysis, which is an important strategic management tool that enables to analyse the internal and external environment in an integrated way, was used to identify the University of Coimbra strengths and weaknesses, as well as the main opportunities and threats of its surroundings.

At the level of the internal environment, the organisational dynamics were taken into account for the analysis, namely with regard to the resources, processes, means and strategies. In terms of the Strengths, the most positive aspects of the UC are highlighted in comparison with competing organisations. As for Weaknesses, the constraints of its activity are presented, which should be at least mitigated or, ideally, overcome.

Through the analysis of the external environment, opportunities were identified, which should be enhanced in order to build defensive strategies against possible threats. In addition, some (potential) threats are presented, which, due to its direct or indirect connection to the activity of the UC, can constrain it in the near future. Therefore, it is important to invest in their transformation into opportunities by means of a proactive and problems anticipating conduct.

Being aware of the threats to which it is exposed, the University of Coimbra should continue its efforts to reduce their impact and take advantage of its strengths by seizing the opportunities identified and investing strongly in strategies which enable to minimise the impact of weaknesses on its activity.



/ prospective and scenarios' analysis

The prospective analysis enables a creative and structured reflection on ways of organising the future, thus contributing to the improvement of decision-making processes in the present and, simultaneously, constituting itself as a mobilising agent towards the desired future.

The prospective analysis is thus a complement to the strategy, and must not be confused with it; it constitutes itself as the search for the goal of the action, while the strategy refers to the way of conducting the action.

The scenarios, as tools of the prospective analysis, are, in essence, narratives of possible, plausible, contrasted and relevant, reflected futures which reflect risks and opportunities inherent in specific strategic aspects. These ways of “organising futures” develop and maximise the processes of organisational learning and strategic design, and become extremely important as a support for decision-making, mainly in contexts of uncertainty.

The methodology adopted is based on the search for a better and larger anticipation and preparation capacity of the UC for future challenges, and it enables to develop the sensitivity and strategic vision of the decision makers, and therefore boost and enhance the institutional adaptation capacity, which is intended to be fast and efficient. The Prospective analysis and scenarios exploration enable to frame the strategic environment and to perceive the context in which the University of Coimbra will compete and cooperate, thus contributing to ensuring more objectivity, coherence, robustness and sustainability to the strategic definition and its decision-making.

Built on a scanning process of the strategic environment, the “Future of the UC in our hands”

sessions that approached the prospective analysis and scenarios exploration have enabled to incorporate into the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan the analysis and mapping of the structural elements – forces of change, trends, uncertainties, opportunities and risks – comprising various aspects of the global external environment. Hence, the external forces, which the University does not control, and which will shape future dynamics in predictable and unpredictable ways, were identified, and it seems plausible that they may have a significant impact on the UC. The analysis was developed with 2030 as a reference timeframe, based on *the best of our knowledge today*: today is when the strategic decisions are made, which will define the University of Coimbra of tomorrow.

Then, the strategic impact of the uncertainties identified was analysed, as well as their evolutionary hypotheses (plausible, compared and challenging) and the direction in which society is heading (and at what speed). Having Future-oriented information reorganised, and built on the combination of shapes that the different uncertainties may assume, the starting scenario has been generated and designed. Afterwards, alternative scenarios, equally plausible and challenging, were generated from optimistic and pessimistic variations (*the extreme world method*). Finally, the implications were analysed and the most relevant strategic options were selected, which the UC should follow in each scenario, ranking them according to their impact (achievement of the best overall results across its missions) and the ease of their implementation (alignment with priorities, necessary resources, support or resistance from stakeholders).

In the second session about this theme, it was possible to include the perspective and contributions of representatives of companies with an eminently global stance on their area of business, and as such, actors that are closely related to the international context and knowledgeable about its demand and constant transformative dimension.



strategic
formulation

The strategic reference framework for the 2019-2023 quadrennium focuses on the Research & Innovation, Teaching and Societal Challenges mission pillars, in a clear correspondence to what is mentioned in the Statutes – higher education, knowledge production and transmission and dissemination of this knowledge to society, respectively. These three pillars thus assume a nuclear role, and, on the whole, they are the driving force of the University of Coimbra.

To achieve the vision of “being internationally recognised as a research university, in which the production of high quality knowledge influences the educational process and increases the sharing of knowledge with society (...)”,

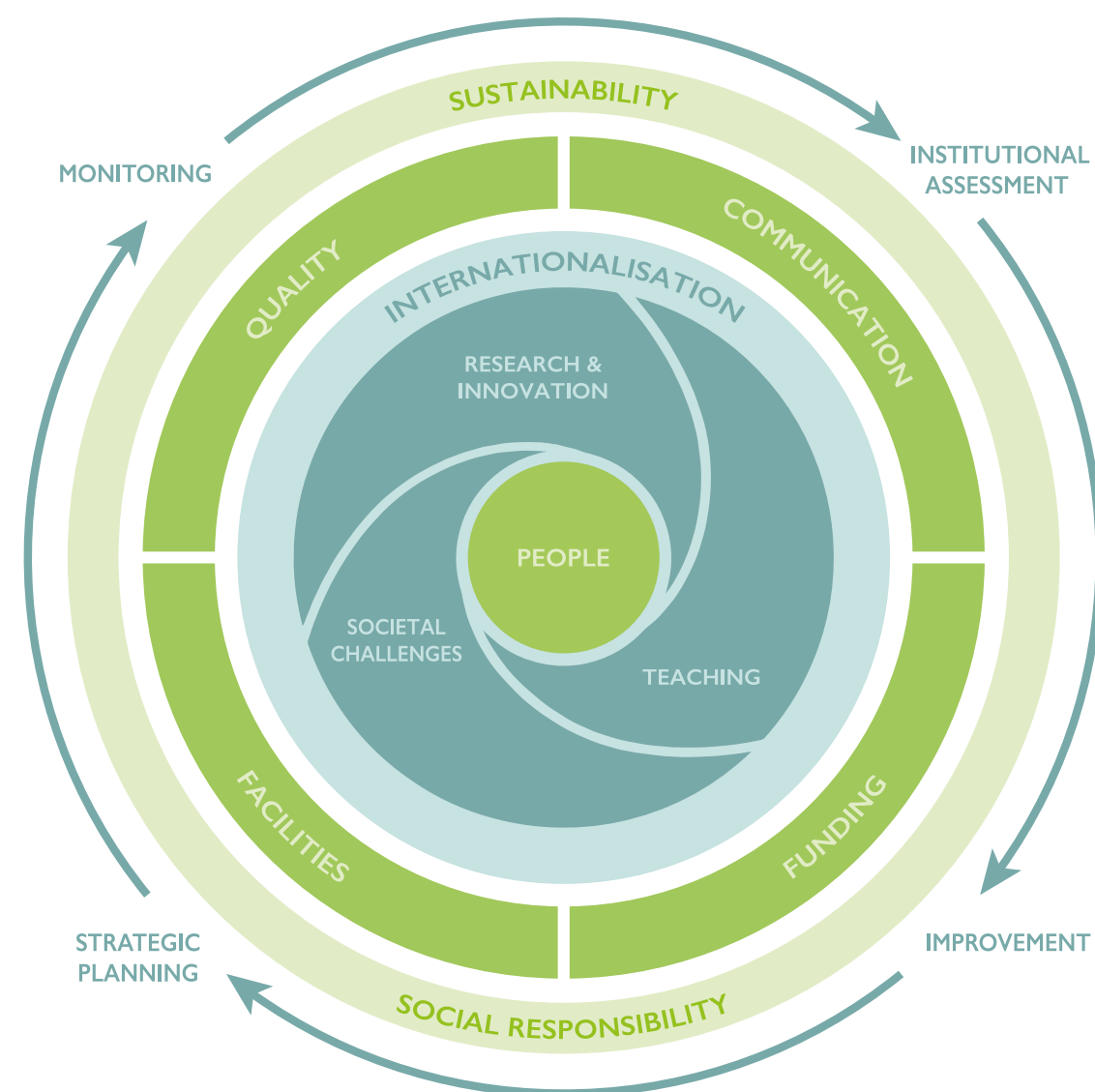
the strategic approach implies to consider a dynamic model of the three mission nuclear pillars, to the detriment of the traditional static model with three parallel columns. In addition, not only based on the defined vision, but also assuming its mission, the focus is on Research & Innovation – at the top of the three pillars – and it is strategic so that the University assumes an absolutely decisive role as a prime mover of society, thus transforming the lives of citizens and

boosting the other areas of activity.

In this dynamic model, there is also a balance between the core pillars: by causing Research & Innovation to move, the other two core pillars – Teaching and Societal Challenges – will move in the same direction and at the same speed. Similarly, any development in the Teaching pillar or the Societal Challenges pillar will cause the other two pillars to advance.

Additionally, the ambition to become a research university will also contribute to the strengthening of a global University of Coimbra, which is why internationalisation is also a priority. With the aim of projecting the UC so that it gains a wider global recognition, Internationalisation is also a mission pillar, which, even if it is not nuclear *per se*, frames and contributes to the Research & Innovation, Teaching and Societal Challenges pillars, and whose presence is cross-cutting in the whole workings of the University.

Since the mission pillars have been identified, it is necessary to define the operational resources that must be at the University’s entire disposal in order to accomplish the defined strategy – the mission axes.



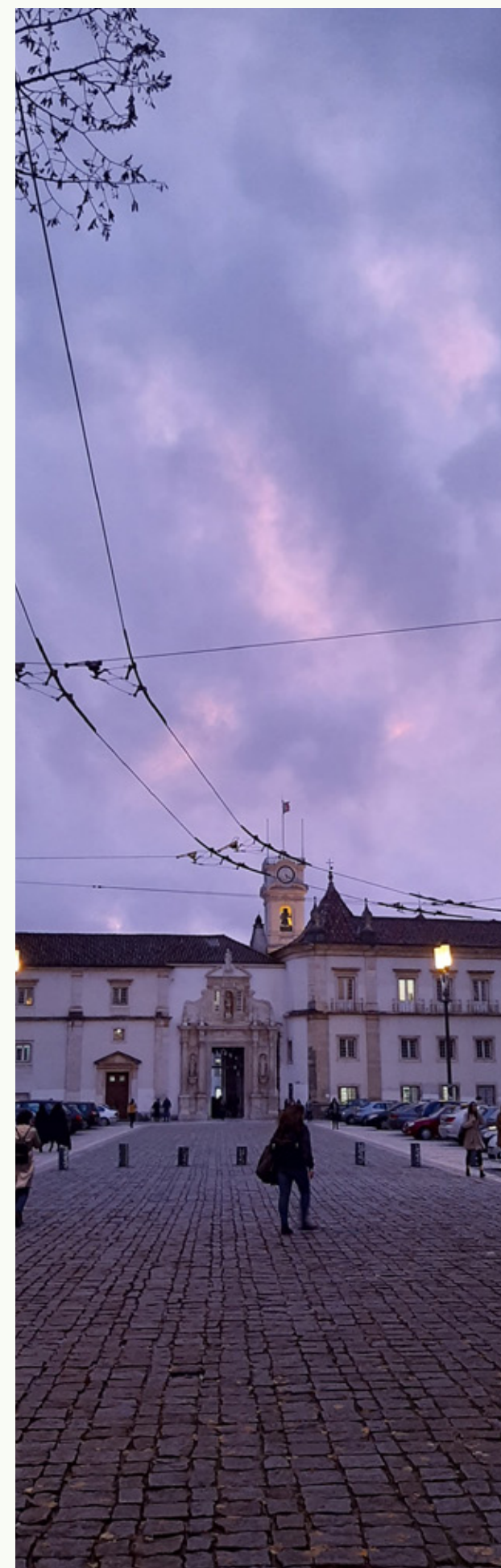
However well-defined a strategy may be, it will always be doomed to failure if its operationalisation is not duly implemented; and however well-designed it may be, this strategy will only succeed if it is implemented with people and for people.

People are thus the most important component of an organisation and the most important component of the adopted strategy, which is why they will assume a prominent place in the model intended to be implemented, serving as a central axis of the movement of the mission pillars and, consequently, of the workings of the University.

The remaining mission axes – Quality, Facilities, Funding and Communication – complete the reference framework in the support for the strategic formulation.

The strategic referential for 2019-2023 thus presents four mission pillars which are related directly to the goals of the University of Coimbra, and five mission axes that are translated into the means necessary to achieve those goals. Furthermore, the UC assertion in levels of excellence presupposes the adoption of a perspective of sustainable management of its activities and resources, and of social responsibility in its performance. Thus, Sustainability and Social Responsibility represent attitudes, behaviours and actions that frame all the UC activity, are cross-cutting and should always be present in all its areas of activity. However, there are two dimensions which, despite being included in this concept, stand out for their relevance and emergence in the current context: the Environment and Climate Action and the Citizenship, Equality and Inclusiveness. Although they are not *per se* pillars or mission axes of the UC and are not included directly in any of them, they have a prominent place in the sphere surrounding the strategic reference framework.

Finally, the cycle of planning, monitoring, permanent assessment of the strategy and feedback loop closes the reference framework, is included in all pillars, axes and areas, and ensures the respect for the principles of quality assurance and improvement in order to achieve excellence in the overall performance of the UC. This scope includes the permanent monitoring that the University of Coimbra has to undertake of the forces of change, trends and uncertainties of the global context in which it is included and permanently interacts with. Only in this way will the UC be able to assess, at each moment, the potential and the risks that surround it, influence and determine its strategic decisions.





/ strategic guidelines pillars

research & innovation
teaching
societal challenges
internationalisation

/research & innovation

VISION

Investing judiciously and unequivocally in the conditions necessary to increase the quality and quantity of international level knowledge production with high impact on society.

A true research university leads the way in the production of knowledge with greater impact on society and is internationally recognised for that, by attracting the best students, attracting the best professors and the best researchers, integrating reference research networks, establishing innovative and excellence partnerships with the business community and obtaining more funding. This is the level at which the University of Coimbra intends to position itself in the upcoming years. Therefore it will invest heavily, but judiciously, in the creation of conditions that will enable to reach a production of knowledge with high impact on society, thus helping to respond to societal challenges.

The Societal challenges, which are thematic by nature, require consistent responses that only an approach through interdisciplinary strategic areas will enable. The increase in partnerships, the participation in reference networks, and the strengthening and diversification of scientific projects are important action drivers, but they require technical support to be strengthened. Stimulation, enhancement and visibility of scientific production and scientific and technological capacity are key factors in a research University. The production of knowledge with high impact on society implies necessarily the activation of the UC innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, in a work to be developed along with privileged and strategic partners.

GOALS

increase by 50-100 per cent the number of articles in top 5 per cent scientific journals [Web of Science]

increase by 20-40 per cent the number of articles in top 25 per cent scientific journals [Web of Science]

increase by 100-200 per cent the number of books published or book chapters published in the 1st quartile Book Series [Web of Science]

increase by 100-200 per cent the number of scientific works referenced in Altmetrics

reach 45-55 million euros per year of funding by contract research programmes [triennial rolling average]

increase by 100-150 per cent the turnover in contracts of specialised services provision

increase by 25-30 per cent the number of submitted provisional patent applications

increase by 50-100 per cent the turnover of spin-offs and start-ups

attract 7-10 large companies to establish competence and/or operation centres in Coimbra, in close collaboration with the UC [turnover > 25 million euros]

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

promoting interdisciplinarity by means of the creation of strategic areas, with multidisciplinary approaches able to respond to societal challenges

The production of more creative and consistent knowledge to respond to societal challenges increasingly requires the alignment, coordination, and aggregation of multiple disciplinary areas. By means of the creation of Strategic Areas, which are interdisciplinary by nature and thematic by calling, the communication and dialogue between R&D units and the congregation of professors and researchers from different areas will be promoted, and consequently the synergies and cross-reference of the different areas of knowledge will be enhanced. The aim is thus to ensure the alignment of the potential of the UC with the needs of the region, the country, Europe and the world, with the Interdisciplinary Research Institute as a cross-platform. Strategic Areas, which are essentially virtual entities (and correspond to a higher level of organisation that enables the aggregation of R&D units), adaptable and flexible by nature will have structured institutional support, allocate qualified personnel and count on the monitoring by international panels of consultants, which has a direct impact on the establishment of partnerships, the promotion of internationalisation and the development of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary projects.

The Strategic Areas should also contemplate the existence of Doctoral Schools, thus making the link between research and teaching and enabling an increase in the efficiency in relevant cross-cutting training of third cycle students, who are the future researchers.

Strategic Areas are considered to be those scientific areas in which the University of Coimbra has a considerable critical mass and an installed capacity enabling it to present a strong and differentiated offer in comparison to other similar institutions and, simultaneously, they may be emerging areas with visible international expansion and aligned with societal challenges. These are inclusive areas, representative of the reality of the UC and potentially capable of attracting competitive funding. Once the relevant scientific and social problems have been identified as well as the specific areas and sub-areas with growth capacity at the level of research and teaching, based on an internal mapping work of the R&D units, research projects, strategic projects and bibliometric metrics, it was possible to identify five Strategic Areas, aligned with Horizon Europe and the United Nation Agenda 2030:

- Health;
- Climate, Energy and Mobility;
- Natural Resources, Agrifood and Environment;
- Digital, Industry and Space;
- Heritage, Culture and Inclusive Society.

stimulating scientific activity, by enhancing the presence of the University of Coimbra in scientific networks, diversifying external funding and strengthening support in the search for opportunities and partnerships, in the submission of applications and in the execution of projects.

In order for researchers to be able to channel their energies towards scientific activity, effective support for the preparation and submission of applications and for the implementation of approved projects needs to be strengthened. It is also important to strengthen the search, identification, screening and dissemination of

competitive and diversified funding opportunities, thus contributing to raising funds from other sources besides those provided by FCT (Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology). This diversification necessarily implies the development of more public and private partnerships, a greater participation in national and international networks, and also the strengthening of the applications of institutional projects.

The investment in the strengthening of support technical structures will contribute to enhancing the success of applications and, consequently, to increase the number of projects approved, the volume of funding and the support for the selective choice of partners. This specialised and permanent monitoring based on proximity and combined with an internal simplification of procedures, will enable researchers to devote themselves more intensely and more focused to their activity.

The aforementioned investment also implies the creation of a structure for monitoring and assessment of the research carried out at the UC, and the development of actions such as the implementation of an information system for research.

boosting scientific production and promoting its dissemination, by enhancing intellectual property and creating incentive systems for professors and researchers with high impact scientific activity

The enhancement of the results of scientific research is an essential premise for the development of applied research and for stimulating scientific activity in qualitative and quantitative terms. Those who produce and publish high-impact scientific knowledge, who develop more strategic partnerships, and those who have more capacity to attract funding should see their commitment encouraged and their merit recognised. Therefore, incentive measures will be created, which enable greater availability of professors for research and positively

discriminate between professors and researchers according to their scientific productivity. As for R&D units, it should be possible for them to analyse, in absolute and relative terms, the evolution of the quality and quantity of the publications affiliated to them in indexed journals. For this analysis, mechanisms should be developed for the continuous and, if possible, automated collection of relevant information on scientific production in real time from different databases representing different scientific areas.

In order to enhance the scientific research, supporting and promoting initiatives for its dissemination is also essential, both inside and outside the UC, thus contributing towards the promotion and sharing of knowledge with society at large, its national and international recognition and towards the presence and active participation in scientific reference networks. The achievement of this goal also implies the reinforcement of the interaction between organisations of scientific and technological dissemination and connection to the UC Group's community, namely the Science Museum, the Botanical Garden, the Centre for Living Science "Rómulo de Carvalho", the Geophysical and Astronomical Observatory and the *Infante D. Henrique* Exploratory – Live Science Centre.

mapping, updating and ensuring visibility to the scientific and technological installed capacity in the University of Coimbra Group

One of the preceding steps to promote interdisciplinarity implies to know well the scientific and technological competence developed by each R&D unit, each research group and each researcher. Likewise, a correct external dissemination presupposes a good knowledge of what is done internally. Thus, the mapping will be carried out and a portfolio of the installed competence will be created regarding the scientific and technological capacity, not only of the UC, but also of the UC Group.

This information will be available online to all internal and external stakeholders therefore ensuring visibility to the research lines and

competence specific of each R&D group or unit and the services that can be provided using the UC Scientific and Technological Platforms, thus contributing to enhancing internal and external synergies.

At the equipment level, the existing technology platforms are intended to be made known, which bring together a set of state-of-the-art scientific equipment aimed to the research and the service provision, and also available to support the extended R&D network and industry, in a variety of areas ranging from basic to applied research. In this way, knowledge and access to equipment will be quickly and efficiently facilitated as well as the enhancement of synergies between research groups or between research groups and external partners.

This inventory will also contribute to identifying the needs of upgrading the scientific equipment with regard both to the modernisation of existing equipment and to new purchases to be made by means of funding for scientific equipment retrofit.

consolidating the innovation ecosystem of the University of Coimbra, by supporting entrepreneurship, business incubation and acceleration, based on the research undertaken

Knowledge production with a high impact on society necessarily implies a consolidation of the University of Coimbra's innovation ecosystem, with a focus on encouraging entrepreneurship and the creation of companies based on the research undertaken by professors and researchers, which will enable to reinforce contributions to local, regional, national and even international development.

The creation of an organisation focused on the relationship with the business community (in its multiple aspects) will enable a profound transformation in the way the UC will relate to society. The INOV C programme should play an even more decisive role as the bottom of the innovation pyramid in the central region of Portugal and participation in international entrepreneurship

support networks will be deepened. Since it is important to strongly support and value entrepreneurship among students and young entrepreneurs, by stimulating their ideas, funding their projects and enhancing the creation of their business, the focus on collaborative activities will be maintained (with ignition scholarships, proofs of concept, among others), as well as on innovation contests (Arrisca C and Ineo Start), on projects such as "Académica Start UC", on social innovation (Social4aLife) and on valuing innovation and entrepreneurship extracurricular activities.

Within the scope of the creation of spin-offs and the business incubation and acceleration, there will be the consolidation of mechanisms, the increase in the effectiveness of the relations with other UC Group entities and the work in close coordination with the privileged and strategic partners. This is the case not only of the incubators of the UC innovation ecosystem – IPN, Biocant (in Cantanhede), SerQ (in Sertão) and the Incubator of Sea & Industry (in Figueira da Foz) – but also of the business community and other entities such as municipalities.

In order for professors and researchers to be able to devote themselves more to this aspect, it is necessary to clearly establish their rights and duties, create conditions for their enhancement and recognise the role of entrepreneurship in their assessment.

The UC is committed to developing its relationship with the business community also in terms of innovation. Therefore, the consolidation of the UC as a prime mover in this area will also imply a close coordination with large companies, assuming thus an active role in attracting to Coimbra competency and/or operation centres – the first partnership was formalised in September 2019 between the University of Coimbra and Altice Labs. In this way, the research and innovation generated in the academia will be transferred to these partnerships and the involved partners will work together to develop advanced solutions.

VISION

Rationalising the pedagogical offer in light of “Bologna” in a logic of efficiency and close coordination with research, by promoting student-centred teaching for the acquisition of skills, developing innovative pedagogical projects capable of increasing the quality of the teaching-learning process and promoting the attraction of new audiences.

/teaching

Focused on the wholeness of the Bologna Process and on an education system based on the development of students' skills, in which all aspects that enhance the acquisition of cross-cutting skills are valued, the University of Coimbra is aware of the importance of introducing new pedagogical methodologies. There is an approach centred on new teaching-learning processes and tools anchored in pedagogical innovation strategies, which focus on teacher training, the use of information and distance learning technologies and on the approach to contexts and real problems. The focus of the teaching-learning processes should be the student, thus enabling a process of flexible learning and cross-cutting of knowledge.

A success factor for internationally competitive quality training is the capacity of the UC to adapt to the rapid and constant changes in the labour market and the awareness that the graduates' skills acquisition no longer necessarily, or exclusively, results from a traditional academic pathway. The ongoing interaction with the business community and other employers is essential to identify opportunities and meeting needs.

The adaptation also implies finding excellence responses to the educational needs of new audiences and lifelong learning, and strengthening and stimulating the link between teaching and research, with third cycle students taking a relevant role as a basis of the research pyramid. Besides the promotion of the quality of the PhD academic training, it is essential to act on the attraction and recruitment of the best students, which implies an increase in the attractiveness of the UC, an issue that is cross-cutting in all cycles of studies.

GOALS

increase by 30-50 per cent the attraction rate of the 25 per cent best candidates who choose the UC as their 1st option in the National Contest for Access and Admission to Higher Education

reach 1,2-1,3 in the demand satisfaction index as 1st option in the National Contest for Access and Admission to Higher Education

increase by 20-25 per cent the number of PhD students

reduce by 50-75 per cent the effective withdrawal rate

increase by 20-40 per cent the interdisciplinary and cross-cutting training offer [degree and non-degree courses]

increase by 50-100 per cent the number of distance-learning courses [degree and non-degree courses]

increase by 25-50 per cent the number of students readmitted to the UC for lifelong learning and knowledge updating

reach 2,500-3,500 students per year in internships and training experiences in business and professional contexts

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

innovating and adapting pedagogical models to 4.0 teaching, by offering excellence in the assimilation of knowledge and skills and in the results achieved

Effectively centring the teaching-learning process on the student requires the development of innovative pedagogical (interdisciplinary) projects that combine the focus on disciplinary knowledge with the acquisition of skills essential to the new challenges of society, including, among others, behavioural and communication skills.

With the “Initiative for Innovation and Learning Improvement”, the sharing of innovative pedagogical practices will be promoted and the pedagogical training of professors (initial and continuous training) will be boosted, by organising training courses that also include the specific needs of the third cycle of studies. Curricula need to be rethought, new educational models and innovative methodologies need to be actively incorporated and a collaborative teaching needs to be promoted, by introducing flipped classrooms and stimulating reflection, critical thinking, discussion and problem solving, including responses to societal challenges. Taking advantage of new technologies will be crucial, which will also imply to study the introduction of distance learning tools in mainstream education.

The University of Coimbra has to be recognised for its innovation and pedagogical success, by ensuring that its students get an excellence preparation for their

personal and professional life, thus becoming critical and proactive citizens in society, prepared for the challenges of the future. Through the creation of the “Pedagogical Activities Observatory”, the expectations and results of the students’ educational pathway will be accompanied – by monitoring relevant issues such as pedagogical quality, academic success/failure, withdrawal or employability, therefore enabling a better action in these areas –, the pedagogical management organisations will be granted rights and information systems will be adapted to existing and emerging needs.

attracting the best students and enhancing the cross-cutting acquisition of competences, by offering students an excellence preparation and taking research activities into consideration

Given the constant and rapid changes in the labour market and the inherent change in the skills pyramid, it is crucial that the University of Coimbra responds to present and future challenges. This adaptation implies the awareness that the acquisition of skills goes beyond a common academic pathway, therefore enhancing and awarding credits to the diversification of skills.

The implementation of the stimuli to the cross-cutting acquisition of skills will imply the development of interdisciplinary abilities – namely behavioural, as well as linguistic or technological innovation abilities –, the flexibilisation of study programmes, the enhancement

of the choice of interdisciplinary courses and the creation of systems for awarding of credits to other experiences and interdisciplinary and integrative projects.

The UC will provide its students with opportunities to engage them in research activities and in the process of knowledge building, by creating a research ecosystem which includes students since the first cycle of studies, therefore contributing to their training, namely to the development of analytical and operational skills, besides the encouragement of critical thinking, thus enabling students to contribute to solving real problems and responding to societal challenges.

Apart from building talents, by giving students the opportunity to exceed their own expectations, the UC will attract the best students by focusing on a more efficient institutional recruitment policy for the first cycle, therefore strengthening and diversifying the interaction with the pre-university audience and the school community, reappraising the current “Summer University” model.

expanding training opportunities, by meeting the needs of new audiences, offering different and attractive programmes for lifelong learning and implementing micro-awarding of credits options

The University of Coimbra will expand the opportunities of training experiences that tend to be more flexible, personalised and accessible, by always aiming to ensure that its audience meets their needs and with a high level of quality. As a result of the reflection undertaken on what higher education will be in 2030, the need for this adaptation and preparation for the future was clearly identified as well as the conviction of the importance of having a more diversified, differentiated and more attractive training offer, including, for instance, the micro-awarding of credits.

The University is aware of the importance of the reconversion and requalification of human capital, the knowledge updating and retraining and the articulated management of different knowledge. Consequently, training programmes aimed at lifelong learning will be diversified by developing the concept of a senior university and increasing the non-degree courses offer in different areas of knowledge, based on the scientific matrix of excellence that characterises the UC.

The dissemination of the training offer focused on the needs of different audiences will be strengthened and a more efficient recruitment policy will be implemented. The attraction of new audiences also implies to enhance the training opportunities that include distance-learning offers, whose model will be reappraised. In addition, the creation of conditions to introduce new technologies, tools and methodologies will be endeavoured, as well as, simultaneously, the focus on the distance-learning with a face-to-face attendance component.

strengthening the proximity and permanent interaction with the business community and other entities, by adjusting and co-creating training offers, ensuring workplace learning and promoting employability

The University of Coimbra will strengthen the permanent interaction with the business community, which enables it to identify opportunities and respond to market needs, by adapting training contents and thus promoting employability. The curricula will be increasingly attractive, more comprehensive and aimed at the labour market.

Stimulating the development of teaching activities in coordination with the business community is crucial – curricular units contents, open classes, seminars, academic works, research projects, master’s dissertations and PhD theses, internships –, by encouraging the combination of theoretical and practical contexts and awarding credits to extracurricular training and activities. The interaction with the business community will enable relevant contributions to responding to real problems and societal challenges.

The UC will contribute to bringing students closer to companies since the beginning of their cycle of studies and throughout their academic pathway, by working together with strategic partners, such as the Academic Association of Coimbra (AAC- Students’ Union) and the student centres and/or junior companies.

In order to promote employability, the support given to students and recent graduates concerning their connection with and integration in the labour market will be improved, by strengthening the area of career opportunities and creating a platform for an integrated management of the actions developed by the UC, by solidly involving *alumni* and, simultaneously, developing an institutional policy of demand for internships and employability fairs.

promoting the quality of PhD training and increasingly recruit better PhD students, thus recognising the importance of the third cycle in knowledge production

Third cycle students play a very relevant role in knowledge production and are a mix of students and researchers since they are the bottom of the research pyramid. Recruiting more and better PhD students is a priority, and in order to achieve it, attractiveness factors must be increased: an internationally recognised research, partnerships and presence in international networks and good welcome conditions – well-structured PhD programmes, complementary training in transferable skills, good working conditions and research scholarships. By means of the creation of Doctoral Schools, included in the Strategic Areas, the efficiency in the training of third cycle students will be increased, and synergies and more efficient levels of organisation will be created.

The quality of the third cycle training will be enhanced, being, therefore, necessary to increase its completion rate within the expected time and, simultaneously, to reduce the withdrawal rate. To this end, sharing and complementary training for PhD theses supervisors will be essential as well as encouraging the active involvement of the third cycle community in the workings and improvement of PhD programmes. This involvement will include the PhD@UC initiative, the organisation of annual meetings of PhD programmes and the promotion and monitoring of the employability of PhD degree holders, by creating connections with external entities.

VISION

Creating conditions to act, react and interact with society in its different aspects by means of knowledge sharing and open science, thus contributing to the sustainable development in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda

/societal challenges

An open and global university must include societal challenges as its mission pillar, by prioritising knowledge sharing and assuming an unequivocal will to respond to problems that are concerns for society, as advocated by the 2030 United Nations Agenda. Both the great diversity and complexity of societal challenges, which cross-cut different areas of knowledge, and the imperative of a research university to be involved in the search for solutions are a unique opportunity for the University of Coimbra, and open new perspectives in its relationship with society. Hence, the UC must act by anticipating challenges, react by detecting challenges, and interact by helping to overcome challenges. Additionally, it will play a part, in a very relevant way, in multiple areas of its activity, in a dynamic interaction and permanent dialogue with the various actors of the city and the region, thus increasing its institutional presence in the territory. The UC will get back in contact with national decision centres and will have an active voice in order to influence decisions. It will create national and international collaborative networks, by involving the business community, sectorial associations, municipalities, other entities and institutions, not forgetting the important role of its *alumni*.

It will also promote good practice and knowledge sharing with the scientific community and with society at large by means of the consolidation of the institutional policy of open science.

Therefore, the UC will contribute to promoting the convergence of action and enhance the capacity to respond to societal challenges.

GOALS

- achieve 100 per cent in the implementation of the Digital Ecosystem Interoperability Plan (UC Digitalis)
- increase by 100-150 per cent the number of students integrated in UC cultural activities
- increase by 25-50 per cent the number of high performance student athletes
 - increase by 30-50 per cent the number of UC student athletes
- increase by 25-50 per cent the number of members of the academic community participating in the UC Games
 - reach 30,000-35,000 members in the UC Alumni Network
- increase by 20-30 per cent the visitable area of the UC Touristic Circuit [m²]

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

promoting interface and knowledge sharing with the business community, other entities and society at large, thus actively contributing to responding to societal challenges

The relationship with the business community is one of the biggest challenges that the University of Coimbra has to overcome with sagacity and firmness. The development of an agile, professionalised and proactive organisation that acts as liaison agent with companies and sectorial associations (business, commercial and industrial) will be crucial. In addition, such organisation promotes dialogue, facilitates contact and intensifies the interaction between those companies/sectorial associations and the academic community, works to detect and manage collaboration opportunities and provides an integrated offer of services (acting in the intervention, relationship and communication dimensions).

Networking with the UC Group entities will undoubtedly enable to obtain added value in the response to societal challenges, since, by nature, these require the alignment, coordination and aggregation of multiple disciplinary areas – measures that are envisaged in other pillars and axes, such as the involvement of students in problem solving, the mapping of the scientific and technological capacity installed in the UC Group or the development of communication strategies that give visibility to the UC's performance – and as such they will contribute to encouraging the relationship of the University with society. Support to and recognition of researchers, who significantly contribute to the development of knowledge sharing with the business community, will be boosted.

The creation of a “Public Policy Observatory” will promote the active participation of the UC in the formulation, monitoring and assessment of public policies, thus increasing its influence on the national scene concerning subjects that directly and indirectly affect society, people and the UC missions.

developing and intensifying synergies with the various actors of the city and region, by enhancing the presence of the University of Coimbra in the region by means of partnerships and collaborative networks that contribute to sustainable development.

Action, reaction and interaction with society imply a strategic commitment of institutional interaction with the main entities of the city and the region, for the success of common projects in the search for joint solutions.

The dialogue and the strategic partnership with the Municipality of Coimbra will be increased, endeavouring to provide a joint public intervention to the city in a wide range of domains. One example is the organisation of joint events, just as it happened with the organisation of the European Universities Games. Other focus areas are the co-operation in the cultural area – for instance, Coimbra's application for the title of European Capital of Culture in 2027 or regular cultural initiatives such as the *Ano Zero* Biennial –, the tourism promotion of the city and heritage management, which includes urban rehabilitation. Nonetheless, other areas cannot be forgotten, such as the development of community projects with impact on the quality of life and sustainability of the city, and the innovation and entrepreneurship. Similarly, the UC will endeavour to attract reference companies to the city and the region by increasing the qualified labour supply.

Working in close collaboration with the University Hospital Centre of Coimbra will be essential to the boosting of the Academic Clinical Centre of Coimbra, in order to enhance the focus on the strategic option “Coimbra Capital da Saúde” (Coimbra Capital of Health), and promote initiatives that enable to assert Coimbra as a significant partner in the M8 Alliance (Coimbra Health) and EIT Health.

Further initiatives and joint projects will be developed with the Regional Coordination and

Development Commission of the Centre of Portugal and with the Intermunicipal Community of Coimbra Region, thus improving the collaboration and coordination with these entities, namely in the search for solutions and definition of a strategy for the region, thereby contributing to territorial cohesion.

Recognising and enhancing the strategic axis Viseu-Coimbra-Leiria as the heart of the central region of Portugal is vital. Therefore, the partnerships with other higher education institutions in the city and region and with other entities positioned in this axis are emphasised.

The expansion of the UC presence in local associations, as it happens with “Coimbra Mais Futuro”, the connection with municipalities of the region, the development of collaborative networks with the regional business community and with other entities are other strategic action drivers.

socially and culturally enhancing the heritage and tourism, encouraging cultural and artistic activity and promoting university sports as an element of cohesion between the academia and the region

The University of Coimbra holds exceptional social, cultural and artistic attributes, recognised nationally and internationally, and must therefore focus on their promotion, enhancement and dissemination.

The pathway to follow is taking culture as an intention, an indelible mark of the progress of organisations and civilisations, and rethinking the cultural policy of the UC, by focusing it on society and not on itself, with a polycentric programme planning, integrated in and coordinated with other reference cultural forces. The creative capacity and cultural practice of the academic community will be fostered and the creation of projects will be endeavoured, in which standards are recognised, by prioritising the activities quality to the detriment of their quantity, for instance the adjustment of

the length of the Cultural Week by refocusing it around events of clear cultural prominence and significant artistic expression. The significant involvement in initiatives promoted by partners, and included in a regular cultural action, will be maintained – in this level of action are included initiatives such as the *Ano Zero* Biennial or the *Sons da Cidade*, among many others –, and the strengthening of their outreach in national and international networks will be endeavoured.

The UC heritage, in its material and immaterial aspects, will be enhanced socially and culturally, by respecting the commitments associated with the application of the “University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia” to UNESCO World Heritage Site and enhancing the social and cultural value of facilities such as the Botanical Garden, the Gil Vicente Academic Theatre, the Science Museum or the Academic Museum. This will be achieved by strengthening dialogue platforms between heritage, culture, science and art, thus enabling the legacy of the past to be a vehicle for innovation and a guarantor of a creative and sustainable future.

Tourism has an intangible component that should enhance the UC brand: conditions will be created and measures will be implemented, which enable a quality tourism activity. In addition, a more attractive, diversified and integrated heritage and cultural offer will be designed, in coordination with the city and the region, and ensuring the preservation of the existing heritage and coexisting sustainably with the daily routine of the academia.

Transforming the UC into the best and most active European University in university sport is the goal to be achieved, by promoting and enhancing the students' sports practice, which will contribute to an increase in the attraction of national and international student athletes. The University of Coimbra Games will be extended in order to promote sport and physical activity within the whole academic community and modalities of

adapted sport will be created.

The Academic Association of Coimbra (AAC- Students' Union), its autonomous bodies, cultural and sports sections, and units will play a role of paramount importance within the scope of this strategic guideline, by means of the development of joint strategic projects and other actions to promote sports practice and cultural activities in the city.

strengthening the bilateral relationship between the University of Coimbra and its former students, as a hub of ideas and experiences, by enhancing the presence of these alumni

According to the soundings made within the scope of the planning process, the *alumni* consider that the quality of teaching, the relevance of the research, the quality of the teaching staff and the educational offer are the most visible aspects of the University of Coimbra.

Therefore, the *alumni* of the UC are the best ambassadors to promote the excellence of the institution, which represents an opportunity that can and should be enhanced.

The presence of former students in the life of the UC will be reinforced. On that account, rethinking and promoting the relationship with this audience is essential, by investing in a proactive communication and organising structured (cultural, scientific and business) initiatives with their involvement, such as lectures and/or professional workshops, focus groups approaching specific topics, forums for debate and experience sharing, and other activities that enhance the potential of this relationship.

Fostering the provision of services and benefits that meet the needs and expectations of the *alumni* is essential, namely by means of the offer of relevant lifelong learning, with special conditions.

In addition, within the scope of the soundings that was made, the former students, who are currently entrepreneurs, expressed their willingness to contribute to the increase in the collaboration with the business community (participation in the revision of the

study programmes, involvement in research projects or support of young entrepreneurship) and to collaborate on mentoring programmes.

consolidating the institutional policy of open science, by promoting good practices and the sharing of knowledge with the scientific community and society at large

The University of Coimbra must manage and disseminate the knowledge produced in a socially responsible manner, by assuming a concerted alignment between the academic research and a wide network of actors from the internal and external community.

Disseminating the concept of open science among the scientific community, society and companies becomes mandatory to expand the recognition and increase of international relevance, thus enabling to bring science to the right interlocutors, and, consequently, increasing the social and economic impact of the knowledge produced.

Consolidating the open science policy will imply to review the policy adopted by the UC, promote initiatives to enhance culture and open science practices, by encouraging open access scientific production and publication, and rethink the role of the *Estudo Geral* (General Study – Digital Repository for Scientific Production of the UC) within the scope of the performance appraisal of the professors.

The role of the University Press will be enhanced, including the development of the UC Digitalis project, which is an open access multidisciplinary and multilingual digital platform – the largest in Portuguese – which enables the sharing of scientific publications and is perfectly aligned with the European recommendations and with the National Open Science Policy.

The development of projects involving citizens in scientific projects (citizen science) by means of collaborative platforms will also reinforce the UC commitment to open science.

/ internationalisation

VISION

Asserting the global position of the University of Coimbra concerning the different mission pillars, by intensifying its presence in international networks, seeking strategic partnerships and maintaining its leadership within the scope of the Lusophone community.

A research university is by nature a university in which internationalisation reaches very high levels, and a greater international exposure will increase the attractiveness levels of the University of Coimbra. This increase in attractiveness will cause a good impact on Research & Innovation – more quality projects, attraction of more high quality researchers and professors, more funding and more international recognition –, in Education – more international students, more internationalised courses, more professors with international pedagogical experience – and in Societal Challenges – sharing of knowledge and contribution to a fairer and more global society.

A strategic and massive focus will be placed on internationalisation as a mission pillar and the internationalisation policy will be revisited and strengthened, hence it is crucial to sensitise the academic community to its importance for the future of the UC. This focus will thus be placed on three aspects – political, scientific and of people.

GOALS

increase by 30-50 per cent the number of students under the International Student Statute

increase by 20-25 per cent the outgoing mobility
[students, professors and researchers, non-teaching staff]

increase by 10-15 per cent the incoming mobility
[students, professors and researchers, non-teaching staff]

increase by 20-50 per cent the number of international events

increase by 30-50 per cent the volume of funding by contracts in international projects

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

strengthening the leadership of the promotion of Lusophone community, its culture and identity matrix, and intensifying the relations with the CPLP countries, thus consolidating the position of the University of Coimbra as a reference institution for the Portuguese language

The unique and irreplaceable historical foundation of the University of Coimbra within the scope of the Lusophone community must be exploited and enhanced. The UC must therefore continue to strengthen its responsibilities concerning this subject that is so delicate to the culture and identity matrix of more than 200 million people who share the same language on different continents.

The UC will intensify its collaboration with the countries of the Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP) – by contributing to their union by means of not only the culture and language, but also the heritage of Portuguese influence – and will develop specific actions to improve the University attractiveness to students from this Community.

In particular with the Portuguese Speaking African Countries, the Coimbra Health's commitment within the M8 Alliance (Global Health) will be implemented, (already existing or new) mobility partnerships will be encouraged and platforms will be developed with universities from these countries to promote distance learning courses in different areas of knowledge.

In addition, within this context, the University Press – and UC Digitalis – will consolidate their leadership

role in the national scene and in the Lusophone world at large. The UC will continue to focus on non-degree courses in Portuguese language and culture and on the promotion of *Casa da Lusofonia*, and a greater dissemination of its activities related to Lusophone community should also be undertaken.

maintaining the international focus on emerging economies, by boosting the Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities and strengthening the relations with other countries

The University of Coimbra is the university which has more students of Brazilian nationality outside Brazil and, being aware of the increasingly strong competition, it will seek to reinforce this position. In order to achieve this, it is crucial to boost new partnerships and revitalise the Coimbra Group of Brazilian Universities, by promoting joint initiatives of variable geometry and enhancing the UC role as this Group's European platform.

As for emerging economies, the focus is on China, hence the UC endeavours to deepen its relationship with institutions in this country. The China @ UC interdisciplinary initiative will be consolidated and the potential of the presence of the Confucius Institute's at the UC will continue to be exploited, particularly in what concerns its expertise concerning traditional Chinese medicine. Furthermore, the recently created Sino-Lusophone Academy will continue to be supported.

Besides this, the UC will endeavour to diversify its emphasis by focusing

on other emerging economies, such as India. Entering this kind of countries will have a greater degree of difficulty regarding the English language training offer, which is why an increase in this offer is a necessary condition for achieving this diversification.

increasing the attractiveness and international recognition of the University of Coimbra, by reinforcing its presence in networks and establishing bilateral strategic partnerships

In order to be attractive, a university has to be recognised. Hence, it is essential to promote the University of Coimbra as a research university in the international *prominent communities* and to seek global partners for the development of knowledge sharing projects.

Within an internationalisation component of strong scientific character, an integrated vision of the establishment of the strategic partnerships with reference foreign universities should be a priority, both for the development of projects on a global scale and for the cooperation between institutions and also for the involvement of the academic community. Strengthening and boosting the presence of the UC in international reference networks is essential, both in organisations and alliances of European universities (Coimbra Group and the European University Association) and within the scope of the different fields of activity, such as innovation and entrepreneurship (e.g. ESA BIC – European Space Agency Business Incubation Centre,

led by IPN in Portugal) or societal challenges (e.g. EIT Health or M8 Alliance). Increasing the presence of the UC in European projects and, whenever possible, ensuring their leadership is also a goal to achieve in the quadrennium, which enables a greater diversification of funding.

The participation in the European Commission's initiative *European Universities*, with the desirable implementation of the *EC2U* consortium – *European Campus of City-Universities*, which is a strategic and cross-cutting project in the whole University and all its areas of activity, will enable to develop an innovation space and free mobility flows between the seven universities involved and their cities. Mapping the international networks and partnerships in which the UC is present will be a starting point, and it will be necessary to develop an analysis which enables to evaluate those that are the most aligned with the defined strategy, by identifying initiatives and partners that consistently yield the best results.

reviewing the geostrategic definition of the University of Coimbra, by deepening its participation in relevant international organisations and attracting international events' organisation to the UC

Having a well-elaborated geostrategic definition is a priority, regarding the participation of the University of Coimbra in international organisations, by setting priorities for action (positive discrimination) and defining a roadmap of relevant international organisations of universities.

As far as relevance is concerned, the Coimbra Group is at the top of the agenda: the UC should actively participate in its definitions of policies, propose and lead initiatives and build on other initiatives within the global policy sphere of universities.

The interest of the physical presence outside the national territory should be appraised, by assessing the impact of the creation of UC representation offices abroad, which enable to exponentially increase the access to information, the success of applications to projects and a greater participation in networks and partnerships.

Encouraging the organisation of international events at the UC is also a way of giving visibility to the University and its activities in its wide range of fields. On the other hand, the participation of professors and researchers in international events is an opportunity for them to act as ambassadors, thus representing the UC brand across borders.

giving a strategic character to the mobility policy, by promoting the international mobility of the academic community, and reviewing the conditions offered to international students

People's mobility is one of the most visible aspects of an internationalisation policy. Recognising that the University of Coimbra is at a very interesting level, especially in what concerns the number of incoming students under the Erasmus programme, the incoming, but especially outgoing, mobility flows will be increased,

and not only of students but also of non-teaching staff, professors and researchers. The contact with new realities will bring benefits to the future of the University of Coimbra, and therefore will enable it to seek and attract quality and contribute to the internationalisation of the UC services and activity.

Within the scope of this internationalisation policy, the International Student Statute, since its inception, has a strategic character for the UC. Assessing the impact of the international students' tuition fees will be important both in its tangible and intangible aspects, as well as rethinking, on the one hand, its value according to the different types and areas of bachelor and masters' degrees, and, on the other hand, the set of services provided to the international students. Besides higher education itself, this includes language courses, the assistance and support services, welcome conditions, support and incentives or social services (for example, accommodation and health services)



/strategic
guidelines

axes

people
quality
facilities
funding
communication



/ people

VISION

Valuing and caring for the academic community, assuming without hesitation that people are the most important asset of the University of Coimbra.

GOALS

- reach 50-70 per cent of full professors and tenure associate professors
- reach 50-60 per cent of non-teaching staff members attending training actions
- reach 40-50 per cent in the technicality index of the non-teaching staff

encouraging dialogue, promoting active participation and establishing the posts of Ombudsman

The University of Coimbra encourages critical thinking, which is why it will be important to take soundings from the members of the academic community, namely by means of open meetings that approach subjects relevant to the University and include divisive themes. The promotion of dialogue should be extended to the representative organisations of the various bodies that make up the academia, such as associations and unions.

In the particular case of students, who are the source of the transgenerational debate, the UC should endeavour to meet their wishes and needs, by fostering their involvement with the academia in all its areas of activity, involving them in strategic decisions and seeking consensus solutions. Consequently, the UC will benefit from their different experiences, ideas and suggestions and their different ways of thinking and acting.

Just like the Student Ombudsman – whose resources will be reinforced – the Institutional Ombudsman (Professors, Researchers and Non-Teaching Staff) will be established, with a mediating role in the conflicts that may emerge and that should be handled independently, thus protecting the rights and duties of the parties involved and contributing to the implementation of a more transparent and fairer system.

dignifying and upgrading professional careers, by recruiting people following a perspective of human resources progression and rejuvenation

The rejuvenation of the staff – professors, researchers and non-teaching staff – has been one of the main concerns of the University of Coimbra, which is why a dynamic recruitment model based on the early retirements will have to be optimised, by undertaking a forward-looking management process, capable of ensuring current and future productive capacity. By means of a strong investment in high quality recruitment based on professional experience, renewing the staff will be possible, being thus necessary to ensure attractiveness conditions and excellence hiring mechanisms.

In the case of researchers, supporting and diversifying the creation of scientific employment is essential, by improving career conditions and contractual stability, which will be a stimulus to their activity.

The professors and the non-teaching-staff careers should be dignified and upgraded, reinforcing the dynamics of career progression based on merit and the normalisation and maintenance of a stable staff without precarious work conditions.

The scope of this strategic guideline also includes the introduction of improvements to the UC Regulation on Teaching Service Provision by the Professors and the simplification of the UC Regulation on Teaching Performance Assessment.

promoting professional and personal training, enhancing individual skills and strengthening the functions performed

When it comes to training and personal skills of the workers, looking at the specificities of each group is crucial. As far as Professors are concerned, a pedagogical training plan will be created, also focused on innovation and new technologies. Moreover, training in relevant processes and tools will be developed for researchers.

With regard to the non-teaching staff, the University of Coimbra will focus on a continuous training plan, in close dialogue with the stakeholders, which may contribute to the increase of productivity. The empowerment of people will also imply the professional enhancement in different scopes, thus investing in cross-cutting training programmes (e.g. foreign languages, which are important for the internationalisation pillar), and opportunities for external training will be seized.

The implementation of a skills integrated management model is essential and will enable to foster the continuous development of the individual skills of each worker, by providing (national and international) training actions and enhancing the functions performed. This aspect is inherent in the promotion of internal mobility, when it is at the convenience of the worker and the units and services involved, thus enabling to solve problems of mismatch between the competences and the functions performed.

facilitating the reconciliation between work, family and personal life, by recognising the efforts of the workers and promoting motivation

People's effort and work must be recognised and rightly enhanced, and workers should feel rewarded for it. The projects and the good practices of pedagogical innovation of the professors will be recognised and acknowledged. Likewise, reference publications in top international journals should be a stimulus to the merit of researchers and professors. The non-teaching staff will be valued by establishing a reward system, for example by means of the encouragement of the exchange of experiences and international mobility.

Reconciliation of the workers' professional, family and personal life should be facilitated as a means of recognition and enhancement of their efforts, in a perfect alignment with the "3 in line - Programme for the Reconciliation of Work, Personal and Family Life" established by the Government and the Portuguese Rule 4552: 2016, which promotes balance in the worker's life. Other measures aligned with this will be developed, such as the creation of a specific plan to support the associative activity of the workers and students.

With all the mechanisms created, the goal of the UC is to increase the sense of belonging and motivation, by acting itself as a socially responsible institution.

being a safe and healthy university and promoting the quality of life of the academic community

Investing in the physical and mental health and quality of life of the academic community will be a priority for the University of Coimbra, namely by means of the promotion of healthy lifestyles, by encouraging physical activity and sport in the academic community.

Making sports practice a vehicle for promoting habits leading to a healthy lifestyle will foster people's well-being by means of sports practice while simultaneously using university sport as a way of sharing values such as solidarity, mutual help and team spirit.

Investing in the health of the academic community also implies preventive measures and programmes (healthy eating, workplace ergonomics, safe working practices, etc.), the implementation of screenings and the promotion of the community medical follow-up, complemented by communication campaigns that promote safe and healthy behaviours.

The promotion of the quality of life of the community will also imply the creation of a UC Club, with an appealing and multidisciplinary physical space, where various social, leisure and sports activities can be gathered, associated with the promotion of the UC card as an identity element.



/quality

VISION

Consolidating the high quality standards of the University of Coimbra in its wide range of fields, by simplifying and modernising procedures and improving efficiency in all the processes.

GOALS

achieve an assessment equal or above “Substantial” in all the assessment areas of the UC Management System certification

increase by 80-100 per cent the number of ISO 9001 certified processes and laboratories

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

promoting the revision of the statutes and fostering the strategic alignment of the entities that constitute the University of Coimbra Group

After more than ten years since the approval of the University of Coimbra's Statutes, it is now the time to promote their revision, by making the necessary adjustments to conform them with the current reality.

Following a perspective of improvement, promoting a greater involvement within the UC Group is also essential, by means of the strategic alignment of its entities, while maintaining their independence. This development of the UC Group's cohesion enables to seek shared solutions to problems that affect each of the entities, thus increasing efficiency levels and securing common political dividends and scale gains.

Going far beyond the mere financial consolidation already achieved, this change will also enable to overcome a previously identified weakness, namely the reductive view of UC activity indicators, which, in most situations, do not consider the overall UC Group.

This alignment is also an opportunity for a strategic reflection in the context of the universe of R&D units in the UC, which may also imply the merger or reorganisation of the existing units, or even the fostering of the creation of others in areas that may not be covered and considered to be strategically relevant, in coordination with the Research & Innovation pillar guidelines.

implementing monitoring and assessment models and tools capable of responding to the new institutional challenges

A business intelligence system will be created and implemented as a tool to support strategic decision-making, thus enabling real-time information on UC activity and the performance indicators at the most various levels. With its implementation, the monitoring of the Strategic Plan itself will be simplified and streamlined.

The pedagogical quality monitoring and assessment model will also be optimised, thus maximising the high potential of its information and simplifying and enhancing the student surveys.

Within the scope of the assessment of the research activities' quality, a model of research characterisation, monitoring and assessment will be implemented, taking into account the principles described in the San Francisco Declaration of the American Society for Cell Biology (2012) and in the Recommendations of the Leiden Manifesto (Hicks et al., Nature, 2015).

implementing innovation and modernisation projects that contribute to the simplification and improvement of the administrative procedures

The adoption of innovative measures and projects is urgent, which aim to promoting administrative modernisation based on the simplification, no bureaucratisation and streamlining of procedures, or their decentralisation. This is the case of the development or implementation of computer applications and computerised means that enable the automatisisation and even the dematerialisation of processes, therefore reducing human intervention, enabling the reduction of steps and time and ensuring quality maintenance – for instance, the document management system, the implementation of digital signatures or the revitalisation of the UC card.

The creation of channels that prioritise the reception and assistance of the users, by replicating a one-stop-counter model capable of meeting their needs and expectations, will also be taken into consideration.

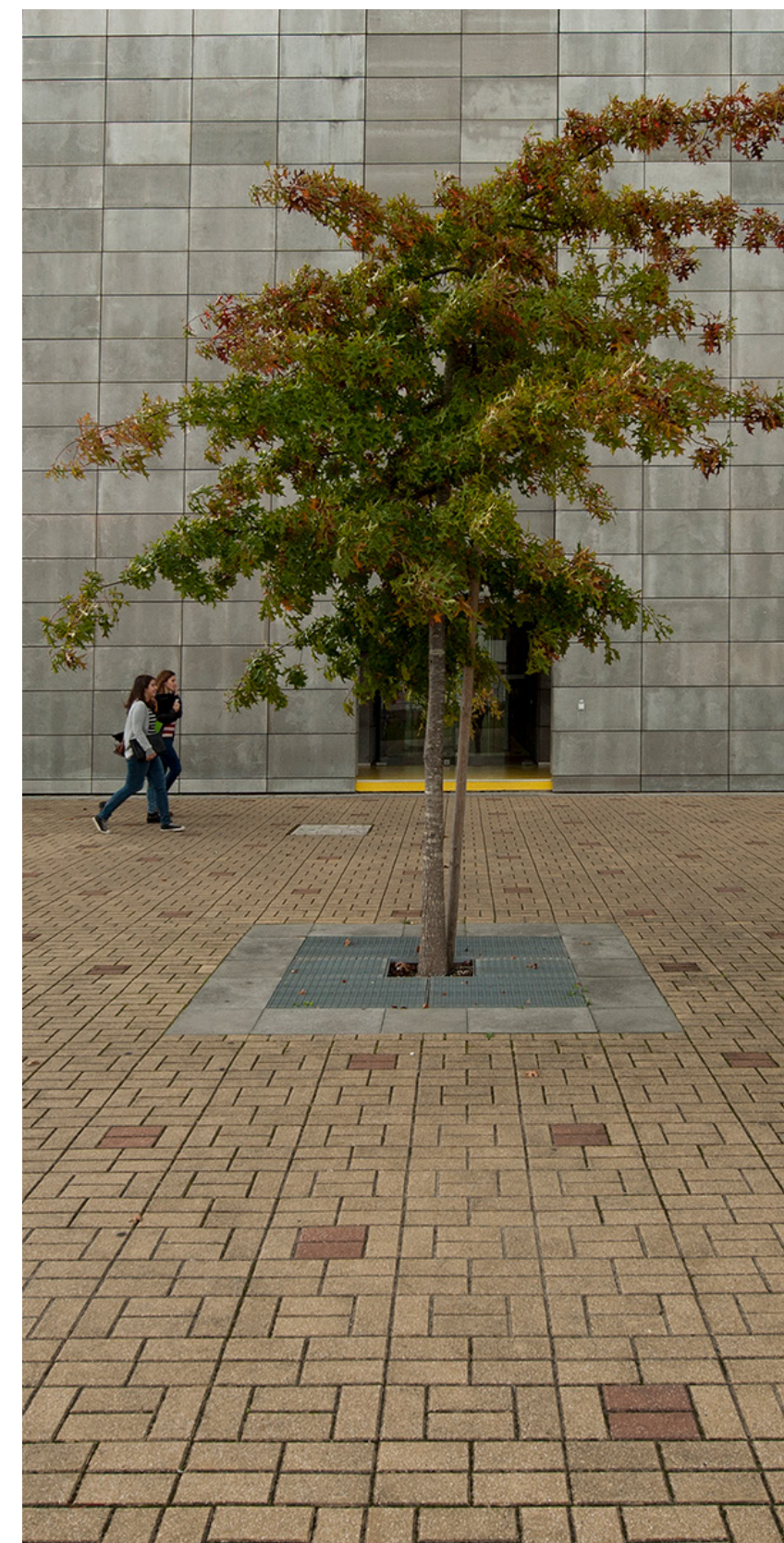
Furthermore, priority will be given to projects that enable the effectiveness, efficiency and quality of activities gains, and, in particular, the ones that contribute to the implementation of hearing and participation mechanisms concerning stakeholders, which ensure the safeguard of users' rights, and which provide the improvement of management support tools, administrative communication and the dissemination of administrative information. In addition, the recognition and sharing of good practices in all activity areas of the UC and members of its community will contribute to the same ultimate goal, which is the permanent and continuous improvement.

optimising the management system of the University of Coimbra, by promoting the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the processes

The UC Management System covers the most varied areas of activity, and adopts an integrated management and constant promotion of a quality culture. Striving for quality in the different pillars and axes of mission is something to look at as a natural way of being and acting. Optimising the Management System is crucial to the development of the UC, since it enables the consolidation and systematisation of the best practices of management and promotion of an improvement and quality assurance policy.

Promoting the alignment of planning, monitoring, assessment and improvement procedures in all the activity areas, including the full compliance of UC procedures with the General Data Protection Regulation, is essential for successful management. The same happens with the effective fulfilment of the risk and opportunity management model, based on the implementation of the Plan for Prevention of Management, Corruption and Related Infractions Risks, which boosts best practices also in all the activity areas of the UC.

The UC will maintain and intend to extend the ISO 9001 certification of the UC Management System processes, will give continuity to the A3ES assessment and certification processes and will promote other external audits – as will happen with the centralised certification and accreditation process for its Scientific and Technological Platforms –contributing therefore to the excellence of the institution in all areas of activity.





/facilities

VISION

Enhancing campuses by improving the working conditions of the academic community, revitalising the buildings and making long-term strategic investments whenever possible.

GOALS

revitalise 20-30 per cent of university residences
[measured in number of beds]

make available 2 to 3 revitalised spaces in order to house temporary and high-impact research projects

implement the Facilities and Location Plan in 20-40 per cent of the UC Administration and SASUC Administration's services

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

mapping the spaces and their use and elaborating a long-term integrated development plan of the buildings, enhancing therefore an efficient use

The mapping and update of the register of all the University of Coimbra's buildings will be undertaken, as well as of their physical and environmental conditions and the use that is being given to them, which will serve as a basis for the elaboration of an integrated development plan for the next decade, with the active participation of the academic community and the Municipality of Coimbra.

The UC will therefore make the most of its buildings, by enhancing an appropriate and efficient use, by means of the progressive replacement of leased spaces and the occupation of currently vacant or unused spaces. Such a plan will also contribute to the reallocation of spaces to other functions and reallocation of services, enabling thus the concentration of diffuse services and enhancing internal cohesion, productivity and satisfaction of the users of those services, and simultaneously the reduction of charges (such as rent payments and unnecessary maintenance expenses).

The development plan will also include the mapping of the needs for new buildings, namely those considered to be a priority and already referenced. Since currently there is no funding for their construction, it will be made should opportunities of support emerge, as it is expected to happen with the residences, within the scope of the National Plan for Housing in Higher Education.

Improving the facilities conditions by restoring and modernising spaces and enhancing safety, health and quality of life

The works already in progress and with an approved funding project, such as in the “Paço das Escolas” will be carried out. The revitalisation of the buildings in the University Stadium will continue, as well as the construction of a new facility for the Faculty of Sport Sciences and Physical Education.

In this strategic cycle there is also an intention to invest sustainably in the maintenance and revitalisation of spaces, providing therefore the best conditions of study and work to the academic community, namely in spaces for teaching and learning activities – teaching and service spaces, libraries, museological areas, residences, canteens, etc. Priority will also be given to the provision of spaces and their equipment for the development of innovative and high impact research projects.

Besides the works of modernisation that may be undertaken, the investment in the maintenance of the buildings aims to achieve the improvement of the physical conditions of the spaces regarding the safety, health and quality of life of the academic community.

qualifying and enhancing the outdoor spaces, by promoting permanent maintenance and improving accessibility

Alongside indoor spaces, it is important to ensure the maintenance of outdoor spaces, revitalising them and enhancing them in close coordination with the Municipality of Coimbra. Therefore the focus will be on promotion plans of the quality of life of the academic community that uses the facilities of Campus 2 (Polo II), Campus 3 (Polo III) and their adjacent areas on a daily basis, including the implementation of measures concerning accessibility and traffic flow and parking issues. All the measures in this scope will be developed in a sustainable way, according to the strategic guidelines defined in the area of Environment and Climate Action.

In Campus 1 (Polo I), the conditions of the outdoor spaces are directly linked to heritage management and also need a resolution in an integrated way with the Municipality of Coimbra – urban rehabilitation, preservation of buildings, reformulation or conditioning of traffic.

In another quite relevant sense, the architectural and physical accessibility to the buildings of campus 1 (Polo I) presents a great challenge: to make this campus 100 per cent accessible, without barriers.

enhancing socially and culturally the historical and museum built heritage

This University is holder of a priceless cultural heritage. Therefore, it is essential to protect the information of historical interest in nationally and internationally recognised archival, bibliographic and museological areas by means of risk analysis and prevention. This whole heritage has to be taken care of dynamically, by enhancing its relevant role in the context of higher education, as a demonstration stage, open to society, and stimulating the perception of its relevance as an ecosystem of education, research and knowledge sharing.

The University of Coimbra will thus persist in the pathway to protecting, safeguarding, enhancing and disseminating its heritage included in the UNESCO World Heritage area, “University of Coimbra – Alta and Sofia”.



/ funding

VISION

Ensuring the financial sustainability of the University of Coimbra, by increasing revenues, controlling expenses and generating efficiency gains, and investing in strategic projects and human resources capable of generating (tangible and intangible) returns.

GOALS

diversify funding
by achieving an independence rate of
over 50 per cent concerning the public funding

reach 100 per cent in the
implementation of the Optimisation Plan
of the Travelling Processes
and the Automatisation Plan
of the Purchase Processes

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

strengthening fundraising and diversifying funding, by focusing on competitive funding and own revenues

The capacity to attract funding and generate revenues is essential to the development of the University of Coimbra, especially in a context of chronic underfunding by the state. Achieving lasting (non-extraordinary) solutions that strengthen economic and financial sustainability is crucial and will enable the UC to fulfil its missions, both “at home” and around the world. More funding will be raised by means of the increase in the number of non-degree courses (making its implementation autonomous, similarly to projects implementation), the development of projects with more diversified funding and the establishment of a greater number of partnerships (including the focus on projects with the involvement of the business community and other entities), the intensive dissemination of a broader portfolio for the provision of services to the community and fundraising by means of patronage (e.g. for specific issues such as conservation and restoration of the built or artistic heritage).

Incentives and stimulus will be introduced to achieve these objectives and the policy of redistribution of funds and overheads will be revised and updated, besides further support in the search for funding opportunities and in the preparation of applications, which is a measure already identified. The alignment of the UC Group entities will contribute to maximising the profitability of efforts and the full potential of synergies.

raising the governance accountability, the operational excellence and the management tools

The effort made over the last years to place the University of Coimbra in a relatively comfortable financial position cannot be wasted, and keeping the accounts under control is essential. The continuous monitoring of budget execution by means of the improvement of financial reporting for governance and the availability of data via the decision-making support system will enable to implement a plan to use, in due time, the balances and surpluses in investments that are strategic for the UC.

Operating general expenses will be reduced by means of the automatisisation of some processes that will enable efficiency gains, the improvement of planning processes and the elimination of redundancies, including process redundancies.

Initiatives such as the strategy to combat waste, the process of administrative modernisation and dematerialisation of procedures and their efficiency gains or the improvement of the energy and environmental efficiency will be in line with a reduction in operating expenses.

defending the economic sustainability of higher education to ensure the fulfilment of its mission in society

Given a history of underfunding of higher education, promoting the improvement of the definition and application of its funding model is important, both in terms of education and research. With regard to the economic sustainability, the University of Coimbra will propose initiatives to the Council of Rectors of the Portuguese Universities. Therefore, it will defend these initiatives before the public powers, in order to improve models that reinforce the university initiative, guarantee multiannual financial stability and endeavour to reach the real permanent scientific employment (by means of the possibility of imputing real costs, just like in European projects).

The University will propose initiatives to FCT in order to simplify project management procedures, thus reducing bureaucracies.

In addition, it will promote the improvement of funding for direct social services for students and will seek funding that enables it to invest in the rehabilitation and construction of university residences.

/communication

VISION

Disseminating the UC brand, thus ensuring national and international visibility and enhancing the attractiveness of the University of Coimbra, and promote the effectiveness of internal communication.

GOALS

reach 60-70 per cent in the Reputation Score
achieve level A+ in the Net Effect

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

developing an internal, personalised and close communication strategy that promotes alignment, cohesion and involvement

The design of an internal communication plan – with clear identification of roles, channels, means and actions – will contribute to promoting internal cohesion and the motivation of the academic community and, in this regard, the current institutional communication model will be rethought, focusing on transparency, effectiveness and efficiency.

In order for the improvement to be a reality, actions are needed which imply the implementation of digital channels, the promotion of cross-cutting events in the academic community or in each of their bodies individually, the organisation of regular staff meetings and the creation of a communication and knowledge sharing platform.

International students, in turn, require further attention and, therefore, the creation of a communication plan for them will facilitate their full integration into the UC. Furthermore, in a global university, the adaptation of communication means and channels to a multilingual format is essential.

actively communicating the cross-cutting nature of the University of Coimbra's activity, in an integrated and coordinated way, thus enhancing its attractiveness and prestige

The outward-facing communication strategy will be redefined, by concentrating its efforts on the dissemination of the multiple activities undertaken by the University of Coimbra, their impact and their strengths. Based on the "The Future of the UC in our Hands" questionnaires addressed to former students and employers, the aspects of the UC activity identified as having greater visibility were: the quality of teaching, the relevance of research, the quality of the teaching staff, the educational offer, the academic tradition and the areas of excellence and international prestige.

The digital presence of the UC will be optimised by means of a simple, intuitive, attractive and multilingual web platform aiming to increase its visibility.

The dynamics should be attractive so that empathy with its addressees is established, given that it should not focus only on traditional means, but also on the immense potential associated with social networks in terms of reaching a greater and more diverse audience. In this regard, a corporate social network platform is intended to be built, which will be a meeting and information space, as well as a space for exchanging ideas between professionals and for lifelong learning.

The communication with the *alumni* is also noteworthy, which should be undertaken in the digital means of communication, also in multilingual format, thus enhancing and contributing to their active participation in the life of the UC.

making the UC brand a citizen of the world by promoting a proper image management and marketing actions that project its visibility and recognition

The UC brand is synonymous with excellence and as such it will be spread and disseminated by means of a marketing plan that projects its visibility and recognition.

The visibility of the UC is also intended to be enhanced by means of projects that promote what is good at the University, under the title "Heritage Powered by UC" and by means of prestigious partners, whether they are national or international, or public or private. The UC brand must also be associated with a framework of international events of unquestionable quality.



/strategic guidelines

sustainability
and social
responsibility

environment and climate action
citizenship, equality
and inclusiveness



The University of Coimbra adopts an approach of sustainable management of its activities and resources and of social responsibility in its actions, which enables it to respond to the present needs without compromising the future, by strengthening awareness and civic action and by assessing impacts. Although Sustainability and Social Responsibility represent cross-cutting attitudes, behaviours and actions in the UC which fit and are always present in its activity, two dimensions are made autonomous, which, due to their relevance and their emergence in the current context, determine a firm commitment to the sustainable development and human rights: the Environment and Climate Action; and the Citizenship, Equality and Inclusiveness.

It should be further emphasised that the UC has been a member of ORSIES since its creation, - the Observatory for Social Responsibility and Higher Education Institutions -, and has been involved in the co-creation of a shared vision of the “Green Book on Social Responsibility and Higher Education Institutions”. Within the scope of the fight against inequalities between women and men in the academic world, the SUPERA network – Supporting the Promotion of Equality in Research and Academia – which consists of six entities of the European scientific system – is an example of an institutional commitment.

The adoption of the guidelines of the 2030 United Nations Agenda for Sustainable Development is a premise of this Strategic Plan. Assuming commitments of the Paris Agreement on climate change and monitoring national strategies such as those that are established in the 2050 National Low Carbon Roadmap are imperative and shape a global need, which should have an impact on local action. In this regard, the UC is also part of the Sustainable Campus Network, in which 28 public higher education institutions signed the Sustainable Campus Charter of Intents, which is already an institutional commitment to the principles and practice of sustainable development, in all its relevant aspects – environmental, social and economic.

/environment and climate action

VISION

Developing an environmental sustainability strategy that enables the University of Coimbra to be the first Portuguese university to achieve carbon neutrality and make academic community aware of the impact of behaviour change on the fight against climate change.

GOALS

- reduce by 20-25 per cent the ecological footprint
- increase by 75-100 per cent the installed capacity for photovoltaic energy production
- reduce by 30-50 per cent the consumption of paper

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

promoting environmental and energy sustainability on the University of Coimbra campuses

The University of Coimbra aims to make its campuses sustainable by promoting their decarbonisation in line with the national target of carbon neutrality by 2050 and energy transition of the 2030 National Energy and Climate Plan. In this regard, the UC will define an integrated sustainability planning and management strategy in its campuses and develop an action plan focused on the sustainable development objectives, which will enable, among other measures, to improve the energy and environmental efficiency of the buildings in a short time. With the constant involvement and contribution of researchers and in-house technical and scientific contributions and expertise, such as the interdisciplinary initiative Energy for Sustainability, the measures most suited to the characteristics of the UC will be assessed and decided. Additionally, a model will be defined for their implementation and management, capable of overcoming possible challenges and difficulties, from an organisational perspective and from the perspective of the academic community.

The existence of historic buildings classified as UNESCO World Heritage Site naturally requires an additional effort in the analysis of the measures that will need to be implemented, by safeguarding the interaction and adaptation of this heritage to the environment over the centuries. An environmental sustainability strategy will have to be developed, with innovative and sustainable solutions that will make buildings more energy efficient, by improving their thermal, acoustic and lighting conditions, reducing energy consumption, promoting the rational use of resources and prioritising renewable energy production. The environmental revitalisation of the UC campuses will give priority to the surrounding public spaces, namely green spaces, by rearranging the existing ones and endeavouring to design new ones.

Measures will be developed along with the Municipality of Coimbra, which

enable to decongest and phase out the traffic of polluting vehicles in Campus 1 (Polo I), and progressively these will be replaced by electric vehicles, namely urban public transport. Furthermore, mobility routes will be developed between the UC campuses.

encouraging behaviour change by means of the combat against waste and promoting an environmentally responsible campus

In order to be effective, change has to be made with and for people. Sensitisation, participation and involvement of the academic community concerning the combat against waste and environmental issues are the first step towards making the University of Coimbra campuses environmentally responsible. Young people are more mobilised than ever for environmental protection, by conducting crowded climate strikes and managing to integrate in them different layers and generations of our society. This positive energy should be extended to the entire community, by encouraging their participation in actions related to the promotion of the environmental sustainability in the campuses.

Therefore, it is urgent to develop a waste-fighting culture and adopt the principles inherent in the circular economy, based on reduction, reuse, recovery and recycling. The UC will promote the reduction of plastic consumption and use, the reduction of food waste – already well developed by the campaigns carried out by the Social Services of the UC (SASUC) over the last years –, the replacement of food products with great environmental impact, the careful management of waste, the rational use of resources, the reduction/optimisation of water consumption, among others. Dematerialising all processes that can be digitally executed is also important (including the widespread use of digital signatures), thus drastically reducing the amount of paper used.

Environmental citizenship will be strongly promoted as well as good practices and public, individual and collective participation in environmental and sustainable development issues. Increasing

awareness and human and institutional capacity concerning the mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning climate change will imply the creation and adaption of the training offer, the encouragement of projects development and the stimulation to participate in networks and develop partnerships.

adopting a green public procurement policy and ensuring the financial sustainability of the implementation of environmental measures

In line with the National Strategy on Green Public Procurement 2020, a policy for service procurement that incorporates environmental criteria will be adopted. Since public procurement is a high potential tool, which integrates economic, social and environmental policies, green public procurement aims to promote resources-use efficiency and minimise environmental impacts by developing the circular economy, with a focus on dematerialisation, collaborative economy, differentiated waste collection and sustainable consumption.

The investments will be optimised and the available funding and incentive tools will be assessed at both national and international levels. Programmes such as the Energy Efficiency Fund, the Environmental Fund, the POSEUR – Operational Programme on Sustainability and Resource-use Efficiency, or the ECO.AP – Energy Efficiency Programme in Public Administration, among others, may encourage the implementation of some measures, thus avoiding assuming a financial effort that may turn out to be unfeasible for the UC. Cost-benefit analyses of the various measures will be performed and their impacts will be monitored. In addition, the achievement of scale gains and cost reductions will be estimated by means of resources saving resulting from the implementation of environmentally-friendly measures that contribute to the sustainability of the public accounts. The savings generated by the implementation of measures can be used to fund subsequent new measures, which in turn will lead to further savings and so on.



/ citizenship, equality and inclusiveness

VISION

Promoting active, enlightened, socially responsible and inclusive citizenship, by preserving the right to have rights, respecting dignity, equality and the right to difference, so that everyone can reach their potential, in a collective formulation of common goals and challenges.

GOALS

increase by 150-200 per cent the support for students with special educational needs [measured in number of students supported]

ensure a minimum representation level of 33-40 per cent of women and men in selection and examination boards (recruitment and PhD exams respectively)

increase by 50-60 per cent the number of projects with social impact, in partnership with the Municipality of Coimbra, NGOs and/or social economy organisations

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

Strengthening the social aid, by ensuring equity and the promotion of academic success, improving the living conditions of the student community and fighting inequalities

Promoting social justice within the student community is crucial, as well as ensuring access to inclusive, quality and equitable education, by ensuring that there are learning opportunities for all and that the students' living conditions are improved. To this end, the UC will continue to ensure direct and indirect support to its students by means of the SASUC, by reinforcing student social aid, in all its aspects, which is a determining factor in the fight against withdrawal and in the promotion of continuity and academic success. Welcome conditions (accommodation and meals) will be improved and study places and opening hours that meet the students' needs will be provided. The quality of the medical services will be ensured by enhancing their dissemination to the academic community, and the psychological counselling and psychiatric support services will also be strengthened.

The Academic Association of Coimbra (AAC- Students' Union) will be the preferred partner in this guideline, but the UC will also establish a dialogue with the "*republicas*" and the "*solares*" as autonomous prime movers of the academic community and integral parts of its identity matrix. Partnerships with the Municipality of Coimbra will be developed in key areas such as welcome programmes for new national and international students.

combating gender inequalities and ensuring equal opportunities by eliminating imbalances and barriers

Equality between women and men is an imperative and a social objective in itself, essential to a full experience of citizenship and a condition for the building of a sustainable future.

Gender inequality is a problem with deep roots and multiple and complex causes, based on gender stereotypes, in which action is required. Such purpose calls for the development of internal policies, whether in terms of human resources, career progression or harassment prevention. Similarly, strengthening gender mainstreaming in knowledge production and transfer, besides being socially responsible, it is an opportunity to improve the pedagogical quality and social relevance of research results.

The UC is aligned with and co-responsible for a fairer society. Therefore, it will implement an institutional action plan for equality, which removes obstacles to equal opportunities, reinforces the principle that identical situations deserve equal treatment and leads to a reality of gender equality, in line with the national and European policy objectives and guidelines – namely within the scope of "Portugal + Equal" and the European Research Area –, and with the SUPERA project – Supporting the Promotion of Quality Research and Academia.

Among other measures, the UC will implement the use of inclusive language in its documents and will provide data and statistics by gender, thus enabling to assess and monitor the UC position in terms of equality.

In addition, the UC will actively engage society, by raising awareness of and drawing attention to gender equality issues.

promoting policies for social inclusion and protection of minorities, ensuring the right to difference and the right to have rights, by ensuring equal access and conditions to achieve success

The University of Coimbra will promote equality and inclusion policies for minorities. The right to have rights is to be respected, and this includes the right to difference. The right (and protection) to difference will be enshrined in all regulations and procedures, by advocating inclusion, integration and welcoming. The UC will continue to find solutions to ensure equal access to all levels of education and training, by improving accessibility and the working and study conditions, and respecting the characteristics of all people with specific needs.

Diversified support aimed at students with special educational needs will be strengthened as well as the support to the organisational units who host them. Furthermore, a support organisation will be created within the scope of the prevention and monitoring of issues associated with mental health, by providing a safe, inclusive and effective learning environment for everyone.

promoting enlightened and responsible citizenship, social cohesion and human rights, by defending civilisational and ethical principles and contributing to the all-round training of citizens

The University of Coimbra is committed to the well-being of the academic community and society at large, by embracing freedom of thought, freedom of expression and critical thinking so that everyone can fulfil their potential respecting dignity and equality, and fighting any violation of human rights. Since it is essential to deepen ethical principles in academic life, by intensifying the dissemination and promotion of ethics in all the areas of the University life and activity, and by strengthening the link between ethical and technical issues, a UC Code of Ethics will be created.

The UC will implement a pedagogical approach that condemns acts of physical or psychological aggression, violence or harassment that use the "*praxe*" as an excuse and will focus on culture as a vehicle of values leading to a fairer and socially more solidary society. Additionally, in partnership with the Academic Association of Coimbra (AAC- Students' Union), the UC will also focus on the involvement of students in projects of cultural promotion, volunteering, social innovation and other forms of civic intervention. The students' active participation is the key to enthusiasm.

The UC is also responsible for contributing to the all-round training of students, by forming citizens who use their knowledge for the benefit of society and to build a better world.



/monitoring and assessment

Throughout the previous strategic planning cycles, a culture of permanent monitoring and regular assessment of the University of Coimbra's activity was created and developed. This culture is cross-cutting in all the organisational structure and in the different management levels, and has already been perfectly integrated into the academic community.

The **dynamic process** integrated into the UC management cycle will be maintained, thus enabling the continuous development of the processes of planning, monitoring, assessment and feedback loop, with a view to achieve excellence in all the pillars and mission axes and sustainability areas.

The process will not be restricted to one measurement, and it will be complemented by the definition and implementation of **improvement** strategies resulting from the assessment carried out in accordance with the principles of quality assurance: supported by the PDCA cycle – Plan, Do, Check, Act – and by the risk-based thinking. This approach will include the analysis and signalling of deviations from what is planned and will trigger the necessary actions – corrections, corrective actions, continuous improvement, disruptive change, innovation and reorganisation – in a dynamic of permanent attention to the internal and external context.

Throughout the whole process, while respecting the principles of participatory management and transparency, it will be essential to establish channels of **communication** with the stakeholders, by communicating the developments in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and the assessment undertaken at each moment, and, on the other hand, enabling the permanent introduction of suggestions for improvement.

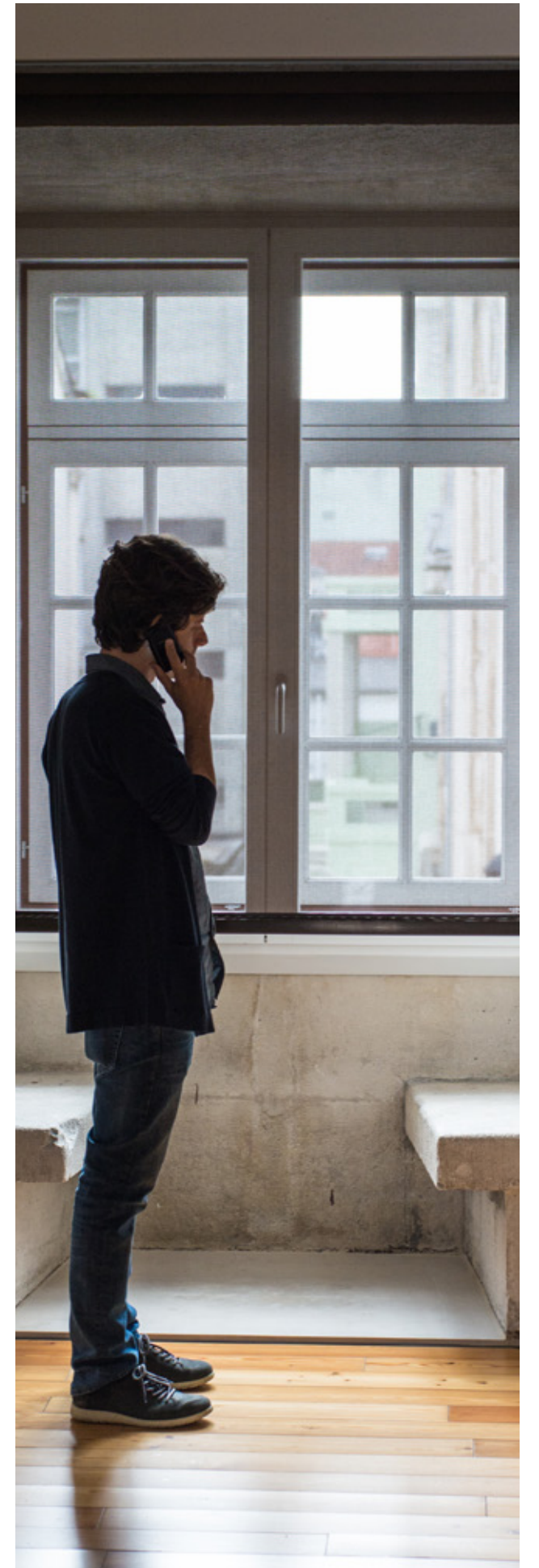
At the beginning of 2023, the **final assessment** will be carried out, which will reflect all the work done in the quadrennium, closing therefore another integrated strategic planning cycle.

/from strategy to action

The Strategic Plan, under the statutory terms, is complemented by the **Action Plan**. This document systematises the main actions that will be triggered by the Rector's Team, at the institutional level, which are aimed to implement the strategic guidelines listed for the 2019-2023 quadrennium.

Achieving the proposed goals depends not only on these actions, but also on the successful alignment of the goals and actions of the **Action Plans of the organisational units, other units and services**. Each Plan defines its panels of specific indicators/goals and actions, in a way which is properly aligned with the higher levels, thus originating the lower assessment levels.

The Quality Plan, which is directly linked to the Quality mission axis, contains the main guidelines for improving the processes and services provided within the context of each of the remaining mission pillars and axes, and areas of sustainability. By including concrete actions to be developed, goals and indicators, the information collected by means of the integrated monitoring in the assessment and monitoring cycle will be used as a management and quality improvement tool in each of the pillars, axes and areas, thus contributing to the optimisation of the Management System of the University of Coimbra. The challenges posed to higher education institutions concerning quality assessment require planning in order to use efficiently the resources, and the definition of a Quality Plan aligned with and integrated into the Strategic Plan enables to channel efforts towards the implementation of the most appropriate initiatives that respond to the UC current and future challenges.



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"People who are part of an organisation are (...) the most important part of the adopted strategy. Each person is important so that the success of an organisation may be achieved. That is why people should be heard, valued and informed. If each one of us feels part of the strategy, than the collective strength will be reinforced."

*In FALCÃO, Amílcar
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THE 1,250 ALUMNI” who completed the survey “The Future of the UC in our hands”

THE OTHER BODIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COIMBRA, namely the General Council, the Senate and the Students Ombudsman

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STRATEGIC
PLAN OF THE
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