



FUTURE FIT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The strategy of TU Wien

Our Mission

Technology for people.

A promise that we have kept with science, passion, and responsibility - since 1815.

In Vienna, in the heart of Europe. Always. For the future.

Our Vision

TU Wien – where we dare to reason.

The creative urban tech university.

Unlimited.



Executive Summary: The strategy of TU Wien

This executive summary describes TU Wien's strategy. For a more comprehensive understanding of our thinking and strategic considerations, we recommend reading the [full strategy paper](#).

Our mission

One mission, one vision

Our mission describes the TU Wien's overarching and enduring purpose - our *WHY*. Enduring for decades, it defines the principles that guide our actions. Our vision, on the other hand, outlines *HOW* we realize this mission in the current context and defines our for the coming years.

As part of the *fuTUre fit* process, we clarified and modernized the language of our existing mission without altering its fundamental orientation. In doing so, we reflected on what defines TU Wien as a technical university, how it stands out from others and which values shape our actions. Our mission reflects our long-term responsibility for science, technology and society, while our vision provides clear direction for the years ahead.

Our mission as a foundation

Like all technical universities, we see it as our task to advance basic research, drive technological innovation, and ensure excellence in research and teaching. Beyond that, we see ourselves as an active contributor to society: we bridge research and application, critically assess technological developments, and promote fact-based decision-making.

Our mission is deeply rooted in our more than 200-year history and is also reflected in the historic inscription on our main building: "*The cultivation, expansion and refinement of craftsmanship, civic arts and trade.*" These terms embody our responsibility to preserve, develop, and share knowledge, methods and technologies with society.

Our values as a guide for our actions

TU Wien is committed to the European values of **human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law** and respect for **human rights**. In addition, the following values shape our daily interactions and collaboration:

- Unity in diversity
- Respect & appreciation
- Scientific integrity
- Personal responsibility & resilience
- Transparency
- Reliability
- Inclusion
- Trust
- Political neutrality and academic freedom

Our mission in a nutshell.

Our mission is a promise: Technology for people! A promise that we have upheld with science, passion, and responsibility - since 1815, in the heart of Vienna, in the heart of Europe.

Our vision for TU Wien

The fuTUre fit process

Our vision in its current form is the result of the broad-based, participatory fuTUre fit process. Without the numerous discussions and diverse experiences, we would not have been able to expand our rational approach by "sensing" what is possible. This has resulted in a vision that is not merely a list of measurable achievements, but focuses on the evolving future of our university, which is already taking shape today. We are convinced that this approach lays the foundation for developments and achievements that reach far beyond our current imagination.

Through the fuTUre fit process, we have undertaken an open, dialog-driven strategy process to develop a deep, shared understanding of our university, its challenges and its potential. Our goal was to create a strategic foundation that reflects not only the perspective of the Rectorate but also on the diversity of voices within TU Wien.

Our journey was structured into three phases:

- **Phase 1 (April – November 2024): Listening and engaging in dialogue** - Through open formats such as discussion rounds, workshops and fireside chats, we gathered perspectives from across TU Wien and external stakeholders. The central questions were:
 - What does TU Wien stand for today?
 - What should TU Wien stand for in ten years?

We documented the collective findings in a "growing exhibition", analyzed them and identified ten key topics. Based on these, working groups with over 100 members in total developed in-depth analyses and visions for the future.

- **Phase 2 (December 2024): fuTUre fit Convention and strategy development** - In November 2024, we brought together the interested TU community at the fuTUre fit Convention. The working groups presented their findings, discussed them in interactive formats, and received valuable feedback from an international sounding board. These reflections were incorporated into the final reports, which served as an important input for the Rectorate's work on the strategy paper in January and February 2025.
- **Phase 3 (from March 2025): Implementing the strategy** - With a kick-off event on March 24, 2025, we will launch the next phase: the execution of our strategy. We will set clear priorities for strategic measures and actively support innovative projects through a targeted *call for projects*.

Participation creates value

What sets this strategy process apart is our consistent focus on **participation, agility and transparent communication**. We not only introduced new formats such as the "Yes, we talk TU Wien" book club but also continuously fostered an open exchange between the Rectorate and the university community. Through the international Sounding Board, we critically reflected on our results and integrated valuable external perspectives.

The fuTUre fit process has shown us that strategy is more than just a document - it is a dynamic, collaborative process.

Our vision as a guiding principle

Our vision is more than just a goal for the future - it should be tangible today and guide us in our daily actions. We deliberately refrain from measuring ourselves solely by key figures or rankings. Instead, we focus on **how** we want to think, act, and be in ten years' time.

Scientific progress often occurs unexpectedly, through *serendipity*. Too narrow an understanding of success could restrict the very openness that makes excellent science possible in the first place.

That is why our vision emphasizes the attitudes and qualities we need to remain Austria's leading technical university and to establish ourselves as one of the leading technical universities worldwide in an increasing number of scientific fields.

Our VISION is

**TU Wien - Where we dare to reason.
The creative urban tech university.
Unlimited.**

It is with this vision that we want to begin telling the story of TU Wien—like a first sentence meant to spark curiosity and create a desire for more. Terms like *reason*, *creative*, *urban* and *unlimited* serve as dynamic guiding principles, inviting reflection and dialogue. By continuously shaping their meaning together with everyone connected to TU Wien, we actively create our future - because only in this way can our shared vision become our living identity.

The elements of our vision

1 We Dare to Reason

Science thrives on critical thinking, questioning and the pursuit of knowledge based on rational principles. In a world increasingly characterized by opinions, emotions, and *echo chambers*, reason is under threat. This makes it all the more essential for a technical university to place reason at the heart of everything we do and to emphasize the importance of fact-based, critical thinking.

- **We uphold the independence of science, free from** political, economic or social expectations - our research is guided by truth and evidence.
- **Rationality is the foundation of innovation** - creativity and technological progress are not random, but the result of methodical, structured thinking.
- **We take responsibility in times of disinformation** – as a university, it is our duty to communicate the principles of scientific thinking to society.

We see ourselves not only as an institution of knowledge but as a place where reason is actively fostered and defended - "**where we dare to reason.**"

2. creative

For us, creativity is not just about developing new ideas – it also means questioning existing thought patterns and making new connections. Creativity requires knowledge, methodological clarity, and the freedom to think beyond established boundaries.

Creativity is not the invention of something out of nothing but rather the creation of new links between existing ideas. It is not just about finding new answers but also about asking new

questions. It emerges from a mind trained to navigate complexity – one that is not swayed by fleeting impulses or external turbulence but instead recognizes deeper connections. As an institution grounded in rational thinking, TU Wien has a responsibility to counter the increasing emotionalization and irrationality of our time.

What does it take for creativity to emerge?

- **Deep knowledge** - In order to create something new, we must first understand and build upon what already exists.
- **Open environments** - Creative breakthroughs happen through exchange and collaboration.
- **Courage to face uncertainty** - We must be willing to explore new paths, even when the outcome is uncertain.
- **A balance of challenge and competence** - creativity flourishes when tackle demanding problems with strong expertise and skill.

Why is this crucial for us as a technical university?

Many of our greatest scientific breakthroughs stem from creative thought processes. Creativity enables us to develop new research questions, navigate technological uncertainty, and find interdisciplinary solutions.

But creativity extends beyond research – it enhances our teaching, our organization, and our university as a whole. By deliberately combining rationality and creativity, we foster an environment where innovation can thrive.

3. urban

TU Wien sees itself as a "creative **urban** tech university" - a university that actively engages with urban dynamics and helps shape them. Cities are hubs of change, connection and technological and social innovation, and this very dynamism defines us. Our location in the heart of Vienna is no coincidence but a deliberate choice: by keeping our campus in the city, we have made urbanity a permanent part of our identity.

But **urban** is about more than just location - it is an attitude: openness, adaptability, connectivity and the willingness to tackle challenges with courage and responsibility. Cities are at the forefront of global challenges, yet they are also laboratories for innovation and new solutions. TU Wien leverages this environment by integrating research, teaching and practice in direct response to the demands of modern urban life.

The city as a laboratory - together with partners from business, science and politics, we develop solutions for urban challenges. We see Vienna as a model for the urban future - technologies and knowledge that have an impact far beyond the city's borders.

However, sustainable development can only succeed if urban and rural areas are considered together. While the future of humanity may be urban, it remains inextricably connected to rural regions - through resources, energy, and ecological cycles.

As an urban tech university, we stand for:

- **Courage & responsibility** - We face reality head-on and fearlessly, embrace challenges, and actively collaborate to find solutions.
- **Dynamism & vitality** - We are constantly evolving.
- **Cooperation & complexity** - We connect diverse disciplines and stakeholders.
- **Agility & flexibility** - We respond quickly and flexibly to new challenges.
- **Cosmopolitanism & diversity** - We thrive on the exchange of cultures and ideas.

4. *Unlimited*

Unlimited is both a reminder and a promise.

It remind us of what drives us at our core: curiosity, a thirst for knowledge and the belief that progress comes from the right combination of technology, people and society. At the same time, it expresses our promise to keep these driving forces at the heart of our institution.

This understanding of *unlimited* shapes the following principles:

- **Limitless possibilities** - We foster an environment where ideas can develop freely within existing budgetary and legal frameworks.
- **Open mindset** - We challenge conventions and rethink knowledge.
- **Interdisciplinarity** - We cross specialist boundaries to solve complex challenges.
- **Global networking** - Our research and teaching are internationally connected.
- **Freedom to innovate** - We reduce bureaucratic hurdles and create space for bold solutions.
- **Future orientation** - We actively shape the future.

Our vision - a living process

This vision is not a fixed final image but an evolving process that we actively shape. Through reflection, inquiry and forward-thinking, we bring it to life – ensuring that TU Wien remains a place of progress and innovation.

The strategic goals

The strategic goals we will focus on in the coming years are the result of an in-depth examination of our vision and the challenges of both the present and future. They stem directly from our commitment to turning our vision into reality while proactively addressing key developments. Our goal is not only to overcome challenges but also to seize the opportunities they bring and to further develop our university in a focused manner.

Challenges and opportunities

Current challenges

TU Wien faces several structural and strategic challenges that we must actively address to strengthen our international competitiveness:

International visibility - Despite high quality research and teaching, TU Wien lacks sufficient international visibility. A clearer strategic positioning and more targeted branding are required.

Promoting excellent research - Limited incentives and financial constraints hinder the development of interdisciplinary top-level research and the long-term retention of outstanding talent.

Efficient use of resources - Dependence on public funding and limited strategic flexibility restrict TU Wien's development opportunities.

Bureaucratic hurdles in financing and partnerships - High administrative costs and complex management challenges in external collaborations make it difficult to access alternative funding sources.

Diversity and inclusion - Structural barriers prevent balanced diversity in management positions and make it difficult to meet statutory inclusion quotas.

Sustainability strategy - The lack of a systematic, university-wide sustainability strategy leads to uncoordinated initiatives.

Innovation culture and start-up support - A lack of incentives and bureaucratic hurdles complicate technology transfer and the spin-off of start-ups.

Strategy for data literacy and artificial intelligence (AI) - TU Wien lacks a coherent approach to data literacy and the role of AI in research, teaching and administration.

Student-centered teaching - Curricula are not optimally designed for innovative teaching formats, supervision ratios are often unfavorable, and ECTS calculations often lack transparency.

Career paths and staff development - Unclear career prospects and fixed-term contracts create uncertainty for academic and non-academic staff.

Future challenges

In addition to current challenges, several global developments will shape our university in the coming years:

- **Volatility and uncertainty** - Rapidly changing conditions require universities to be more adaptable.
- **Shifting university self-image** - Universities must assert themselves as centers of fact-based discourse and social responsibility.
- **Shortage of qualified junior staff** - International competition for talent continues to increase.
- **Technological disruption through AI** - Increasing automation is fundamentally transforming research, teaching and administration.
- **Climate change and sustainability** - Universities play a key role in developing sustainable technologies and social adaptation strategies.
- **Post-truth phenomenon** - The increasing spread of disinformation necessitates a stronger defense of scientific excellence and fact-based decision-making.
- **Global de- and re-globalization** – Geopolitical tensions are increasingly challenging international cooperation.

Strategic opportunities for TU Wien

These challenges are not just risks - they also open up new strategic opportunities for us.

To strengthen TU Wien's position in the long term, we are focusing on the following areas:

- **Strengthening international partnerships** - We increase our visibility and scientific impact through targeted cooperation with leading global institutions and participation in alliances such as the European University Alliance EULiST.
- **New financing models** – Diversifying funding sources increases our independence and creates new opportunities for strategic development.
- **Attractiveness and flexibility of study programs** - Innovative teaching formats, AI-supported learning processes, English-language study programs, and a stronger student focus enhance TU Wien's international competitiveness.
- **Scientific leadership, technology leadership and social responsibility** – By strategically focusing on key areas such as Information Technologies, Green Technologies, Health Technologies, Quantum Technologies and Engineering Technologies, we position ourselves as a university of excellence and a driver of both technological and social innovation. Strategic cooperation and alliances with national partners (e.g. TU Austria, AIT) play a key role in this effort.
- **Resilience and strategic adaptability** - TU Wien is evolving into an agile organization capable of responding flexibly to crises and emerging challenges.

The 8 strategic goals

The strategic goals translate our mission and vision into concrete development paths. They address key challenges and leverage strategic opportunities to further advance TU Wien in a focused way.

1. Further develop an attractive and high-performance environment for all members of the university.

TU Wien provides an environment where excellence in science and teaching is combined with a high quality of life and a culture of respect.

- TU Wien is internationally recognized as a first-class place to study and work.
- Researchers, students and employees experience an environment that both supports and challenges them while being inclusive and appreciative. Particular attention is paid to gender equality.
- Career paths are transparent, structured, and offer long-term development prospects.
- A strong culture of personal responsibility and team spirit shapes cooperation at the university.

2. Strengthen scientific leadership and strategically enhance TU Wien's international visibility.

TU Wien is one of the world's leading technical universities and plays a key role in the global scientific landscape.

- TU Wien is an international leader in strategic research fields.
- Excellence in research and teaching is demonstrated through high visibility in global rankings and recognition as a top university.
- TU Wien is actively engaged in the world's most important research networks and is a sought-after international scientific partner.
- TU Wien is regarded as an attractive destination for international talent (researchers, students and managers) and for collaboration.
- TU Wien identifies, develops, and supports its top scientists and future high achievers (e.g. young talents) through innovative career paths (e.g., opportunity hiring)

3. Re-emphasize the unity of teaching and research.

TU Wien recognizes teaching and research as equally important. Both are central to academic excellence and social responsibility.

- Future-oriented and innovative research fields are reflected in high-quality, responsible teaching program.

- Teaching quality is measured using clear metrics and is considered into relevant career decisions.
- Aligning teaching with student needs ensures that degrees can be completed within the standard time frame, supports student success, and enhances TU Wien's attractiveness to (inter)national talent.
- The close integration of research and teaching, along with consideration of the needs of industry and society, ensures that new developments are directly incorporated into teaching.

4. Establish digital transformation as a strategic priority at TU Wien.

TU Wien is not only a research hub for digital technologies but also a pioneer in digital transformation.

- Digital technologies and AI are an integral part of research, teaching, and administration, supporting all members of the university in their work.
- Scientific excellence is driven data-based research and the use of innovative digital tools. Research data is managed according to the highest international standards.
- New data-related tasks and roles (e.g. data stewards, data analysts) have been established at TU Wien, playing a key role in research.
- Processes for digital services are continuously improved and implemented for researchers, students and administration, enabling new ways of working, innovative products and enhanced services.
- Skills for managing digital transformation - especially data literacy and artificial intelligence – are actively taught.

5. Systematically strengthen creativity and innovation culture at TU Wien.

TU Wien is a place where creative and critical thinking, interdisciplinary cooperation, and unconventional solutions form the foundation of research, teaching and internal processes.

- A strong culture of curiosity, openness, integrity and interdisciplinary reflection is embedded all areas of the university.
- Creativity is recognized as a key component of scientific excellence.
- Researchers and students work in an environment that fosters scientific freedom and creative exploration.
- Bureaucratic and organizational hurdles are minimized to allow researchers and teaching staff to focus on their core tasks.

6. Establish sustainability as a central principle in research, teaching and university operations.

Responsible and long-term resource management is an integral part of TU Wien's scientific and institutional culture, shaping research, teaching, and administration. At the same time, TU Wien positions itself as a leading institution for urban transformation and actively contributes to sustainable development.

- Sustainability principles are embedded across all areas of the university and shape scientific discourse.
- TU Wien serves a role model for sustainable research and technological development, actively shaping environments, in particular the TU Campus.
- Scientific findings on sustainable technologies and processes are widely recognized and influence societal decisions as well as urban development.
- Close collaboration between science, city administration, and business ensures that research findings directly impact key urban areas such as sustainable mobility, smart infrastructure, and resource-efficient construction.
- All members of the university engage with sustainability issues and contribute to their further development.

7. Position TU Wien as a leading institution for the exchange of knowledge, methods and technologies.

TU Wien views innovation as the social and economic application of new research results through multidirectional exchange with all stakeholders. TU Wien fosters innovation by:

- Establishing itself as an internationally recognized role model and a leading hub for productive exchange and cooperation between basic research and applied research for tech and deep tech.
- Strengthening entrepreneurship and intrapreneurship to create an innovation-friendly environment both externally and internally.
- Expanding further education and training programs in its core competencies as well as in of entrepreneurship.
- Actively supporting spin-offs and start-ups, positioning them as equally viable career paths alongside science and industry.
- Developing partnership models with academic and industrial players to maximize synergies between research and application through intensive exchange.
- Creating spaces for innovation by developing (digital) idea and collaboration platforms, opening laboratories, and establishing maker spaces.
- Promoting sustainable and socially responsible business start-ups.

8. Strengthen the TU Wien community and sense of belonging: Together we are TU Wien!

We can only achieve TU Wien's strategic goals together. This requires all members to identify with TU Wien as a whole – whether in studies and teaching, research and innovation, administration, or governing bodies of the university. In times of global change, uncertainty and challenges, TU Wien, with its more than 200 years of history, provides orientation and serves a role model. A united front, respect for our autonomy, and shared responsibility at all levels strengthen us as a community and allow us to act effectively. **Unity in diversity - together for a sustainable TU Wien!**

- Everyone at TU Wien sees themselves as part of a strong, visible community and identifies with the university's mission and vision.
- A productive and appreciative feedback culture - driven by the desire for continuous improvement - is an integral part of our daily collaboration.
- Innovative formats and spaces encourage spontaneous encounters and conversations, complementing the existing culture of celebration.
- Third parties perceive TU Wien and its people as competent, self-confident and approachable.
- TU Wien is a reliable and sought-after partner for solutions in business, society and politics.
- Alumnae and alumni maintain lifelong ties to TU Wien and support it ideally, financially, or as brand ambassadors.
- TU Wien communicates in multiple languages and has implemented a functional multilingualism strategy.

The cross-cutting themes

The function and origin of the cross-cutting themes

TU Wien's strategic goals define **what** is to be achieved, while the cross-cutting themes determine **how** the strategy is to be implemented in a sustainable and coherent manner. They ensure that core values and principles are embedded in all measures.

These themes were not defined in the abstract but emerged from a comprehensive analysis of the fuTUre fit process - particularly from the first phase ("Listening"), the working group reports and the fuTUre fit Convention. As a result, they reflect recurring challenges and opportunities and ensure the university's effective and future-oriented development.

Comprehensive communication - Enhances TU Wien's external visibility, strengthens internal networks, and makes science more tangible for society and policymakers.

Scientific integrity - Ensures international recognition of research results, promotes long-term excellence, and guarantees the highest quality standards.

External cooperation - Increases social and technological impact, strengthens international partnerships, and positions TU Wien as a key innovation driver.

Customer Orientation & debureaucratization - Reduces administrative hurdles, improves the efficiency of university processes, and increases the attractiveness TU Wien's attractiveness as a place to study and work.

Diversity - Fosters an inclusive university culture, enhances appeal for international talent, and contributes to an equitable and gender-balanced academic environment.

Safety - Enhances the well-being of students and staff, protects infrastructures, and promotes a resilient university community.



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