



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
DI PADOVA

# Strategic Plan 2023-2027

Executive summary



## Universa universis patavina libertas: mission and vision

*The University of Padua has a strong century-old history and tradition of high-quality education and research and has a reputation as a large and qualified multidisciplinary University capable of enhancing diversity, with the intent **to further increase the quality of research and teaching and its integration**, thus confirming the leading role in **the innovation and the improvement of society**, assuming the responsibility of providing value and knowledge to the national and international community, **respecting and rewarding merit and enhancing scientific knowledge**. The University aims to strengthen its importance at a global level, **enhancing diversity, sustainability and the integration between various types of knowledge and skills**. Focusing on the University's **aspirations towards universality and freedom of research and teaching**, on **concrete programmes and action strategies**, on the **sense of belonging, the dedication and the multiplicity of professional skills** of the entire academic community, we intend to exemplify the motto "Universa Universis Patavina Libertas".*

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## Values and principles

In 2022 the University of Padua celebrated its 800th anniversary. It was an exciting year, full of events, learning opportunities and openness to the city and institutions, with particular attention to the inspiring values of our University, which was founded by students in search of freedom of study and expression.

*Patavina Libertas* is inextricably linked to the birth of modern medicine, to the first woman graduate in the world, to the Gold Medal of Military Valour awarded to the University for its contribution towards the fight against Nazifascism, and to students of all religions and geographical origins who have found in Padua a place where they can study without having to give up their identity.

Strengthened by this identity, the Values and Principles underlying the Strategic Plan are:

- To promote and protect a public university that is open, secular, pluralist and free from “any conditioning and discrimination based on ideological, religious, political, economic or physical reasons” (Statute, art. 1).
- To protect freedom of research and teaching.
- To enhance all fields of knowledge, promoting interdisciplinarity in research and teaching (*gymnasium omnium disciplinarum*).
- To promote the commitment to scientific research, to the generation and transmission of knowledge and to cultural production, which is the basis for the formation of new generations and for economic and social growth.
- To promote relations with the society at large, with the awareness of being a proponent of

cultural, social and economic development, enhancing social impact and social responsibility in all activities.

- To enhance the cultural heritage of the University as a factor for the empowerment and growth of people and the society.
- To promote a culture based on values such as equality, inclusion, sustainability and social responsibility.
- To enhance the diversity of ideas and world views, combating all forms of discrimination (based on ethnicity, health, gender, age, religion or sexual orientation).
- To promote autonomy and responsibility in the management of resources.
- To value merit and promote excellence also through fair and shared assessment tools.
- To adopt concrete programmes and foster sustainable development, translating into action the values of the University’s motto *Universa universis patavina libertas*.

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## Changes in progress: challenges and opportunities for the University

The University has changed significantly in recent years, growing both in terms of student population and employees, and in the variety and number of activities carried out. Some data highlight the evolution of the University between 2018 and 2021:

- students went from about 60,000 to 70,000;
- international students enrolled in the 2017/18 academic year were just under 500 and accounted for 2.7% of career starts, while in the 2021/22 academic year there were 2,283 international students, almost 10% of the total career starts;
- the bachelor's, master's and single-cycle master's degree courses have gone from 177 (academic year 2017/18) to 203 (academic year 2022/23);
- postgraduate courses grew by 9.5%, from 222 (academic year 2017/18) to 243 (academic year 2022/23). In particular, the number of doctoral courses has increased from 39 to 40, while short specialisation degrees and other postgraduate courses are 203 in 2022 compared to 183 in 2018;
- the number of teachers grew by 10.9%;
- the number of technical and administrative staff grew by 4.7%;
- research funds acquired annually increased from EUR 34 million to EUR 48.5 million;
- research funds acquired and usable in subsequent years grew from 145 million euros to 382 million euros.

Dimensional growth implies a certain degree of complexity for the University and poses a problem in terms of availability and adequacy of spaces, urging both an increase and a rethinking of such spaces to ensure availability, functionality and sustainability.

This change for the University also took place in a context characterised by events of historical significance, such as the Sars-Cov-2 pandemic and the explosion of a war in Europe, and by the strengthening of underlying dynamics that will have a significant impact on societies.

Covid has accelerated the digital revolution in progress, promoting a widespread and irreversible way of using technology in teaching and giving a strong impetus to the implementation of smart working. The pandemic also gave rise to the most important public intervention of the last 70 years: the Next Generation EU. This intervention significantly involves the university system, allocating huge resources to be used in a short period. Universities therefore have a responsibility to ensure that this investment in research has significant cultural, social and economic effects.

During the pandemic period, there was also a progressive reduction in the availability of housing for students. This is a common dynamic, in part due to an increase in the availability of housing solutions used for short-term tourist rentals in the national real estate market, leading to a significant increase in prices. The availability of housing for students is a limiting factor for the growth of the University and calls for a systemic approach.

Finally, Italy is affected by two divergent dynamics:

- a) the need to increase the number of graduates to support the social growth and competitiveness of the country;
- b) the demographic decline that directly influences the potential student population. With 28% of

young people (aged between 24 and 34) graduating, our country is second to last in the EU and is far from the European average (41%) and from the target of 45% of graduates by 2030 (Eurostat source). In this context, there is also a growth in the enrolment of online universities, which have undoubtedly benefited from the implementation of distance learning during the pandemic.

Another important factor is a major technological change. The knowledge acquired and accumulated, both by people and by organisations and institutions, has a relatively short life cycle, strengthening the role of universities in generating and transferring new knowledge. In this perspective, it becomes essential to promote technological transfer and to offer training courses with updated content aimed at acquiring the knowledge required by the labour market, while deepening and updating the knowledge already possessed.

The scenario in which the University operates is affected by profound changes and unexpected and potentially destabilising conflict situations involving the entire international community. All this means that the University has the responsibility to reaffirm and promote the values of freedom, peace and acceptance of diversity, and to generate and disseminate scientific knowledge relevant to addressing the profound changes that affect society.

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## The University in the face of challenges: resources and unique features

The University has the ambition to be a fundamental institution for Italy and Europe, with the task of contributing to the change of society and its growth through Scientific Research, Teaching, the Third Mission and the social impact and dissemination of knowledge.

The results achieved place the University in an extremely prominent position at a national level; however, the high quality in Research, Teaching, the Third Mission and social impact must be maintained and improved where possible, in order to offer a way to face and drive the changes in progress, playing an important role not only at a national level, but also in the international context.

The changes and challenges that are taking place are impressive, but the University has the distinctive and qualifying resources to govern change, contributing to the development of society, such as:

### **The founding values: freedom of research and teaching and inclusion**

The founding values of the University are of extraordinary relevance and bring the academic community together, while also attracting talents;

### **High quality in research**

The University has implemented virtuous policies for recruiting quality researchers, as demonstrated by numerous indicators, including the high quality of publications and the extraordinary ability to acquire research funds from competitive calls.

### **High quality in teaching**

The Anvur evaluation awarded the University the letter A, certifying thorough and consistent processes. The ability to attract students and the continuous activity of teaching analysis and evaluation are essential to face the profound changes that are taking place in university teaching.

### **The high quality of the teaching, technical and administrative staff**

The results are obtained through the commitment and quality of the teaching, technical and administrative staff. Competence, pride, passion and a sense of belonging are essential to face the challenges and changes underway.

### **Economic and financial soundness**

The University is an economically and financially sound institution. Over time, this has allowed the University to plan and make important investments in research (e.g. BIRD, Infrastructures and World Class Research Infrastructure projects), recruitment, teaching and construction to provide quality spaces for study, work and research. These investments have always created a virtuous path, leading to the acquisition of additional resources and allowing the University to improve and grow.

### **Multidisciplinarity**

Being a *gymnasium omnium disciplinarum* allows the University to address all relevant research issues and challenges that characterise modern society in all fields of knowledge and professions.

### **The University's logistics project under construction**

The University has undertaken a careful analysis of logistics for a long time and has substantial investments underway that will lead to a significant increase in available space. In particular, at the end of the interventions in place, spaces for teaching will grow by 13.1%, while those for research will increase by 14%.

### **Meetings and discussions with the main institutional actors**

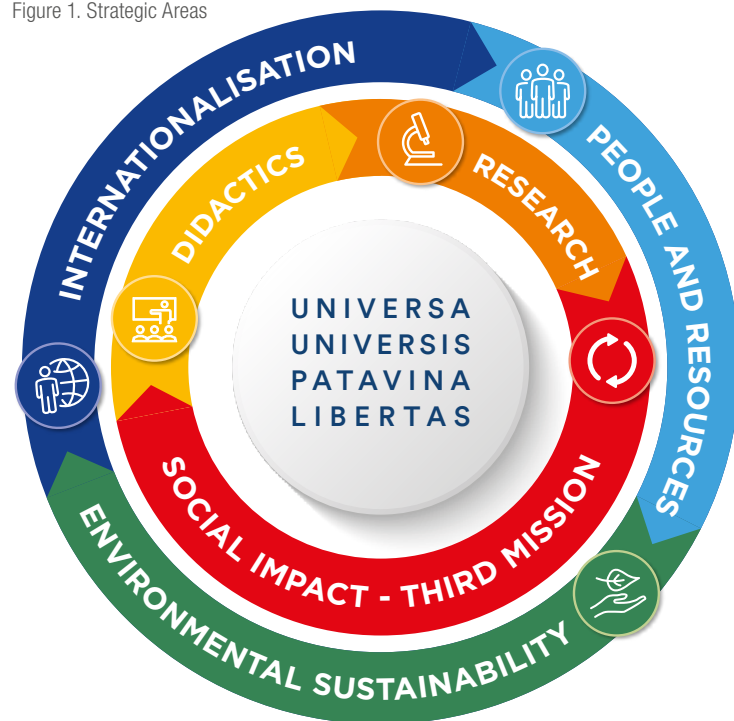
The University is aware of the importance of a favourable study and work environment, and has arranged or has promptly joined meetings and discussions with local and regional institutions and actors. These initiatives are aimed at addressing the main problems regarding university activities in a coordinated manner.

## Areas and strategic objectives

The University's strategy is divided into six strategic areas, shown in Figure 1.

The areas refer to the three fundamental missions - **Didactics**, **Research** and **Social Impact - Third Mission** - and to three transversal dimensions: **Internationalisation**, **People and Resources** and **Environmental Sustainability**.

Figure 1. Strategic Areas



For each of the six areas, specific **objectives** are identified to define the autonomy of Departments and Schools and the policies of the University.

Table 1 shows the list of objectives of the University for each of the six strategic areas.

### TEACHING

- Encourage teaching improvement
- Encourage innovation in teaching methodologies and content updating
- Improve the attractiveness of degree, doctoral, specialisation and master's courses
- Promote the development of transversal and interdisciplinary skills
- Enhance and improve internship and traineeship opportunities also at an international level
- From external locations to the widespread Campus: improving services by reducing diversity between different locations
- Expand, diversify and renew the technological equipment and services available to the student body, with particular attention to those with disabilities, SLDs and learning difficulties
- Promote policies and interventions that protect the right to education

### RESEARCH

- Promote scientific excellence and multidisciplinary in research
- Increase the ability to attract competitive funds for research
- Increase the ability to attract excellent researchers
- Strengthen research infrastructures and research services

### SOCIAL IMPACT AND THIRD MISSION

- Promote a third-mission culture and enhance the responsibility and social impact of the University at the local, national and international levels, with particular attention to social vulnerability
- Promote strategies and actions aimed at reducing the skill discrepancy of professionals with respect to the demands of the market, the territory and the school world
- Promote and consolidate academic entrepreneurship through the creation and growth of spin-offs and start-ups, and take action to increase the employability of students
- Encourage and consolidate technological transfer, patentability of research results and the use of scientific patents and know-how
- Make university museums inclusive places for knowledge sharing and facilitate access to the historical, artistic and cultural heritage of the University, including library services
- Value university medicine and veterinary care for the welfare of society

### INTERNATIONALISATION

- Turn study and doctoral courses into open and international learning environments
- Increase the University's reputation as a centre of excellence at an international level
- Develop the University's international social responsibility through the enhancement of international cooperation activities

### PEOPLE AND RESOURCES

- Promote recruitment and career progression according to merit in order to support the people's professional aspirations and the development of the University
- Improve services for the well-being of students and staff of the University
- Improve the work environment and expand services for organisational well-being
- Promote gender equality and an inclusive culture
- Foster the digital transition and promote the digital skills of staff
- Strengthen the economic and financial balance
- Improve safety standards in work, study and teaching areas
- Improve, adapt and coordinate the management and technological standards of work and study spaces

### ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Encourage sustainable management of procurement processes
- Reduce the environmental impact of processes, products and services
- Monitor and improve efficiency in the use of environmental resources
- Promote sustainable mobility and environmental awareness projects

## University strategic positioning indicators and expected outcomes

In order to reach the University's anticipated results the following scenario is expected:

- at least 23,000 students enrolled, of which at least 10% are international students. The University does not have the objective to increase the number of enrolled students, however, the current number conforms with the role of a public institution at the service of the country and with a medium-to-long-term sustainability of investments;
- the implementation of the recruitment plan for teaching and technical and administrative staff, so as to reach 2,850 teachers and 2,900 units of technical and administrative staff by the end of the plan;
- research funds received from competitive tenders amounting to at least 100 million euro per year.

### UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC POSITIONING INDICATORS AND TARGETS

INDICATOR	Position in the main international rankings
TARGET	Maintaining the position
INDICATOR	Weight of premium share on the FFO fund
TARGET	Greater than or equal to 4.85%
INDICATOR	Weight of the standard cost share of the FFO fund
TARGET	Greater than or equal to 4.25%

Edited by  
Ufficio Controllo di Gestione  
[controllo.gestione@unipd.it](mailto:controllo.gestione@unipd.it)

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ACOM - Ufficio Comunicazione

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© Università degli Studi di Padova  
via VIII febbraio 2 Padova  
[www.unipd.it](http://www.unipd.it)



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