

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF VAASA

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2.4 The HEI's examples of successful enhancement activities

- HEI's self-assessment

Adoption of holistic and responsible criteria in research evaluations

UVA periodically evaluates its research activities via invited international panels of independent scientific experts in order to strengthen the quality of research internationally, to advance the scholarly and societal impact of research, and to further develop the research environment. The most recent research assessment exercise (RAE 2023) evaluated the research environment, research cooperation and funding, publications, and scientific activities including societal impact. In addition to the [CWTS analysis](#) prepared by Leiden University, [SciVal](#) analyses on [Scopus](#) publications against SDGs were performed for each unit, as well as results from AI-analysis of the themes of open access publications.

Similarly, UVA's tenure track and progression evaluation criteria cover publications, scholarly impact (e.g. citations), as well as societal impact, which must be demonstrated.

The enhancements via the above include:

- Creation of 'impact cases' as a means for research groups to demonstrate impact as part of RAE; these cases were subsequently published on UVA's main webpage under the 'Mission Possible' science communication campaign
- Greater alignment with DORA and CoARA policy and recommendations

- Greater visibility and importance attached to positive societal impact at institutional and researcher level
- Graduate School training on ‘impact through research’ and ‘effective science communication’ for all doctoral students
- Alongside accreditations, UVA is a member of PRME and has entered EFMD’s Business School Impact System (BSIS) as a continued commitment to measuring and reporting impact.

Creation of research platforms to foster multidisciplinary, innovative and impactful research

In line with UVA’s mission to advance sustainable business, energy, and society, three [research platforms](#) were established to address key societal challenges in the areas of energy and sustainable development, digitalization, and innovation. The platforms are each led by a Research Director, who are all part of the UVA Management Group. They have complemented UVA’s strong disciplinary expertise in the following main ways:

- Increased high-quality academic research output and quality;
- Promoted impactful, phenomenon-based and cross-disciplinary research;
- Supported researcher collaboration across subject areas and schools; and
- Stimulated research project development in high-potential areas for external funding from competitive national and international funding bodies
- Example: Via the Digital Economy platform, UVA is home to the international ESA Business Incubation Centre (ESA BIC) Finland Vaasa Site. ESA BIC Finland runs the European Space Agency’s business incubator activities in Finland. The ESA BIC network aims to inspire young entrepreneurs to commercialise space-related business ideas.

‘Vaasa Energy Week’: Mission-driven engagement of multiple stakeholders to support innovation, networking and impact

UVA organizes and participates in a number of stakeholder-oriented seminars and events. The most significant is the annual [Vaasa Energy Week](#) – Finland’s leading international energy conference. Energy Week gathers energy business stakeholders – academics, practitioners and public officials – from all over the world to share information, hear about the latest news and most interesting cases, extend their networks and do business. Energy Week focuses on renewable energies, smart energy, gas energy and energy storage. Topics of interest include digitalization, batteries and storage, circular economy, future smart cities, energy regulation, business and innovation. At Energy Week, UVA is engaged in a variety of forums, either hosting or presenting at seminars and events. This has facilitated several enhancements:

- New project development with new and existing industry and academic partners
- Forum for business, university, city officials and regional development agencies to meet

- Knowledge dissemination between researchers and industry representatives
- Career opportunities for experts and researcher in the energy sector.

Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Model (CoDoc)

UVA's Collaborative Doctoral Partnership Model ([CoDoc](#)) addresses companies' research-based operation, process, and service needs. Within this model, the company partner funds the four-year PhD research with the University. CoDoc covers cooperative funding, scheduling, coaching, and supervision to add value for all partners. With CoDoc, the university is the first in Finland to provide venture capital-funded PhD scholarships.

Talent Boost activities for talent attraction and retention

The University is coordinating [Talent Boost](#) activities in Vaasa. The aim is to facilitate the integration of international degree students into the regional labour market. UVA wants to promote the integration of international talents into Finnish society. All the HEIs in Vaasa jointly organize [Talent Forum Vaasa](#), a recruitment and career event for higher education students.