

AUDIT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

Authors **Milena Žic Fuchs, Sebastian Neufeld, Mikael Pentikäinen, Marijk van der Wende, Sirpa Moitus & Mira Huusko, Self-assessment of the University of Turku (eds.) Juha Sainio & Ilona Tuominen**

Year of publication **2023**, FINEEC publications **26:2023**

Language **English**

ISBN **978-952-206-804-0 pdf**

4.1 An evaluation area selected by the HEI

- HEI's self-assessment

Support Services for Societal Impact and Engagement

The support services for societal impact and engagement at UTU have been recently strengthened. They were placed under the responsibility of the Vice Rector for partnerships and strategic engagement with a unit with the same name, and complemented by services provided by several other units in the support services. Services presented here are primarily focused on supporting UTU community.

Through societal interaction, UTU actively enhances the creation of positive development in society. Strategic Goal of UTU is to be a *proactive and dynamic partner* (Figure 27). Accordingly, UTU aims to be a *respected and responsible societal contributor*. Furthermore, *UTU builds and maintains strong regional partnerships* that make UTU's operational environment unique and internationally attractive.

In order to realise the strategic goals, itemised sub-goals have been identified:

- > UTU carries global responsibility and is a proactive partner in development. Excellent research and education create the basis for our increasing **impact**. We train experts with a **capacity for change, who build a sustainable future** in different sectors of society.
- > UTU is an open and proactive societal contributor. Our research is employed in **decision-making**. Our researchers highlight scientific information and its significance, introduce perspectives to the public debate, and **emphasise matters requiring research**. We are a responsible advocate of science and a pioneer in research advisory activities.
- > UTU values close collaboration in regional, national and international networks. UTU engages in **long-term and goal-oriented partnerships**. Strategic collaboration strengthens our societal impact. UTU collaborates with **business life** to create opportunities for **new innovations and their commercialisation as well as business development**. UTU increases regional well-being and development through our three campuses on the western coast of Finland.
- > UTU has an excellent international reputation and standing as a global education provider. UTU realises **transnational education** in a responsible manner and produces additional value.

Figure 27. Itemised sub-goals in the strategy of UTU

UTU has five units (Figure 28) with services focused on supporting and highlighting the positive trajectories created through UTU’s basic tasks. These include responsibilities in the University-level partnerships and strategic engagement on a national as well as international level, continuous learning, research and innovation support, strategic development, and increasing the visibility of UTU’s societal impact and engagement. The units support the UTU community also by issuing University-level guidelines and policies, intermediating between administration and faculties, aiding the UTU management in decision-making, and providing personalised guidance to the members of the University community. Services are accessible to entire UTU community.

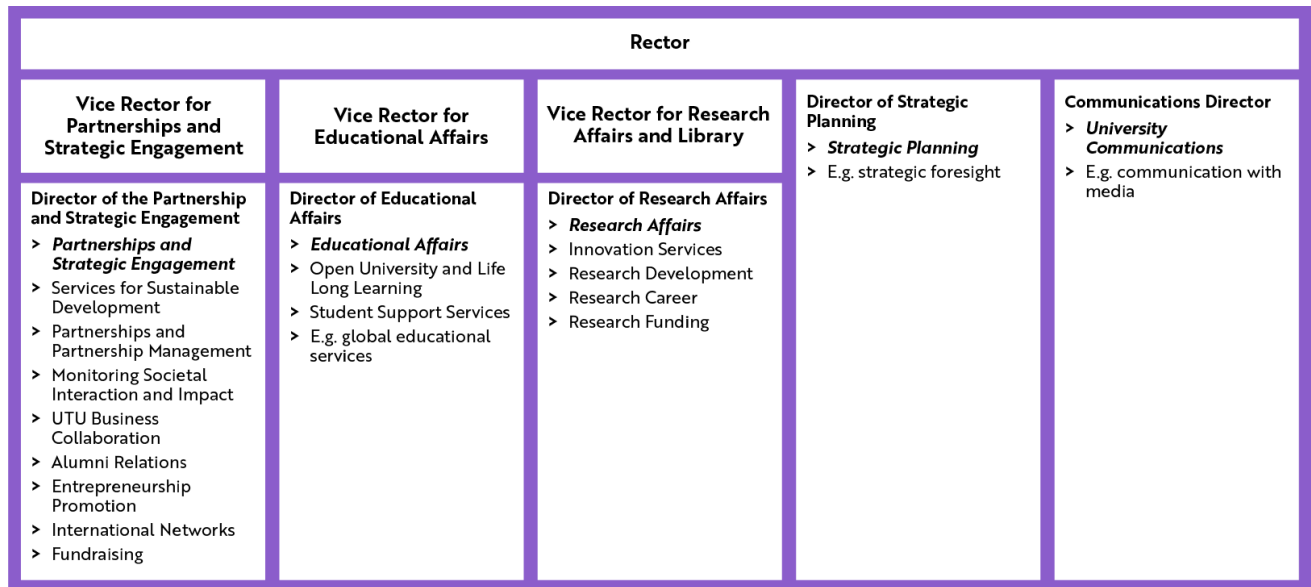


Figure 28. Support services of societal engagement and impact at UTU. Note: Services illustrated here do not represent all UTU services that belong to the remit of Rector, Vice-rectors and Directors.

Fund-raising activities communicate about UTU to society in a diverse manner, thereby expanding the awareness of the University’s impact. The fund-raising services is responsible for University-level donations as well as supporting the faculties in their fund-raising. UTU exceeded its €5M fund-raising goal for the state-matched funding scheme 2020–2022. Fund raising policy is expected to be issued by April 2023. Partnerships and partnership management services support UTU’s decision-making and operational development. It is supported by a *partnership management system* which is currently under development. UTU was successful in forming two new University-level strategic partnerships in 2022. Policy for strategic and University-level partnerships was approved in 2022.

UTU Business Collaboration (UBC) boosts research project funding preparation with companies. The impact can include increased sustainability and better competitiveness. Since the service was established in 2021, UTU has been successful in increasing the number of applications submitted to Business Finland (Co-Creation and Co-Innovation). The UBC services are implemented together with the Innovation Services and it complements the Research Funding in the Research Affairs. In the same unit, Research Development analyses the services for impact at different stages of the research process. It also organises training for different profiling areas in UTU. UTU is particularly focused on the promotion of open science and was placed on the highest

level in Finland in 2022.

Entrepreneurship promotion services increase entrepreneurial thinking and activity, and support the development of research-driven innovations at UTU. Through the services, students and researchers are introduced to and supported in entrepreneurial matters which ultimately boost business activity and economy. In 2022, UTU was awarded as the first Finnish university with the international ACEEU (Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial and Engaged Universities) accreditation for its efforts in entrepreneurship promotion and societal engagement. The Innovation Services work in collaboration with the entrepreneurship promotion services in guiding individuals in the early stages of business development. The unit is also responsible for the statutory innovation notification process and coordinates a systematic method for searching, screening, and upgrading innovation proposals. In addition, it coordinates the “Research to business” funding. Since 2012, UTU has received funding for 44 out of 62 projects (71%) and for 45 out of 89 applications (51%) with the total funding being 16.26M€.

The 50,000 alumni form an important interest group for UTU. The alumni relations are steered with annual action plans. The focus is on the faculties and units that collaborate with their alumni in the way that best suits their discipline. The objective of the centralised alumni relations is to support the faculties in strengthening their alumni co-operation through offering advice, increasing communications, and organising events. Recently, services especially for the international alumni have been strengthened.

Internal collaboration between different services and shared teams across units create synergy. For example, services for sustainable development and international networks both support the creation of domestic and global societal impact by implementing the UN’s sustainable development goals. In 2022, UTU launched an ambitious Action Plan for Sustainable Campus Life and, already in 2018, committed to carbon neutrality by 2025. Another example is the monitoring and assessment of societal interaction and impact, which includes collecting, analysing, and distributing information to management and faculties. This work is realised in co-operation with the Strategic Planning unit. The Rector provides feedback to faculties once per year on their societal interaction.

Faculties, units, and support services (e.g. Partnerships and Strategic Engagement) are responsible for disseminating the research results to society, e.g. by influencing decision-making. They are supported by the University Communications that communicate and monitor UTU’s public image which is formed through research and education. Educational Affairs offers support and advice in matters and processes related to undergraduate education, but also in continuous learning, where impact is achieved primarily through the open university education. These services also include Global Educational Services that made 25 education export deals in 2021.

Strengths	Enhancement areas
Basic funding directed to internal services ensures the availability and quality of the support services for societal impact and engagement. The services were notably strengthened with a new organisation in 2021 with clear responsibilities	On the University-level, there is a lack of comprehensive reporting system for some of the services (such as sustainable development, the extent and different forms of company collaboration)
Existing services are directly linked to the UTU Strategy. In addition, the cross-cutting themes of the UTU Strategy, including internationality, open science and impact, responsibility and sustainable development, are present in the services	Delivery of the services necessitate human resources and proper structures not only in the administration but also in the faculties and units. Regarding some services, structures are still being developed (e.g. alumni relations)
Guidelines and policies ensure strategic, systematic and long-term activities, such as policies and guidelines for the University-level partnerships, fund-raising policy, IPR, establishing a research-based company	Monitoring impact cannot be based solely on quantitative indicators, i.e. numbers. More diverse indicators are needed
Research-to-business process is working efficiently at UTU, providing ongoing funding opportunities for companies with international growth potential	UTU is applying a network model in order to ensure an extensive and versatile environment for supporting the growth of entrepreneurship. However, more attention is needed in building entrepreneurial teams with other actors in the entrepreneurship ecosystem
UTU has versatile and well-established co-operation with actors from different sectors of society, incl. industry. An example of this are University-level strategic partners, with whom co-operation is promoted throughout UTU's basic missions	Some services are in the development phase, e.g. the new partnership management system may require help with the technical aspects
Internationality is part of the essential structures and services. For example, international activities and networks have been strengthened recently, including the alumni relations, international advisory board, and the International Programme of UTU	