

# Vision & Strategies
2026–2031

UNIVERSITY WEST

# **Vision & Strategies** 2026-2031

This document outlines the direction for our university's continued development. Based on our core mission – education and research – we are taking a clear step back to basics. The vision, objectives, and strategic development areas describe the kind of university we aspire to be, our role in society, and how we take responsibility for the future.

The mandate comes from the University Board and builds on the strength and quality that already exist within our operations. We are already on our way, and this work clarifies a shared direction that helps us make deliberate choices for the future. As a socially relevant university, firmly embedded in society, we contribute to knowledge, education, and change – locally, nationally, and internationally.

This direction is shaped collectively. It means that everyone active at the university – teachers and researchers, students, doctoral students, and other staff – are part of a shared academic community and are important contributors to the university's development. We share responsibility for quality, for continuous development, and for open collaboration that strengthens our role in society.

The document below presents our vision, our objectives, and four strategic development areas. Together, they form a coherent whole: what we want to feel proud of, what we aspire to achieve, and what we will do in concrete terms to take the next step.

**Creating change together.**



# Introduction

Our vision sets the direction for the university's long-term development and clarifies the objectives that are to guide our activities. The point of departure is education and research of high quality, closely integrated with each other and with the surrounding society. To further develop our activities, four strategic areas of development have been identified. Work within these areas is intended to drive continued progress towards our vision and objectives – our education and our research.

Central to the identity and way of working at University West is a collective, collaborative, and cooperative approach, characterised by open and academic dialogue. By contributing diverse perspectives and experiences, we create conditions for critical reflection, knowledge development, and innovation. This approach is grounded in the principles of academic citizenship, in which everyone active at the university – teachers and researchers, students, doctoral students, and other staff – forms part of a broader academic community.

As academic citizens, we share a collective responsibility to promote quality in education and research, and to safeguard open, respectful, and trust-based collaboration.

Through shared responsibility, University West creates a sustainable and inclusive academic environment that contributes to societal development.




**University West conducts future-oriented education and research – with societal relevance, quality and responsibility.**

# **Vision for** University West

University West is a university in the middle of society, creating knowledge, innovation and sustainable societal change through education and research. We are convinced that knowledge makes a difference for individuals, for working life and for society. Through education, research and active collaboration, we address the needs of the future and create value at local, regional, national and global levels. At University West, we are dedicated to creating change together.



# **Objective** – Education

### Education that Meets Societal Needs

University West meets society's need for academic education. We offer attractive and high-quality education that is relevant for society and designed to address regional, national and global needs.

### A Broad, Strategic and Flexible Range of Programmes and Courses

Our range of programmes and courses is broad and strategically designed, comprising a flexible mix of first-cycle and second-cycle programmes, standalone courses, contract education, and doctoral education within our areas of strength. Courses and programmes are aimed at both new and experienced higher education students, as well as working professionals.

### Education that Strengthens Individuals, Professions and Society

They are adapted to meet student demand and society's and the labour market's need for expertise. This creates conditions for individual development as well as professional and societal development.

### Accessible Education with High Expectations and Active Engagement

We make higher education accessible to everyone, regardless of background. Teachers have high expectations of students' engagement and confidence in their capabilities. Each student is regarded as an active co-creator of their education, and we develop the educational environment together.

### Education in Close Collaboration with Research and Society

Education at University West is closely linked to research. We therefore work actively with organisational and pedagogical structures that promote a dynamic and vibrant interaction between education and research. The programmes are also characterised by global perspectives and collaboration with working life and society.

### Our Students are Prepared for the Complex Challenges of the Future

University West educates students who are analytical, creative and critically reflective, with the ability for independent judgement, ethical awareness, resilience and intellectual curiosity. This prepares them to meet future challenges at regional, national and global levels.

### An Inclusive Learning Environment with Strong Academic Values

The educational environment is open and inclusive, and a place where teachers' pedagogical, subject-specific, practice-based and scientific expertise is a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring high quality. Collegial collaboration is central, and we support one another in achieving success. We dare to prioritise and stand up for values such as academic freedom, equal rights and equal opportunity for all, as well as sustainable development. We develop education that meets the needs of the future and contributes to sustainable societal development.




# **Objective** – Research

### Research that Makes a Difference for Society

University West develops knowledge that makes a difference. We conduct high-quality research that contributes to knowledge development, innovation and sustainable societal change. Our research is important for society, working life, professions and individuals. It is shaped in close dialogue with students, research colleagues, industry, professionals and other societal actors.

### Cohesive and Collaborative Research Environments

Research at University West is characterised by cohesive research and education environments, such as our areas of strength in Production Technology and Work-Integrated Learning. These environments, as well as others at our university, are marked by interdisciplinarity and applicability, where collaboration is a driving force for research excellence (eller research capabilities?), societal relevance and innovation. By integrating academia, working life and international partnerships, both basic and applied research are strengthened.

### Academic Excellence with Practical Relevance

In our research, we combine academic quality with practical relevance to generate new knowledge that contributes to solutions to complex societal challenges and strengthens the development of working life and competence supply. Collaboration with industry, the public sector and civil society is a natural part of our research. This creates value and benefits for research and education, as well as for our partners and society.

### Curious, Ethical and Internationally Rooted Research

Our research is characterised by curiosity, critical thinking, ethical awareness and academic freedom. Through international perspectives and networks, we strengthen our global competitiveness and capacity for innovation.

### Research as a Foundation for Education and Lifelong Learning

Research at University West forms the foundation for the scientific quality of our education and creates environments where students engage with current research and develop the ability to apply knowledge in practice. In this way, we contribute to lifelong learning that benefits societal development at regional, national and global levels.

# **Strategic** Development Areas

The following four strategic development areas are intended to support planning and prioritisation of operations in order to achieve the university's vision and the objectives for education and research. During the period 2026–2031, we will place particular emphasis on developing these four areas.



**Cohesive and Collaborative Research and Education Environments**



**Strengthened Research Capacity with Societal Relevance**



**International Perspectives and Global Engagement**



**Pedagogical Excellence and Work-Integrated Education and Teaching**

## Cohesive and Collaborative
Research and Education Environments

University West will work toward strengthening its cohesive research and education environments, where high quality, practical relevance, and capacity for innovation go hand in hand, creating value for both students and society. By fostering a strong collegial culture and establishing structures that bring researchers and students closer together, we create sustainable environments where the solutions of the future can be developed.

**During the period 2026–2031, we will focus on developing:**

- research and education environments that enable high quality in both research and education and contribute to societal development
- a collegial culture in which senior and junior teachers/researchers jointly develop the university's activities to ensure long-term sustainable development that promotes equal opportunity and gender equality
- pedagogical and organizational structures that enable and enhance a close relationship between education and research for teachers/researchers as well as students

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## Strengthened Research Capacity
with Societal Relevance

University West will enhance its research capacity by developing our research environments, including our areas of strength. This will deepen our collaboration at both national and international levels and ensure high quality in both research and education. Our research shall be characterised by high quality, ethics, responsibility, and academic freedom. Through strategic investments in skills supply, publishing, funding, and close collaboration with society, our research aims to contribute to innovation, sustainable development, and new knowledge that makes a difference.

**During the period 2026–2031, we will focus on developing:**

- research collaboration at national and international levels, both with research entities/stakeholders and other collaboration partners
- strategies for the qualitative and quantitative development of research activities (including publication and funding strategies)
- structures and methods that enable contributions to innovation and societal development
- research capacity through strategic work on competence development

## International Perspectives
and Global Engagement

University West uses internationalisation as a strategic strength to address global societal challenges and to create educational and research environments that are open, attractive, and of high quality. Through sustainable partnerships, international programmes and courses, and the integration of global perspectives, we foster an inclusive environment while also strengthening knowledge development, innovation capacity, and our international competitiveness.

**During the period 2026–2031, we will focus on developing:**

- sustainable, responsible, and strategic collaborations and partnerships in education and research to enhance academic quality and attractiveness
- a relevant and sustainable range of international programmes and courses at all levels
- methods of integrating international perspectives into education
- organisational, cultural, and competence-related conditions that support the further development of internationalisation

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## Pedagogical Excellence
and Work-Integrated Education and Teaching

To enable high quality in education and to make University West an even more relevant and attractive educational environment, we will develop individual and collective structures that strengthen teachers' pedagogical competence. We will also strengthen and clarify the university's educational approach through Work-Integrated Education and Teaching (WIE), and create stronger links between education and research.

**During the period 2026–2031, we will focus on developing:**

- the institution's pedagogical approaches and practices for Work-Integrated Education and Teaching (WIE) across all educational activities
- basic higher education pedagogical competence among all teachers and researchers, combined with incentive structures that systematically support individual and collegial development of pedagogical competencies and teaching practices
- collaboration and partnerships that enable both accessibility to higher education and practical relevance in academic programmes and courses

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The vision, objectives, and strategic development areas were adopted by the University Board at University West on 24 April 2026 and came into force on 1 May 2026.

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