

University of Crete Strategic Plan 2018-2025¹

The University of Crete at the beginning of the 21st century: an international centre of excellence in research and education

The University of Crete aims to build on both the tradition created by the quality of its academic activity and its close relationships with the research and innovation ecosystem of Crete, as well as the exceptional quality and diversity of life in Crete, in order to become one of the world's top 200 Universities by 2025.

We recognize that global trends in wealth and power, labor market diversification and rapid changes in the world of research and technology are intensifying international competition between universities to attract high-quality staff and students as well as public and private resources. These trends also raise questions about the social mission of the university at local, national and international levels.

In this context, the UoC will adhere to the principles governing its functioning: democratic governance, excellence in cutting-edge research, linking research and education, international orientation and developing partnerships with leading institutions in the world as well as attracting high level staff with open procedures and excellent undergraduate and postgraduate students. At the same time, measures will be taken to increase productivity and better organize UoC operations, while also seeking to resolve institutional issues that make it difficult to achieve its strategic goals.

Axis 1: An international, forward-looking and creative academic environment

1.1. Attract talented staff and students

The connection between high quality research and education is an enduring feature of University life. For this reason, the UoC aims to attract top researchers from around the world to create competitive teams internationally but also talented students with high expectations. At the same time, the UoC is committed to ensuring open and transparent procedures in recruiting associates at all levels (teaching and research staff, students, and support staff) and to equitable treatment based on non-discrimination related to gender, religion or origin and more generally to the protection of individual and collective rights.

By 2025 the UoC aims to

- Increasing the numbers of international teaching and research staff on campus to 10% using the opportunities for personal chairs and hosting visiting academic staff
- Significantly increasing the numbers of foreign postgraduate and undergraduate students with the development of foreign language study programmes
- Establish an Equal Opportunities Policy Committee with responsibility for drafting and overseeing a code of good practice on diversity, equity and inclusion

¹ 391/19-07-2018 Senate decision

1.2. High Quality Research

The range of research themes, synergies with other research institutes in Crete and international collaborations have made Crete the Region of Greece with the highest success rate in research and innovation. In this way, the conditions have been created for the contribution of research to regional development in cooperation with social and economic stakeholders. The University will encourage and support the use of the research results in this direction and will monitor its progress.

By 2025 the UoC aims to

- Create support services to facilitate the preparation of project proposals for funding in critical areas of research, so as to significantly increase funding for research through the Special Account for Research Funds.
- Facilitate the development of interdisciplinary research groups and interdisciplinary research programmes within the University, with particular reference to connections between AHSS and STEM departmental groups from both campuses.
- Take measures to empower young researchers at UoC to develop innovative ideas in critical scientific disciplines
- Intensify efforts for dialogue and cooperation with enterprises to develop joint research and development programmes
- support corporate collaboration by developing a corporate relationship model for the entire University
- Establish a quality assurance system for all the University's operations

1.3. Internationalisation

The UoC will intensify efforts to strengthen its contacts with the international academic community, which are already at an acceptable level mainly due to co-operation in the context of competitive European programmes. The active participation of UoC in University networks will strengthen its research and educational activities through the exchange of people, ideas and good practices.

By 2025 the UoC will further

- Participate in networks of strategic alliances with universities around the world with similar and / or complementary characteristics
- Exploit the comparative advantages of Crete to increase the scope of international educational and research activities
- Map and develop collaborations with Greek scientists of the Diaspora to facilitate broadening cooperative initiatives with leading institutions worldwide
- Utilize the educational leave of UoC staff to establish new collaborations in significant research fields

Axis 2: An attractive educational centre for young scientists and responsible citizens

2.1. Education

The rapid pace of technological and socio-economic change impacts not only the graduate labour market, but also the frequency and extent of changes affecting the lives of graduates.

Accordingly, the skills required of University graduates differ from those that were desirable or necessary in the 20th century. Aware of these trends, the UoC aims to equip students with the necessary skills and competences to cope with the associated challenges, and to improve their career prospects, by cultivating critical learning, academic breadth, real problem solving, collaborative skills, an understanding of reality in the fields of science, society and the economy as well as a sense of social responsibility.

By 2025 the UoC is committed to

- Updating and accreditation of all degree programmes;
- Expanding the University's scholarship provision to students in all degree cycles as well as to new teaching staff, with better utilization of national and European resources as well as sourcing private funding;
- Significantly increasing the range of internship options and harmonize access procedures across the UoC to enable all students wishing to undertake an internship to do so;
- Significantly increase the mobility of UoC students through ERASMUS+ and other relevant exchange programmes in order to enrich their experience in other academic and educational systems and environments;
- Integrate new technologies in teaching and research
- Introduce courses on academic breadth across the spectrum of studies (history-methodology of science, philosophy, epistemology, ethics, dissemination of research results, research policy, soft science)
- Introduce courses on social responsibility, economy, sustainability
- Introduce new forums and strengthen the channels of extracurricular dialogue in wider areas of science, technology and social development
- Improve student: staff ratios according to international standards
- Training academic staff in new teaching methods and generalizing good practices

2.2. Interdisciplinarity and novel study programmes

An interdisciplinary approach and linking research and teaching are high on the list of UoC priorities. Utilization of the scientific / research potential of Crete, the infrastructure and know-how as well as the important capital of its international collaborations in education, has contributed to achieving high quality undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes. The UoC aims to continue in this direction and further strengthen relations between groups with complementary capabilities, facilities and infrastructure.

By 2025 the UoC aims to

- Introduce interdisciplinarity in all educational programmes
- Strengthen cooperation between UoC Departments in the organization and implementation of existing undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes
- Establish the option of elective course combinations that will lead to accredited interdisciplinary study programs; a goal for which the University will seek drastic improvement in the current institutional framework

- Develop course modules on research methodology, competence training in the evaluation of scientific information, and soft skills training in writing presentation techniques
- Develop study programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate) in subjects in high demand from society and the economy that utilize areas of excellence which exist today in the UoC.

2.3. Nurturing the professional development of our graduates

Knowledge has independent value, but mass entry into higher education is normally accompanied by expectations for a better professional future. Despite the fact that the professional futures of students vary considerably, even among those who have studied the same subject, and differ significantly over time, the UoC has a duty to nurture the professional development of our graduates. This includes not only equipping students with knowledge and skills, but also familiarizing them with the labor market through organized contacts.

By 2025 the UoC is committed to

- The numerical and thematic expansion of the network of internship opportunities
- Creating better records of graduates and better communication forums with alumni
- Research on the professional careers of graduates and survey of their opinions on the strengths and weaknesses of their education at UoC in terms of finding employment
- Systematically develop links with alumni willing to act as student mentors, internship hosts, or as a source of information for improving study programmes
- Creating a periodical Newsletter with the aims of highlighting achievements and good practices and promoting communication and dialogue between the wider UoC community
- Expand job fair type activities for final year students and potential employers
- Through the UoC Centre of Continuing Education & Lifelong Learning, organize complementary training programmes and knowledge updates in areas that increase the competitiveness of our graduates

Axis 3: Resources for Development and Modernization

3.1. Infrastructure

The infrastructure of the University is crucial both for the quality of research and for the quality of life of staff and students. The UoC aim is for continuous upgrading of the research infrastructure of all the institutions of the research ecosystem of Crete to support high level collaborative research between the participating institutions as well as joint research activities with partners worldwide. Housing infrastructure is also an important resource for securing accommodation for students from outside Crete, as well as for scientific collaborators and participants in summer schools, conferences and other scientific events that require mobility.

By 2025 the UoC aims to

- Modernise, improve and increase the available research infrastructure by utilizing public investment funds, the University's assets, and sponsorships from foundations and other institutions
- Encourage and monitor the joint use of these facilities for interdisciplinary collaborations
- Improve and increase the number of student residences to at least three times the current capacity so that the University can respond better to its social mission and overcome disadvantages deriving from its regional position
- Improve infrastructure for sports and cultural activities, with facilities at the Gallos Campus in Rethymnon as a priority

3.2. Economic Resources

The University needs continual renewal and upgrading to be able to provide high quality education and research. This presupposes obtaining resources from a variety of sources, especially as the resources available from the state are increasingly limited and the mechanisms for their utilization are becoming increasingly rigid. It is therefore imperative to seek the establishment of an institutional framework that will ensure adequate levels and flexibility in the use of state funding, and also for UoC academic staff to attract funded research and educational programmes from which a small percentage can be invested in actions of high added value to improve the image of UoC, teaching, research and the social contribution of the University.

By 2025 the UoC aims to

- Restructure and improve policy for the use of UoC assets
- Improve procedures of the financial, legal and technical services to facilitate maximum absorption of state funds
- Reduce electricity consumption by 50% and minimization of other running costs in the context of a green policy
- Increase external funding for research and educational projects by 60%
- Conclude joint programme agreements with companies for technology transfer
- Attract sponsors and donations in critical areas of development for UoC

3.3. Human Resources

The University needs adequate staffing, both in terms of teaching and research staff and in terms of administrative and technical staff. The recruitment of new staff in all categories is necessary both to ensure a balanced age distribution and to attract people with new expertise/competences in emerging areas of activity. In an ever-evolving academic landscape with new challenges and demands, human resources must also evolve and take on new roles and responsibilities that are necessary to realize high quality education and research. Implementation of the UoC strategy depends on the dynamism, enthusiasm, ingenuity and perseverance of the University's human resources and its ability to harness this HR potential to achieve UoC goals.

By 2025 the UoC is committed to

- Increasing mobility, communication and cooperation with staff with similar duties in other universities in Greece and abroad
- Training in new digital technologies aimed at increasing productivity, reliability and documentation of activities
- Distributing tasks and describing associated goals as derived from the overall UoC Strategic Plan
- Reorganization of the University services in the interests of greater economy, efficiency, and to increase the range and quality of the services offered
- Improving the terms and conditions of employment and the degree of staff satisfaction with their work

