

Caucasus International University

Strategic Development Plan

2025 - 2031

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1. Introduction

In accordance with its mission and vision, Caucasus International University has developed a strategic plan founded upon the university's 29 years of operational experience, Georgia's Unified National Strategy for Education and Science 2022-2030, the Sustainable Development Goals, key recommendation documents of the European Higher Education Area, and the expertise of the National Centre for Educational Quality Enhancement alongside leading European and American universities. The document is also grounded in an analysis and assessment of Caucasus International University's strengths and weaknesses. The Strategic Development Plan draws upon self-assessment reports for authorisation and accreditation, external expert conclusions and recommendations made during the current authorisation reporting period. Furthermore, it was underpinned by an external evaluation conducted by independent experts in autumn 2023, a summary report from the university's operational and strategic plan implementation monitoring group in autumn 2023, focused discussions on the university's development strategy and mechanisms with administration, academic staff and students, as well as internal research and survey results conducted by the university.

A working group comprising six senior university officials was established in spring 2022 to review and update the university's Strategic Development Plan, which commenced work on defining the key priorities for the university's new Strategic Development Plan for 2025-2031. Following one year of intensive work by the working group, it was formulated in its present form. The university envisages approving the new strategic plan in December 2024, following completion of the university's authorisation process, taking into account possible recommendations contained in the authorisation experts' conclusions.

1.1 Connection to the Unified National Strategy for the Development of Education and Science of Georgia (2022-2030) and the Framework Documents of the European Higher Education Area

The university's Strategic Development Plan reflects Georgia's Unified National Strategy for Education and Science 2022-2030's three sectoral priorities: I. Quality and Relevance; II. Equality, Inclusion and Diversity; III. Governance, Financing and Accountability, which emphasises the importance of development-oriented internal and external quality management instruments in institutional development, optimisation and consolidation of educational and scientific research institutions, which will create better opportunities for meeting the needs of individuals, the economy and society.

In discussing challenges in governance, accountability and financing within the education, science, research, technology and innovation sectors, Georgia's Unified National Strategy for Education and Science 2022-2030 particularly emphasises that "the practical implementation of the 'third mission' concept in the management culture of educational

institutions is significant for the higher education, research and innovation system". Within the framework of a new cycle of strategic development, Caucasus International University aims to advance to a new level of collaboration with the labour market, industry, civil society and other stakeholders, which will be manifested in strengthening the interconnection between research and innovation, as well as enhancing collaboration between the university and industry and, accordingly, strengthening the university's "third mission".

The university's Strategic Development Plan also reflects the framework documents of the European Higher Education Area, which emphasise the importance of developing education, research and innovation systems oriented towards sustainable development and the future. It should be noted that the 2020 Rome Ministerial Communiqué underscores the significance of innovation and inclusivity in higher education and highlights universities' role in sustainable development. The Communiqué states that "higher education institutions can make the greatest contribution to achieving sustainability, environmental protection and other fundamentally important goals. They must prepare students—transform them into active, critically minded and responsible citizens and support each individual in fulfilling their social role. Higher education will be a principal actor in achieving alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030". Accordingly, contributing to the development of local communities and ecosystems for sustainable development is incorporated within Caucasus International University's strategic objectives.

2. Vision of Caucasus International University

Caucasus International University is an educational and scientific institution that promotes socio-economic progress, developing the values of Georgian and world culture based on contemporary knowledge.

3. Mission of Caucasus International University

Caucasus International University creates a contemporary teaching and research environment through the implementation of innovative methods, internationalisation, and diverse university life. The university ensures the cultivation of generations who are competitive in local and international labour markets, possess democratic values, and are capable of contributing to overcoming sustainable development challenges.

4. Mission Priorities

4.1 Contemporary Learning Environment

A contemporary learning environment integrates modern teaching methods - incorporating innovative approaches and digital tools into the learning process and the establishment of collaborative learning spaces (for group work). The integration of contemporary

teaching and learning methods in the mission underscores the university's aspiration to maintain a leading position and equip students with the skills necessary for today's rapidly evolving world.

4.2 Innovative Methods

Based on the Bologna Communiqués, Caucasus International University considers innovative teaching and learning methods as pedagogical approaches that differ from traditional methods and involves equipping students with future-proof skills, such as critical thinking, creativity, digital and media literacy, adaptability, and preparing students for a competitive employment market. Innovative teaching and learning methods also encompass the integration of interdisciplinary perspectives in education to address complex challenges, service learning and challenge-based education grounded in current societal challenges. Additionally, the integration of sustainable development issues into teaching and learning is considered an innovative method, which is directly linked to fostering democratic values in graduates and their competitiveness at local and international levels.

The university continues to develop contemporary and innovative educational programmes that align with current development trends in the field at local and international levels, focuses on developing material and digital infrastructure to ensure online teaching and learning and collaborative learning environments, supports structured professional development programmes for academic staff, encourages and recognises innovative teaching practices, and promotes quality and innovation groups within faculties that work alongside academic staff to develop innovative teaching and learning practices.

4.3 Internationalisation

For Caucasus International University, internationalisation involves implementing international best practices and strengthening international partnerships within the framework of teaching and learning, research, and the university's third mission activities, as well as in organisational management and staff professional development.

4.4 Diverse Student Life

The university promotes the development of diverse student life in which each individual's uniqueness is valued, mutual respect amongst individuals is encouraged, and equality is recognised. The university actively endeavours to strengthen an inclusive environment where students feel valued and significant members of the university community, which is essential for establishing and strengthening a democratic environment within the university. Caucasus International University creates platforms for open dialogue and quality development between students and university administration. The university also offers students support services and encourages their participation in various extracurricular activities. Claude can make mistakes. Please double-check responses.

4.5 Contributing to Sustainable Development

In order to contribute to sustainable development, Caucasus International University, based on its teaching and learning and research profile, prioritises the following sustainable development goals for the structured implementation of the "third mission":

- **SDG 3 - Health and Well-being;**
- **SDG 4 - Quality Education;**
- **SDG 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production;**
- **SDG 16 - Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions.**

In accordance with these priority sustainable development goals and the vision of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia regarding the strengthening and promotion of universities' "third mission", Caucasus International University undertakes the following types of activities:

- + Ensures that knowledge and practice accumulated within the university space is shared with the broader public, including school pupils and young people. Through this, Caucasus International University ensures that society becomes more democratic, knowledgeable about its rights and responsibilities in relation to society, the state and the environment;
- + Implements diverse certification and continuing education courses, thereby also focusing on lifelong learning and continuous professional development;
- + Participates in the development of legislative frameworks/regulatory framework documents at national level;
- + Supports the development of existing small and medium-sized businesses and the development of new innovative entrepreneurial ecosystems;
- + Implements regional development initiatives according to existing needs.

5. Strategy: Priority Directions and Strategic Goals of the Seven-Year Plan

Through its Strategic Development Plan, Caucasus International University demonstrates how it intends to fulfil the role envisioned by its mission within the framework of the university's three fundamental pillars of responsibility—teaching and learning, research, and the "third mission".

The seven-year Strategic Development Plan encompasses the following priority directions:

1. Creating contemporary and innovative educational opportunities and continuous development of teaching and learning quality;

2. Strengthening scientific research activities;
3. Supporting sustainable development goals within the framework of the university's "third mission";
4. Institutional development for the effective implementation of the university's three fundamental pillars of responsibility.

Priority Direction 1: Creating Contemporary and Innovative Educational Opportunities and Continuous Development of Teaching-Learning Quality;

Strategic Goal 1.1: Integration of contemporary and innovative methods into programs and positioning of the university as an institution providing transformational education;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

1.1.1 Development and implementation of new programs, including joint degree English-language programs, which will integrate innovative methods and elements of transformational education;

1.1.2 Strengthening of innovative methods and transformational education components within existing programmes;

1.1.3 Definition/Implementation of artificial intelligence capabilities in programmes and the teaching-learning process;

1.1.4 Development of innovative continuing education programmes for the wider public, in response to development trends;

1.1.5 Development and advancement of professional educational (qualification, diploma), professional training and retraining programmes based at the university.

Strategic Goal 1.2: Strengthening programme content and teaching-learning quality through internationalisation;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

1.2.1 Systematic development of international cooperation in programmes for consistent and rapid integration of best practices. This will contribute to reflecting current innovations in field programs and ensuring program compliance with international development trends.

1.2.2 Offering joint exchange programmes and online learning opportunities for students, as well as using cross-cultural learning methods;

Strategic Goal 1.3: Integration of issues related to sustainable development goals into the learning process;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

1.3.1 Enhanced integration of issues related to sustainable development goals into programmes;

1.3.2 Offering practical learning experience in the real world related to sustainable development issues for students;

1.3.3 Raising awareness of sustainability concepts and the 17 Global Sustainable Development Goals through non-formal education pathways;

Strategic Goal 1.4 Annual improvement of the quality of learning support services for students in the learning process;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

1.4.1 Development of a structured academic support services concept based on the assessment of the effectiveness of existing services;

1.4.2 Implementation of peer group learning practices;





1.4.3 Implementation of regular working meetings (workshops) to prepare students for the competitive employment market and to develop skills necessary for the future;

Priority Direction 2. Strengthening scientific-research activities;

Strategic Goal 2.1 Creating a distinguished research space for sustainable development of excellent research;

This involves addressing the following task:

2.1.1 Strengthening institutional support for participation in international research projects, attracting and engaging highly-cited foreign researchers in Caucasus International University's research activities;

-  Development and advancement of career progression mechanisms for highly cited researchers and outstanding young scientists to support research priorities.
-  Formation of research teams and/or structural units in accordance with university research priorities.
-  Creation/development of internal university grant funding and co-funding systems and research infrastructure to support university research priorities.
-  Maintenance and development of existing internal university grant funding and co-funding systems.

Strategic Goal 2.2 Development of interdisciplinary and intersectoral (between government, business and academic sectors) research partnerships with local and international organisations; This involves addressing the following task:

2.2.1 Creation of an internal university grant funding system for developing interdisciplinary and intersectoral research projects;

✚ Creation of mechanisms to promote the commercialization of scientific research.

Strategic Goal 2.3 Support and development of doctoral research in relation to the university's research priorities;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

2.3.1 Development of joint doctoral programmes and/or dissertation co-supervision corresponding to research priorities with leading foreign universities;

2.3.2 Supporting career advancement of doctoral research supervisors and doctoral students in accordance with research priorities;

✚ Structuring doctoral programs in accordance with the university's research priorities.

Strategic Goal 2.4 Contributing to society's socio-economic progress based on developing a culture of research and innovation, dissemination of new knowledge and deepening public engagement;

This involves addressing the following task:

2.4.1 Development of mechanisms supporting the popularisation of science in the wider community;

Priority Direction 3. Supporting Sustainable Development Goals within the framework of the university's "third mission";

Strategic Goal 3.1 Collaboration with representatives of society, governmental and non-governmental sectors using knowledge accumulated at the university to address real challenges;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

3.1.1 Implementation of business incubator activities with cross-faculty involvement and development of entrepreneurship-based learning;

3.1.2 Ensuring inclusive and equitable education and creating lifelong learning opportunities for vulnerable groups and wider circles of society;

3.1.3 Participation in the development of legislative framework/regulatory framework documents at national level;

3.1.4 Sharing knowledge and practices accumulated in the university space with the wider community (including in promoting healthy lifestyle and Georgian culture);

Priority Direction 4. Institutional Development for the effective implementation of the three main pillars of the university's responsibility;

Strategic Goal 4.1 Strengthening the development-oriented direction in quality management;
This involves addressing the following tasks:

- 4.1.1 Creation of mechanisms for recognition and encouragement of innovative practices;
- 4.1.2 Offering greater opportunities for student involvement in the quality development process through the implementation of programme representative practices;
- 4.1.3. Implementation of an online system for monitoring strategic development planning;
- 4.1.4 Conducting action plan implementation monitoring and preparing reports via the online strategic development plan monitoring system.

Strategic Goal 4.2 Human Resources Development;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

- 4.2.1 Promoting continuous staff development, their integration and focus on common objectives. Also, developing structural programmes for professional development of employees and supporting career advancement;
- 4.2.2 Internationalisation at the level of academic and administrative staff and studying and consistent implementation of best international practices (approaches and methodologies) in organisational management processes;
- 4.2.3 Development of an incentive system for academic staff taking into account the results of teaching-learning, research and contribution to society, and implementation of this system;

Strategic Goal 4.3 Strengthening support services for students;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

- 4.3.1 Strengthening career support services for students and expanding the employer network;
- 4.3.2 Promoting the protection of students' rights through support in both engagement in the academic process and legal consultation services;
- 4.3.3 Facilitating the adaptation of international students to the university and the country's society, supporting intercultural dialogue;

4.3.4 Supporting the university students' membership in local and international student associations and unions and promoting participation in relevant activities;

Strategic Goal 4.4 Development of relations and cooperation with graduates;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

4.4.1 Strengthening career and academic support services for university students and graduates and expanding the employer network;

4.4.2 Cooperation with the graduate network for institutional development.

Strategic Goal 4.5 Gradual renewal and modernisation of the learning and working environment;

This involves addressing the following tasks:

4.5.1 Establishment of additional innovative learning spaces;

4.5.2 Development of the Faculty of Viticulture and Winemaking infrastructure;

4.5.3 Construction of an additional university building and development of sports and wellness infrastructure;

4.5.4 Supporting eco-culture, integration of eco-friendly spaces and green design elements into the university infrastructure.