

# **University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna**

## **R&D strategy**

June 2019

## 1. Preamble

This research and development (R&D) strategy ties in with our Strategy 2025, which states that the University of Applied Sciences (UAS) BFI Vienna's R&D output is a driver of innovation, and that the relevance and profile of R&D activities should be enhanced.

Research at the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna is also a prerequisite for:

- making an authoritative contribution to academic discourse related to the university's research focuses,
- shaping discussions in society and playing a part in developing workable solutions to contemporary challenges, and
- high-quality teaching based on strong scientific foundations.

Research at UAS BFI Vienna is:

- *independent* and geared towards generating scientific knowledge,
- *practice-led* thanks to a focus on application-based research and development commissioned by or carried out in collaboration with businesses and institutions,
- *innovative* and gives rise to new insights and approaches,
- *interdisciplinary in addressing research topics* as a result of collaboration between degree programmes and subject areas, and
- *international*, with a focus on relevant international topics and issues, coupled with participation in international research networks.

## 2. Research and development objectives

### 2.1. Strategy-based, application-driven research and development

The formation of research teams is designed to facilitate the bundling of competencies? skills? and interdisciplinary research activities. Research at UAS BFI Vienna is structured on the basis of two key areas with responsibility for research topics: the degree programmes and the Academic Council. Degree-programme-specific research topics are the responsibility of the degree programmes (degree programme director) themselves, while topics related to more than one programme are overseen by the Academic Council (head and deputy head). Ensuring the alignment of topics of degree-programme-specific research with the university's strategy is the task of the degree programme directors; for university-wide research, this responsibility falls to the head and deputy head of the Academic Council. The overall R&D budget is prepared by the degree programme directors and the Academic Council head and deputy head, and then agreed with the Supervisory Board.

Long-term partnerships and the promotion of projects funded by third parties are designed to underline the significance of research activities and raise their profile within the research community. We intend to step up the expansion of partnerships with companies, and the aim is to increase the overall proportion of third-party funding for R&D and the number of full-time equivalents working in research.

In order to strengthen research at UAS BFI Vienna and to achieve these objectives, incentive systems and the framework for research must be improved. A dedicated career path for teaching and research staff at UAS BFI Vienna will be defined in order to ensure that research skills are specifically bolstered by means of training and development, and to facilitate research through time dedicated specifically to working on projects.

## 2.2. University-wide research fields (Academic Council)

A focus on core research fields is intended to enable us to bundle employees' knowledge and skills, and ultimately to raise our external profile in the research community and among practitioners in these fields. Interdisciplinary research at UAS BFI Vienna focuses on the following fields:

- New Work, New Business
- Location Competition and Regions
- Financial Market Development and Regulation
- Sustainable Management and Social Transformation
- Higher Education Teaching and Management

The aim is for each degree programme to participate in at least one university-wide research field in order to enhance the programmes' visibility in the research community (by means of conference presentations, publications and memberships) and to boost knowledge transfer into teaching and business practice.

### **New Work, New Business research focus**

Research in the New Work, New Business field concentrates on applied transdisciplinary analysis of the effects of technological transformation and digitalisation. This transformation is having an impact on private households' social and financial circumstances, and is also posing challenges for businesses and the public sector.

Besides the resulting effects on companies and their organisational structures, the treatment of workers is a key factor – this also influences households as a result of changes in the labour market and the nature of labour as a factor of production. Interdependence with the demands placed on social systems, and the public sector's role in connection with the challenges faced by companies and private households – resulting from the significance of globalised financial markets and international capital flows – are also important, and must be considered in an international context.

As far as the labour market is concerned, New Work, New Business examines the latest trends, such as the erosion of employment norms, the rise of atypical forms of employment and the transformation of professions. These transformation processes are having an impact on both organisations and individuals. Company-related research topics include flexible working time models, geographical flexibility and new organisational forms, as well as generational management and the life-domain balance, to name just a few. At the micro or individual level, analysis centres on aspects such as the blurring of job boundaries, the intensification and personalisation of work, the separation of work and leisure, and health-related impairments in the context of new working environments. Although HR, IT and change management provide the focal points, research covers a cross-section of topics, with an emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches.

### **Location Competition and Regions research focus**

This core research field builds on UAS BFI Vienna's successful focus on location research. It carries out interdisciplinary, multiscalar research into opportunities, risks, prospects and potential in relation to various regions, as well as multi-level analysis of the competitive conditions and frameworks for companies or groups of companies (micro, meso and macro perspective). Research looks at institutions and businesses, and examines organisational structures, management systems and strategies from an international and multinational viewpoint. Emerging markets and Europe play a key role in the global context. The aim of this

research focus is to continuously expand knowledge and expertise, and promote knowledge transfer.

### **Financial Market Development and Regulation research focus**

The evolution of global financial markets and the resulting increase in the commoditisation of goods markets has contributed to rising instability in both developed and less developed countries. However, an international analysis reveals significant structural and institutional differences.

Particularly as a result of the financial crisis, regulations and compliance requirements for banks and insurance companies have changed dramatically in the last few years. Regulatory reporting for banks and insurers has been comprehensively remodelled, not just regarding content but also in organisational terms (especially the rise of regtech). The next few years will see an increase in research into changes in the financial sector and international regulatory trends, which will have a variety of implications for the banking and insurance sectors, and for macroeconomic growth.

### **Sustainable Management and Social Transformation research focus**

The United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are intended to address the major environmental, social and economic challenges of our age, provide a global framework of objectives for the implementation of sustainable development measures between now and 2030 (see the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development). The University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna is driving forward research into the topic of sustainability, generating new insights that will help to promote a more socially responsible and environmentally friendly economy, as well as the development of more sustainable business models. The required social transformation is viewed as a long-term process encompassing many sections of society, and this perspective forms the basis of the university's research.

### **Higher Education Teaching and Management research focus**

This research field addresses issues related to the development of universities, with an emphasis on higher education teaching and teaching development, and higher education management.

With regard to teaching at higher education institutions, the focal point is research into both teaching and learning, in particular new approaches such as learning analytics and educational data mining, which have gained added significance due to their importance for the digitalisation of teaching. Research into higher education management examines the importance of national, European and international higher education policy trends for higher education management, as well as universities' role as key players in regional and national innovation systems.

Research is intended to generate important inputs for the development of the higher education sector as a whole, as well as for UAS BFI Vienna, and to highlight innovative, forward-looking and above all practicable approaches with a view to ensuring the requisite practical relevance of application-based research.

## **2.3. Degree programme research focuses**

Each degree programme also specifies its own research focuses and targets, which reflect the respective programme's skills profile and potential graduate career paths, as well as supporting the transfer of knowledge to teaching activities, and to businesses and

institutions. These aspects are regularly reviewed by the degree programme director in order to ensure their relevance and effectiveness. Each degree programme publishes its R&D strategy on its website.

The aims of these strategies are to enhance the visibility of a degree programme's research by means of knowledge transfer into teaching and business practice, and by raising its profile in the research community (through conference presentations, publications and memberships).

#### **2.4. Networking and integration in the research community**

We are an active contributor to the regional, national and international research community, and proud of our network of contacts to other research institutes in Austria and abroad, as well as of our role in driving the development of national and international doctoral partnerships for students and employees.

The university aims to extend its wide-ranging network of partner universities and R&D partners. Current and future networks will contribute to implementing new projects as part of domestic and international consortiums, and to developing and consolidating strategic partnerships.

#### **2.5. International research**

Research and development at the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna has an international emphasis, as well as a regional focus on Europe and emerging markets. Promoting international research activities is an important objective which involves:

- participating in and coordinating R&D projects with an international focus;
- exploring options for securing international third-party funding for R&D projects;
- supporting relations between academics from our university and international counterparts as part of international higher education networks;
- playing an active part in international conferences and research activities; and
- publishing research on international topics.

#### **2.6. Effective knowledge transfer into teaching and practice**

UAS BFI Vienna takes steps to transfer its research findings into teaching, and to share them with companies, institutions and the public. Expert teams can also carry out research on and address groups of topics in selected subject areas.

The transfer of knowledge from research into teaching takes place by means of the university-wide and degree-programme-specific research focuses. Newly generated expertise feeds into courses, including by means of new modules and the allocation of bachelor and master thesis topics. In addition, as up-and-coming academics, students should be more closely integrated into research activities. Participation in student research competitions at master level will be specifically encouraged, and the public will be made aware of outstanding research (in particular master theses) more effectively and promptly.

Communication with and knowledge transfer to businesses and institutions comes about as a result of their participation in third-party-funded projects, and by means of event formats aimed specifically at them, or through master theses written in collaboration with businesses and institutions in a given profession. The university is committed to intensifying and broadening its cooperation with businesses and institutions, with the aim of forming networks that generate mutually beneficial expertise.

Research findings are made available to the public by means of lectures, workshops and appropriate media publications.

## 2.7. Quality management

The R&D strategy covers the period to 2025, but will be reviewed annually as part of the rolling strategic development process set out in the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna development plan. In 2022 a review process will identify any necessary changes to the R&D strategy for the second half of the period.

Gender- and diversity-related standards are integrated into and taken into account in the selection of topics, formation of teams and determination of the content of R&D activities.

As a member of the *Agentur für wissenschaftliche Integrität* (Austrian Agency for Research Integrity, OeAWI; <http://www.oeawi.at/>), we are committed to reporting cases of serious academic misconduct to the agency, and to further enhancing our academic quality controls. Additionally, in 2016 the University of Applied Sciences BFI Vienna set up an ombudsman's office for good scientific practice, which is based on the OeAWI guidelines and is the point of contact for students and full-time teaching and research staff who wish to report instances of academic misconduct. The ombudsman's office is part of the university's R&D quality circle.