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Digital Strategy

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Connected. Since 1365.
Connected digitally. Since 1990.

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Position and mission

Digitalisation: position

**University of Vienna. Connected.
Since 1365. Connected digitally.
Since 1990.**

Digitalisation is not an unknown territory for the University of Vienna. Since computers are available at the University and especially since the Internet conquered Austria through the University of Vienna in 1990, the University has been investing in digitisation and digitalisation. Digitalisation does not only crystallise in the constantly increasing availability of digital technologies but goes far beyond. It comprises the diverse developments that are intertwined with the introduction and implementation of digital innovations and their effects on individuals, organisations and the society as a whole. Digital technologies and innovations are already extensively used in all areas of the university system. They are an indispensable part of our societal, professional and private everyday life.

**Quality and diversity as a potential
for digitalisation**

Digitalisation offers universities great opportunities to proactively shape the current and future digital transformation in the areas of education, economy, culture and society. The University of Vienna has enormous potential for understanding the phenomena related to digitalisation and for shaping the digital transformation. It draws this potential from the quality, diversity, networks and relevance of its research. The numerous interdisciplinary networks and disciplinary research fields have particular significance in this respect. The opportunities and challenges resulting from ubiquitous digitalisation shape the ideas of a university of the future and its renewed role in society.

Actively advancing digitalisation together

Digitalisation is a universal phenomenon that the University cannot elude but rather intends to advance: Academic research is international. Due to their broader availability, digital technologies and innovations increasingly permeate both academia and the way organisations, sectors and society as a whole work and interact in general. We have reached a turning point characterised by a tremendous growth of available data and digital products and services. This necessitates a complete reorganisation of our capacity to analyse and interpret data and our way of using these new opportunities. Examples for changes in the way

research is conducted include the growing number of large interdisciplinary research teams, jointly used digital research and teaching infrastructures as well as the opening up and sharing of research activities, research data and research results. Another example is the provision of digital teaching that enriches the students' presence, commitment, interaction and learning progress at their University. Other examples are the reorganisation of organisational processes within the University and across universities as well as the mutual exchange with partners from the regional and international educational and innovation systems. Definitions of digitalisation, digital innovation and digital transformation are provided in the annex.



Digitalisation: mission

Digitalisation permeates all societal, economic, academic and cultural areas. The digital transformation creates opportunities and a new scope of action while also entailing risks and uncertainties. It changes our way of thinking, of conducting research, of teaching, learning and working together. Within this process, the University of Vienna takes an active and shaping role and a critical and reflecting role at the same time. As an institution producing and communicating knowledge, the University is required to raise and act on research questions resulting from digitalisation and to find adequate answers. This way, it contributes significantly to the social discourse and to prudently shaping current and future digital transformations in education, economy, culture and society.

The University of Vienna facilitates and promotes the acquisition of digital competences by all university members to jointly reflect on and actively shape the related processes, practices and services, the infrastructure and the University of Vienna's role in the digital ecosystem of education. The University of Vienna prepares its students for tomorrow's

digital opportunities and challenges. It relies on its graduates' potential to act as multipliers in academia, economy, culture and society.

The University of Vienna is aware of its crucial role in the higher education sector and other areas of society. It advocates a sustainable digital transformation in terms of a reliable and humane design of digital products and services.

The University of Vienna strives to seize the opportunities offered by digitalisation in all its areas to promote academic excellence, innovative teaching and high-quality and efficient organisation and administration. Using digital innovations should foster its strategic development, strengthen its international competitiveness in the areas of research and teaching and help exert wider impact of university actions.

The digital transformation at the University of Vienna also has an effect on society. The society incorporates, realises and uses the digital innovations jointly shaped by the University. Thus, they serve as the basis for developing new digital innovations, new findings and new solutions.

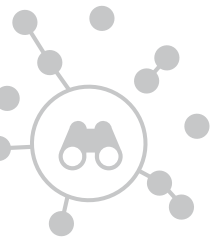
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Strategic aims

Digitalisation significantly contributes to the achievement of the aims specified in the Development Plan in the areas of teaching, research, administration and in exerting impact. The University of Vienna strives to tap new research areas and to further establish networks at the intersections between academic disciplines. Therefore, the Digitalisation Strategy is interrelated to this expansion. On the one hand, digitalisation helps meet the requirements and demands arising from new professorships, tenure track positions

and additional measures regarding personnel and infrastructure. It stimulates interdisciplinary and inter-faculty collaboration and the creation and further development of the University's strategic priorities and cross-faculty research specialisations. On the other hand, the high number of appointed professors in the area of digitalisation and related areas also has a positive effect on the development of disciplinary and organisational capacities for the digital transformation at the University of Vienna.



1. Digitalisation based on ambition and prudence

We intend to critically and constructively reflect on and develop our understanding of and position on digitalisation. We strive to connect relevant projects run by the University or in which the University participates to coherently shape the digital transformation of the University of Vienna. Here, we also intend to gain impetus from regional, national and European initiatives aimed at the digital and social transformation that can support our activities, magnify the desired effects and enhance synergies. Together with our partners and relying on ambition and prudence, we intend to advocate human-centred digitalisation in a European way recognising our University's special role due to its diversity, wealth of experience and high potential for innovation; a digitalisation characterised by respect for and responsibility towards all individuals in their diversity and by preserving and developing our cultural heritage.

We strive to achieve the following aims for the implementation of the Digitalisation Strategy:

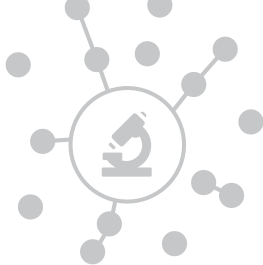
- We enable and support all university members in gaining expertise to understand and shape the digital transformation.
- We expand the University's capacities to implement digital innovations as part of its range and provision of services.
- We intensify knowledge exchange, joint generation of knowledge and collaboration to implement digital innovations both within the University and together with our partners.
- We ensure a responsible, appropriate and safe use of digital technologies, also by creating suitable framework conditions.
- We foster a critical and constructive social discourse about digitalisation. We actively contribute to the process of digital transformation by sharing our experience, our findings and our commitment.



2. Digitalisation as a cross-sectional issue

The University of Vienna draws its potential from its size, the diversity of its organisational units, the wide range of its members' profound competences and from its vast network of regional, national, European and international partners. Digitalisation takes the form of numerous projects and initiatives at all organisational units. Digital transformation affects all university members and all executives and leaders share responsibility for the digital transformation of their organisational unit. However, digitalisation is also a cross-sectional issue. This encompasses, among others, the modes of connecting and accompanying digitalisation projects, knowledge exchange and joint generation of digitalisation knowledge as well as coordinated efforts to advance digital transformation from a university-wide perspective.

- We consider digital transformation an issue that unites and connects all organisational units of the University and a catalyst for open, collaborative, solution-oriented and coordinated working methods.
- We encourage cross-disciplinary and coordinated disciplinary initiatives aimed at digital transformation in organisational units.
- We intend to institutionalise a programme coordination that connects and coordinates activities and projects aimed at the implementation of the Digitalisation Strategy from a university-wide perspective.
- We welcome activities and projects addressing cross-cutting topics of digital competences and resilience as well as user experience and communication, digital processes and collaboration and digital services and infrastructures.
- We continue to increase collaboration aimed at digitalisation with academic and non-academic partners.



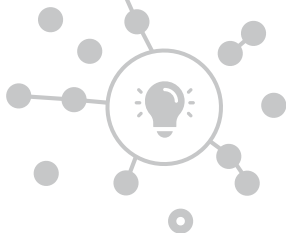
3. Digitalisation advances researchers

Through digitalisation academics change research questions, research topics, research fields, research methods, research practices and research infrastructures as part of an international academic community. Digitalisation offers new approaches to traditional questions and is also a research topic in itself. At the same time, digital technologies are being increasingly used as indispensable instruments in all academic disciplines. Digitalisation leads to the emergence of new, universal societal phenomena and challenges that result in highly topical research questions in many academic disciplines. To answer these questions and to shape the digital transformation, excellent basic research creates key findings in a plethora of disciplines and usually also beyond disciplinary boundaries. These findings allow for stimuli and the development of solutions through application-oriented research. Thus, our research also provides the foundation for the development of expertise in digitalisation. This expertise can advance teaching and research itself and exert further impact on the economy and society.

Digitalisation leads to a wider range of methods and tools used in research to collect, prepare, analyse, interpret and jointly use data, for example. Digital technologies allow for substantial improvements in research practices, especially in collaboration and joint generation of knowledge among researchers. They result in far-reaching changes in the modes and processes of publication, communication and contextualisation of research results as well as their translation to facilitate effective and sustainable innovations in economy and society. For this, researchers need a research infrastructure that provides professional services and support throughout their projects, ranging from the idea and research proposal, the implementation and organisation to the dissemination and application of research results. This also includes the handling of research data, ranging from the planning phase and data collection, analysis and interpretation to publication, storage and archiving.

- We welcome interdisciplinary and inter-faculty research activities addressing digitalisation that draw ground-breaking contributions from the diversity of the academic disciplines represented at the University of Vienna.
- We give researchers the freedom to develop new research fields related to digital technologies and the shaping, effect and governance of digital transformation.
- We create structures and framework conditions for resilient research infrastructures, and welcome and enable the sharing of research data and research results as well as increased visibility of research activities both in the academic community and in the public.
- We are committed to good academic practice when handling data. We inform researchers about the applicable regulations concerning the protection of personal data.
- We advocate the operation, continuous updates and the further development of the digital infrastructure, such as in the area of high performance computing.





4. Digital innovations for students and teachers

Digital technologies provide additional opportunities that are partially already taken for granted today. They allow us to complement, organise and accompany the acquisition and communication of knowledge by digital means. Moreover, digitalisation provides new opportunities and challenges for preparing research results for the purpose of research-led teaching. It also has a huge potential for shaping the content and methods in the areas of teaching and studies. Since digitalisation plays an important role in research at all faculties and centres, they offer their students specific activities to understand, shape and use digitalisation in order to advocate humane digitalisation. Interdisciplinary training opportunities addressing digital competences, such as the technical, legal and ethical aspects of the effects of digital technologies, supplement the portfolio. They are adapted to the students' realm of experiences in different degree programmes and are appropriately linked to the disciplinary competences. With these opportunities, we intend to promote the students' self-determined use of future digital technologies and competences required to reflect on and shape the related societal impact.

The University of Vienna has achieved a strong position as a university offering face-to-face teaching but it is also capable of offering suitable teaching contents in a digital format. It considers the opportunities of learning, work and encounters at the University amid the attractive surroundings of the city of Vienna an immense value to its students and teachers that needs to be preserved also in the future. Digital technologies do not only allow for innovative teaching concepts but also act as drivers for reshaping face-to-face teaching. Digital communication complements personal encounters at the University to enrich the quality of interactions between all university members, especially between students and between students and teachers. This requires shaping both digital and personal interactions in a way that results in real added value. The use of digital technologies should include but also go beyond providing digital materials that support students in studying and revising teaching contents at any time and any location. It should further discourse and collaborative learning, stimulate continuous studying and the realisation and further development of the knowledge and competences gained based on high-quality feedback or give students an understanding of contents and competences that could previously not be conveyed without digital technologies, such as with the help

of virtual reality or augmented reality applications that enable the immersion in unobservable phenomena and processes.



- We enable our students to develop a critical and constructive mindset and to acquire the necessary competences to seize opportunities and tackle challenges related to the digitalisation in academia, economy, culture and society in the future.
- We encourage members to develop, implement and reflect on digital innovations in the areas of teaching and studies.
- We adapt and integrate new teaching contents and methods addressing digitalisation for all students.
- We use digital technologies proactively and deliberately in all forms of academic teaching.
- We welcome open, participatory and inclusive teaching formats and support students by giving feedback and providing activating opportunities.



5. The University as a partner of economy, academia, culture and society

The University of Vienna is in an optimal position to understand and actively shape the manifold phenomena related to digitalisation thanks to the considerable expertise in the academic disciplines it covers. Moreover, it can rely on sustainable investment in creating interdisciplinary connections between them and the corresponding development of the University's strategic priorities. When considering digital technologies as instruments, they continuously offer new possibilities for knowledge exchange, technology transfer and for accessing knowledge, thereby promoting participation, critical reflection and the proactive shaping of social development.

- We position the University as a partner in reflecting and shaping digitalisation for politics, economy, academia, culture and society.
- We are involved in the critical discourse about the opportunities and challenges of digitalisation.
- We participate in the development of competences and capacities for digital innovation, transformation and entrepreneurship in society.
- As a university, we are a competent partner in handling gigantic data volumes and special data constellations based on our own experiences.
- We help actively shape the society's digital transformation together with our partners.
- We encourage the deliberate, responsible and sustainable handling of digital technologies.



6. Attractive employer, professional organisation, administration and infrastructure

The general availability of digital technologies and innovations has changed people's expectations about an organisation over the past years. This includes expectations about the types of digital user experience, digital processes, services and infrastructures and their professional supervision that academics have in the area of research and teaching and that students have in their studies at their University. It also encompasses the expectations held by future employers about graduates, the expectations held by employees about their employer or the expectations held by society about a professionally organised university.

- We advocate the digitalisation of the academic and cultural heritage to keep it safe and make it accessible to research and the public.
- We offer training to continuously (further) develop digital competences and support the participation by all university members.
- We assist university members in independently shaping their digital working, learning and research environments and their interaction in groups, project teams and networks.
- We make use of digital technologies to improve processes and services and to support university members in fulfilling their tasks.
- We offer access to a modern and safe digital infrastructure for the purposes of storage, processing and communication.
- We ask all university members to make suggestions and launch initiatives to develop digital innovations that meet the university community's demands.



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Expected impact

The University of Vienna will achieve substantial progress in the application of digital innovations. Digitalisation is a joint effort, an integrated, long-term strategic initiative that is linked to a critical and constructive culture and open attitude towards digitalisation. We intend to identify successful elements of digital transformation and, thus,

improve knowledge exchange within and between organisational units. Digitalisation concerns us all. We consider the implementation of the Digitalisation Strategy a success if all groups of university members and all persons affiliated with the University practically experience an improvement in their use of the University's digital products and services.

University member

As a university member, I am informed about the digital products and services that the University offers to me, my group, my project teams and my networks to which I am contributing. I am aware of how to use these in a productive way.



Prospective student

As a prospective student, I am well informed about university studies through using the University of Vienna's digital products and services. I get advice in a competent manner when digitally communicating with university members. I gain a good understanding of my future studies.

Student

As a student, I can arrange my digital learning and working environment in such a way that I can easily use it in a personalised and flexible manner. My needs for access to digital resources at any time and any location, for the digital interaction with students and teachers and for the efficient organisation of my degree programme are met. I can access adequate information about my learning progress and receive feedback that helps me increase my learning success. I am well prepared for the future opportunities and challenges of digitalisation in academia, the economy, culture and society.

Employee

As an employee, I am well versed in moving within a flexible, collaborative digital working environment, also thanks to the support received for developing my digital competences.

I experience recognition for my contributions through a positive, also digitally supported feedback culture. I proactively seize the opportunities to improve working practices, processes and services through digital technologies.

Researcher

As a researcher, digital research infrastructures and the related services support me in advancing my research together with my project teams and connected to the international academic community. They also support me in successfully acquiring and realising research projects and increasing the visibility and impact of my research activities and research results.

Teacher

As a teacher, the University's digital learning platforms, tools and support measures enable me to implement innovative teaching concepts, to enrich my teaching through appropriate and meaningful digital teaching services, to create and use open educational resources and to efficiently organise teaching, exams and feedback processes for students.

Cooperation partner

As a cooperation partner, I can access the information that I need when collaborating with members of the University of Vienna. I can easily and safely share data, jointly develop digital resources and communicate and interact with university members from anywhere.

Member of executive staff

As a member of executive staff, I have safe and reliable access to up-to-date, complete and accurate information that I need to make decisions. This information is provided to me through digitally improved, productive processes over which I can exercise appropriate control and through which I receive effective notifications.

Interested party

As an interested party, I am well informed about the University through using the University of Vienna's digital products and services. I gain a good understanding of the University, its activities, results and contributions to society.

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Annex: Definitions

The German term “**Digitalisierung**” has two meanings. In a narrow sense (digitisation), it is the technical process of converting analogue signals into a digital format, during which the information is decoupled from its physical carrier and is made accessible to storage, processing and communication with computers. According to this meaning, digitisation has been ongoing since the invention of the computer. In a broad sense (digitalisation), digitalisation comprises the diverse and far-reaching changes that are intertwined with the introduction and implementation of digital innovations and their effects on individuals, organisations and the society.

The continuous development of digital technologies allows for **digital innovations** that refer to the process and result of combining digital and physical components that help generate new business processes, products, services or business models that are clustered in a range of services and are embedded, incorporated, disseminated and used in another environment. In a university and organisational context, these refer to processes in which universities combine digital technologies with additional resources to reshape their model of providing services and the related processes, practices, services and infrastructures, and thus their range of services.

Digital transformation encompasses the building of organisational resources and capacities to generate, prioritise, select and implement digital innovations so that they benefit the University's range of services. However, digital transformation is not limited to the levels of the individual or the organisation but it exerts its effect by distributing the University's range of services in the ecosystem of education. This ecosystem incorporates, realises and uses the digital innovations introduced by the University and, thus, serves as the basis for developing new digital innovations. This **digital ecosystem of education** comprises universities, primary, secondary and tertiary educa-

tional institutions, base and funding institutions at the European, national or regional levels and their interactions with education-related processes in the economy, culture and society. In this context, the digital transformation unlocks potential to act coherently on all these levels and across sectors, to strengthen the position of universities as central actors in society and the innovation system, "and thereby to contribute to the personal development of the individual, and to the welfare of society and the environment" (section 1, Austrian Universities Act) to address, among others, the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals.



**Wir freuen uns über
Ideen und Feedback**
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