



UNIMORE

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI DI
MODENA E REGGIO EMILIA

Strategic Plan 2020-2025

**Università degli Studi
di Modena e Reggio Emilia**



Strategic Plan 2020-2025

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A MULTIDISCIPLINARY UNIVERSITY FOR QUALITY RESEARCH AND TRAINING

Universities today are faced with fundamental strategic choices, which can guide their future and mark the future of the cities and territories hosting them, as well as the entire country.

Faced with a complex economic and social environment, exacerbated by the pandemic, universities can adopt a defensive approach, focused on local and short-lived objectives and dimensions, or aim at a role on a European and international scale, on par with the best poles of research and teaching.

With this Strategic Plan, the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Unimore) decidedly and ambitiously chooses to measure itself with the highest national and global levels, aiming to consolidate and strengthen its identity as a "Research University" in many cultural, science and technology fields of great importance.

Only in this way can Unimore guarantee excellent teaching, train students to the best international standards and at the same time consolidate its strong roots in the territory, strengthening its capacity to attract and retain the skills that will be crucial for the economy and for the entire social and cultural structure of the future.

We want to train people to become increasingly aware of the challenges of sustainability and inclusivity, and increasingly able to critically interact with the best skills and ideas and to help design and implement concrete actions for a better society.

This path requires maximum openness to develop all the synergies with the relevant external subjects, and at the same time requires an actual and punctual work within the University to overcome the difficulties that still remain: enhance the people who work and study at Unimore and deploy all their potential; improve our organisational and management structures; strengthen the quality and sustainability in every single choice at the base of training, research and third mission activities.

The Six-Year Strategic Plan 2020-2025 of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia is the programming document that defines the University's vision for the near future, implementing it through strategic lines and objectives that will be possible only with the daily contribution of ideas and work of all the members of the University. It is the prerequisite for the elaboration of all subsequent planning acts.

The Six-Year Plan is included in the Two-Year Plan 2021-22, followed by a Three-Year Plan 2023-25, which identifies the objectives and actions envisaged for their achievement, as well as the evaluation indicators and the relative values expected at the end of the period.

Within the framework of compliance with regulatory requirements, the Plan aims to highlight the guidelines of the governing bodies for the period of the current Rector's term of office, represents the reference for the planning of the Departments, and indicates the ways of interaction and synergy between different projects, developed both inside and outside the University.

INTERNAL CONTEXT

In its long history, whose origins date back to 1175, the University has always been an important reference point for the scientific, cultural and social life of local communities.

With approximately 30,000 students currently enrolled in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level programmes and over 1,400 employees among teaching, research and permanent technical-administrative staff, Unimore has been one of the largest universities in the ministerial classification since 2017¹. The University is a network of locations², that is Modena and Reggio Emilia, combined with the city of Mantua, which has been the accredited seat of a Degree Programme since 2018. It is organised in 13 Departments and 2 Schools, as well as in centres located on the territory of the two provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia, where teaching, research, third mission and related support services are carried out.

The 30,000 members are the result of a constantly positive trend that from 2013 to date has led to a 35% overall growth, with almost 8,000 units more than the figure of a.y. 2013/14.

Faced with this substantial growth in the student population, teaching staff and researchers remained almost stable in the same period, with about 800 units currently active (+2% compared to 2013, with a significant recovery after the sharp decline in 2017). The share of ordinary professors remains stable (accounting for 27% of the total), with an increase in both associate professors (from 32% in 2013 to 44% of the total in 2021) and researchers on a fixed-term basis (today equal to 14% of teaching staff and researchers) which are gradually taking over from university researchers (currently at 15%).

The administrative technical staff, another key component for the University, recorded a generally decreasing trend, with almost 90 units less than in 2013 (-12%).

Among the activities in support of the territory, the University plays an important role in offering assistance, mainly provided in agreement with the Hospital - University of Modena and the Health Company - IRCCS in Reggio Emilia, with an important impact on the health system and on the protection of public health.

The pandemic crisis of 2020 also brought immediate and deep changes to Unimore in all major activities. The first reaction took the form of a response to the medical emergency, with a decisive contribution from university medical-health staff. Another emergency was at organisational level, which was met thanks to working groups to adapt the structures and processes of the University to the sudden transition towards radically different models and practices. This accelerated the transition to the digitisation of workflows. Even based on that critical experience, Unimore is redefining its internal organisation, a process that will continue to require a strong commitment to change also in the near future.

The greatest effort has been made to respond, in the midst of the pandemic crisis, to the discomfort of students, especially those coming from outside the region and international students, by enhancing communication and willingness to listen, providing devices to be used for distance teaching, simplifying and digitising administrative practices.

The shift from traditional lectures, guidance for incoming students and graduation sessions to online remote teaching activities required a collective effort and a strong adaptability. All facilities were involved to allow continuity of teaching activities and interaction with students remotely. All teaching activities are now going back to face-to-face mode.

¹ Italian University rankings by Censis (2017/18).

² Since 1998, the University is organised in a “**network of universities**” (art. 1 of the Statute)

The research activity continued, despite the difficulties linked to the temporary interruption of a large part of the laboratory activities. The project and response activities to regional and European calls for applications remained very intense.

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

THE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC CRISIS

The Covid-19 pandemic has generated a collective trauma with profoundly negative effects on the economy, on social relations, on people's daily life habits. It is estimated that the heavy reduction of GDP in 2020 can be recovered, in the main European countries, only between 2022 and 2023, with differences between national situations [Figure 1].

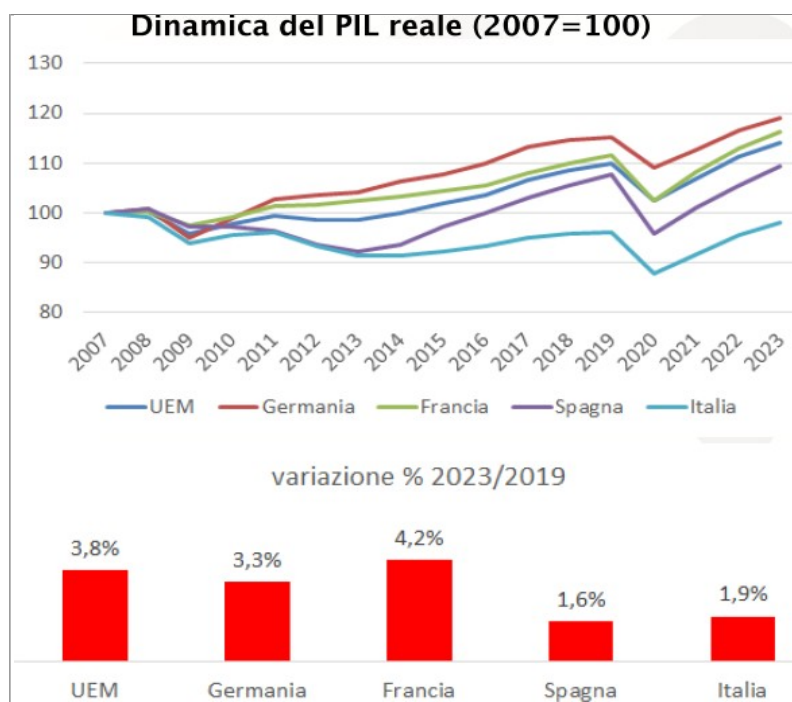
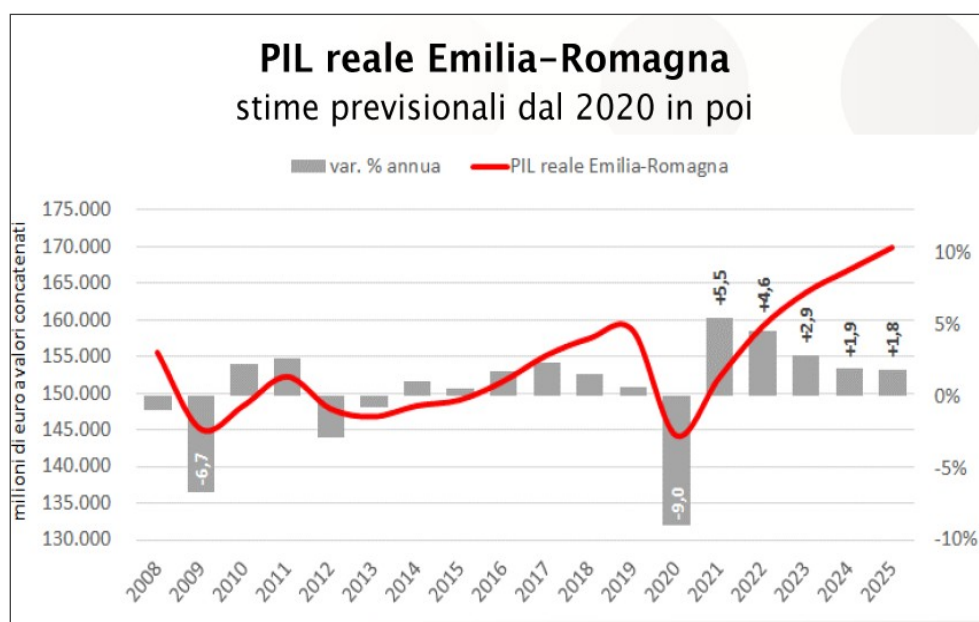


Figure 1. Recovery times estimated on actual GDP before COVID (2007=100)

Source: Predictive scenarios for Emilia-Romagna, Regione Emilia-Romagna, ART-ER (April 2021)

Emilia-Romagna was one of the Italian regions most affected by the Covid-19 epidemic, also due to its central position at national level. In this scenario, the regional GDP registered a steep fall due to the pandemic, with a negative impact on all components of domestic and foreign demand [Figure 2] and a heavy social impact in terms of job and housing losses.



Source: Predictive scenarios for Emilia-Romagna, Regione Emilia-Romagna, ART-ER (April 2021)

In 2021, the number of job-seekers is expected to grow sharply (+12%), but a significant recovery in employment is envisaged as early as 2022.

The latest estimates indicate the return of regional GDP to pre-Covid level in 2022, thanks to a sustained recovery in imports, investment and exports [Figure 3]. In 2021, the estimated recovery will cover all macro-sectors, with a greater variation in construction (+11.6%), due to state incentives (restructuring bonuses) and a much smaller recovery in services.

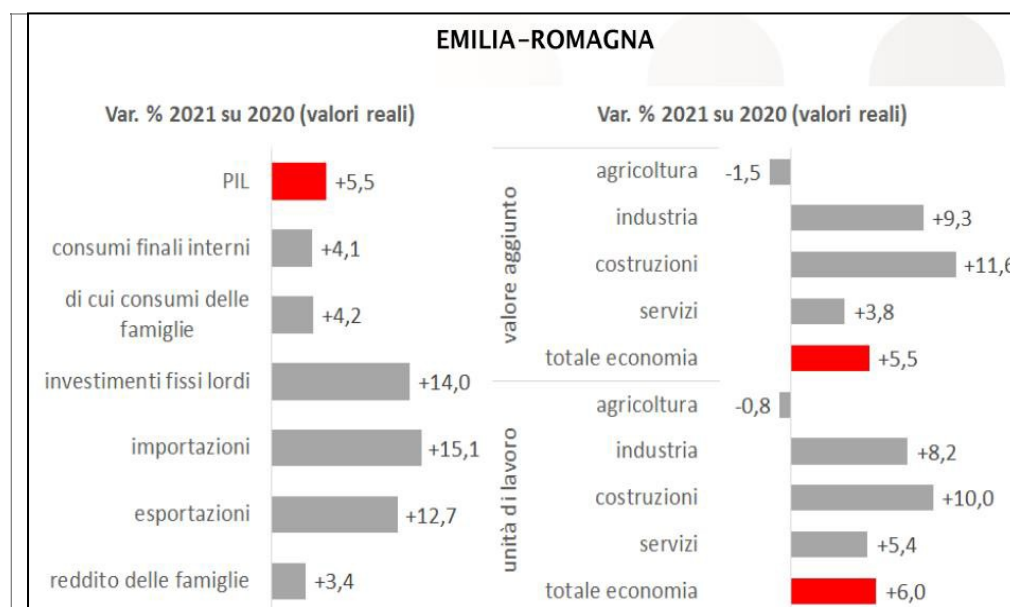


Figure 3. Growth estimates for regional GDP components, 2021

Source: Predictive scenarios for Emilia-Romagna, Regione Emilia-Romagna, ART-ER (April 2021)

Modena and Reggio Emilia, the main reference territories for Unimore, play a fundamental role for the

regional economic system, especially in terms of manufacturing and contribution to exports. Together, the two provinces account for about the third part of the regional value added per capita (2019 data: 17.3% Modena, 12.1% Reggio Emilia; second and third province after Bologna, 25.9%) [Figure 4]. Still in 2019, at national level Modena ranks fourth among the Italian provinces, with 36 thousand euros per inhabitant, and Reggio Emilia ranks tenth with 33 thousand euros [Figure 5]

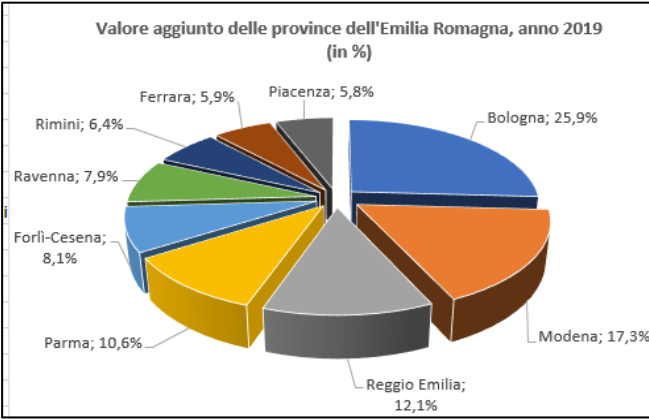


Figure 4. Added value of the provinces of Emilia Romagna (% of the regional added value), year 2019
Source: Study and Statistics Centre of the Chamber of Commerce of Modena - data processing by Unioncamere

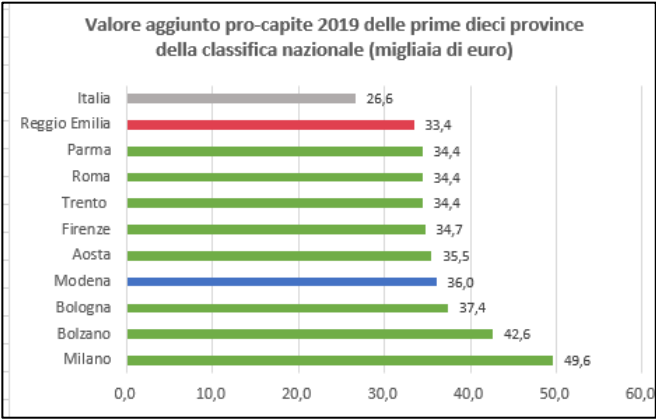


Figure 5. First ten Italian provinces in terms of added value per capita (thousands of euros), 2019
Source: Study and Statistics Centre of the Chamber of Commerce of Modena - data processing by Unioncamere

Although the pandemic crisis has heavily affected these two provinces, the prospects for recovery are already significant in 2021, with important recovery expected in manufacturing. Less prominent is the expected resilience for services, while much attention will have to be focused on the resilience of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which constitute the numerically backbone of companies of Emilia Romagna and is a fundamental centre of widespread innovation.

A RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE TERRITORIAL SYSTEM

The territories in which Unimore operates have undoubtedly expressed a strong resilience in the recent past, knowing how to react to the global economic crisis of 2008, the earthquake of 2012 and during the current pandemic crisis, which has affected a very solid context, that in 2019 came from seven years of consecutive growth of disposable income per capita; at regional level, this shows values higher than the average growth of the regions of Northern Italy [Figure 6] and with very high quality of life indicators at national level.

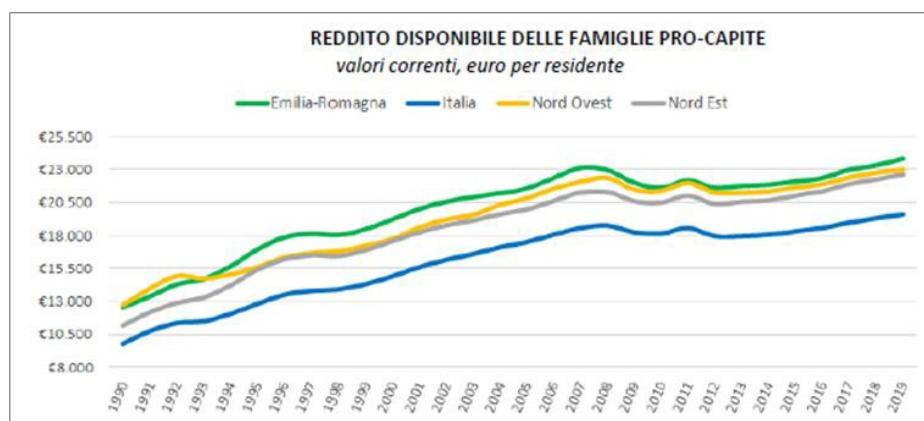


Figure 6. Available income of households per capita.

Source: Documento di Analisi e Programmazione Strategica Triennale (DAPST, Document of Three-year Analysis and Strategic Planning) – Rev 3 – 2020, ART- ER

The innovative start-ups born and/or operating in Emilia-Romagna in the period 2013-2020 are 1,821, with the largest concentration in the territory of Bologna, followed by the province of Modena (second place) and the province of Reggio Emilia (fourth place).

As for 2019, there are currently 160 university spin-offs in Emilia-Romagna, with very substantial spaces for growth in the future. There have been 43 spin-offs incubated in the history of Unimore, of which 12 in the last 4 years. Of these - significant data - 27 are still active companies and some have consolidated on the market.

THE GAPS TO BE FILLED

At national level, Emilia Romagna shows an excellent position on many indicators in the field of education, research and innovation, significantly better than the average figure in Italy and the north-east. Some of these indicators, however, are lagging behind the European average, and in particular in relation to those regions that are the true competitive benchmark for Emilia Romagna in manufacturing specialisations (e.g., Baden Württemberg, North Rhine Westphalia). This delay needs to be filled quickly, especially in the light of the pressing needs of the future post-pandemic, both to address the urgent and profound needs of the economic and social system and to make the most of the investment opportunities offered by the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience (NRRP) and other national and Community funds in support of recovery.

Similar considerations apply to the level of education. In line with the Europe 2020 strategy for curbing early school leaving rates. In recent years, Emilia Romagna has reduced the proportion of young people aged 18-24 who leave school early, reaching 11% of 2019 (compared to the national average of 13%). Also in 2019, among the adult residents of Emilia-Romagna, 25% had a tertiary degree (degree or post-degree), higher than the national one (23%) and North-East (22%). However, this figure is still far from 37% in the EU and the 40% target set in the Europe 2020 Strategy.

The urgent need for catching up this gap is heightened by the clear correlation between employment growth and the level of education. In 2019, the growth of regional employment is in fact driven by the increase in the employment of people with diplomas (+12,400 employees, equal to +1.3% compared to 2018) and especially graduates and post-graduates (+21,600, +4.5% compared to 2018), whereas the number of employees with a lower qualification than the diploma is substantially reduced. Graduates account for 24.7% of the total, above the North-East (22.6%) and national (23.4%) figures, but still far

from the EU average (35.9%), which is growing in all countries.

The comparison with the data of the European regions at the frontier of economic and technological development confirms the absolute need for an acceleration in the ability of Emilia Romagna to invest in research, innovation, and people qualifications and skills. The system of regional universities is at the forefront of this collective effort to bridge the remaining gaps.

In this direction, a regional policy aimed at exploiting the opportunities emerging from the new Horizon Europe programme will be a top priority. The Emilia Romagna region with the Regional Strategy of Smart Specialisation in Research and Innovation 2021-2027 has provided the framework within which regional players, including universities, will have to face the major challenges of EU cohesion policy [Figure 7].



Figure 7. UE challenges and regional manufacturing specialisations: Priorities of S3 Emilia Romagna 2021-2027
Source: Pact for Employment and Climate Table - Regione Emilia Romagna, 2021

Within this framework, Unimore is working and will work on the strategic horizon 2020-2025 to give tangible support to regional strategies and to strengthen its contribution to the economic, cultural and social development of the territories of reference.

A further great opportunity is offered by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) recently approved by the Parliament, divided into 16 Components, grouped into 6 Missions that transpose and reflect the strategic and priority axes [Figure 8].



Figure 8. Missions of the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and funds provided. Source: text of the NRRP approved by the Italian Parliament

The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) accompanies the Recovery Assistance Package for Cohesion and the Territories of Europe (REACT-EU) and other national and EU mutual resources. The RRF alone provides resources of EUR 191.5 billion, to be used in the period 2021-2026, of which EUR 68.9 billion are grants.

An important component of the Plan will be managed by the Ministry of University and Research. In particular, and on the basis of the actions mentioned above and described in greater detail in the continuation of the strategic six-year plan, Unimore believes it can make an important contribution to Missions 4 C1 and 4 C2.

The objectives of Mission 4 C1 "ENHANCING THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION SERVICES: FROM CRÈCHES TO UNIVERSITIES" include: facilitating access to the university, making the transition to the world of work faster and strengthening the tools of guidance in choosing the university path, and reforming and increase the PhD programmes by ensuring a continuous evaluation of their quality.

The objectives of Mission 4 C2 "FROM RESEARCH TO ENTERPRISE" include: strengthening research and encouraging the dissemination of innovative models for basic and applied research conducted in synergy between universities and enterprises, supporting processes for innovation and technology transfer, strengthening research infrastructure, capital and innovation support skills.

Overall, the strategic complexity and the unprecedented scale of investments planned at European, national and regional level require a joint commitment of the different components of the University, in a multidisciplinary perspective and in collaboration with other entities, to make the most of the opportunities offered.

UNIMORE STRATEGIC APPROACH

In an external context so dynamic and marked by critical epochal events, the University is committed to maintaining and strengthening the link with political, social and cultural institutions and with the bodies of the manufacturing world and services.

Unimore strongly believes that *quality* is the key word for a sustainable future of our territories. With this in mind, investments in the coming years in people's skills, technologies, infrastructure, research, social inclusion, environmental sustainability and digitisation, made possible by European, national and regional development plans, will be able to support relaunch strategies that can position us on the frontier of the most advanced European regions.

The constant strengthening and updating of the educational mission has been and will continue to be a strategic priority for Unimore, in line with the European challenges aimed at creating an intelligent society, that is, capable of investing in the fields of education, research and innovation and to grow through knowledge. Through its educational mission, Unimore will act in the coming years to improve the capacity of reaction of the external context, generating new highly trained human capital and, through it, offering constant stimuli to the innovation of the territory.

The strategies implemented for the training offer are aimed at creating, through an open dialogue with external interlocutors, study programmes able to fight historical problems of tertiary education (excessive duration of studies, early leave before obtaining the degree). At the same time, it aims to offer new content and methods, which can cross the main routes to future innovation in order to facilitate the integration of young people into the labour market and to respond to the widespread demand for highly qualified professionals and advanced skills, especially in the most driving sectors of the productive fabric.

Unimore's training role will stimulate quality growth, strongly oriented by the criteria of environmental sustainability, investing with a multi- and interdisciplinary approach in different cultural and professional fields, on scientific contexts with a high potential for business development and on the strengthening of programmes to support the development of entrepreneurial skills, in full alignment with regional strategies (S3 RER 2021-2027).

Unimore is also committed to investing more in post-graduate training, contributing directly to the continuous transformation of knowledge in society and work.

With these aims, the collaborations in the educational field will be strengthened at national and international level, and will continue those with the other academic realities of the territory (the Universities of Bologna, Ferrara, Parma and, since 2018, the Univermantova Foundation), thereby further enhancing integration with the economic, social and cultural reference system.

Another key strategic priority is the field of research, for which the University aims to support and increase the activity and attractiveness of its departments and centres, and the number of researchers involved. Unimore's good position among the Italian universities in the ranking of the best universities in the world and the growing success in competitive tenders at European level demonstrates the cultural and scientific vitality of many areas of the University. However, we are aware that a considerable further effort is needed to strengthen the financial and personnel resources, the laboratory infrastructure and the instruments dedicated to research, particularly basic.

Unimore shares this commitment with the territorial context to support investment and to reach the appropriate scales of activity; in this sense, joint action is needed in activities such as the financing of fixed-term researchers, doctoral grants and, in general, collaborative research activities.

The application of the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience (NRRP) for funding under the

responsibility of the Ministry of University and Research (MUR) represents in this perspective a great opportunity to relaunch, temporally coinciding with this plan. Unimore is ready to put its skills and relationships at stake to fit into networks able to compete in large-scale projects, including related to the major challenges of ecological transition, digital and technological innovation, health care and social inclusion.

As part of the Third Mission, Unimore aims to multiply efforts to disseminate and enhance the results of scientific research in the external environment, in a "system perspective" and in innovative and participatory ways, with the aim of involving a plurality of reference audiences: from citizens and civil society, to institutional entities, to enterprises and social and third sector organisations. The characteristics of the regional system represent a fertile ground on which to graft the skills and potential of the University, with the support to a quality growth of the leading sectors and the competitive repositioning of the supply chains that were most affected by the crisis. The use of Open Innovation models will be pursued with consistency, in order to enhance ideas and skills existing within the university, combining them with proposals, solutions and technological skills that come from outside, in particular from companies, start-ups, other universities and research and consultancy institutes.

Unimore also intends to strengthen the activities of Public Engagement, significantly increase the contribution given to continuing and recurrent training, enhance and strengthen the accessibility to a wide audience of the museum and archival heritage of the University, extend the third mission activities in the field of biomedical and public health protection.

We believe it is essential for these purposes to continue in close cooperation with the Emilia-Romagna Region in the various areas in which this can take place: from the financing of instruments for the right to study, housing and student residences, research grants and support for post-graduate training, the sharing of research projects in key areas such as agri-food, automotive and sustainable mobility, clean energy, building and construction, cultural and creative industries, health and well-being industry, service innovation and social inclusion.

An integral part of this commitment will be the activities that Unimore carries out through the Technopoles of the High Technology Network of Emilia-Romagna (Modena, Reggio Emilia, and Mirandola), a privileged channel of contact with the world of production and services.

The priority in the field of internationalisation is primarily to offer our students and our staff useful skills and opportunities in a global working environment. In this perspective it will be essential, in addition to strengthening the English language teaching, to sign agreements with universities and industrial realities of other nations to promote the mobility of our students, especially for PhD students as a link between teaching and research.

The ability to attract more students and researchers from abroad, a parallel strategic objective, will be directly proportional to the chance of offering an really attractive environment in terms of teaching, research and welfare.

For Unimore, the innovation of processes and organisational structures is a fundamental objective to be achieved in the time frame 2020-2025. The achievement of the organisational objectives, as outlined below, will be crucial to improve the overall quality of the system, to increase service levels and to provide adequate support for strategic planning, as well as to improve the working conditions and welfare of workers.

From the first two years, the plan aims to achieve a deep digital transformation of all University activities, that will move simultaneously and consistently with the overall organisational change, and with the important generational turnover of personnel in the coming years. At the same time, effective

communication both internally and externally will be the indispensable tool to further strengthen the identity of the University, its recognisability and the positive and propulsive perception that the various stakeholders have of it. No less important, it is necessary to rediscover at all levels a synergy and harmony of objectives between teaching staff and researchers, technical and administrative personnel, in view of a University Pact for Quality Assurance, for continuous improvement of processes and working environment.

Unimore is a state institution with aims of a social nature, which recognises in students the founding nucleus of its community. It must provide them with the means to achieve their objectives and fulfil their aspirations, even beyond theoretical curricular training, by offering new teaching methods, taking initiatives that ensure full inclusiveness and facilitate the sense of belonging to the university community and the promotion of active and responsible citizenship, acting as a catalyst for the world of work and fostering internationalisation and mobility projects.

The University is committed to raising the education rate by supporting the families of students with aid and benefits to facilitate studies, avoid forced abandonment, involving in this direction local authorities, baking foundations, businesses.

Of no less importance, Unimore has the duty to support its students with a welfare offer consistent with the demand. It will therefore be essential to improve the quality and size of the buildings for teaching, research and sport, which today are not fully adequate also for the increase in the number of students in the recent past, with a view to a sustainable and inclusive University.

In this context, the relationship with the cities and territories of Modena, Reggio Emilia and Mantua will be strategic, to design and develop sustainable university city models to meet housing needs and raise the level of services to Unimore's students and staff, and at the same time to act as examples of communities open to knowledge and individual and collective development.

The objectives contained in the Unimore Strategic Plan are therefore part of this perspective of development of individuals and the community, as well as of the whole territory. They focus on many areas of intervention and collect the contribution of all the components enhancing the spirit of initiative and the sense of belonging to the institution. The plan consists of three initial chapters relating to the fundamental missions of the University (Training, Research, Third Mission) and subsequent chapters concerning other areas of intervention of a transversal or specific nature.

SWOT ANALYSIS

The SWOT analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) below provides a concise representation of Unimore's internal strengths and weaknesses and the favourable (opportunities) and unfavourable (threats) conditions of the external environment.

STRENGTHS

- Excellent reviews of graduates on Degree Programmes and employment rate of graduates (top university in the region)
- Several internships and traineeships in companies
- Good attractiveness of the Master's Degree Programmes by students coming from other universities
- Suitable university presence in healthcare activities of the two cities
- Research quality above the national average in 10 of the 16 subject areas (R>1, VQR 2011-2014)
- Presence of excellent researchers at national and international level
- Increasing ability to attract resources in

WEAKNESSES

- Student/professor ratio needs a careful monitoring
- Areas that need to be developed for teaching and research
- Modest results, in comparison with the Universities of the north-east, in terms of regularity of training
- Limited accommodation solutions for students and teachers offered by the territory
- Poor attractiveness towards students coming from other regions (except for Master's Degree Programmes) and abroad
- Internal organisation and sharing of information

OPPORTUNITIES

- European, national, and regional recovery plans
- Historically productive local context
- Presence of businesses, foundations, entities and institutions of the territory strongly interested in collaborating with the University
- New opportunities related to the fight against the healthcare emergency
- Interaction with Universities of the region

THREATS

- Economic and social consequences of the pandemic
- Psychological and behavioural effects of the pandemic on the academic community

1. TRAINING

As a public university, Unimore pursues the aim of contributing to the welfare and development of the community through the production of knowledge made possible by research, the development of the applications deriving from it and the transmission of this knowledge to the new generations and more generally to society, through high-level training activities (University guidelines for training, approved by the Academic Senate on 21 January and by the Board of Directors on 24 January 2020).

This leads to institutional tasks: the definition of highly qualified cultural and professional profiles consistent with the needs and prospects for the future development of society and the labour market; the provision of teaching resources for the needs of innovation and continuing and recurrent training, dialogue and confrontation with territorial, national and international realities.

Unimore undertakes to implement quality assurance actions of its Degree Programmes, coordinated with appropriately defined policies and with a teaching programming based on adequate resources in terms of teaching, facilities and services to students. Unimore favours the entry of students, in a manner consistent with its endowments and compatible with the sustainability of high levels of quality teaching and research, and acts in this sense rewarding the value in the entry stage, with appropriate policies of orientation, selection and right to study; during the study programme with actions for the recognition and enhancement of acquired skills; in the exit stage with activities to support internships and job placement. It intends to adopt appropriate measures to reduce student leaving.

Finally, Unimore is committed to developing and implementing new forms of quality teaching, also as a means of increasing the opportunities for access to study programmes and continuous training, as well as their use by students and student workers/ workers and off-site.

Unimore maintains its vocation as a multidisciplinary university and supports the enhancement of interdisciplinary collaboration, through a training offer that covers multiple thematic areas - Health, Science, Society and Culture, Technology, Life - and that finds place in departmental structures in relation to their individual specificities and research vocations.

Within this framework, the identification of new degree programmes to be established will aim to capture requests and proposals meeting criteria such as innovation, internationalisation, specificity and high-profile territorial vocations.

In line with the above-mentioned Guidelines, in the six-year period 2020-2025 Unimore intends to improve the quality of University teaching and, as a result, its positioning at national and international level, with a consequent increase in the University attractiveness.

As for the teaching offer of 1st and 2nd level, in the academic year 2021/2022 Unimore provides 90 Degree Programmes, of which 10 are joint-degree programmes and 5 with foreign universities: 15 in the Healthcare area, 13 in the Science area, 29 in the Society and Culture area, 22 in the Technology area, 11 in the Life area.

In comparison with other Italian universities on the quality of training and employment opportunities, the situation of Unimore shows two sides. On the one hand, Unimore occupies the first positions in different rankings of the Italian universities with regard to teaching; in particular, the Censis Ranking of Italian Universities 2020/21 (<https://www.censis.it/formazione/la-classifica-censis-delle-universita00italiane-edizione-20212022-1>) places Unimore at the 1st place as employability and at the 7th place of the general ranking among the big universities.

On the other hand, the school-leaving rate between the 1st and 2nd year is higher than in other Universities in the geographical area of reference (North-East), and at the same time the number of university credits

acquired between the 1st and 2nd year is lower (source: ANVUR). These data show that, although starting from a high number of freshmen, in many Degree Programmes the number of graduates is much lower, not fully meeting the demands of the territory; in addition, this situation weighs heavily on the first year, where the teachers are in different programmes with high numbers of students to follow to the detriment of quality. It is therefore necessary to act to support student training, also through the expansion and redevelopment of the teaching spaces.

As for the post-graduate teaching offer and continuous training, Unimore current offer is designed and managed in a fragmented way: the initiative is often left to individual professors and the management entrusted to individual departments. Even if the offer meets the needs of the territory, two critical issues emerge. On the one hand, there is a lack of a centralised coordination structure that would make it possible to exploit the University's educational potential, including the interdisciplinary one. On the other hand, management in departments shows some inefficiencies. It is therefore necessary to make the post-graduate offer more complete, attractive and effective, relating in particular to master programmes, specialisation programmes and similar initiatives.

In the light of this, Unimore sets some strategic objectives within the six-year period of this plan, outlined below, along with the main actions and expected results, aimed at improving the processes and results in the area of teaching. In the 2021/2022 and 2023/2025 plans, these targets will be set out in strategic objectives and specific actions will be indicated to achieve them.

The aims for the six-year period 2020-2025 in the area of teaching are:

1. Improve the training offer in terms of quality, sustainability and possible extension of teaching activities
2. Reduce student-leaving rate in Degree Programmes
3. Make the post-graduation offer more attractive, continuous and recurrent

IMPROVING THE TRAINING OFFER IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABILITY, QUALITY, AND POSSIBLE EXTENSION OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES

In order to ensure the quality of teaching and improve the training offer in terms of possible expansion, sustainability and quality of the degree programmes, the following actions are planned:

- The optimisation of the existing training offer;
- The optimisation of teaching loads.
- The institution of new Degree Programmes based on strategic criteria for the University;
- The creation of new teaching infrastructure and requalification of the existing ones;
- Professor training to teaching;

The results expected from previous actions are as follows:

- Improved quality and sustainability of the teaching offer for all Degree Programmes.
- A more attractive training offer in line with the strategic approach of the University.
- An improved availability of spaces and infrastructures for the teaching activities;

REDUCING STUDENT LEAVING

In order to reduce the number of students leaving the Degree Programmes, the following actions are planned:

- Strengthening guidance in the entry stage, making it more capillary and effective, so as to make students more aware of the courses offered by the various Degree Programmes;
- Strengthening the tutoring in progress also with innovative methods of supplementary

teaching and laboratory, so as to support students in their training, especially students who, while having the potential to continue their path in the chosen programme, show difficulties.

The results expected from previous actions are as follows:

- A consolidation of the number of registrations, such as to make teaching sustainable;
- The decrease in the number of students leaving the university, in particular between the first and second years, to allow more students to complete their training;
- An improvement in the relationship between graduates and freshmen, to increase the number of graduates and better meet the needs of the territory.

MAKING THE POST-GRADUATION OFFER MORE ATTRACTIVE, CONTINUOUS AND RECURRENT

In order to make the post-graduation offer more attractive, continuous and recurrent, the following actions are planned:

- Enhancement and coordination of the offer at central level;
- Optimisation of continuous and recurrent post-graduate offer management

The results expected from previous actions are as follows:

- The attraction of an increasing flow of students and therefore of resources from post-graduate, continuous and recurrent training with a quality offer, consistent with the professional and employment needs and prospects;
- The reduction of the workload of peripheral structures for the management of post-graduate programmes.

2. RESEARCH

Consistent with the «University Guidelines for Research» (document approved at the meetings of the Academic Senate on 11 February and the Board of Directors on 12 February 2020), Unimore recognizes the importance of research and pursues the aim of contributing to the welfare and development of the community through the production of knowledge generated by research and the development of applications that derive from it.

It also considers research as a priority not only for the development of knowledge, but also as a means of providing the new generations with the tools to address the challenges of society, including through the enhancement of international collaborations.

The link between quality research and training activities is one of the unique characteristics of the University and allows the creation of culture, knowledge and innovation also through the promotion of entrepreneurship and the enhancement of research infrastructures.

The University is therefore a complex system in connection with local, national and international entities and institutions. During the pandemic, the research has suffered a real slowdown, especially in laboratories where no research was carried out on the virus, a condition common to the entire national university system and also to the entire country. The University has tried to contribute to the resumption of activities through investments to make some of them remotely manageable, facilitating the virtual interaction between researchers, and allowing access to laboratories in compliance with safety standards.

European, national and regional plans are important opportunities to encourage and structure certain research activities. Several actions may be of interest to the University; in particular, the forthcoming MUR calls for applications for National Centres, Extended Partnerships and Research and Innovation Infrastructures of the National Plan for Recovery and Resilience (NRRP) may see Unimore as an active and proactive member on some issues. This opportunity can be leveraged only through a coordination of the professors, improving the ability to network and propose themselves as groups with sufficient critical mass on the internal level and relations with other Universities, Research Centres and Enterprises.

The Strategic Plan describes the activities that Unimore intends to implement in order to achieve the overall objective of *improving the quality of university research*. The Plan identifies some priorities and proposes solutions, including:

- (i) the need to identify effective ways of evaluating research (scientific production, design, ...) in absolute terms and in comparison, in a context characterised by a community of researchers who adopt different paradigms and practices and are based on different epistemological assumptions;
- (ii) encouraging interdisciplinary approaches to scientific issues, enabling the different communities in which academic research is conducted to interact in a virtuous way;
- (iii) the intersections between training and research are centred on the PhD, increasingly enhancing the figures and scientific personalities of PhD students and reflecting on the educational-scientific activities that characterise the path;
- (iv) the discussion on the ways of reconciling the need for a high average scientific quality with that of having some centres of international excellence, capable of attracting the best talents and of successfully competing for funds and reputation;
- (v) the need to maintain a high level of independent fundamental and foundational research, together with the increasing demand to provide "useful knowledge" to the socio-economic system in which our University is integrated;
- (vi) the objective of making Unimore more recognised and attractive at international level.

Several of these points require a close collaboration between research activities, third mission and

internationalisation and therefore a close coordination between the corresponding Delegates and the action of the offices in charge.

In any case, in order to strengthen internal research at the University, its already considerable technological innovation strength, and increase its visibility and competitiveness at national and supranational level, we need to adopt new measures to promote synergy and integration between the existing many different skills, with focus also to new ethical issues that require new thinking, suitable to the challenges we will face. In this context, Unimore will also be able to respond to National Plan for Recovery and Resilience calls in an effective manner.

In the light of this, Unimore sets some strategic objectives (SO) within the six-year period of this plan, outlined below, aimed at improving the processes and results in the area of Research, in line with Teaching, Internationalisation, and Third Mission programmes.

FS1) Ensure and increase the resources of the University dedicated to research, also improving the organisation and involvement of dedicated staff.

FS2) Improve attractiveness to students and researchers from other national and international venues.

These strategic objectives can be further developed in the following areas:

MANAGING AND MONITORING THE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH

The objective of improving the quality of university research must be based on actions that allow an effective management of the activities required to develop research programmes and an evaluation of the quality of the research carried out. The analysis of the evaluation results may lead to different actions to improve/stimulate/encourage participation in research and the quality of the achievable results, as well as the identification of strategic areas on which to intervene.

This results in actions such as:

- a. Reorganisation of the evaluation and management structures of the Research (Research Observatory, University Research Commission, Senatorial Research Commission).
 - i. Responding also to comments received during the accreditation ended in 2016 on the opportunity to identify bodies and internal evaluation criteria, the Research Observatory was established at the beginning of the current term of office of the Rector, and it is made of one representative for each CUN (Italian University Council) area. The tasks of the Research Observatory include the monitoring of research: scientific production, planning, national and international collaborations, ability to attract funding, involvement in national and international bodies that carry out activities to address and promote research, scientific production of research doctorates, development of cultural scientific initiatives, etc.
 - ii. The University Research Commission has instructor and proactive tasks regarding the achievement of the objectives defined in this Strategic Plan.
 - iii. The Senatorial Research Commission is one of the four Permanent Commissions set up for the organisation of the work of the Academic Senate; it has investigation, proactive functions, referring to the Senate.
- b. Identification of some themes around which "conscious competence" will be collected. From this action you will get useful information about the positioning of Unimore with respect to different research approaches, from local to national, and to international level.

PROMOTING BASIC RESEARCH AND INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES OF RESEARCH

The evolution of the national and international research system increasingly requires significant critical mass aggregations, both to meet ambitious scientific and technological challenges, and to build partnerships capable of successfully participating in competitive initiatives and calls for applications.

In addition to greater coordination within the University, the main route is to strengthen or build long-term collaborations and synergies with national and international research entities and subjects, also aiming at real strategic alliances. In some examples, as in the case of the CNR (National Research Centre), we can rely on existing and structured collaborations to strengthen them, evaluate their extension to other fields and design joint initiatives of broad scope.

A similar commitment must be developed with regard to all the subjects of the territory who are interested in research, with a view to 'third mission' (and in close collaboration with the structures of the university in charge) but also in the perspective of real collaboration and strategic synergies of research.

One of the strongest messages of the COVID-19 pandemic is the social importance of basic research. As pointed out by editorials in the most prestigious scientific journals, basic research has proved to be a wealth of knowledge in which the society has been able to quickly find effective solutions to the emergency situation, and should therefore be considered a critical infrastructure of contemporary society. This role is underlined by the centrality of excellence in basic research in Horizon Europe, highlighted by the sharp increase in the financial effort dedicated to the ERC programme, and the creation of a similar Italian programme as early as 2021.

Another key aspect of research is the central role of interdisciplinary aspects. In this field, the central role that the so-called "missions" based on some clusters have in Horizon Europe stands out: *Health; Culture, creativity and inclusive society; Civil security for society; Digital, industry and space; Climate, Energy and mobility; Food, bioeconomy, natural resources, agriculture and environment*. For each of these areas of intervention are offered covering many aspects that can be studied by different disciplines, emphasizing how research must relate to the needs of citizens with clear visibility and strong impact.

The "mission" consists of a portfolio of interdisciplinary actions to achieve a clear, decisive and motivating goal that has a strong impact on society. The 17 objectives defined by the United Nations also help identify possible lines of research for all researchers, and the NRRP proposes transdisciplinary macro-themes that reflect and contextualise the European missions to Italian characteristics.

Unimore has multidisciplinary features, which are suitable not only to the participation with "vertical" research groups that collaborate with international networks, but could also propose large projects and gather around the present skills a team for participating in important and significant calls, having also a role of coordinator.

The actions useful to achieve these objectives are:

- a. Increasing the University budget for research, also involving other sponsors.
- b. Reorganising the University Research Fund (FAR - Fondo di Ateneo per la Ricerca) to increase departmental research, to consolidate the instrumental provision and to stimulate the international and trans-disciplinary planning capacity.
- c. Strengthening interdepartmental research infrastructures, such as the *Centro Interdipartimentale Grandi Strumenti* (CIGS) and the *Centro Servizi Stabulario Interdipartimentale* (CSSI), to provide all research groups with common access facilities equipped with the most advanced technologies.
- d. Encouraging participation in international networks and tables through facilitating the procurement of calls for applications and support for the preparation of project documents.

- e. Creating transdisciplinary groups to design/coordinate/share activities related to specific themes or applications and involving skills distributed across multiple departments.

ENHANCING PHD PROGRAMMES

Research Doctorates are a strategic field: they are fundamental in both research and third-level training, and also for the repercussions in terms of interaction and collaboration with the non-academic world oriented to scientific and technological, social and economic development. Research Doctorates can be considered as a) an incentive and outcome of a wide, qualified and competitive research activity, b) an area in which internationalisation takes place as an effective and vital way, c) a tool to consolidate a bidirectional interaction, mutually beneficial between university and socio-economic fabric. These features are the subject of consolidation and improvement actions, such as:

- a. Increasing the offer of PhD programmes, both as a number of scholarships, as a type of path, and as a joint offer with other national universities.
- b. Promoting the internationalisation of PhD programmes, strengthening collaboration and joint training agreements with international universities, and the establishment of Colleges of Teachers with members belonging to qualified foreign institutions.
- c. Increasing the attractiveness of PhD programmes towards applicants with foreign degrees and stimulate and support the outgoing mobility of PhD students also through agreements with other universities.
- d. Developing the involvement of extra-academic players in the creation of training and research opportunities to expand the skills of PhD students and their career options.
- e. Improving the educational quality of PhD programmes and stimulate the scientific production of PhD students, including through the monitoring system described above

Both the REACT-EU plan and the NRRP plan envisage the strengthening of the PhD programme and a particular emphasis on industrial doctorates. The modalities are not yet known, but Unimore will take action to respond to these actions by defining procedures suitable for the management and development of innovative doctorates and enhancing the results of these activities.

RELATIONS BETWEEN RESEARCH AND TERRITORY (IN CLOSE COOPERATION WITH THE THIRD MISSION)

The area of reference of the university is rich in companies, especially medium- and small-sized, very rooted in the territory, proud of the "know-how" typical of Emilia. In the face of considerable initiative and effective action, there is, however, still a great deal of individualism which leads, in many cases, not to exploit a synergistic process that is also necessary to meet the challenges and opportunities of digitisation and era 4.0. This also applies to the set of existing relations between the individual research groups and enterprises/associations. The University will promote joint actions with a view to increasing the quantity and quality of relations aimed at sponsoring research activities with industrial repercussions, with a more effective exploitation of research results, even the basic ones.

The actions to achieve this goal, several of which are characterised as third mission activities, are for example:

- a. Promote the research results by means of theme events dedicated to companies.
- b. Intensify the participation to the "Notte dei Ricercatori" (researchers' night) and similar events.
- c. Present the research results also in secondary and primary schools.
- d. Link Group Tables for the research with the tables for consultation with the Stakeholders for teaching.

- e. Create a collection of successful cases in the relationships between the university and companies that can be an example and stimulus.

IMPROVING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF UNIMORE

As far as Research is concerned, the attractiveness of the University goes through the qualitative and quantitative improvement of research infrastructures and the opportunities for developing new ideas/projects.

A key action is to strengthen support for research by investing in qualified personnel, both in terms of design support (Research Directorate, Technology Transfer and Third Mission) and more generally research activities at department and centre level. This includes the creation of new permanent positions and the renewal of the agreement with the Foundation of Modena for fixed-term contracts for research technologists.

Other initiatives related to Teaching, Third Mission and Internationalisation certainly improve the attractiveness of the University, such as initiatives to create networks for attracting talents in partnership with both local and foreign universities, create university residences open to researchers, and improve welfare.

3. THE THIRD MISSION

Consistent with the «University Guidelines for the Third Mission» approved by the Academic Bodies in February 2020, Unimore recognises the importance of the third mission as a natural completion of its fundamental training and research functions and as a tool to contribute to the welfare and development of the community.

The University considers the sharing of knowledge and its application useful also for improving the quality of research and training, by means of a two-way interaction through which third-mission activities can positively influence research and training activities.

In this perspective, in the six-year period of this plan Unimore defines some strategic objectives, outlined below, aimed at improving processes and results in the area of the third mission.

FROM A SYSTEM PERSPECTIVE, PROMOTING THE COMPETENCES EXISTING IN THE UNIVERSITY

A strategic objective of Unimore is to strengthen collaboration with the social and economic context, also in order to increase the exploitation of research results.

We believe that for a research-based university a fruitful model for achieving this objective should be based on the promotion of the different skills existing in the university in a «system perspective», aimed at maximising synergies and impacts on research and teaching related to research, rather than on purely individual initiatives that have characterised a large part of the collaborations with the economic-productive conditions in recent years.

We want to apply this approach both to the internal enhancement of skills, and to the offer of innovation to the outside. In the two time plans in which this six-year plan will be implemented, specific actions will be defined aimed at:

1. strengthening entrepreneurship training courses for teachers, researchers and students and support for patenting;
2. creating tools to facilitate the internal and external knowledge of the University of the overall framework of the University's know-how and the meeting between demand and innovation offer;
3. improving the coordination and strengthening of innovation intermediation structures and services for the technology transfer.

REDUCING THE GAP BETWEEN THE WORLD OF RESEARCH AND SOCIETY

Unimore wants to confirm and strengthen the activities of Public Engagement to reduce the existing gap between the world of research and society, propose itself as a responsible university that promotes interaction, attentive to social, cultural and environmental challenges, open-minded and close with the territories and communities in which it carries out its activities.

Since 2018, Unimore has been supporting departmental public engagement programmes through a dedicated funding channel based on a selective internal call for applications. In the two time plans for the implementation of this six-year plan, actions will be defined with the aim of widening in the budget of the University the amount of current funding for departmental initiatives, and to encourage the efforts of departments and individual professors and researchers on initiatives with a high social, economic and cultural impact.

In the specific field of health protection, the purpose is to intensify interactions with patients' associations

and their families and initiatives to prevent and promote healthy lifestyles, in agreement with public and private bodies and associations of the territory.

MAKING THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE UNIVERSITY AVAILABLE TO EVERYONE

Unimore is committed to protecting the cultural heritage of the University, by strengthening its dissemination through greater accessibility to a wider audience of stakeholders interested in its use. The centuries of history of studies and research in scientific and humanities fields carried out in our University has stratified over time a rich cultural heritage made of legacies, museum collections and archives, of which it is necessary to ensure not only the conservation but also a more adequate exploitation to make them public and social spaces fully liveable by the community.

In order to achieve these objectives, a series of actions are planned: 1) to strengthen museum activity through the establishment of a university museum system which can catalyse the many experiences of existing museum activities; 2) to improve the management and extend the usability of the University's archival and historical heritage; 3) to support investment in the digitisation of archival and museum heritage; 4) to strengthen and innovate the educational function of university museums and to strengthen their role in incoming guidance activities.

CONTINUOUS TRAINING AS A NEW PRIORITY

Unimore operates within reference territories that are extremely dynamic in terms of technological, economic and social innovation, with a constant need not only to provide new adequately trained human capital, but also to develop lifelong learning paths for those already active in the economic sectors, in schools, services, public administration and, more generally, in institutions. Unimore's mission, for the time horizon of this plan, is to significantly increase the contribution given to continuing and recurrent training, to adult education and to all forms of open teaching able to support the development of professional skills and to support an innovative and responsible competitiveness.

Currently, these activities are limited to certain areas, in particular the training of professors, but it is believed that, within our University, there are resources and skills capable, if properly used, to give an important boost. In particular, we consider it feasible to activate a wider offer of continuing training aimed at medical-health personnel working in hospitals and territorial structures, to meet the training and professional needs in progress, also related to communication between medical staff and patients and to strengthen the presence on the territory.

In the first instance, we intend to reorganise the continuing and recurrent training offer, so as to understand the opportunities and limits of the current offer, carry out an analysis of emerging training needs through more intensive processes of collaboration and co-design with public bodies, territorial foundations, business associations, individual organisations and accredited training bodies.

To facilitate the creation and development of collaborative relations with the territories, we also believe that it is essential to implement a substantial involvement of the Marco Biagi University Foundation and the Alumni Association in continuing training initiatives. In a second phase, Unimore aims to increase investment in innovation in the educational formats used for continuing and recurrent training, for example, through the provision of online remote learning courses open to participants from diverse geographical areas and cultural backgrounds.

4. INTERNATIONALISATION

Unimore recognises the importance of Internationalisation as the natural completion of its primary functions of training, research and third mission, to be pursued through typically transversal actions. Internationalization is considered as a fundamental connotation of the universities that, in a globalisation and increasing competitiveness approach, must acquire a transnational dimension to provide their students and staff with useful skills and opportunities in an international working and collaborative environment.

The University aims to pursue and maintain levels of excellence in the different areas of teaching and research in relation to international standards and in accordance with the objectives also defined by the Agenda Europe 2025, in order to contribute positively to the creation of the European Higher Education and Research Area. Unimore promotes social inclusion, the reduction of inequalities including gender, race and religion, the contrast of xenophobia and populism, in total harmony with the principles of the Erasmus Charter for Higher Education (ECHE) and through the implementation of the Erasmus 2021-2027 programme. Unimore joined the Inclusive University Manifesto proposed by the UNHCR to establish university humanitarian corridors and the SAR (Scholars at Risk) network.

International mobility is a tool for personal and professional growth for all Unimore stakeholders, returning to the community individuals and citizens who are sensitive to the issues of international openness and lifelong learning.

Another fundamental aspect of internationalisation is the ability to attract students and/or researchers from abroad. In this regard, we need to distinguish between mobility and recruitment actions; both are part of the strategic objectives of Unimore but require different activities of promotion and reception.

The decision of the Academic Bodies (meeting of the Board of Directors on 29/05/2020) to encourage direct calls from scholars from abroad is a strategic signal for a university open to the world in the fields of research and teaching. This action, together with the recruitment of foreign students, will be a real success to the extent that we will be able to offer an attractive environment from the point of view of teaching, research, spaces and welfare, creating a virtuous circle of international exchanges. Even from this perspective, the level of internationalisation is strictly connected with the quality of the University and the quality of life in the cities and territories it embraces.

Unimore sets some strategic objectives within the six-year period of this plan, outlined below, aimed at improving the processes and results in the area of teaching.

4. Internationalisation of Teaching
5. Mobility, Structured Mobility - Erasmus 21-27
6. Internationalisation of PhD Programmes
7. Structured collaborations with foreign universities and Unimore becoming part of international networks
8. Improvement of Unimore position in International Rankings
9. Enhancement of the organisational structure for Internationalisation

We need and ought to point out that the emergency health situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic is affecting the university system globally. Therefore, some flexibility in time should be maintained in the actions required to pursue the objectives of the plan.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF TEACHING

The University is strongly committed to enhancing the training offer relating to international programmes, through various actions that it wants to consolidate and rationalise. For the academic year 2019-2020, the monitoring activity by MUR listed 10 Degree Programmes, of which 7 Master's Degree Programmes in English and 3 structured mobility programmes, i.e. in which at least 20% of the students enrolled have obtained 12 CFUs abroad.

They are medium-term objectives of the University: the increase in the number of international Degree Programmes and joint degrees in structured mobility, the number of teachings provided in a foreign language and the number of students and graduates who acquire a significant percentage of university credits abroad, including those obtained during periods of "virtual mobility".

In order to increase the number of foreign students, it is essential to act on several fronts: offer teachings that are readily available and attractive for their contents (able to value the specificities and the excellences of our University) and language skills (programmes taught in English) also by exploiting the competences already existing in the University in terms of e-learning (in this perspective, the Delegate for internationalisation takes on the role of digital officer); improve reception capacity in terms of bureaucratic procedures, including by enhancing the International Welcome Desk, and housing, urging the different parts involved; facilitate inclusion within the academic community through students who help as "mediators" for the Degree Programmes with a high number of foreign students.

MOBILITY, STRUCTURED MOBILITY - ERASMUS 21-27

The development and improvement of mobility actions of students, teaching staff and administrative staff (physical, virtual and blended) represent, in perspective, a strategic priority for Unimore, with a particular commitment to individuals in a disadvantaged economic situation or with disabilities.

The University aims at further increasing the number of incoming and outgoing students, considering that 1500 students per year is an achievable and sustainable objective.

The participation to the Erasmus Programme, the strategic partnerships, the structured mobility related to the Double Degrees or Joint Master Degrees and the participation in the European university network will be the main tools used to implement the project.

The determination of inclusive education and the international scope of education itself will be considered a priority and an innovative aspect. To this effect, in accordance with the Guidelines towards the First Strategic Plan for Horizon Europe 2021-24, special attention will be paid to the programmes based on STEAM Education, a new educational model that promotes the interdisciplinary relationships between arts, mathematics and the technical-scientific subjects to counter education poverty and gender divide.

In the short term, Unimore expects a constant increase in the mobility of professors and personnel in order to promote both the continuous exchange on innovative learning themes, and the definition of training programmes through which double and joint degrees will be issued.

STRUCTURED COLLABORATIONS WITH FOREIGN UNIVERSITIES AND UNIMORE BECOMING PART OF INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS (EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY NETWORK - EUN)

The active integration in international networks, not only as individual researchers but also as a University with all its potentials, is the cornerstone to activate educational and research exchange programmes (Student and Staff Mobility) and to open new collaboration channels that help acquire new resources, enhance the degree of internationalisation and the attractiveness of our training, as well as facilitate participation in Erasmus+ calls for applications, with clear positive interconnections on research.

Therefore, it is essential to commit to the participation and establishment of University Networks, mainly at European level (*European University Network-EUN*), by trying to coordinate with similar universities in terms of size and potential, in order to promote mobility and collaborations within the network and increase the critical mass to act at an international level.

Special attention will be also paid to international research centres and to the economic and productive world (mainly through Italian companies and institutions with headquarters abroad) through formal agreements (strategic partnerships) within the research and teaching field, the mobility of professors and researchers, the creation and formalisation of double/joint degree programmes, the implementation of student mobility (within KA1 action of the Erasmus+ programme and More Overseas action) for study and internship.

As regards the academic and economic relationships within a non-EU context, they involve China, Brazil, the emerging countries of Latin America and the Asian area such Vietnam, Thailand, India, and Iran (also thanks to the partnership agreement with Uni-Italia), as well as the areas of Northern Africa and the Mediterranean Sea through the participation in UNIMED, and some excellences of the English-speaking areas for the implementation and improvement of the existing agreements with countries such as the US, Canada and Australia.

INTERNATIONALISATION OF PHD PROGRAMMES

The internationalisation of PhD programmes is based on the formalisation of agreements on joint degrees with foreign Universities (the signing of co-supervision agreements), the presence of PhD students abroad (e.g. Marie Curie projects), the presence of qualified foreign professors in the Teaching Body. Therefore, both PhD student mobility and teacher mobility must be promoted by means of appropriate incentives. To date, there are 13 International PhD Schools in Unimore based on MUR's definition, and there are 6 double degrees activated with foreign PhD schools. However, the international features need to be strengthened in order to improve ministerial indicators and attractiveness. To this end, we considered it useful to anticipate the opening date of the calls for applications, in particular for foreign students, and to define guidelines to organise intensive courses, so as to better promote the excellence of Unimore.

Unimore's primary goal in the medium term is the improvement of the proportion of PhD students who spend a reasonable period abroad, to be implemented also through policies of incentives and co-financing of students with supplementary grants or other forms of rewards that make the economic treatment of PhD students more competitive.

IMPROVEMENT OF UNIMORE POSITION IN INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS

The evaluation parameters for international rankings are complex. For 2021, Unimore ranks between 401 and 500 among over 1500 Universities considered worldwide by Times Higher Education (THE), behind the top 10 Italian universities; our strong point (Quoting Indicator, Citations per Faculty) remains high, while the search indicator, while still showing low levels, shows a growth trend. Indicators linked to teaching, private sector funding and internationalisation have been broadly stable in recent years. As for

the 2022 ranking of Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), the position of Unimore worldwide is lower (range 701-750 among about 1300 international universities), although better than 2019 (801-1000).

The objective of Unimore is to improve its position in QS and THE rankings in the medium-long term. To this end, the analysis of results must be deepened and strategies must be developed to activate positive and virtuous paths for research, academic reputation, attractiveness, reception services, in a transversal and integrated way between the University realities dealing with Teaching, Research, Internationalisation and Third Mission; an ad hoc Working Group has been set up consisting of teaching and technical/administrative staff to guide the university's efforts to improve its performance.

ENHANCEMENT OF THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE FOR INTERNATIONALISATION

The University has recently adapted its regulations and its organisational layout, by setting up a University Senate Board, as well as a University Work Group for internationalisation, to coordinate the competences and optimise the individual commitment in order to promote the actions, monitor the objectives and the relevant indicators, and in general boost the effectiveness of suitable actions to disseminate the internationalisation culture.

In particular, the aim is to facilitate dialogue and the flow of information between the different central structures (which hinge on the International Relations Office and the Delegate for Internationalisation) and between these and the decentralised structures (Departments and PhD Programmes); to this end, contacts have been identified both among the teaching staff and the administrative staff. In addition, the way in which the University presents itself abroad (website in English) and more generally administrative procedures must be implemented and optimised with a view to a global approach to the international dimension, with full availability of documentation and forms in English.

Note the intense activity of the University Language Centre (CLA), through which Unimore promotes the learning and maintenance over time of the language skills of students, teachers and administrative technical staff - as well as the acquisition of Italian as a foreign language by international users - thanks to an articulated range of courses, which also include preparation to pass the international IELTS exam issued by the British Council (UK).

The University aims to achieve the objectives outlined above both by developing the internal structures responsible for the implementation and development of internationalisation activities, and through an increasing interaction with external partners, such as CRUI and other regional universities, embassies, territorial and governmental bodies, bodies and offices of the European Commission.

5. THE ORGANISATION

The constant improvement of the processes and organisational arrangements is for Unimore a fundamental objective to operate efficiently in its various institutional missions and to implement its strategies. In the light of this, Unimore sets - within the timeframe of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 - some organisational innovation objectives, outlined in the following, which it considers crucial for improving the overall quality of the system and for increasing service levels, towards both internal and external stakeholders.

AN ORGANISATION SUPPORTING CHANGE

The intention to work a more incisive structuring of the relationship between the fundamental missions of the University (research, teaching, third mission) and the vast audience of people interested in the use of their services, and in the interaction with the missions, requires an extraordinary effort to rethink organisational processes.

We believe it is essential to enhance the role of management and staff involved in administrative processes, encouraging their transformation from a function of pure executive efficiency and mainly based on compliance with rules and regulations, a function that can also provide a constant stimulus for innovation and simplification of processes.

To this end we deem it essential to:

- Proceed towards a redefinition of the principles of allocation of financial and human resources within the organisational units of the University, with the aim of creating the best operating conditions to strengthen the achievement of strategic objectives and, in particular, to support the functions that contribute most directly to the creation of value for the University, through the strengthening of fundamental missions and the relationship between these and stakeholders.
- Pay high attention to the development of projects involving different organisational units of the University, with the aim of jointly finalising their individual and combined activities, and achieve the objectives set by the strategic plan.
- Make systematic a communication process between the different organisational units, so as to improve the sharing of objectives between the heads of their functions, including through the provision of organisational systems and mechanisms to pool information and improve access to and use of information. This must be done both through the provision of appropriate IT tools and through the introduction of organisational practices aimed at facilitating maximum information sharing between the main decision makers.

The review of the organisational model aims to accelerate the improvement of integration between university strategic decisions and executive development by the management and all the units involved in the implementation phases. This should be based on a clear and early definition of the deadlines and units involved, with the final objective of achieving the establishment of a system of full accountability of the actions carried out, at the level of the University's general management and directorates.

Among the strategic objectives of the University, the achievement of gender equality will require the design and implementation of Positive Action Plans and Gender Equality Plans and the inclusion of gender budgeting in the University's budget and programming cycle.

A system of indicators on gender equality will be developed using administrative data and the results of ad hoc surveys on working conditions and study, aimed at detecting the existence of gender stereotypes and the reflections on gender indicators contained in the annual report of the Single Guarantee Committee (Comitato Unico di Garanzia - CUG). The collection of data will be facilitated by the achievement of the

objective of building a new data ecosystem that will pay attention to the disaggregation of information collected based on gender.

The organisation will adopt the figures and services (for example, the figure of the trustee or adviser or the psychological support and counselling service for the student population) which will improve well-being and fight all forms of discrimination, thereby improving the working and learning environment.

The review of the University's organisational model will also cover the relationship between central administrative units and decentralised units, primarily the Departments. Compared to this point, three main objectives can be associated with the six-year plan.

- The first objective is to invest further in the transparency of administrative processes: the search for maximum information sharing between units of the Centre and decentralised units should make the decisions taken more immediately visible, to speed up procedures involving both central and decentralised units. This will be done through the preparation of informative management models that will define the data flows between the structures and that will have to be adjusted to match the overall review of the University's computer systems.
- The second objective is based on the desire to identify more fluid forms of work organisation for activities referring to relations between central units and decentralised offices, in order to fully reintegrate and enhance the skills existing in all parts of the university system. We also propose to extend the presence of organizational figures connecting central and decentralised units, to harmonise the activities carried out at two different levels and enhance the level of service provided to internal and external stakeholders.
- The third objective is to increase the administrative skills of department directors and managers of peripheral structures, by organising training activities dedicated to both directors to make them aware and updated on issues, including accountancy/administrative staff, for which they are directly responsible, both to actors on quality in order to have competent, motivated and highly qualified personnel.

Concurrently to this layout, we propose a consistent review of the models for assessing the distribution of the endowment of Technical Administrative staff between the two levels, according to assignment modalities to be anchored to the development plans not only of the individual organisational units (central or decentralised) but of the University as a whole, with the strategic plan at the centre as a fundamental direction of change.

STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT OF IT SYSTEMS FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Since the first time period, the plan aims to achieve a deep digital transformation of all University activities, that will move simultaneously and consistently with the overall organisational change, and with the important generational turnover of personnel in the coming years. At the heart of the plan of change is a complete review of the management of the computer services of the University.

The new design provides for the complete unification and centralisation of IT services (for administrative purposes, for teaching, for research), to overcome the organisational fragmentation of existing service structures and improve support for the achievement of university strategic objectives in different areas.

The centralisation of computer systems will be combined with the activation of data management technologies aimed at defining data flows and their management, identifying the roles and privileges of the actors of the organisation, preserving privacy and information security.

The new structure aims to:

- provide the University with a structured tool to coordinate the action of functions and actors operating in the processes;
- provide databases in a systematic and structured manner that are ready to be used for decision-making purposes, enabling rapid selection and extraction processes of subsets of data relevant to the decision-making;
- offer new tools for the standardisation of processes and their dematerialisation;
- provide, for students, IT services in line with the increased degree of dissemination of digital skills, both in relation to the use of teaching and administrative services;
- provide departments and administrative structures with rapid models of access and data management and technical-administrative staff trained and prepared for this type of management.

The aim is to provide the University with an infrastructure that allows it to make a qualitative leap in the efficiency of administrative processes and, ultimately, in the ability to offer high quality services both for internal users, primarily students, and external ones (e.g. suppliers).

In line with these objectives, the University undertakes to:

- strengthen the expertise in the organisational unit (IT Services Directorate) where the management of IT systems will be centralised, starting from a management structure able to implement the digital transformation project of the University and to develop it consistently with the overall readjustment of the other organisation processes;
- work constantly to break down existing and new forms of digital divide and support all teaching, research and technical-administrative staff in a continuous process of training and updating on the new IT technologies in use, so as to disseminate and root full awareness of the potential associated with the use of such tools.

In line with the plan of rationalisation and strategic centralisation of the management of the University's IT services, the organisation of relations between the central units of the University, Service Centres and in-house Companies will be redefined.

The objective, at the organisational level, is to shorten the line of control between strategic decisions involving the use of IT services and operational management of them, overcoming the current fragmented and decentralised configuration, based on a plurality of organisational units that have differentiated and stratified over time. This review process involves a reshaping of the organisation of work for the staff of More Service, the current in-house company of our University, with a particular attention to staff engaged in computer support for teaching.

A SINGLE DATA CENTRE

In line with the process of reorganisation of the overall IT services system, the University intends to restructure the methods of data production, collection, management and access, encouraging the acceleration of the path towards a Single University Data Centre, going beyond the current approach that still sees an important portion of the data based on compartmentalisation at the level of individual organisational units, both in the generation and collection phase and in the access and use of the data.

A centralised model of virtual integration of existing data repositories can facilitate the extension of data-driven decision-making processes for ordinary activities, as well as offer more organised empirical bases for the drawing of strategic planning documents.

The creation of a common platform where all data converge (even those currently not present in ESSE3

or Titulus systems) will allow the strengthening and speeding up of access to data for all decision-makers at the University, improving integration between university strategic decisions and executive development by the general management and all units involved in the executive process.

DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF PROCESSES

The fundamental objective of the six-year plan is to significantly increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the management and administrative processes of the University, in order to make them consistent with the innovation goals indicated in the other sections of this Plan.

To this end, in line with the strategic centralisation of the management of the University's IT services, the general objective takes shape in the creation of a digital ecosystem of the University around which the dematerialization processes will be organised.

Specifically, the dematerialisation process aims to:

- Overcome digital storage problems, to make the process of extracting archived documents and information resources more agile and faster;
- Make a progressive digital transformation of all the documentation involved in the administrative processes of the university such as, for example, the competition procedures, the administrative activities related to teaching (lesson books, teaching diary teachers), applications for entry selection into Specialisation Schools, etc.;
- Reset the phenomenon of duplication of required certifications and documents, with the aim of creating a central archive in which this documentation is stored and made available to all stakeholders in the procedures and to replace, not only side by side, the paper documentation.

The dematerialisation process will lead to a containment of the redundancy and complexity of the existing administrative processes, with the simultaneous reduction of the costs associated with the production and management of these processes, as well as sunk costs and missed opportunities for development related to the timing of administrative processes.

By way of example only, we mention the improvement of the timing of the notices and the time of publication of the rankings of the entry tests to Degree Programmes and PhD Programmes, in order to ensure access conditions to students that are aligned with or better than that of the most efficient universities.

COORDINATED AND INTEGRATED COMMUNICATION

In the context of a systematic vision of organisational improvement, there is a well-defined and structured strategy on several levels of communication.

The challenge is that of a truly unanimous approach to this area and its unprecedented configurations, in order to achieve effective communication both inside and outside: this is an essential aspect to further strengthen the identity and brand of the University, its recognisability and positive perception on the part of the different interlocutors of reference.

To this end, a clear and defined strategy with a single central direction will be fundamental, to be implemented with forms of connection and organic coordination between the different articulations and structures of the University. Multidisciplinary skills will be enhanced in order to implement quality communication plans and campaigns.

The context in which we operate as a public institution requires transparent and cooperative communication as much as possible: an essential objective is to have accessible and effective

communication tools and forms. This is particularly relevant with reference to the world of students for the multiplicity of communications and stresses to which they are addressed.

Maintaining a fluid and fruitful dialogue with all those who represent possible institutional partners (at territorial, national, European and international level) and on key issues is certainly essential to this end.

A solid awareness of the university institution, in all territorial contexts and at all levels, as well as a good capacity for communication and dissemination of research activities and internationalisation, can only facilitate the purposes of the third mission and public engagement. The aim is to consolidate the willingness to share and pool the results of the work and projects of teachers, the professional skills expressed by technical and administrative staff, the creativity that often comes from the student world.

Communication must be an expression of an organic vision: the communicative tools of the Unimore network, online and offline, the graphic and informative material, the websites and social channels of the Departments and structures, the core of institutional communication, must therefore coordinate with the Guidelines and with the University's website and communication channels in order to be immediately recognisable and referable to the official voice of the University.

Fully aware that the implementation and adoption of these strategic guidelines are closely linked to the adequate availability of dedicated staff and continuing training, there is a need for follow-up meetings on the subject aimed at the staff and communication contacts of each department, as well as forms of evaluation and monitoring - indicatively annual - to assess the effectiveness of the actions undertaken in the various aspects of the University's communication strategy.

A NEW ORGANISATION FOR POST-GRADUATE TRAINING

The University intends to develop a great strengthening of post-graduate training and the overall teaching proposal able to accompany the professional life of people by continuously updating their skills. In this way, Unimore aims to give full value to the skills existing in the departments.

Enhancement will be driven by the establishment of a new central unit for post-graduate and continuing training. At the new dedicated organisational unit there will be a centralisation of the administrative processes related to these activities, now carried out within the departments both for the accounting and for the teaching part.

The central organisational unit, with the help of the Marco Biagi University Foundation, will support the action of the departments in identifying the thematic areas of interest to external stakeholders, in the interaction with the territory, communication to potential users (coordinated with the communication area of the University), organisation of teaching activities and administrative management of contracts to teachers.

6. QUALITY ASSURANCE

The University of Modena and Reggio Emilia was one of the first universities in Italy to establish, in January 2013, the University Quality Presidium (Presidio della Qualità di Ateneo - PQA) and to adopt a quality assurance model (QA) consistent with the AVA system (University Quality Assurance Guidelines by PQA, latest revision 2018, QA Policy Document).

The Guidelines for the University QA, as well as the AVA model, are also consistent with the indications contained in ESG-ENQA 2015 (Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area). The general organisation, outlined below, is aimed at ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of training processes, scientific research activities and third mission.



The focus on quality and improvement of activities is achieved through a strong integration between the PQA and governing bodies, as well as between the PQA and departmental structures, the latter facilitated by the figure of the QA Head of Department.

The Board of Evaluation has the task of verifying and evaluating the functioning of the QA system as a whole, while support for programming and evaluation activities is guaranteed by the appropriate Management.

The University received the periodic accreditation visit of the ANVUR's Committee of Evaluators (CEV) in October 2015 (accreditation decree 2016).

The promotion, by the University, of a widespread culture of Quality, with a clear definition of Policies and the identification of management and implementation responsibilities, as well as the presence of an adequate control and guidance of the QA, was considered a strong point by the CEV.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES FOR THE 6-YEAR PERIOD 2020-2025

Six strategic objectives are identified for the 6-year period 2020-2025:

- (1) Further strengthening, at all levels of the University, the culture of Quality, as drawn in the most recent Guidelines published by ANVUR (AVA2, 2017) and pending the new guidelines that will define the transition to AVA3.

- (2) Improving the overall QA system of the University, implementing a thorough critical review of its operation and at the same time enhancing the critical contribution of all its components. The review will take care to design the QA processes in order to facilitate as much as possible specific paths of renewal and innovation with agile and efficient practices, compatible with the framework established by the ANVUR guidelines.
- (3) Improving the quality of the services offered by the University, also through the strengthening of surveys on the service satisfaction perceived by students, teachers and technical and administrative staff.
- (4) Encouraging an increasingly active and conscious participation of Unimore students in the decision-making processes of the University at different levels.
- (5) Fostering the improvement of strategic planning ability of departments with reference to Teaching activities, Research, and Third Mission.
- (6) Fostering an improvement of PhD Programmes through the provision of an agile QA system for PhD Students, in line with the indications that will come from ANVUR in the matter of "Evaluation and Accreditation of PhD Students" (ANVUR Programme of Activities 2021-2023).

STRENGTHENING THE CULTURE OF QUALITY AT UNIMORE

The promotion of a widespread culture of Quality is a consolidated activity in Unimore, but further progress is required in the acquisition of awareness, at the various levels of the University and for the different players - teachers, students, technical staff, administrative staff - the importance of substantial and conscious adherence to the objectives of continuous improvement, complementary to the need to respond to indications and solicitations from above (Ministry of University, ANVUR, Rector and University Bodies in their respective spheres of competence).

This objective must therefore be understood as the common thread of a series of objectives, and related actions, planned for the next two years and transversal to the different areas of Quality Assurance, from Training to Research, up to the Third Mission.

IMPROVING THE UNIVERSITY QA SYSTEM AND VALUE THE CRITICAL CONTRIBUTION OF ALL ITS COMPONENTS

After nearly ten years since the launch of the AVA system, the periodic critical review of the University's QA system is a stable commitment in Unimore. A good example of this commitment is represented by the Annual Quality Audit, which brings together the Rector and Governing Bodies with the Quality Presidium and the Board of Evaluation, to discuss collectively the reports presented by the PQA on QA activities carried out in the reference year and by the Board of Evaluation on the development stage, as well as on the evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of the University's Quality Assurance System.

However, the time is ripe for a major revision of the University's QA System, both in the light of some important recent innovations as far as governance is concerned, which characterised Unimore since the new Rector took office in November 2019, and due to the development of new activities and Commissions, among which the Research Observatory stands out. Essentially, an update of the QA system, with an even clearer identification of responsibilities for the management and implementation of policies, is appropriate.

IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF UNIVERSITY SERVICES ALSO BY ENHANCING THE SURVEYS OF PERCEIVED SATISFACTION

An important medium-term strategic objective is related to improving the quality of services offered by Unimore. To this end, surveys on perceived satisfaction (customer satisfaction) on services are an important tool of Quality Assurance.

In fact, they are useful to measure the distance on the perceived quality between those responsible for the provision of services and their users. Measuring this distance can in turn be the premise for the implementation of corrective interventions aimed at improving the quality of the services offered to students, teachers and technical and administrative staff.

Surveys of perceived satisfaction are carried out systematically in Unimore at Degree Programme level. Recently, they have been extended to the Specialisation schools in the medical field. In the next two years, these investigations will be further developed in relation to all the services offered by the University.

ENCOURAGING A MORE ACTIVE AND AWARE PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS TO UNIVERSITY CHOICES

Another important strategic objective of Unimore, which will be pursued throughout the entire reference period of this Plan, is the enhancement of student empowerment. It is worth pointing out that the conscious involvement of students in the activities of AQ has been promoted by our University since the start of the AVA system, as witnessed by the University Laboratory for Accreditation, a training module that started in 2015 and provides for the training of students engaged in the Joint Teacher-Student Committees.

Moreover, the importance of the contribution of students to the pursuit of the institutional aims of the University is included among the guiding principles of the Articles of Association (Article 2 of the Articles of Association of the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia).

In this Strategic Plan, the goal of enhancing student empowerment is a commitment of the University aimed at creating favourable environmental conditions to make more effective the ability of students to contribute to the decision-making processes of Unimore. A long-term commitment, therefore, that within the 2021-2022 Plan, approved in parallel to this Six-Year Plan, will be first implemented as a training project for students, representatives in the Bodies, on the University QA System and jointly developed by the Presidium of Quality and the Board of Evaluation.

FOSTERING THE IMPROVEMENT OF STRATEGIC PLANNING ABILITY OF DEPARTMENTS WITH REFERENCE TO TEACHING ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH, AND THIRD MISSION.

A strategic objective identified in this Plan is to stimulate further improvements in the quality of departmental strategic design, especially in relation to the aspect of the link and consistency with the strategic lines defined at central level. Areas of improvement can also be found in the specification of the activities of the Departments related to the monitoring and review of the results of research and the third mission. However, it should be noted that these measures already include a comprehensive monitoring and review activity in the framework of the Departmental Research University Funding (FAR) 2021.

The contribution of the research QA structures will mainly be to stimulate the Departments' sensitivity to planning, also through the preparation of Guidelines for the planning of departments that contain indications on how to draw up a scientific project of the Department and on the definition of objectives planned over a three-year period, in line with its potential but at the same time in line with the University's strategic planning. The guidelines will also include information on the transparency of the criteria adopted

for the distribution of resources, specifying any incentives and rewards provided, as well as the establishment of a template for the annual monitoring process on the implementation of results and for the regular review process.

DEVELOPING A QA SYSTEM FOR PHD RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

The design of an agile QA System for PhD Students will contribute to the improvement of their quality. It should also be noted that the strengthening of PhD programmes is an important strategic objective stated in the current six-year plan and its implementation within the two-year plan provides, among others, an objective of qualitative improvement of the Industrial Doctoral path. Therefore, the set of these indications confirms the importance of the development of a PhD Quality Assurance System which, however, can only be fully developed after the publication of Guidelines by ANVUR.

7. SUSTAINABILITY

The achievement of sustainability objectives is a task in which all Institutions have to engage: together with Economy, Society and Environment, the Institutions are in fact the fourth pillar of sustainable development.

Unimore joins the Network of Universities for Sustainable Development (RUS) promoted by CRUI in 2015, which coordinates and shares the experiences of all Italian universities on the issues of environmental sustainability and social responsibility. The Universities of the RUS are committed to address their institutional activities towards the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (Sdgs), objectives of integrated sustainability contained in the UN Agenda 2030.

Unimore has the UNFCCC (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) accreditation. Unimore is one of the signatories of the Employment and Climate Pact of the Emilia Romagna Region (20 December 2020) and supports regional tables (Agenda 2030 and Regional Strategy for Sustainable Development, Plastic-FrEER control room).

Unimore is a stakeholder of the Municipality of Modena in the Zero Carbon City project and of the Municipality of Reggio Emilia in the PROSPERA project, and shares the Local Action Plan for zero carbon emissions to 2050.

The general Sustainability objectives of Unimore in the timeframe of the Strategic Plan 2020-2025 are outlined below, with a view to a continuous improvement towards the achievement of the SDGs. Moreover, since every activity of the University can be declined in terms of Sustainability, further objectives that are contained in other parts of this Plan are also related to this area. An example of this is the redevelopment of buildings, to be carried out through the renovation of the existing buildings hosting the University's premises, that is, the planning, design and implementation of changes to parts of the Campus with possible demolitions and construction of new structures, in accordance with sustainability criteria.

ANALYSIS OF MOBILITY IMPACTS

The activities of the University generate an impact with potential consequences on both the environment and human health. To harmonise institutional activities and improve the management of environmental aspects, in collaboration with the University's departments and services in specific sectors, a permanent **observatory** of the state of sustainability of the University is already in place (<http://www.unimoresostenibile.unimore.it/>) on the transversal themes indicated by the RUS (climate change, food, education, energy, inclusion and social justice, mobility, resources and waste) and it is intended to formally establish an interdisciplinary group composed of referees from the university departments.

The University has started a quantification process of its environmental impacts, which includes:

- the monitoring of CO₂ emissions, with annual inventory, and assessment of Unimore's Carbon Footprint, according to indicators defined by the RUS;
- the analysis of the life-cycle (*Environmental Product Declaration* - EPD) of a department of its organisation
- the annual monitoring of the mobility of its university population in home-work travel.

In the reference period, the annual monitoring of CO₂ emissions and mobility will be developed at the level of single structures (department/campus) as well as for the University as a whole, in order to highlight

any critical issues; EPD analysis may be extended to other structures of the University in the light of the results obtained in the first application.

The impact of vehicular emissions is also reduced by promoting sustainable mobility: for years, incentives have been in place to encourage the use of public transport through the signing of agreements with local transport companies in Modena, Reggio Emilia and Mantua for staff and students, and has recently increased the number of bike racks. The "Bike to work" project, promoted by the Emilia-Romagna Region, was also developed with the Municipality of Modena.

Further progress will be made by renewing the fleet of vehicles and installing charging stations for electric cars at the University premises as well as, in perspective, the installation of a hydrogen refuelling station built by a primary national player in collaboration with Unimore.

As part of the coordination provided for in the Framework Agreements with the Municipalities of Modena and Reggio Emilia, Unimore intends to promote sustainable mobility initiatives, which further facilitate the use of public transport and bicycles, suggesting the optimisation of routes and the frequency of public transport and planning the completion of cycle paths, so as to encourage these means of travel to the University.

Interventions and policies to optimise resources in the mobility sector will particularly rely on an expert (Mobility Manager) at the University. Among the ongoing initiatives to reduce impacts, the reduction of the incidence of plastics ((EU) 2019/904) with the progressive transition to containers of sustainable materials in food vending machines and the project "Plastic free", which provides for the installation of water supply towers in the University poles and the distribution of water bottles to students and university staff.

EDUCATION TO SUSTAINABILITY AT UNIMORE

The aim of teaching is to promote a transdisciplinary educational dimension of university programmes in order to contribute to the growth of a culture of sustainable development and therefore to promote the adoption of correct lifestyles by students and also by university staff. This can make use of awareness and promotion initiatives also outside, in the territory, with a view to stakeholder engagement.

In the academic year 2020/2021, the teaching of "Soft Skills on Sustainability" was activated, provided completely on remote mode and accessible as an option by all students of the University. Many Departments of Unimore contribute to this teaching offer, which provides students with the various aspects of sustainability, environmental, economic, social, legal and humanities, and much more.

In the reference period of the plan, the aim is to strengthen and promote this initiative and also address it to university staff, as training opportunities on sustainable development issues, and to society as a whole as a proposal for continuing training.

It is also intended to continue to highlight the content of sustainability within the educational offer of the University, accompanying the training activities of the logos of the most relevant SDGs.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY AND INTERNATIONAL RANKINGS ON SUSTAINABILITY

The general aim is to create a community capable of developing, disclosing and disseminating good practices, new projects and collaborations in the fields of knowledge transfer and teaching skills, the third mission and the management of the University with particular attention to the dimensions of sustainability.

Building a sustainable community is an objective that affects all areas of university planning and requires shared planning through a systematic process of communication and integrated sharing for all structures,

directorates and units involved in the implementation phases. They contribute to the achievement of indicators related to building and green areas on campus, to the efficiency of facilities (drinking water distribution networks, energy performance), the differentiated waste collection rate and the reduction of disposable plastics, green policies as well as inclusion and gender equality, to name a few, which are also the subject of other parts of this Plan.

Unimore follows harmonised European methods to enter and update its position in international rankings annually, which evaluate universities around the world on the basis of sustainability criteria. For several years, Unimore has been participating in the International Ranking Green Metric, where it is currently ranked about halfway, and will evaluate participation in a second Ranking on Sustainability, *Times Higher Education* (THE) for the three-year period 2023-25. The improvement of the position of the University in a ranking is not a mere metric operation but involves progressing in the common vision of all the activities of the University based on the ethics of sustainability.

In the reference period, the University's weaknesses will be systematically evaluated, seeking to progressively improve its position in the international rankings.

SUSTAINABILITY CHARTER AND REPORT

In the reference period, Unimore will proceed to the realisation and signing of some fundamental documents that reaffirm the ethical guidelines and values of UNIMORE in the achievement of the SDGs. Initially, "Guidelines" for Sustainability will be drawn up, presenting the aims of the University and the objectives that it wants to achieve.

Then, annually, a Sustainability Report will be prepared and published, a tool useful to report to stakeholders what the institution has achieved to contribute to sustainable development, where the activities and structures of the University will be analysed with quantitative and qualitative standard indicators, explaining the shared value that is the basis of the sustainable community to be created and strengthened.

8. BUILDING

A primary objective for Unimore is to promote strategies that, in concert with civil and religious institutions, local authorities, foundations, professional associations, companies and individuals, increase the role of Modena, Reggio Emilia and potentially Mantua and other locations as university cities, attractive and hospitable towards students and researchers also international.

Fundamental elements in this perspective are the availability of services, accommodation and educational facilities and research adapted to the expectations of the student population, and of teaching, research, and technical and administrative staff.

The situation of the building structures currently available to the University and its students (40 buildings owned or in concession/usufruct, plus a dozen leased) is indeed varied and, in some cases, not entirely adequate.

In particular, priority is given to the need to increase the number of classroom seats (about 15,600 compared to over 23,000 current enrolled in Degree Programmes in a.y. 2020/2021, in addition to more than 800 students of specialisation schools and over 400 PhD students), educational laboratories and study rooms; increase and, in some cases, upgrade the premises for research laboratories (currently about 11,800 square meters in Modena and only 1,300 square meters in Reggio Emilia, where premises on rental are excluded); increase the number of accommodation available to students.

In this context, the strategic aim is the radical and wide-ranging renovation or energy recovery of the building stock of Unimore.

POTENTIAL REPERCUSSIONS

The availability of more suitable spaces for classrooms and educational workshops can help to improve student training, resulting in an increase in the number of graduates. More space for research laboratories also allow the enhancement of PhD programmes and teaching related to research in Master's Degree Programmes, helping consolidate the positioning of Unimore as a Research University.

The infrastructural strengthening of a university building and the improvement of the students' training programme also have an important impact on the context outside the University, the city itself and the connected territory, that goes beyond the modifications to the urban planning consequent to the realisation of the building interventions required.

The increase in the attractiveness of a university building has wide repercussions on the social, economic and cultural context, such as direct economic development resulting from the need for housing and student consumption, the impulse to the demand for the production of cultural goods by city institutions, the greater ability to respond to the growing needs of highly qualified graduates by the working world of the territory.

UNIVERSITY ENERGY PLAN

The University's Energy Plan will be updated with the following objectives:

- Update the available information on the thermal and electrical consumption of the University buildings.
- Collect available information on water consumption.
- Collect and update the available information relating to the housing of buildings and existing plants, identifying possible issues: windows with poor sealing, inadequate thermal insulation, obsolescence of plants, etc.

- Optimise the management and maintenance of mechanical and electrical systems, trying to foster the objectives of energy efficiency.
- Evaluate the best purchasing options of the energy carriers. Define and plan short, medium and long-term actions to reduce energy consumption and the ecological footprint, in the light of the situation resulting from the collection of information, encouraging, where possible, the diversification of energy sources and the use of renewable energies.
- Promote Unimore as an example of a "virtuous" public body from the energy point of view.

The rationalisation and optimisation policy of energy consumption of the structures is already in place. The Academic Bodies will prepare an implementation plan for interventions with an onerous nature, based on energy priorities (high priority for the most energy-intensive structures and interventions with a faster return on investment) and on criteria of social-environmental-economic sustainability.

NEW BUILDING ACTIONS

The necessary expansion of spaces for teaching, research and residential use requires investment in new buildings and the redevelopment of existing buildings, also in order to improve the level of environmental sustainability of the University.

The objective of this Plan, ambitious but achievable if implemented in synergy with the territory, is to make available to students and teachers and, for some buildings, also the citizens, a new structure per year from 2021, with parallel termination of the lease of buildings that are now obsolete and energy inefficient, located in Modena and Reggio Emilia.

Some of the main actions planned for both venues are described in the following sections.

Modena campus

As regards the teaching facilities located in historic buildings in the city centre, the *Forum Boario* is currently undergoing seismic improvement and cabling work, and an agreement with the Municipality has been signed for the realisation on the ground floor of new classrooms for the Degree Programme of the Department of Economy Marco Biagi, which is planned to be completed by 2023.

For the complex of S. Eufemia, in which the new headquarters of the University Language Centre and new classrooms and offices of the Department of Linguistic and Cultural Studies have been recently inaugurated, there is a project of earthquake-resistant improvement for a portion of the building (East Wing G building) currently awaiting authorisation from the Cultural Heritage Superintendence.

These interventions are integrated with those planned or under study for the Rectorate building and for the nineteenth-century building of the Botanical Garden, whose redevelopment works are expected to be completed by 2023, also for the purpose of making it available to the public.

An important Urban Redevelopment Programme of the Complex of the former Sant' Agostino Hospital, funded by the Foundation of Modena, will give a new seat to the University Museum Centre, adjacent to the eighteenth-century Anatomical Theatre that has already been restored with university funds.

In the scientific centre located to the south-east of the city, the construction of a new Teaching Pavilion is expected to start soon in the Engineering Campus. It will provide 1,100 classroom and study rooms, and new offices and research laboratories will be built in another pavilion next to it.

The building of the Biomedical Institutes (MO-15) in the Campus of Via Campi will be rebuilt as a nearly zero-energy building, providing it with a housing with high thermal performance in winter and summer, as well as state-of-the-art plant, with over 1,200 new classroom places, study rooms and research

laboratories; this will be achieved following the demolition of the former Chemistry building (MO16), built in the 1960s and closed for years.

The intervention in the Campus can be integrated by building a nearly zero-energy tower dedicated to student housing, possibly by an entity other than Unimore and in any case against a specific line of financing.

Reggio Emilia Campus

The University will be organised into four poles: San Lazzaro Campus, Episcopal Seminary, Palazzo Dossetti, area of former Officine Reggiane.

The San Lazzaro Campus, now the historic seat of the University, is the site of a project being launched by the City of Reggio and co-funded by the University, which will allow for the creation of 75 new beds for students, study rooms and an auditorium of over 200 places.

A second project, which is expected to be implemented through public-private partnerships, concerns the construction of new buildings (nearly zero-energy buildings), which will meet the needs of research laboratories and classrooms for the technical and scientific area. These two projects, which are expected to be implemented by 2023, together will increase the capacity of the classrooms by about 1,500 places.

The restructuring of the Episcopal Seminary of Reggio Emilia, made possible by the generosity of the Bishop and the Reggio Città Universitaria Committee, has allowed the transfer to Unimore of the right of usufruct of large parts of the building including classrooms, offices and laboratories; this new headquarters (third pole) of the University, near the historic centre and the Arcispedale S. Maria Nuova, is being completed and will host over 1,500 new classroom seats.

Finally, a tough challenge but fully in line with the development plans of the city consists in creating, with the support of the Municipality, a fourth teaching and research centre in the Innovation Park (area of former officine Reggiane), which is set to become the focus of university education and innovation in the various forms of development of the digital area.

ENERGY REQUALIFICATION OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Buildings not subject to demolition and reconstruction will be subject, wherever it is cost-effective, to deep energy remediation, such as the installation on roofs above air-conditioned environments of an external insulation package and batteries of photovoltaic panels associated with electric accumulators and, above all, inertial thermal accumulators, the replacement of obsolete refrigeration units for air conditioning and/or the integration of boiler heating systems with refrigeration units to operate also in heat pump mode, the sensing technology and implementation of air renewal so as to automatically adjust the renewal rate to the actual occupancy of the premises, the replacement of obsolete windows with new bodies with high thermal insulation and with effective solar shielding, the shielding from solar radiation of vertical windows and walls by means of rows of deciduous trees, or by means of external screens with vertical slats.

In the green areas (Campus of Science and Engineering in Modena, San Lazzaro Campus in Reggio Emilia) trees will be planted and arranged in order to create shaded ground areas and protected paths, offering a green lung to the surrounding neighbourhoods, completed by the widespread placement of furniture (benches, tables, etc.) designed to encourage recreation and student aggregation.

Photovoltaic roofs will also be implemented to protect parking lots.

All the University's electricity supplies will be contracted as supplies of energy from certified renewable

sources. In addition, natural gas heating systems will be converted, in whole or in part, into more efficient heat pump systems, powered by renewable electricity.

All incandescent and gas-discharge lighting points in the University building stock will be replaced with LED lighting devices. Solutions shall be adopted for the exterior lighting points to maximise the illuminating effect on the ground and to minimise light pollution to the sky. For interior lighting points intended for corridors or service spaces, activation by presence sensors and/or automated timed off shall be implemented.

Finally, an experimental unit of generation and/or cogeneration fuel cell, powered by hydrogen, will be installed at the Modena Engineering Campus.

9. SERVICES AND SPORTS

STUDENTS SERVICES

Our University believes that the younger generations are the most precious and vital resource of society to face the difficulties of the present and to plan the future. From this point of view, students are at the heart of the desire to organise educational activities, plan investments and direct choices.

To meet these objectives, a "Technical Table for Student Services" has been established for the first time in the history of our University, which intends to take the students' voice directly to the institutional tables. The aim is to establish a permanent forum in which requests, needs and expectations of the student component are reflected in the actions taken by the academic bodies, emphasizing the centrality that the latter must have in the policies of the University.

In this spirit, Unimore decided to implement articulated quality assurance actions of its study programmes, recognise the educational value of student mobility, remove economic, social, cultural and gender barriers for access to universities and the world of work, put in place appropriate measures to reduce student leaving, develop and implement new forms of quality teaching, including as a means of increasing opportunities for access to education and continuing training.

In agreement with the local institutions, during this six-year period, it is also intended to give a decisive boost to make Modena, Reggio Emilia and Mantua university cities, improving in particular the general and environmental conditions for the reception of students, as well as housing and service facilities (classrooms, libraries, public transport, info-point).

In addition, culture (places for sharing research, technological innovation and scientific rewards), work (opportunities and development), health (student welfare network), digitisation and equal opportunities complete and are the cornerstones of a wide-ranging project, in which the right to study is lived as the promotion of the abilities of individuals in a new and stimulating university environment and where the training programme is also active and participatory.

Special attention should also be paid to deserving students, reviewing the current criteria for awarding study grants.

Moreover, as already underlined in the "Organisation" section, it is essential to implement IT services in an appropriate way to the increased degree of dissemination of digital skills, both in relation to the use of teaching and administrative services.

LIBRARIES

The University Library System (SBA - Sistema Bibliotecario di Ateneo) is a centre that coordinates the activity and services of the network of libraries of Unimore, fundamental spaces of university life, specialised in the different areas of the University of Modena and interdepartmental of Reggio Emilia: economics, law, humanities, science and nature, science and technology, and medicine. Its services are aimed at all those who study, work or collaborate with Unimore.

The Covid emergency has accelerated the strengthening of all the services that can be provided remotely; thanks to librarians and administrative staff who have profitably collaborated in the reorganisation and redesign of spaces and services, and thanks to the substantial strengthening of the digital library, there has been a further diversification of support for study and research and has therefore consolidated its quality.

The flagship of the SBA of Unimore is the Bibliometric Office, which provides analysis and advice of high bibliographic/bibliometric level, also for the evaluation of research quality, and the management of the institutional research archive Iris Unimore.

The creation of new study spaces for students adjacent to libraries, the maintenance of an adequate staff from a qualitative point of view and the strengthening of the Library Office are strategic priorities of Unimore, for an overall improvement in student and staff services.

SPORT AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Unimore aims to exploit the potential of sport as an effective and soft tool for training, research, innovation but also to improve well-being, encourage healthy lifestyles and enrich the university experience and quality of life of students and employees.

Sport is support for growth and individual training, fosters relationships between people, enhances a sense of belonging, stimulates healthy competition and a sense of responsibility, strengthens self-esteem and determination, educates to sacrifice and the ethics of doing, enhances group work and values individual contributions, teaches people to know and accept their limits, pushes to achieve goals through commitment and willpower. Our University, together with other universities affiliated to the Unisport Italia network, recognises these values and considers them fundamental in the university field.

The realisation of the Unimore Sport Section within the University site (<http://www.sport.unimore.it/>) aims to promote the potential of our University in the sports field and to enhance the actions taken to make Unimore an example to imitate. In particular, the following are considered strategic objectives, to which more resources should be devoted:

- the dual career, which through the USE (Unimore Sport Excellence) project allows students to combine university study and competitive sports.
- University laboratories and research centres in the field of sports, as the research, training and intervention initiatives that now characterise the intertwining of the university world and the sports sector are many, but can be further implemented;
- well-being and healthy lifestyles, for which a new training programme is planned to discourage the abuse of alcohol and smoking, and the organisation of one-day sports events for all (such as the Unimore Run in Reggio and Modena) and tournaments and intra-university and inter-university competitions to involve the entire academic community, encouraging and spreading the sporting activity.

UNIMORE 2025: A RESEARCH UNIVERSITY LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

At the end of the six-year period 2020-2025, Unimore aims to strengthen its "Research University" identity aimed at creating new knowledge, as well as nurturing the culture of discovery, creativity and innovation in its students. From this point of view, the key objective will be the construction of partnerships capable of successfully participating in competitive initiatives and calls, aiming at strategic alliances.

Opening up to the European and international environment and improving infrastructure and services will further enhance the ability to attract and retain skills, addressing the challenges of sustainability and inclusiveness through concrete actions, harmoniously placed within a clear and balanced perspective of development.

At the same time, by investing in research, Unimore can continue to ensure excellent teaching and fully exploit the potential generated by its strong roots in the territory.

This path will be based to a significant extent on a new organisational and management structure based on a digital ecosystem aimed at streamlining and simplifying procedures, and on a new relationship between professors, researchers and technical and administrative staff aimed at strengthening the quality and sustainability of choices regarding training, research and third mission activities, as well as measuring the quality of the work carried out in each field.

At the same time, with a view to consolidating Unimore position on the international stage, the organisation and coordination of expertise will be crucial for effective actions to disseminate the culture of internationalisation, as well as at central level, at departmental level and at laboratories and research centres.

This includes the project to enhance a strategic sector such as the PhD programme (also essential for the repercussions in terms of interaction with the outside world).

In this context, it is essential not only to make continuous efforts to increase financial and personnel resources, laboratory infrastructures and instruments dedicated to research, including basic research, but also innovative ways of carrying out activities at all levels of the University. With regard to this last aspect, the promotion of the culture of quality, refresher activities and continuous and recurrent training will be characterised not as a contingent aspect but as a real priority.

Within this project, students are permanent interlocution figures also on the institutional level.

A future-oriented university requires strategic choices constantly aimed at supporting staff and students with a structured welfare system that is consistent with demand.

Measurement criteria in the pursuit of this crucial objective - which concerns the entire territory and institutional, economic and social fabric - will be in particular: the quality of buildings for teaching, research and sport; the ability to meet housing needs; the level of services to Unimore students and staff, as well as to foreign professors and researchers hosted by the University.

Pursuing the challenges outlined here, within an integrated project, allows Unimore to present itself as an example of a community open to the knowledge and development of people and the community and thus to constantly look to the future.

This University has long been engaged in a major awareness-raising effort to fight gender stereotypes. With this in mind, it was decided to give greater linguistic visibility to differences. Where masculine is used for simplification purposes only in this document, the form shall be understood to refer in an inclusive manner to all persons operating within the community.



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