

EUni Well 2030

Strategy Framework and
Strategy Questions

Imprint

- EUniWell Board:
- ▶ Prof Dr Beatrix Busse, Chief Development Officer for EUniWell, Vice-Rector for Teaching and Studies, University of Cologne
 - ▶ Dr Graham Harrison, Managing Director University of Cologne
 - ▶ Prof Dr Robin A. Mason, Pro-Vice Chancellor International, University of Birmingham
 - ▶ Prof Dr Giorgia Giovannetti, Vice-Rector for International Relations, University of Florence
 - ▶ Prof Dr Gilles Forlot, Vice-President for European and International Affairs, Inalco
 - ▶ Prof Dr Victoria Khurshudyan, Deputy Vice-President for European and International Affairs, Inalco
 - ▶ Prof Dr Dorothea Debus, Vice-Rector for International Affairs, Equal Opportunities and Diversity, University of Konstanz
 - ▶ Prof Dr Ann-Charlotte Larsson, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Internationalisation and Innovation, Linnaeus University
 - ▶ Prof Dr Senena Corbalán, Vice-Rector for Research, University of Murcia
 - ▶ Prof Dr Pascual Cantos Gómez, Vice-Rector for Internationalisation, University of Murcia
 - ▶ Prof Dr Olivier Grasset, Vice-President for Research and Open Science, Nantes Université
 - ▶ Prof Dr Isabelle Richard, Vice-President for European and International Affairs, Nantes Université
 - ▶ Prof Dr María José López Couso, Vice-Chancellor for Degrees and Internationalisation, University of Santiago de Compostela
 - ▶ Prof Dr Miklós Kellermayer, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, Semmelweis University
 - ▶ Prof Dr Kseniia Smyrnova, Vice-Rector for International Cooperation, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv
 - ▶ Liam Walsh, Chief Student Officer for EUniWell

Background graphics inspired by Gego (Gertrud Louise Goldschmidt).

We are EUniWell:



Content

Executive Summary	2
EUniWell 2030 – Our roadmap for Well-being	5
EUniWell – At a Glance	6
Why Well-being?	7
Why Work Together?	7
Strategy Framework	8
1. Becoming a/the Voice for Well-being	9
a. Multidimensional concept of Well-being	9
b. Research excellence	10
c. Educational excellence and student engagement	11
d. Converging frontiers in innovation	11
e. Civic engagement and policy dialogue	12
The challenges of becoming a/the Voice for Well-being	13
2. Becoming a European University	14
a. Institutional change and transformation	14
b. Viability and quality for the long-term	16
c. EUniWell from local to global	16
d. Seamless mobility	17
e. Employer of the future with a focus on people	17
The challenges of becoming a European University	18
3. Becoming Communities for Well-being	19
a. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity	19
b. We are all learners and networkers	19
c. Well-being competencies in career development	20
d. Individual Well-being and mental health	20
e. EUniWell green campus	20
The challenges of becoming Communities for Well-being	21
Strategy Questions – Bringing EUniWell 2030 to Life	22
Strategy questions	22
Process for engaging with strategy questions at institutional and Alliance level	23

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

EUniWell 2030 – Our roadmap for Well-being

EUniWell 2030 outlines our roadmap as a European University focused on the specific concept of Well-being. It establishes the framework for the activities that will deepen our impact in research and education, our transformative work at the converging frontiers of innovation, and our societal engagement and contribution to policy-making. **EUniWell 2030** evolves our long-term ambitions into three strategic Focus Areas, for becoming: 1) a/the Voice for Well-being; 2) a fully-fledged European University; and 3) communities for Well-being.

The EUniWell Alliance unites eleven universities from eleven European regions in a cross-sectoral, interdisciplinary, knowledge-based perspective around the topic of Well-being.

EUniWell 2030 places the *platform model* at the heart of our approach, which allows each of our diverse member institutions – from our classical comprehensive research-intensive universities, to regionally-focused universities, to specialised universities – to implement EUniWell’s collective vision and mission, whilst at the same time accommodating institution-specific needs and constraints.

We understand **EUniWell 2030** as a living document, meaning that our approach remains responsive to the complex changes and challenges within and beyond the Alliance. It therefore comprises two parts: the Strategy Framework and Strategy Questions. Together, Framework and Questions pave the way for our EUniWell collective journey around Well-being to be a success, and for the Alliance to come to be regarded as a diverse, democratic, and challenge-based destination to and for talent, a model of futures-oriented thinking and doing, and a leader in excellent, open, and inclusive science.

3 Strategic Focus Areas for Well-being

The range of meanings around Well-being – from personal life-satisfaction to societal and planetary challenges – underlies our choice to embrace Well-being as our guiding ambition and place it at the heart of our missions. Understanding Well-being as a working concept emphasises how it does not mean the same for everybody, and entails taking into account the outcome of our actions in a holistic fashion and carefully considering their individual, societal and planetary impact. It leads to rethinking the way we perform our education, research and outreach activities, and developing a more collaborative and Well-being-focused way for transforming our universities.

EUniWell 2030 outlines our three Strategic Focus Areas, which are derived from and aligned with our Missions:

- 1. Becoming a/the Voice for Well-being**, details how EUniWell is incorporating Well-being into the four university dimensions of education, research, innovation and societal engagement, and how we will offer leadership and excellence on Well-being-related topics in Europe and beyond.
- 2. Becoming a European University**, sets out how Well-being impacts institutional change for our members, and how we address topics such as sustainability, digital transformation, and mobility, within our European and global contexts. It also addresses the conditions that EUniWell needs to achieve for realising its vision of becoming an Employer of the Future and thus contributing to the long-term employability aims of the European Higher Education Area.
- 3. Becoming Communities for Well-being**, describes how Well-being will support all students and all staff to work in interdisciplinary and futures-oriented ways, and allow for the EUniWell European University to take shape.

Engaging our participants and partners

This strategy document aims to resonate with and engage a wide audience, especially our internal Alliance-wide participants; local, regional, national, European and global stakeholders; and our broader publics and civil society.

Within our Alliance, it helps us consider the What, How and Who of EUniWell and for each Focus Area we have formulated a dedicated “Challenges” section that highlights and draws attention to obstacles and complexities that the Alliance faces. Our EUniWell Strategy Questions and our collaborative approach serve to address these complexities in a way which allows members to engage with and implement both our EUniWell Missions and the platform model, balancing Alliance aims with institutional realities and speeds in acquiring futures-oriented competencies for Well-being.

Working in partnership with societal stakeholders and across the research-education-innovation nexus, we aim to generate new knowledge, play a critical, intermediary role in delivering research-based policy to inform decision-making, underpin education, training and skills development and have a measurable impact on European and global citizens’ Well-being and quality of life.

At EUniWell we consider that the prism and competency in Well-being are the best ways to tackle the complexities of everyday life, institutional transformation, and global societal and environmental challenges. For this, we aim that our collaborative efforts and holistic approach will pave the way for a transformative change at regional, European, and global levels, placing Well-being at the core of all our initiatives.

We look forward to engaging with you around our three Strategic Focus Areas for Well-being. Please bring your perspective, whether you are coming from a personal, an institutional, an Alliance, a societal, or a global one.

EUniWell 2030.

EUniWell 2030 – Our roadmap for Well-being

EUniWell 2030 outlines our roadmap as a European University focused on the concept of Well-being. Building upon the successes and accomplishments of EUniWell since our creation in 2019, **EUniWell 2030** refines the strategic ambitions of our Alliance and establishes the framework for the activities that will deepen our internal and external impact in research and education, our transformative work at the converging frontiers of innovation, and our societal engagement and contribution to policy-making.¹

EUniWell 2030 reflects our two long-term ambitions and strategic Focus Areas: firstly, to *become a/the Voice for Well-being*, and secondly, to become a *fully-fledged European University integral to its member institutions*. These two goals rest on our third strategic focus, *Becoming Communities for Well-being*, which will enable us to build the necessary internal tools and processes to come together as one European University around Well-being through diverse, interdisciplinary, multi-partner, and transnational ways and structures of collaboration, supported by state-of-the-art technologies.

EUniWell 2030 also actively addresses the tension – faced not only by our member institutions, but also by all European University Alliances – in aligning individual institutional strategies with those of a European University Alliance. To achieve this, **EUniWell 2030** sets in place the EUniWell *platform model*, which will allow each of our member institutions to implement EUniWell's collective vision and mission, whilst at the same time accommodating institution-specific needs and constraints. Our EUniWell platform model will thus enable us to progress towards a future that is both shared and institutionally unique.

Our EUniWell platform model will also allow us to address the broader challenges that universities are faced with beyond those immediate to European Universities. At EUniWell we consider that the best way to take on the responsibility to tackle these challenges, which include, for example, the complexities of everyday life, globalisation, or digital transformation and Artificial Intelligence (AI), is through the prism and competency in Well-being.

We understand **EUniWell 2030** as a **living document**. It will be adapted and fine-tuned if and when this becomes necessary. To ensure the adaptability of our **EUniWell 2030** in an uncertain world, it is structured in two parts: the **Strategy Framework** and **Strategy Questions**. The Framework comprises and describes our three strategic **Focus Areas**. The Questions are designed to activate the Strategy Framework as part of our platform approach and allow EUniWell to move towards becoming a European University and a Voice for Well-being in the most impactful way possible. Together, Framework and Questions support setting up or enhancing already existing shared infrastructures, resources, and knowledge pools. They pave the way for our collective journey around Well-being to be a success, and for EUniWell itself to be regarded as a destination to and for talent, openness and open science.

¹ **EUniWell 2030** draws on our [EUniWell Mission Statement](#) as well as other EUniWell initiatives such as the EUniWell #Research project, an H2020 programme under the Science with and For Society (SWAFS) call; the TEFF (Teacher Academy for a Future in Flux) project, designed to enhance teacher education around futures literacy, accessibility, and agility; and our Erasmus+ Work Programme for 2023-2027.



EUniWell – At a Glance

EUniWell unites eleven universities from eleven European regions in an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, knowledge-based perspective around the topic of Well-being. Our Alliance brings together classical comprehensive research-intensive universities, regionally focused universities, and specialised universities. It has been consolidated as a legal entity since 2022.

Our core mission is to understand, improve, measure, and rebalance the Well-being of individuals, our communities, and society as a whole and to articulate this Well-being with our values: democratic, inclusive, diverse, research and challenge-based, inter- and transdisciplinary, entrepreneurial, and co-creational.²

Working in partnership with societal stakeholders and across the research-education-innovation nexus, we aim to generate new knowledge, play a critical intermediary role in delivering research-based policy to inform decision-making, underpin education, training and competencies development, and have a measurable impact on European and global citizens' Well-being and quality of life. In doing so, we will progressively transform our institutions to be better able to fulfil our missions at a European scale.

² See the EUniWell Mission Statement

Why Well-being?

Despite major evolutions over the past twenty years, universities are often still built around disciplinary fields, each of which is responsible for conserving, enriching and transmitting a corpus of knowledge. The vast majority of our academic staff and students are attached to a department within a faculty and many naturally identify primarily with their department or their field of specialisation. Such a disciplinary identification can come at the expense of competencies such as communication and working together within inter- and transdisciplinary settings.

In this context, a concept such as Well-being lacks academic prestige, as it is considered fuzzy and poorly defined. It embraces a wide range of meanings from classical psychological, philosophical or economic concepts around life-satisfaction, happiness and 'good spirit', to a wider societal and planetary meaning that encompasses the great societal challenges that we are facing. This fuzziness is often said to also be true of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). For example, at a time when the 1.5°C degree increase in global temperatures that was fixed in 2015 as a target for 2100 is on course to be broken before 2025, we can no longer go about our university missions as if nothing was happening.

By embracing Well-being as our guiding ambition and placing it at the heart of our strategy, we are embracing complexity, excellence, and sense-making. Striving for Well-being and understanding it is in line with our research foci and raises everyday and global consequences in which Well-being certainly does not mean the same for everybody. To work from a holistic and systemic perspective based on a critical assessment of concepts of Well-being implies rethinking the way we perform our education, research, and outreach activities. It entails taking into account the outcome of our actions in a comprehensive fashion and carefully considering their individual, societal, and planetary impact. It is, in other words, a way to transform our universities.

Why Work Together?

The ambition that we have just outlined requires a collaborative and comparative approach that brings together our different expertise, perspectives, people, systems, structures, and local contexts in order to identify synergies, challenge our way of teaching and doing research, and develop new perspectives that in turn enable a transformation of each of our institutions towards connection and co-creation.

It is precisely because we are different as institutions, because we are situated in different countries, with different cultures and different perspectives, that cooperating is so important. It is only in this way that we can identify our blind spots, develop common solutions, approach our missions with enthusiasm, and thereby also share and expand our impact on and with society

Strategy Framework

Strategy Framework

The Strategy Framework together with the Strategy Questions shape EUniWell towards 2030. The Strategy Framework is based on the aim, defined in our EUniWell Mission Statement, of becoming a multi-campus European University that:

1. empowers our cutting-edge research, education and training and interacts ever more closely with, for, and in society to enhance global and regional Well-being in social, environmental, economic, cultural, and technological terms;
2. promotes internal Well-being for each student and member of staff, for each educational programme, for each disciplinary field and department, for each campus and for the Alliance as a whole;
3. multiplies synergies by breaking down boundaries, both internal and external, increasing the permeability of our structures, and shifting to more inclusive and holistic ways of driving change by evaluating what we do and how we do it.

EUniWell 2030 has three Strategic Focus Areas, derived from and aligned with our missions. Our three Strategic Focus Areas correspond to the What, How and Who of EUniWell, across all organisational levels – meaning Alliance, institutions, and individuals.

- ▶ Focus Area One, **Becoming a/the Voice for Well-being**, details how EUniWell is incorporating Well-being into the four university dimensions of education, research, innovation and societal engagement, and how we will offer leadership and excellence on Well-being-related topics in Europe and beyond.
- ▶ Focus Area Two, **Becoming a European University**, sets out how Well-being impacts institutional change for our members and how we address topics such as sustainability, digital transformation, and a future-proof concept of mobility within our European and global contexts. It also addresses the conditions that EUniWell needs to achieve for realising its vision of becoming an Employer of the Future and thus contributing to the long-term employability aims of the European Higher Education Area.
- ▶ Focus Area Three, **Becoming Communities for Well-being**, describes how Well-being will support students and staff to work in interdisciplinary and futures-oriented ways and allow for the EUniWell European University to further develop.

Through the further identification of “Challenges” for each Focus Area, we highlight our awareness of the multifaceted and complex challenges that lie ahead and what we need to do to enable EUniWell to co-create a joint and sustainable path towards Well-being-based offers and processes, with regard to each one of our strategic Focus Areas.

1.

1. Becoming a/the Voice for Well-being

a. Multidimensional concept of Well-being

Well-being has many dimensions: from individual quality of life, to social cohesion, to environmental balance at planetary level, as well as the relationship and interplay between these dimensions. Our five Thematic Arenas – Health and Well-being; Social Equality and Well-being; Environmental Change and Well-being; Culture, Multilingualism and Well-being; and Teacher Education and Well-being – allow us to tackle the topic of Well-being from multiple and multicultural perspectives, building on the different strengths and expertises of our members, to impact on society and contribute to solving the grand societal challenges, both locally and globally. It is core to the vision of EUniWell to look at all these dimensions from a systemic and global perspective instead of a purely individual one.

EUniWell envisions a meaningful and sustainable change in academic culture and beyond, by integrating a Well-being-based holistic and systems-thinking approach into our understanding of the core missions of our universities, into our structures for inter-university collaboration, and most importantly, by ensuring the Well-being of our staff and students. These three interconnected strands underpin our communication and dissemination activities towards building societies based on human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, (human rights, and the rule of law) as part of a diverse Europe and a better world.

Well-being thus becomes an integral thread of the future which synchronises economic growth, climate action, technological innovation, digital transformation and AI, and first-class lifelong education at all levels. Our aim is to become a reference point and guiding force on Well-being in Europe and beyond.



Arenas – EUniWell futures-oriented structures

Our EUniWell Arenas have been implemented for EUniWell as a new transformative format of working together (see Busse 2022³). They are (a) a form of networking motivating collaboration and cooperation and (b) an attitude incorporated into all missions. EUniWell Arenas are core organisational units which work in open, inclusive, co-creational, and responsive ways. The Arenas are also an attitude and reflect our willingness to work as flexible and dynamic, inter- and transdisciplinary hubs of collaboration and cooperation that accommodate the diversity of institutions, departments, services, and status groups across the Alliance to allow for a wide range of different perspectives on a topic.

Our Arenas are by design co-creational and facilitated by the EUniWell Arena Coordinators, bringing together staff (researchers, educators, administrators, etc.) and students from across the Alliance into diverse, multi-partner, and international communities of practice, to identify and develop future-oriented education offerings, paths for excellent research, or societal and entrepreneurial engagement activities. The initial conceptualisation of the Arenas in our pilot phase was based on the SDGs and the particular SDG-related strengths of our Alliance.

b. Research excellence

EUniWell's research excellence manifests in our five Thematic Arenas around Well-being in combination with Health; Social Equality; Environmental Change; Teacher Education; and Culture and Multilingualism. These five Thematic Arenas are aligned with the particular SDG-related strengths of our Alliance members. In these Arenas, academics and interested stakeholders from across the Alliance come together to identify shared areas of interest in research and education and pursue collaborative activities to advance the EUniWell missions.

This strong research-intensive component of EUniWell, heightened by the diversity of our institutional settings, enables us to enlarge our scope, build on our reputation for research and teaching excellence, and increase our critical mass. EUniWell demonstrates that diversity, inclusion, and co-creation do not come at the expense of excellence, but – together with mastery of Well-being – actually act as a catalyst by driving and accelerating it. This is closely aligned with the approach being pioneered by the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) to revise classical procedures for research assessment by promoting the responsible use of quantitative indicators.

In its mission to further drive excellent research and best scientific practices, EUniWell uncompromisingly respects and upholds the principles of scientific freedom and responsibility. Furthermore, EUniWell adheres to the Open Science principles that provide the open multidisciplinary environment as much as the necessary peace and security where researchers, innovators, companies, and citizens can publish, find and (re)use data, tools and services for research, innovation and educational purposes, ensuring implementation of FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable, reusable) data practices. Aligning with European guidelines, EUniWell also ensures that every member university has the necessary resources for the implementation of the EU Open Science Policy in their local context, and within our various cross-Alliance communities of practice.

³ Busse, Beatrix. (2022). Willkommen in der Arena. Formate und Haltung für die strategische Fitness und zur resonanten Ko-Kreation in Universitäten. In Organisationsentwicklung. Zeitschrift für Unternehmensentwicklung und Change Management 1/22: 17-24.

c. Educational excellence and student engagement

With a focus on interdisciplinary topics involving Well-being, EUniWell is at the forefront of educational excellence, developing in all learners – from undergraduate students to postdocs and beyond – the forward-looking competencies necessary to succeed and adapt in a rapidly changing environment and society. EUniWell offers the possibility to build personalised trajectories around key societal challenges and create particular futures in the workplace based on these Well-being competencies. Our students are an integral part of the various networking opportunities offered through our five Thematic Arenas. Through their representation in the Student Board, they are involved in the development of education, research, and civic engagement initiatives: from conceptualisation and co-design to implementation, to assessment and evaluation, locally and internationally.

To reflect the way Well-being transforms our educational programmes, EUniWell encourages not just content, but also pedagogical innovations that benefit from the diverse expertise that exists across the Alliance. EUniWell continues to expand its collaborative educational offers and experiences at all levels, by embedding a focus on global challenges in our educational programmes and increasing the use of digital technologies, blended learning, and work-based learning. This further includes embedding learning on the green transition and sustainable development in curricula and in the flexible, dynamic, and individualised learning paths, as one way in which planetary Well-being manifests in our daily lives.

At EUniWell, we are developing a common curriculum marked by cutting-edge research- and challenged-based education, learning and training, and a common educational identity across our Alliance members and communities. In the long-term, EUniWell aims for a seamless, state-of-the-art transnational educational environment in which boundaries dissolve as we become a multi-campus European University strongly intertwined with our local, regional, and global contexts. As part of our educational excellence, students, staff, and members of our wider communities from different socio-economic and cultural backgrounds discover and understand different realities, working together to identify both commonalities and specificities.

In pursuit of educational excellence, EUniWell is further adapting to emerging educational and learning models that satisfy the needs and requirements of both our academic staff and students as learners, consistently upholding the foundations of academic freedom. With its dedicated policy on Open Education – the EUniWell Open Education Declaration – EUniWell encourages and supports our staff in using and developing Open Educational Practices, by making the produced Open Educational Resources (OER) visible at national and international level and in particular by providing a common repository of OER built by our institutions.

d. Converging frontiers in innovation

The term *innovation* has come to signify a broad scope of things. EUniWell's innovation embraces technological transformation including integration and adoption of new technologies and systems, technology transfer and entrepreneurship, as well as activities focused on digital and social innovation. Through these activities, we aim to enhance the use of digital technologies optimising and improving users' experience at institutional level, as well as to tackle societal challenges through the lens of Well-being.

As a forward-looking European University with a strong focus on teacher education and a commitment to EU Digital Education Action Plan (2021-2027), the use of digital technologies in education and the training of the necessary competencies for a digital Europe are part of our core strategic activities. We are exploring new digital developments in teaching and teacher education (be it physical, virtual or hybrid), to ensure that our universities and educators stay at the forefront of the digital transition. Similarly, we aim to expand beyond the traditional aspects of technology-focused innovation and digitalisation by integrating Well-being considerations. For EUniWell, human Well-being and interpersonal relations are essential to advances in the fields of deep technology, machine learning, and artificial intelligence.

EUniWell's innovation initiatives support the education, research and training systems in our member regions to become more resilient and conscious of these aspects, promoting digital risk awareness, and supporting safe digital education environments and seamless digital transformation. We expect EUniWell to be an important player in this dimension by promoting also social impact. For EUniWell this means, for example, measuring not only the capacity to “market” knowledge through patents or start-ups, but evaluating students and staff competencies, their educational processes, and their understanding of the rights/duties of citizenship through the prism of Well-being. We focus on how digital and technological innovations can contribute to fairer, more dynamic, and efficient education and research settings and societies – and how educators, students, and researchers can drive the digital transition by learning to better articulate their needs.

Working together as EUniWell, we expect to complement existing innovation and assessment metrics as they are applied to universities, and to elaborate novel ones that are more aligned with our mission to increase Well-being in all its dimensions. Our capacity to set up joint research, design, and co-creation processes with societal actors is key to this aim. We are opening our European University to institutions in other sectors such as secondary education or health. Working with our wide array of Associated Partners such as university hospitals, schools, city councils, NGOs and big tech companies makes it possible to co-design solutions to societal challenges and improve Well-being in our communities.

e. Civic engagement and policy dialogue

Well-being is today endangered by a series of challenges that range from climate change, new diseases, and a growing divide between different groups in society to growing geopolitical instability. Addressing these issues requires a holistic and systems-thinking approach in which institutions of higher education, research and innovation have a leading role to play. Taken

as a whole, it implies a “move beyond GDP” towards new ways of measuring progress and success that put Well-being at the centre of policy, as both the Council of Europe, the OECD, and the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underline.

Well-being has become acknowledged as a topic with high economic and social relevance and EUniWell commits to contributing to policy dialogues at European and global levels. By informing policy and contributing to discussions about societal challenges around the topic of Well-being, we ensure that our member universities become lead contributors to the Well-being debates. This plays out even in the composition of our EUniWell members, where the complex implications of Brexit and contemporary conflicts at European level necessitate careful science diplomacy towards upholding academic and scientific freedom, peace, solidarity, and democracy.

Our commitment applies to working towards the relevant policy objectives of the European Education and Research Areas, as well as towards developments at international level, such as the OECD's Well-being Economy, or the WHO/Europe's Universal Well-being Economy Initiative (U-WE). By articulating our Well-being focus around the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), we contribute towards tackling the global sustainability-related challenges that Europe and the world face today.

By collaborating with local society stakeholders in each member region around environmental challenges, we are addressing specific sustainability-related issues that affect our local ecosystems and environments. We are intensifying our ongoing transfer of knowledge around Well-being into policy-making institutions, for instance, with regional strategic boards. Through our research focus on environmental change and Well-being, we are contributing to the green transition of our regions and society as a whole, from local to global.



The challenges of becoming a/the Voice for Well-being

Like other important concepts such as “Sustainability”, the term “Well-being” has suffered in recent years from being used in an ever increasing number of contexts. Yet, unlike Sustainability, which is being incorporated at the heart of research and education strategies of universities worldwide, Well-being is often still dismissed as a fuzzy concept that is of limited interest to the academic world. Becoming the European University for Well-Being requires identifying and tackling the more concealed issues underlying our ambition, whilst at the same time helping to explore Well-being-based principles for a world adapting to the challenges we face.

Research, to take an example, is largely driven by competition and excellence, just as academic careers are still strongly shaped by impact-factors and citations. The uptake of indicators which also take into account the societal impact of research, or excellence in education, is slow. Several efforts are currently underway to address these issues, such as the emergence of CoARA. In line with these objectives, EUniWell is actively working on adhering and aligning with our members on our guiding principles, and closely following critical assessments of the methodological shortcomings of global university rankings.⁴

This is especially relevant as some students' choices are guided solely by rankings, and universities themselves constantly compare each other with metrics that are antinomic to Well-being. Indeed, within universities even disciplinary fields tend to be rated according to a supposed degree of purity, with specialists in teacher training or nursing rarely occupying positions of leadership and students themselves too often selecting their courses based strongly on reputation.

These issues will not be changed by statements of intention, but they illustrate both why our focus is important and why addressing it will require us to constantly question what we are doing, how we are doing it, and with whom we are doing it, always placing the concept of Well-being at the centre of these questions. Indeed, returning to our first example, sustainability can only succeed if it takes into account the aspiration of both individuals and societies for a better life – in other words, if the planet's sustainability is aligned with the Well-being of both society and individuals.

⁴ ‘Ranking the university: On the effects of rankings on the academic community and how to overcome them’, Universities of the Netherlands, advisory document, July 2023.

2.

2. Becoming a European University

a. Institutional change and transformation

Becoming a reference and a guiding force on Well-being in Europe and beyond requires the profound understanding and institutional integration of Well-being dimensions across our four pivotal areas: education, research, innovation, and societal engagement. The process of incorporating EUniWell's uniquely Well-being-based missions into the strategic work and the daily life of each member institution is key to stimulating transformation at institutional level and promoting an alignment within our Alliance and with common European, democratic, and Well-being-based values.

We are approaching this considerable challenge through several different strategic activities which include four key aspects:

- ▶ First, the **EUniWell platform model** allows for institution-specific implementation needs and speeds regarding Alliance activities;
- ▶ Second, our **five Thematic Arenas** drive our Well-being specialisations;
- ▶ Third, our **innovative organisational structure** linking thematic strengths with enabling excellence and a systems-based approach;
- ▶ Fourth, we are putting into effect a **futures-oriented view of staff and students** as not fixed in purely hierarchical frameworks but as both participants and architects of co-creation and collaboration, and of multi-dimensional and diversified career paths. We understand our students as the next generation of researchers and educators, in academia and beyond, as we describe more in the Focus Area Becoming Communities for Well-being.

By establishing common processes, structures and infrastructures coupled with creating shared educational offers and pooling resources across all Alliance members, we are thus setting the ground for an in-depth long-term institutional transformation.



Thematic and Enabling – EUniWell systemic organisational principles

In order to place Well-being at the centre of everything EUniWell does, we are implementing organisational structures and principles which allow us to optimally manage the considerable size and diversity of EUniWell and support operationalising the platform model in the daily running of our member universities. These organisational principles include thinking and working in terms of interplaying *Thematic* and *Enabling Work Packages*, which are dynamically interdependent and designed to realise our ambition of creating a true European University, and are therefore applied in all EUniWell project proposals.

For example, for the Erasmus+ project 2023-2027, the *Thematic Work Packages* are focused on our five SDG-aligned Well-being themes, in which we as EUniWell show a particular strength. The five *Thematic Work Packages* are tasked to initiate, set-up, enable and facilitate networking formats which involve all levels of staff and students co-creating with and learning from each other. The *Enabling Work Packages* are designed to provide consistent, cross-thematic and task-specific support to the *Thematic Work Packages* and to all our activities across the Alliance. They leverage the institutional capacity of our members, to ensure that all our offers benefit from the efficiencies, synergies, and cooperation inherent across the Alliance. *Enabling Work Packages* contain the higher education mechanisms for ensuring that educational and other content gets to facilitation and implementation, leveraging our potential for innovation and continuous renewal at organisational level.

We are confident that these innovative, futures-oriented and systems-based structures and principles can become a role model and a trend-setter for other Alliances.

b. Viability and quality for the long-term

For EUniWell, the essential groundwork for becoming a European University includes building long-term viability and influence. We emphasise that, although EUniWell requires a major effort from our universities, it will bring long-term added value to all our students and staff. We have come to understand that shifting the perspective away from a short-term project and towards a long-term strategic programme changes how members interact with it.

This requires us to continue building common infrastructures and further defining and refining common strategies with corresponding and interacting quantitative and qualitative indicators. Embedded in our EUniWell platform model, we understand viability to mean that our institutions evolve beyond traditional boundaries by placing a high priority on cooperation, efficiency, inclusivity and work towards embedding Well-being, European University values, and long-term financial stability in order to build up structures and resources sustainably.

Viability cannot, however, be considered without at the same time assuring the quality and the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of our internal and external output. We continue to apply our EUniWell Quality Culture Framework, to ensure common EUniWell standards and processes for the joint and high-level quality of our research, educational offers, innovation, and engagement activities. This promotes a EUniWell-specific quality culture as part of our Well-being competencies. As already mentioned above, we are also critically engaging with debates on qualitative and quantitative modes of assessing research outputs (CoARA) or university rankings, and considering which aspects can be beneficially integrated to support our EUniWell-specific monitoring and evaluation practices. At the same time we are developing our own Well-being- and science-based criteria for assessment.

c. EUniWell from local to global

Becoming a/the Voice for Well-being within the European Research Area and the European Higher Education Area goes hand in hand with both EUniWell's international visibility and local engagement. EUniWell strongly encourages local and regional cooperation of Alliance institutions and supports interregional innovation projects on aspects of Well-being, especially for participatory science initiatives, which bring together diverse players in encouraging attitude changes towards Well-being with local and regional effects. To this end, EUniWell also promotes multilingualism across the realms of education, research, and society, facilitating collaboration and the collective generation of knowledge across diverse cultures, languages, and societies.

EUniWell collaborates with other members of European University Alliances, where appropriate and feasible, by creating hubs and shared innovation ecosystems to ensure synergies between education, innovation, and entrepreneurship, in line with the aims of the European Strategy for Universities and the new European Innovation Agenda.

Similarly, EUniWell is establishing high-level partnerships that extend beyond Europe, focused on the global impact of Well-being as a research and educational topic. These include transatlantic partners as well as higher education institutions from India and the African continent. EUniWell advocates for a non-traditional strategic partnership approach, in which we, from our systems-based perspective, act as the central promoter of increasing cooperation opportunities and reducing the level of dependence upon individual players. This enables EUniWell to work with partners based upon our different thematic areas, involving the relevant communities, and increasing the financial opportunities and funding streams accordingly.

d. Seamless mobility

Mobility and cooperation are two key factors that play a crucial role in developing a true European University as well as in enhancing an individual's professional abilities, intercultural competencies and employability opportunities. EUniWell leverages the Alliance's distributed knowledge and resources across its eleven cross-European member institutions, to enable an integrated professional environment with mobility offers for all students and all staff.

EUniWell's concept of mobility is holistic and future-proof. It promotes seamless digital, physical and hybrid intersectoral mobility across the different institutions. Our initiatives strengthen the general exchange of students among our members as well as between professional staff and researchers. We are developing 'off the shelf' mobility offers with a database that centralises all mobility opportunities and a catalogue of flexible, individualised and forward-looking EUniWell joint education programmes, to encourage digital, hybrid, and physical mobility towards collaboration within and across different communities involving students, staff, and external stakeholders. As a European University, we are building mobility synergies at all levels in our members, which allows us to enhance in particular also the mobility of professional staff to build cooperation and share best (and innovative) practices as key components of our mobility agenda.

EUniWell is committed to supporting internationalisation at home, barrier-free mobility, and reducing EUniWell's carbon footprint. Our EUniWell Mobility Model is designed to be sustainable and is closely linked to the steps we are taking towards having Green campuses. Our model incentivises sustainable travel options, such as our partners connecting via European rail networks, and explores options to compensate for the impact of our travels on the environment.

e. Employer of the future with a focus on people

EUniWell is conscious of the importance of building and establishing a strong Human Resources model that supports the undoubtedly challenging transition towards becoming a university of reference for Well-being in Europe and beyond. We are highly aware of the significant changes in workplace culture, policies and practices that have taken place in recent years, including also the pace of work itself. Not least the pandemic has made it necessary to establish new ways of working and operating, shifting focus to methods concentrating on the Well-being and sustainability of employees. To align with the need for a workplace model adapted to current challenges and opportunities, our EUniWell Alliance aims to approach institutional change management by becoming the Employer of the Future.

Becoming the Employer of the Future, for EUniWell means embodying and anticipating the evolving needs and expectations of the workforce in the coming years, and adopting a novel approach to talent management, workforce development and workplace practices. We support streamlining the HR practises common to all our eleven members, promoting HR best-practice exchanges, and exploring shared principles towards a EUniWell recognition and reward system and a joint EUniWell understanding – and practising – of leadership. This goes hand in hand with EUniWell's focus on digital innovation and transformations which enhance efficient collaboration and communication, and strengthen workplace best practices. By taking these actions, we are developing a sustainable HR model that goes beyond EUniWell and merely the academic sector, and which puts employee Well-being at its core, for a futures-oriented way of learning, researching, managing, co-creating, and engaging.



The challenges of becoming a European University

Becoming a European University presents a series of intertwined complex challenges related to sustainable funding, governance, policy requirements, legal frameworks, mobility and operational issues. EUniWell, together with our EUA partners, will encourage the European Commission and the Member States to explore pathways to offer targeted, flexible and aligned funding opportunities to European University Alliances. We will also foster and fortify our regional, national, European, and global partnerships and work to diversify our income streams from both private and public sources.

Cooperation between institutions can encounter obstacles due to the heterogeneity and diversity of legal, organisational and governance structures of our members. EUniWell makes sense only if each member institution sees our Alliance as a unique place to progress in key areas, such as changing their approach to the workplace and opening novel horizons for students, whilst not losing their institutional identity. For EUniWell, our platform model responds to these direct challenges and supports a streamlined implementation across partner institutions and communities, underlined by novel incentive mechanisms and monitoring processes.

To confront these complexities from an Alliance perspective and become a true European University at the forefront of individual and societal Well-being, EUniWell can only succeed by strongly integrating its mission at all institutional levels and engaging its members, working towards becoming the Employer of the Future, advocating for its purpose beyond the Alliance, and actively shaping current and future European Higher Education policies.

3.

3. Becoming Communities for Well-being

a. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity

For EUniWell, becoming a/the Voice for Well-being by embedding this concept within our core missions, and transitioning towards a European University, requires strengthening our inter- and transdisciplinary ways of working, participating, communicating, and co-creating with one another. With inter- and transdisciplinarity, we refer to our aim of operating in an open and boundaryless transnational education and research environment, in bi- and multi-partner constellations respectively. To achieve this, we have established EUniWell *Communities of Practice* at the heart of our Alliance. These Communities of Practice are diverse, multi-partner, and transnational networks and hubs of collaboration which work together to further EUniWell's long-term cooperation roadmap on education, research, innovation, and societal engagement. They co-create new research avenues and successfully explore them bottom-up; co-design new educational offers and ways to effectively implement them while at the same time practising how to do this; and they do so from an inherently multicultural European as well as global perspective.

Within EUniWell, the way disciplinary fields are structured and inter- and transdisciplinarity are promoted is different in each of our institutions, just as is the way research feeds teaching and the weight that is afforded to fundamental next to applied approaches. Our diversity in internal structures provides EUniWell with a privileged setting to reflect on possible new frameworks, new ways of working, and addressing cultural issues relating to diversity and inclusion, open science, incentive systems, and talent development. Pilot formats are paving the way for our systems-based approach and a view to scaling up.

Considering inter- and transdisciplinarity from a Well-being perspective means we can learn from each other, build up knowledge together and question those boundaries that exist – sometimes without us as individuals even being aware of them. To ensure meaningful and sustainable change in disciplinary as much as cross-disciplinary cultures through a holistic and systems-thinking approach means also to ensure the Well-being of our staff and students and we are exploring how coming together as one European University implies coming together with multidimensional Well-being in mind.

b. We are all learners and networkers

EUniWell knows that only by supporting our students, educators, researchers, and all administrative staff and their Well-being, will we accomplish our Alliance goals and become the European University for Well-Being. We consider that every individual – staff or student – has the capacity to work as a learner and networker, and to actively engage and participate in our activities at Alliance, institutional, or any other level. We call this approach “We are all learners and networkers” whereby individuals are encouraged and empowered to learn and co-create, guided by their unique insights, as part of the EUniWell systems and networks. Again, this also means that we need to practise these methods and gradually build up the relevant competencies.

Individual aptitude grows also through lifelong learning, considered as a voluntary and ongoing curiosity to understand how our world works and for the richness of activities which emerge by engaging with different perspectives. Our networking formats and bottom-up initiatives empower both students and staff to take a lead in the co-design and co-implementation of actions. Well-being, as we understand it, is democratic and inclusive and puts students and staff first, in a way which enables inter- and transdisciplinary as well as intergenerational, intersectional, and mutually respectful sharing of perspectives. Learning from each other and co-creating with each other for the Well-being of all, students and staff emerge as both participants and architects of action.

In this, we do not distinguish between academic and non-academic staff. Instead EUniWell acknowledges that educational and research excellence cannot manifest without the close collaboration and cooperation of academic, administrative, and all other types of staff. Only the interconnected participation of distinct expertise, different points of view, and all constituent parts of our institutions enables lived inter- and transdisciplinarity and student and staff Well-being as key to our shared EUniWell journey.

c. Well-being competencies in career development

Focusing on all learners – from undergraduate to doctoral and postdocs, as the next generation of educators, scientists, and responsible leaders outside university – is a central branch of institutional transformation at EUniWell. The academic knowledge of today, possibly more than ever before, is situated in a rapidly changing world. EUniWell empowers in particular our next generation researchers to pay tribute to uncertainty, change, complexity and contradictions, and look at the world in ways which include Well-being from planetary to individual levels.

In this sense, EUniWell is developing the EUniWell Training Academy which offers training on transversal futures and Well-being competencies via digital and hybrid formats. Adapted to the specific needs of different target groups and career levels as well as diversified and multi-dimensional career paths, the topics include, for example, Crisis and Resilience, Mindfulness as Metacognitive Skill, and Transferable Skills in Sustainability. The Academy will also offer training in digital, and more specifically, artificial intelligence competencies through the prism of Well-being to provide students with competencies of both the human and technological aspects of AI.

Promoting this kind of early-career training through the lens of Well-being positively impacts personal and professional development and allows EUniWell to develop a focus on individual autonomy of staff and students as part of the interconnected dimensions of Well-being.

d. Individual Well-being and mental health

EUniWell's educational and research excellence, as much as our overall impact, is both co-created and limited by the Well-being of our students and staff. The mental health of youth and young adults is an urgent and worldwide concern, and our EUniWell students are at the forefront of driving how we respond to this issue at institutional level and beyond. Growing student and staff Well-being requires competencies that extend beyond successfully pursuing academic knowledge, and EUniWell highlights competencies such as effective communication, systemic awareness, and resilience as crucial to quality of life and personal development.

To ensure that student and staff needs around Well-being are heard and responded to and that everybody has access to different tools and resources to look after their mental health, work-life balance and (especially for students) campus social life, EUniWell has undertaken several measures such as establishing Well-Being Offices at our campuses. These Well-Being Offices are one way we implement the inter- and transdisciplinary excellence of our Well-being research as well as promote sustainable initiatives and policies related to topics such as eco-anxiety, depression, and mental distress.

The Well-Being Offices assist EUniWell in its goal of becoming a leader in Well-being across the European Higher Education Area and to impact how other higher education institutions look after and promote individual and community Well-being.

e. EUniWell green campus

EUniWell continues to increase the sustainability of our physical and digital campuses and immediate regions. Our *Green Campus* initiatives ensure that our member universities are exemplary leaders in the green transition and can set examples across Europe – both to the individuals in our ecosystems and to other universities. Green Campus involves coordinating best-practice exchanges, the support of green and sustainable policies for mobility and energy management, and further linking the established pilot Green Offices to structurally integrate sustainability in our education, research, and facilities and to foster a culture of sustainability in the community of staff and students at our campuses.

Green my Community is EUniWell's pilot flagship action coming out of the first EUniWell Sustainability Forum with students across the Alliance held in 2022. This initiative strives to implement common standards and measures for our Alliance to become more environmentally sustainable and reduce its carbon footprint, in line with our commitment to the SDGs, and to develop hybrid contact points for students and staff on environmental health and Well-being at all EUniWell campuses. Student grassroots initiatives are key drivers in directly engaging with their communities, creating volunteering groups, and staying at the forefront of the green transition at regional and European level.



The challenges of becoming Communities for Well-being

At times, the everyday environment of working in academia can have a very toxic quality. Contemporary research evidences the detrimental impact of such work environments on both students and staff, on learning and research output, administrative efficiency, and overall physical and mental health. Critical factors in academic workplace culture can include extremely rigid organisational hierarchies, an exacerbated sense of entitlement, lack of leadership competencies, lack of respect, or racial or gender-based discrimination. The resulting issues are not limited to academia but can be found in all types of working environment, and here EUniWell will be able to develop a/the Voice for Well-being competencies, both in academia and beyond.

EUniWell is exploring how our understanding of Well-being extends from personal workplace cultures to systemic levels. To achieve this goal, it is essential that all our diverse communities, encompassing students, educators, researchers, and administrative staff, from all our Alliance members, gain a profound understanding of the multifaceted dimensions of Well-being, uptake the necessary Well-being competencies and remain committed to educating future generations, upholding the belief that we are all learners and networkers in the pursuit of Well-being mastery throughout the entire work- and lifespan.

We are thinking of new incentive methods to shift current academic and scientific culture and commit to developing new quality metrics which level how research, education, innovation, and civic engagement are rewarded and recognised. Exploring, addressing, and prioritising different topics through the overarching lens of Well-being is necessary to shift current approaches regarding research and education that would be beneficial both at a personal level, as well as intrinsically at a social and/or planetary level. To foster and consolidate different Communities of Well-being within the EUniWell Alliance, our Well-being missions and values have to be lived and transmitted over the years.

Moreover, extending the influence of EUniWell beyond the boundaries of the Alliance and its partner institutions necessitates a concerted effort to disseminate knowledge and impart education at regional, national, European levels, and beyond. Only when both internal and external communities have learned about and integrated the Well-being-values into their respective systems, EUniWell is achieving its potential to make a significant and positive impact on society.

Becoming Communities for Well-being demands an ongoing and profound collaborative effort across all our members together with societal actors, through which we can catalyse the transformative change we aspire to see.

Strategy Questions

Strategy Questions – Bringing EUniWell 2030 to Life

Strategy questions

Our **EUniWell 2030** comprises the Strategy Framework and a set of Strategy Questions. The Strategy Questions are designed to empower member institutions to engage in reflective processes on how to implement our EUniWell missions and values across all institutional levels over the coming months and years. They are expected to also enable this reflective process at Alliance level, and where appropriate, with external partners. The Strategy Questions, listed below, serve as catalysts to activate EUniWell's platform model as much as the other key aspects around our institutional change and transformation – our five Thematic Arenas, our systems-based organisational structure, and our futures- and community-oriented view of staff and students.

The EUniWell Strategy Questions are:

1. What are the key implications of becoming a/the European University for Well-being, at institutional and Alliance levels?
2. How does EUniWell prioritise the integration of Well-being into its educational offers, research fields, and community interactions, ensuring it is at the fore of its missions?
3. In what ways does EUniWell anticipate influencing and shaping European higher education and open science policies?
4. How will EUniWell guarantee that the technical, digital, and social innovations and knowledge it develops and adopts transfer beyond academia, reaching wider societal contexts?
5. How will individual EUniWell members back thematic, cross-departmental and cross-Alliance collaboration and cooperation?
6. How does EUniWell support its diverse institutions to actively implement the platform model and monitor its success?
7. How does EUniWell address the contradictions and complexities that are inherent in any of the Focus Areas mentioned in this strategy framework?
8. Which ongoing initiatives from EUniWell members might be easily scaled up or tweaked to become best practices for implementation by other Alliance partners?
9. How does the EUniWell concept of Well-being impact the understanding of the SDGs?
10. How does EUniWell measure its achievements both quantitatively and qualitatively, at Alliance and institutional levels?

Over the coming months, we will be reflecting on these Strategic Questions to help shape and implement the future of our Alliance. This reflective process will take place internally within each of the EUniWell member institutions and across Alliance-wide sectors such as Human Resources or IT, as described below. We aim to have our first feedback and answers as part of this process by April 2024. This will allow for the results to be presented at the Rectors Assembly taking place during that month, and then shared with the wider EUniWell communities via online and other suitable media.

Process for engaging with strategy questions at institutional and Alliance level

To initiate active participation from partner institutions with **EUniWell 2030** and ignite the platform model as inherently linked to the success of **EUniWell 2030**, we have developed a structured process comprising three key steps around Engagement. By *Engagement* we mean our member institutions individually and the Alliance as a whole taking on the Strategy Framework, and moving from questions to actions for our three Focus Areas.

1. Institution-specific Engagement (from November 2023 onwards)

Following the launch of **EUniWell 2030** in Murcia on November 9, 2023, the EUniWell Alliance members will each begin their institutional engagement with the Strategy Framework and Questions. Engagement for the EUniWell members means each institution individually establishes what is necessary for implementing the Alliance aims and strategic Focus Areas at institutional level, with institutional autonomy and as part of the EUniWell platform model.

These ongoing institutional processes, which are both distinct and overlapping, will establish the conditions for implementing EUniWell as a/the Voice for Well-being and the Alliance as a European University. The engagement activities both complement and coincide with actions deriving from EUniWell projects such as the ERASMUS+ work plan 2023-2027.

2. Alliance-Wide Engagement (Starting January 2024)

During a 3-month period starting in January 2024, the various bodies and communities of EUniWell, will engage with the Strategy Framework and Questions from an Alliance perspective. Engagement at Alliance level means that the Thematic Arenas and the diverse EUniWell working groups (for, for example, IT, HR, mobility, quality assurance, or communications) as well as senior management bodies (such as the Rectors Assembly, the Steering Group and the Student Board) will reflect on what is necessary for implementing the Alliance aims and strategic Focus Areas across all levels of the Alliance. This will also involve establishing how to best support the implementation of the EUniWell platform model.

This Alliance-wide engagement is based on cross-sectoral, co-design, collaboration, and communication at all levels of EUniWell, and these collaborative processes will take place in participatory formats, such as workshops or focus groups, co-designed by our Alliance communities of practice.

3. Consolidation, Evaluation and Iteration (in 2024)

Based on these strands of institution-specific and alliance-wide engagement with **EUniWell 2030** in 2024, we will have the following outcomes:

- ▶ A set of EUniWell key performance indicators, co-designed to appropriately address and demonstrate transformation at institutional and Alliance levels, or EUniWell achievements in project contexts.
- ▶ The EUniWell *Implementation Manual*, which, as the name implies, will be the go-to reference manual for how EUniWell does well what it does.
- ▶ A first assessment through our so-called *Engagement Mappings*.

Our EUniWell *Engagement Mappings* will take place annually from now on, and will be our way of tracking, measuring, and evaluating the progress which EUniWell members and the Alliance as a whole are making towards realising our strategic aims. A key moment for this will be the Rectors Assembly planned for April 2024 at Nantes Université. The meeting in Nantes will be the first time that all eleven EUniWell members, the cross-sectoral working groups, and other relevant bodies, present their specific Engagement Mappings, which will include, for example, “Lessons Learned” and the EUniWell KPIs.

The outcomes of the institution-specific and additional Engagement Mappings will serve to:

- ▶ refine our Strategic Framework and especially the Strategic Questions, where necessary, to the specific challenges of what lies ahead in the coming months and years and
- ▶ take the temperature on how the EUniWell platform model is being activated.

Together with this process, our steps around engagement and evaluation aim to ensure a holistic, systemic, and collaborative approach as we move forward together and EUniWell becomes a/the Voice for Well-being.

Find us on your
favoured network:



