

White Paper on Quality in Research (09/05/2023)

Research plays a very important role at the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences. As a higher education institution with a strong research focus, we carry out projects on application-oriented topics together with national and international partners. From basic research through technology development and prototyping to innovation transfer in the form of business cooperations, spin-offs, and new business foundations, we cover the entire innovation chain.

With this “White Paper of Quality in Research”, the Board of the St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences – in coordination with the Provider – describes its quality requirements for its own research. Another objective of the White Paper is to offer all readers an orientation as to the location of the St. Pölten UAS’ research approach and culture in the higher education landscape and to what this UAS stands for in particular.

The [Guidelines for Good Scientific Practice of the Austrian Agency for Research Integrity](#) (ÖAWI) form the basis for our White Paper with regard to the principles of scientific integrity and the standards of good scientific practice as well as the understanding and definition of scientific misconduct and involvement in such.

This is what quality in research means to us

Social responsibility

This is how we render quality visible

The St. Pölten University of Applied Sciences has been a member of the [Alliance for Responsible Science](#) since 2015 and, as such, makes relevant contributions to overcoming social challenges. As soon as in the first year (2015), interdisciplinary collaboration, knowledge transfer, and exchange with various cooperation partners for profile development and innovation-friendly culture were already agreed upon.

The need for our research is derived primarily from our stakeholders (business, culture, public sector, civil society). They are the most important initiators of our research projects, source of our research questions, and the beneficiaries of our research results.

A key characteristic of our responsibility to society as a university of applied sciences is the *Gender Equality Plan* in which we address the dimensions of “Gender & Diversity” in our collaboration and the sustainability dimension of our research in the form of our contributions towards the *Sustainable Development Goals* as overarching goals. As a UAS, we put awareness-raising support measures into practice in order to highlight, question, and more consciously consider the ethical aspects of our research work.

We promote and actively participate in science communication and transfer and contribute to the dialogue with the population at large through manifold formats. In the form of citizen science projects, we involve interested citizens in research projects and open up a space for dialogue between our UAS and the population, always in accordance with scientific standards.

Regional and international anchoring

We see ourselves as an active player in the regional and international research and innovation ecosystem as well as in the scientific and higher education discourse.

In line with the strategic orientation of our European University E³UDRES², we seek and promote exchange and the resulting impact on our region. Moreover, we become actively involved in shaping the European research and higher education area. Challenges and missions that we identify at the European level are considered regarding the focus of our research institutes and activities.

Transfer to the scientific community and exploitation

We actively participate in the discourse of those scientific communities that are relevant for us and we are familiar with important areas of application and implementation partners for our research results. In this context, we always strive to transfer our research results to the economy and society.

We place great emphasis on sharing the results of our research with our shareholders and we actively make them available for use and exploitation: We communicate our results to the outside, apply them to further research projects, and exploit them (if possible). We thereby help to enhance the scientific understanding of the public in the region and in our European alliance. Networking at the regional, national, European, and international levels is an important mark of our identity.

We have a common understanding of sustainable research data management. This applies to both the interface of data storage for researchers themselves and in collaboration with the infrastructure and organisation. This means that we process data and the corresponding metadata in such a way that they can be used by others and we also store them – unless precluded for any reason.

Open Science with its pillars Open Access, Open Formats, and Open Reviews is an important dimension for the international scientific community. It facilitates the development and implementation of open innovation measures and the establishment of networks with our stakeholders. The stance and strategy of our UAS in these matters is continually developed and documented in individual policies and guidelines.

**Variety of disciplines and
interdisciplinarity**

Our strengths lie in the variety of different approaches and disciplines of our institutions and in the pooling of competencies regarding complex questions in interdisciplinary projects, research proposals, and transfer projects.

Interlinking with teaching

Our research is directly linked to teaching, which ensures that our range of study programmes and continuing education programmes not only keeps up with the state of the art in science but is constantly developed further in line with future needs as well. Furthermore, our research is also pioneering work in the development of (continuing) education and creates impulses for new study programmes and continuing education programmes.

Our researchers are actively involved in teaching and pass on today's research results in the form of tomorrow's teaching contents, always processed in a target group-oriented manner. We actively involve our students in research projects through both curriculum-related measures and extracurricular activities, for example within the framework of final theses and specialisations in our study programmes.

**Further qualification of our staff
members**

Our research contributes to the further qualification of our staff members in teaching and research who – thanks to their involvement in research projects and papers – keep up with the state of the art in

research in their respective discipline, or even develop it further where possible. We see career paths for academic personnel as a direct connection of research and teaching.

Within the framework of our *Human Resources Strategy for Researchers*, we continuously strive to make career paths in research more attractive. Our teaching and research staff are actively involved in the development of supporting incentive measures.

Coaching and training offers promote the further qualification of our team members. These offers include, e.g., starter courses for young executives and individual coaching offers for the improved instruction of junior researchers.

Quality assurance by third parties

In addition to the above-mentioned internal quality assurance measures, we place great emphasis on external quality assurance.

When determining research objectives, we – as a European University – orient ourselves towards the European Union's *Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment* and focus our research assessment on qualitative goals.

We support and gradually implement the resulting commitments in our organisation, especially the following ones:

- We acknowledge the diversity of contributions and careers.
- We implement adequate evaluation methods in exchange with external *critical friends* and with the goal of the qualitative further development of our research activities.
- We seek and promote the exchange and the discussion about the practice and experiences of research evaluation in the sense of *mutual learning* within the UAS and with other academic institutions.

We deliver diverse research performances whose quality is assured by third parties through various channels. Examples include:

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- Research: acquisition of third-party funding, peer review, specialist publication, editorial work
 - Transfer: standardisation, spin-off, commercialisation, exploitation, awarding of prizes by relevant institutions of the discipline, article in practice magazine, interview, news report, science communication such as presentation of results at specialist conferences and events by relevant stakeholders and conferences
 - Further qualification: training, mentoring and supervision for junior researchers
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