

Strategy of academic affairs at TU Graz

1 Introduction

Graz University of Technology (TU Graz) covers the entire spectrum of **engineering and natural science degree programmes**. In addition to its basic-oriented Bachelor's programmes, it focuses on Master's and Doctoral programmes, which are largely taught in English. It imparts expertise and knowledge through excellent research-led teaching using modern and subject-specific teaching methods and technologies. In order to provide students with the tools and motivation that are essential for helping to solve the social problems of our time and to drive them forward responsibly, teaching at TU Graz should not only impart knowledge and methodological skills, but also a passion for dealing with complex issues. [Excerpt from the mission statement and strategy of TU Graz]¹

The strategy of academic affairs forms the framework for the development and realisation of future measures in close coordination with the responsible university committees and service departments.

TU Graz places its educational mission towards society and the economy at the centre and focuses on specific priorities. It is crucial to focus on the entire **student life cycle** and to orientate itself towards the **qualification and support of teaching staff** (see Figure 1). For educational measures to have a holistic effect, everyone is considered, from prospective students to alumni. In addition, TU Graz assumes **responsibility towards society and science** and actively makes the knowledge acquired in the areas of research and teaching available to tackle current challenges (Third Mission, Responsible Science, Sustainable Development Goals, UNITE!). All graduates of a degree programme at TU Graz should acquire fundamental skills for solving social problems or future skills in addition to in-depth technical skills. This enables students to contribute to solving major global challenges (e.g. climate crisis, biodiversity loss or sustainable development) as future leaders, decision-makers and multipliers. This means that the university does not focus on a specific period in students' lives but sees its **educational responsibility in all stages** of students' and teaching staff's lives in terms of lifelong learning.²

¹ Excerpt: [Mission statement](#) and [Entwicklungsplan 2024plus](#) (in German), Chapter 1.2.4

² See [Entwicklungsplan 2024plus](#) (in German), Chapter 4.2

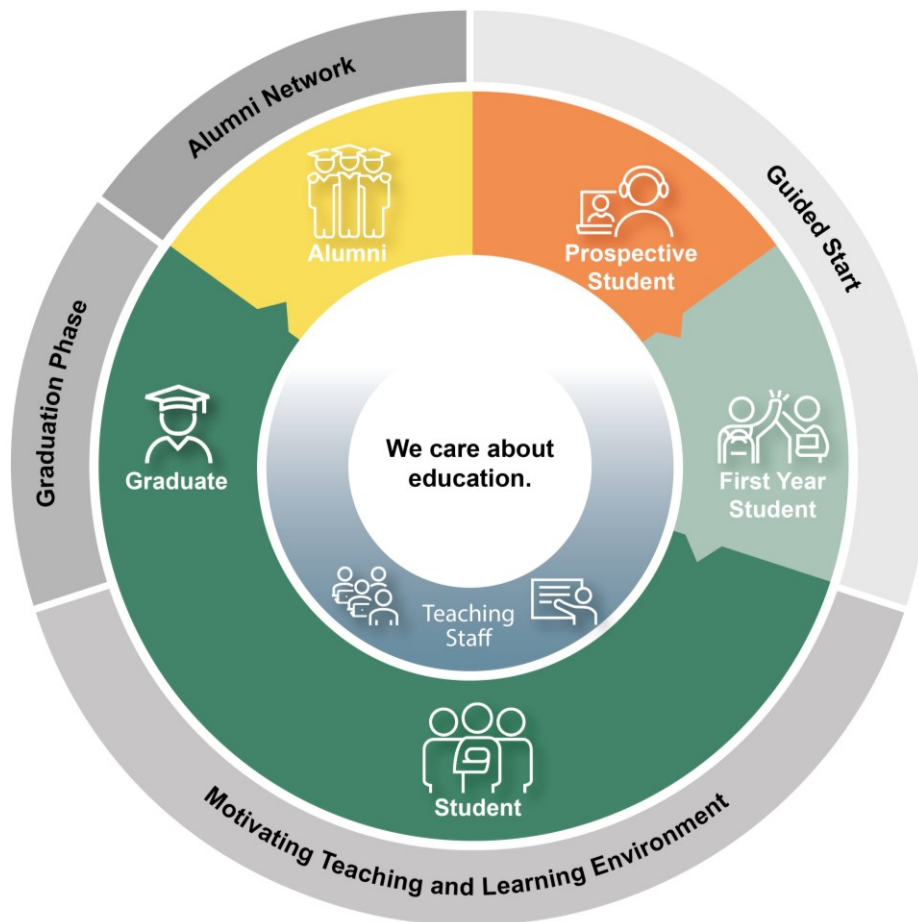


Figure 1: Strategy of academic affairs

2 Student life cycle and teaching staff: visions and key objectives

The **vision of teaching** at TU Graz is focussed on the four phases of the **student life cycle** and on the **teaching staff** (across phases). In order to achieve this vision of teaching and to identify the priorities that will guide action in the coming years, five key objectives are being pursued:

Phase 1 - Prospective students: Prospective students find themselves in a life situation in which they are actively or passively searching for a training and (further) education opportunity. They are dependent on support from the university to help them make a decision. Prospective students of all age groups and educational levels (atypical access and transition from school-leaving examination to Bachelor's, Bachelor's/Master's, Master's/Doctoral) should therefore be interested in TU Graz, regardless of their background and origin, talents should be encouraged and information and details about the degree programmes on offer should be provided. In this way, the heterogeneity and quality of students can be increased and the perception of the university enhanced.

Vision	TU Graz is an attractive (inter)national educational centre.
Key objective	Qualified and informed (best-suited) people decide in favour of studying at TU Graz.

Phase 2 - First Year student: First Year students start their studies at university and need special support in this initial phase so that their gifts and talents are recognised and encouraged. The transition phase requires orientation, support and guidance.

Vision	The welcoming culture at TU Graz enables a goal-oriented start to studies.
Key objective	Students are satisfied with their choice of degree programme and show optimal progress in the first semesters of their studies.

Phase 3 - Student: Students acquire knowledge, competences and skills in selected subject areas at Bachelor's, Master's and Doctoral level. They receive training in the subject areas as well as education in the sense of personality and interest development. The university requires excellent infrastructural conditions (laboratories, lecture halls, IT infrastructure etc.) as well as excellently trained teaching staff who are open to innovative teaching and learning methods. The use of digital teaching and learning technologies in particular offers great opportunities to move from the pure transfer of factual knowledge to application-centred teaching and learning. Digitally retrievable factual knowledge is supplemented by application-centred knowledge. TU Graz sees its vision and its strength in close cooperation between teaching staff and students and in the internationalisation of teaching.

Vision	Dedicated, innovative teaching staff support committed, knowledge-seeking students who are in demand as graduates on the labour market and in academia and who can open up new areas based on the qualifications and skills they have acquired.
Key objective	Students are optimally mentored and supported during their studies so that they can successfully enter the labour market immediately after graduation.

Phase 4 - Alumni: Alumni are multipliers and cooperation partners for TU Graz as well as potential students for further studies, postgraduate further education and other educational formats. They have a mutually supportive and encouraging relationship with the university.

Vision	TU Graz has a mutually supportive relationship with its alumni.
Key objective	A strong alumni network leads to a high and active loyalty to the alma mater .

Across phases - teaching staff: Teaching staff are a cornerstone of TU Graz. Students benefit from excellent research-led teaching and lecturers can continuously develop their skills through the use of extensive university didactic programmes.

Vision	Teaching staff are innovative, use valuable didactic concepts and are in lively dialogue with their colleagues and students.
Key objective	A comprehensive, target group-specific and attractive higher education didactics training and networking programme supports outstanding performance in teaching.

3 Strategic fields of action

Strategic fields of action are derived from the visions and key objectives, the scope of which extends from interested parties to alumni and teaching staff.

- a) **Positioning TU Graz as an excellent educational institution:** The perception of TU Graz as a high-quality (initial and continuing) educational institution, both nationally and internationally, is increased so that the most suitable people decide to study at TU Graz.
- b) **STEM promotion:** The goal is to stimulate and maintain interest in STEM subjects at an early stage and to promote talent. An increase in the proportion of female students is aimed for.
- c) **Internationalisation and diversification of teaching and learning:** Students are supported regardless of their origin and background. Excellent students are explicitly promoted. Teaching is particularly geared towards internationalisation (UNITE!) and diversification.
- d) **Guided Start:** A structured introductory phase in teaching and studies as well as comprehensive support measures during the first semesters create an optimal start for students and support teaching staff.
- e) **Motivating learning environment:** Through student-centred curricula and corresponding measures for study operations, the focus is on the ability to study within a reasonable period of time while maintaining the highest internationally comparable quality. Students feel welcome on campus and are positively supported in their studies by the infrastructural framework conditions. A virtual teaching and learning environment enables comprehensive participation.
- f) **Motivating teaching environment:** Strengthening the appreciation of teaching in general, teaching staff and their teaching qualifications as well as support through infrastructural and didactic measures enable contemporary, innovative teaching situations at the highest international level - strengthened by solid organisational support. Incentive systems and support programmes for good teaching strengthen the reputation of teaching.
- g) **Graduation phase:** Optimising the graduation phase guarantees that students complete their studies quickly, that the theses they write are of high quality, that graduates can start their careers quickly and that they remain in contact with TU Graz.
- h) **Further development of Professional Continuing Education:** Further studies, post-graduate continuing education programmes and diverse educational formats, including educational cooperations, support the education of society in the sense of lifelong learning.
- i) **Strengthening the alumni network:** Graduates remain in contact with their alma mater and actively shape the educational centre by returning.

All fields of action affect the four phases of the student life cycle and teaching staff to varying degrees.

In addition to the strategic fields of action outlined above, the strengthening of the feedback culture, the consistent implementation of measures and commitment are at the centre of the strategic orientation of teaching. The creation of a high-quality teaching programme must go hand in hand with the commitment of learners to use the programme. TU Graz is aware of its responsibility as an educational institution and emphasises this with the principle: ***We care about education!***