

The ULB logo consists of the letters 'ULB' in a white, sans-serif font, centered within a dark blue square.

CAP 2030

The background image shows a modern university campus. On the left is a large, multi-story building with a white, grid-patterned facade and horizontal window bands. In the center is a smaller, cylindrical building with a light-colored stone or concrete exterior. On the right is a traditional red brick building with a stepped gable roof. In the foreground, a group of students is sitting on a green lawn, and a brick wall with a dense green hedge runs across the middle ground.

The 10 orientations
of ULB's Strategic Plan

OUR IDENTITY

A free spirit since 1834



A permanent driver of reflection, a forum for debates and exchange of opinions, a hive of creativity, innovation and knowledge dissemination, the Université libre de Bruxelles bases its teaching and research on complete freedom of thought. The University regards the **practice of free enquiry**, which postulates independent reasoning and the rejection of all dogma, as an essential component of human emancipation.

Four scientific Nobel Prizes, one Fields Medal, three Wolf Prizes are evidence of the University's longstanding **tradition of excellence in research**. ULB is actively involved in the European Research Area, and is committed to the resolution of the challenges facing society and to the socio-economic development of its environment. Research forms a continuum, from fundamental research to applied research and innovation guided by industrial and social needs. With its Erasme **university hospital** and its hospital network, ULB is both a provider of top-level health care and a driver of innovations in the health sector.

The University makes it **a point of honour to offer a high-quality education** to all its students and strives to equip them with critical thinking skills and an interest in research. ULB's faculties, schools and institutes offer programmes at Bachelor, Master and PhD level in all disciplines. The University caters to a very broad audience, from the youngest to the oldest members of society, via the *Université des enfants* and the *Université inter-âges*, and also offers continuing education programmes for professionally active adults.

A multicultural university, with over a third of students and researchers coming from abroad, **international relations is a daily reality for ULB**. Its openness to Europe and the world is evidenced by the large number of agreements, collaborations and privileged partnerships that have been setup. Along with seven other universities, ULB is also a founding member of the CIVIS European university.

With its commitment to participatory governance, ULB advocates a truly inclusive and democratic management model. All bodies within the University are involved in defining and implementing the main orientations of the University, its departments and faculties.

ULB has a strong social commitment and, since its foundation in 1834, has strived to promote both critical thought and the freedom and emancipation of women and men, in Belgium and abroad. The University's core values have placed it at the forefront of the struggles in favour of the secularization of society and against all discrimination. ULB was the first Belgian university to accept women in the 19th century, it resisted fascism during World War II, it continues to actively defend women's and minorities' rights and is committed to providing support for refugees. Its alumni include two Nobel Peace Prize laureates. ULB is also involved in solidarity initiatives, such as student-aid, the *Schola* tutoring programme for secondary school pupils and development aid via its NGO *ULB-Coopération*.

THE 10 MAIN EVOLUTIONS THAT PROMPT US TO REFLECT ON OUR FUTURE

1. The legitimacy of the university as an institution in a democracy in crisis

The spread of radicalism, the normalization of racism, the perverse effects of social networks, the commodification of knowledge and the questioning of the independence of research, result in a number of imperatives for a university like ours. They call for greater vigilance with respect to our scientific and academic partnerships and collaborations, and to the conditions associated with research funding. They also require us to offer support to institutions at risk and to participate, even more resolutely than before, in the public debate, by affirming our vocation to enhance scientific knowledge and foster critical analysis.

2. A changing relationship with knowledge: the explosion of information and of information and communication technologies

Our relationship with both the production and transmission of knowledge is changing rapidly as it faces various developments in which the rise of information and communication technologies plays a major part. The University, more than ever before, will have to fulfil its mission to produce and transmit knowledge in the public space. It will have to develop new forms of interdisciplinarity, in both its research and curricula, and will no longer be able to do without ambitious pedagogical and digital strategies.

3. New timeframes for learning

The extraordinary boom in knowledge, rapid innovation cycles and increasingly common career changes make it necessary to constantly update one's knowledge. This questions the linear nature of training programmes and compels us to think about the relationship between our initial education and life-long learning. The latter is a major area of development for the University, which must position itself as a legitimate major player and a reference in this area.

4. The massification of higher education

In recent decades, higher education has undergone an expansion phase and our University has experienced steady growth in the number of enrolments. This raises the question of how the University will be able to provide a decent environment for all its students - both on a human level and in terms of infrastructure - given the current budgetary constraints.

5. A student body with heterogeneous educational and socio-cultural backgrounds

In order for our University to continue to fulfil its mission to foster social emancipation and upward social mobility, without compromising on the academic demands of its curricula and while improving student success rates, it needs to have an active recruitment policy and provide better guidance and support tailored to the heterogeneous educational backgrounds of its new students.

6. Growing European and global competition for students

As students are increasingly mobile, there is growing competition to keep the best students in Belgium and attract students from abroad. This should encourage us to offer attractive and innovative teaching methods, good studying and working conditions on our campuses and high-quality student housing.

7. Increased pressure on members of academic and research staff regarding scientific output

Given the growing competition, to both recruit talents and obtain funding, we need to better structure our research, reduce the other tasks expected of academic and research staff, implement a proactive recruitment and retention strategy and re-assess our promotion and remuneration policies. It is only by doing so that we can remain a university renowned for the quality of its research, without neglecting the importance of its teaching mission and social commitment.

8. The expansion of national and international academic collaborations

Given the change in the scale of teaching and research networks, we must move from an essentially internal management model for our University to one that is systematically more open to our environment and to regional, inter-regional and international partners. We must strengthen and streamline the management of partnership processes. In addition, we cannot completely disregard the growing number of international rankings.

9. Evolving expectations and changes in how campuses are used

If we want our campuses to contribute to the attractiveness of our University and thereby enhance the recruitment of students and staff, we must ensure that our built environment is not only in line with our teaching and research strategy but also meets sustainability requirements. We must also strive to make our various sites convivial living spaces, where all those who frequent them thrive.

10. The funding of universities is not on par with their missions

Public funding does not keep up with the increase in the student population. It is therefore legitimate to wonder how we are going to be able to continue to fulfil our missions when we are under-funded. Our public funding guarantees our survival in the long-term, but we also need to develop other sources of funding in order to fulfil our missions and compare favourably with partner and competitor universities throughout Europe. Furthermore, we shall need to equip ourselves with tools to control and analyse costs and to optimize spaces.

OUR VISION



A **civic** University

- focused on contributing, through its missions, to the defence and promotion of the values of free enquiry and democracy;
- involved in resolving major societal problems;
- an active participant in the public debate against disinformation, ideological regression and identitarian closure.

A University **focused on research**

- committed to excellence and freedom of research;
- guaranteeing a rigorous and rational approach to scientific questions;
- attentive to the relationship between research and teaching.

A University **open to its environment**

- playing an active role in society;
- anchored in its social, political, cultural and economic environment;
- eager to contribute to regional development;
- a driving force in networks of alliances and partnerships in Brussels and Wallonia.

An **inclusive** University

- eager to make students agents of their own learning and to provide them with support, guidance and an environment that will help them succeed;
- careful to promote equal opportunities and diversity in all its policies.

An **attractive and sustainable** University

- recruiting the best talents and offering them an environment in which they can thrive;
- focused on innovative teaching methods and on providing a high-quality education to students at all stages of their lives;
- adhering to standards of environmental excellence in all its operations, especially in the management of its infrastructures;
- offering a convivial environment to all students, staff and visitors.

A **European and international** University

- embracing its European and international vocation in its three missions: research, teaching and service to society;
- active in a vast international network of alliances and partnerships.

A major player in **health care**

- a driving force in its university hospital network in Brussels and Wallonia;
- a catalyst for innovation in the health ecosystem;
- ensuring unrestricted access to quality health care services for all.

OUR 10 STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

1. Research

Drive, Support, Innovate, Decentralize

While the university is the place *par excellence* where disinterested knowledge is produced, research at ULB forms a continuum, from fundamental research to applied research. ULB also strives to tackle major societal issues and to play a part in the socio-economic development of its environment.

Excellence in research is largely founded on the freedom granted to researchers. ULB therefore aims to provide them with a stimulating intellectual environment that fosters creativity and the emergence of new knowledge.

Our decisions

- Support each researcher by ensuring they have sufficient resources (time, funding, equipment) to conduct their research
- Encourage our researchers to apply to competitive international calls for funding
- Adopt an 'open science' approach for our research
- Set up an institutional policy that drives and supports research topics regarded as strategic
- Encourage the emergence of evolving (inter)disciplinary research units
- Promote and support collaborative research at national and international level
- Provide institutional support for knowledge transfer

2. Teaching and student support

Learn, Accompany, Emancipate

ULB wants its students to play an active role in their own learning and is convinced of the importance of high academic standards in helping them achieve full emancipation.

It makes sure that its programmes are designed to encourage critical thinking and open-mindedness, that students learn how to discuss freely and formulate arguments, and ensures a continuum between initial education and lifelong learning.

The attention given to students, whose number is constantly increasing, cannot be limited to their academic learning and the University also ensures that they are offered a fulfilling environment that respects their specific needs and is in line with evolving lifestyles.



Our decisions

- Introduce innovative teaching and evaluation methods and formats that ensure our students play an active part in their own learning
- Strengthen the continuous critical assessment of the quality of our programmes
- Use digital tools to diversify the ways in which knowledge can be accessed and to offer learners individualised curricula
- Encourage the opening up of our curricula to other disciplines, without waiving the requirements specific to a chosen discipline
- Help students with their academic choices, learning processes and subsequent professional integration, through the coordination of resources devoted to guidance, learning and teaching support
- Provide psychosocial support to students who need it and ensure the integration of students with special needs, while facilitating their personal development
- Streamline teaching activities, possibly by leveraging synergies between different programmes within our University or across universities
- Encourage the internationalisation of our programmes, promote intercultural and international experiences for students as well as multilingualism
- Establish the University as a reference player in the area of continuing education, and ensure a continuum between initial education and lifelong learning

3. Community engagement and service to society

Defend, Act, Transform

As an agent for social and economic change, ULB fulfils its commitments to the outside world by defending the values of democracy and emancipation in society and by disseminating the knowledge, skills and expertise developed through its research and teaching activities. ULB's concern with sustainable development leads it to be a player in the resolution of major societal challenges.

The University aims to strengthen its interactions with compulsory education, whether by offering guidance to pupils, training teachers and directors or providing support to schools.

Our decisions

- Value the diffusion of knowledge and the provision of expertise in society
- Encourage the community engagement of all members of our community, both in our own environment and worldwide
- Contribute to development aid, by supporting university collaborations and our NGO *ULB-Coopération*
- Develop a true partnership with the compulsory education system and invest in the initial and continuous training of those working in compulsory education
- Develop international solidarity actions with academic institutions or colleagues at risk, in accordance with our values



4. Our networks and partnerships

Unite, Consolidate, Share

The key issues in research, teaching and service to society stretch beyond ULB's historical borders in Brussels and Wallonia. Through a series of alliances and partnerships, ULB wishes to bring together talents and share resources in order to achieve better results and performances. The University must also ensure that it is active in developing political strategies related to its missions.

Furthermore, ULB must seek to strengthen and professionalise its relationships with all stakeholders and to build closer ties with its alumni.

Our decisions

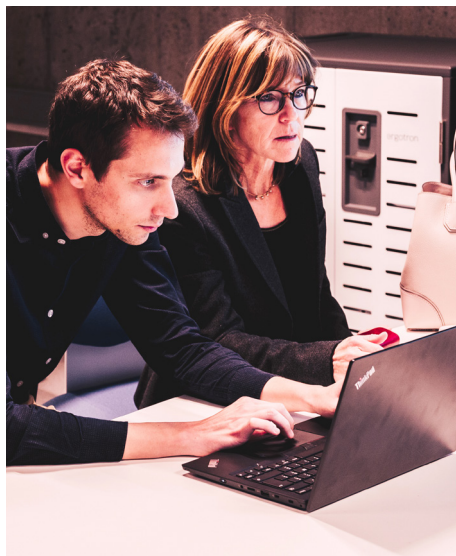
- Consolidate our foothold in Brussels, in synergy with VUB
- Strengthen our collaborations with higher education colleges and art schools, and take leadership of the Brussels academic hub
- Take full advantage of our location in Brussels, the capital of Europe
- Increase our foothold and commitment in Wallonia, in particular in collaboration with UMONS, and first and foremost in Charleroi
- Strengthen our international partnership strategy, while at the same time ensuring it is consistent
- Successfully develop the CIVIS European university
- Fully acknowledge the contributions of non-academic experts to teaching, training and research
- In cooperation with other higher education institutions, have an impact on policies promoting support for quality education and research
- Strengthen relations and better structure our collaborations with our alumni network and other stakeholders



5. The University's staff

Attract, Motivate, Train

Members of the University's academic staff, research staff and administrative, technical, managerial and specialized staff are undoubtedly the driving force behind our University's development. ULB must be regarded as an attractive employer concerned with the well-being of all its staff. Conversely, the challenges facing the University require the collaboration, trust and equal respect of all parties.



Our decisions

- Proactively attract talents who can contribute to the development of our research and to the quality of our programmes, while promoting gender equality and diversity
- Offer members of academic staff attractive careers, that reflect appreciation for their contribution to the University's three missions, and set up training and support programmes
- Pay particular attention to the specific situation of F.R.S.-FNRS staff
- Promote the mobility of teaching and research staff throughout their career
- Offer an attractive career policy to members of administrative, technical, managerial and specialized staff

- Provide members of administrative, technical, managerial and specialized staff with the training that enables them to acquire the skills that will help them adapt to the evolution of their profession and facilitate their mobility within the University
- Ensure that PhD candidates have the conditions necessary to succeed, while taking into account their different statuses
- Facilitate the socio-professional integration of our PhD candidates and postdoctoral researchers
- Enhance fairness and recognition with respect to everyone's contribution to the missions of the University and tackle all forms of disrespect
- Reconcile autonomy with the coordination necessary for the optimal fulfilment of our teaching and research missions

6. Management of the institution and participatory governance

Empower, Collaborate, Recognize

Management of the institution has become more complex and cumbersome over time. The University must therefore ensure that responsibilities are shared optimally and must support all those who shoulder these responsibilities on a daily basis, whether they concern teaching, research or the supervision of administrative, technical and logistics teams.

Given ULB's commitment to participatory and democratic governance, the participation of all members of the university community in the deliberative processes that underlie the functioning of the University's various institutional and faculty bodies should be facilitated and encouraged.

7. Administration of the University

Simplify, Professionalize, Communicate

The University must function in such a way that it can fulfil its missions of teaching, research and service to society. The administrative processes essential for the proper functioning of the University require both increasingly specialized skills and flexible internal collaboration structures to ensure that they are properly implemented.

Our decisions

- Rethink the sharing of managerial tasks related to teaching and research between members of academic staff and members of administrative, technical, managerial and specialized staff
- Develop training, guidance and support programmes for members of staff who take on institutional responsibilities
- Reinvent democratic participation within the institution
- Recognize and value investment in the institution's management and governance by all categories of staff

Our decisions

- Simplify administrative processes, through digitalisation when appropriate, in order to accelerate processing of files
- Ensure the correct match between profiles and skills in order to handle increasingly complex files
- Ensure staff understand the importance of their contribution to the University's missions and delegate decision-making to the right level
- Strengthen synergies and collaborations between all members of administrative, technical, managerial and specialized staff, working both in the general administration and in the different faculties, so as to better serve the University's strategy and missions
- Improve the management of logistical resources and workspaces by encouraging pooling and preventing all logic of appropriation



8. Welcoming and sustainable campuses

Listen, Reshape, Adapt

Our campuses are not only places of learning, research and work, they must also be places of fulfilment, well-being and creativity. Sustainability must permeate all our missions and infrastructures.

Our decisions

- Build infrastructures that are suited to new teaching, studying, research and work modes and consider the possibility of promoting tele-working
- Ensure exemplary environmental management of our campuses and infrastructures, especially as regards energy and mobility, and encourage everyone's involvement in making our campuses sustainable
- Integrate sustainable development concerns in the management of all ULB activities (teaching, research, administration, service to the community)
- Draw on the expertise, scientific rigour and creativity of our internal experts in order to turn our campuses into places of experimentation and innovation
- Ensure that our campuses are safe and attractive working and living environments
- Ensure the socio-emotional well-being of our students and support their civic, cultural and sports initiatives and activities
- Provide convivial student accommodation and halls of residence
- Articulate our campuses with their external environments, while taking into account their socio-cultural dimensions.

9. Information and communication technologies

Connect, Streamline, Automate

Participatory training programmes, personalized monitoring of students' trajectories, research and the fluid management of administrative processes all rely on digital tools. This means that none of the University's strategic objectives can be achieved without a critically deployed digital strategy and the provision of information and communication technologies that meet evolving teaching, research and management needs.

Our decisions

- Demonstrate a reflective critical culture with respect to information and communication technologies
- Follow the evolution of information and communication technologies in the field of teaching and education, and develop the infrastructures required to implement them
- Meet researchers' expectations as regards supercomputing and the storage, accessing and analysis of research data
- Develop digital tools that offer all members of the university community, fluid and efficient services and that permit better sharing of information
- Pay special attention to IT security issues and ensure our independence with regard to digital tools

10. Funding

Develop, Innovate, Encourage

The University must go beyond its current funding model if it wishes to maintain its reach and implement its strategies. It must also continue to actively urge politicians and other public funding bodies to increase the funding of higher education, while ensuring its autonomy is preserved.

Our decisions

- Advocate for public funding that is on par with our missions
- Convince public authorities to develop innovative mechanisms to increase the funding of universities and reduce their costs
- Foster dialogue within the Wallonia-Brussels Federation regarding different funding methods that have been successful in other countries or regions
- Develop a policy of public-private partnerships, fundraising and sponsorship in line with our identity, values and missions
- Encourage all colleagues in the faculties and general administration to respond to external calls for funding, and support them in their applications
- Strengthen all mechanisms that anticipate, allocate and control the proper use of resources

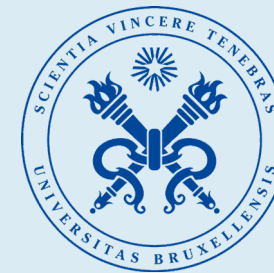
The Université libre de Bruxelles is a European university devoted to research, innovation, teaching and training.

It generates, transmits and disseminates fundamental and applied scientific knowledge, and is actively involved in the public debate on major contemporary issues.

It offers its students, throughout their lives, a community of learning built on rigour, autonomy and critical thinking.

ULB is also at the heart of a university hospital network, and plays a key role in public health.

With its historical attachment to democratic culture, it promotes - both in society and within itself - values of free debate, equal opportunities and emancipation.



ULB CAP 2030 - *Strategic Plan*

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