**UOC** Universitat Oberta
de Catalunya

Strategic Plan
2014-2020
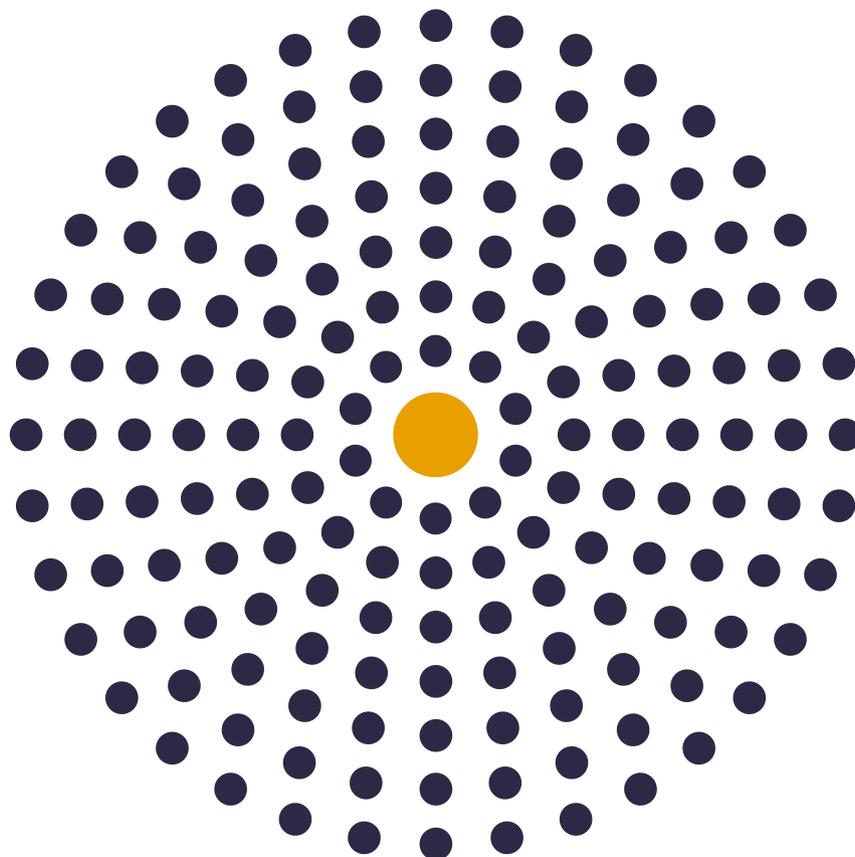
A transformative university that adapts to the times

"We can now outline what the UOC of the future will look like, connected to new markets, alert to new needs and ready to spread into new regions. We are ready to take on new challenges and new risks."

The Universitat Oberta de Catalunya (UOC) has, since its foundation, been an active agent in pedagogical innovation, with an innovative and high-quality educational and course offering able to combine proximity, ubiquity, employability and research, among many other factors. These traits and values remain very valid, but we now need to be able to adapt to an extremely competitive and changing context.

With this aim in mind and over this first year and a half in office, we have driven the roll-out of a Strategic Plan that is respectful of our idiosyncrasy and, at the same time, ambitious and innovative. The process places equal weight on the final result as the path to get there, given that its development has involved the active participation of the whole of the organization and, consequently, led to its own equally strategic transformation.

Strategic plans have to be transformative and, in good part, this depends on the level to which they are internalized by the organization itself. This has required great efforts to synchronize, incorporate and work together as a team. It is thanks to this coherent work carried out internally that we can now outline what the UOC of the future will look like, connected to new markets, alert to new needs and ready to spread into new regions.

We are now ready to take on new challenges and new risks. We are aware that, as Mark Zuckerberg warned, "the biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that's changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks." The following pages represent a summary of what we want the UOC to be in the future and, above all, the strategy to follow to achieve these aims, and the risks involved. The objective is clear: to customize our value proposition to the demands of each context, making the most of the possibilities offered by technology to adapt to the professional needs and personal circumstances of each student.

Josep A. Planell
UOC President

Georgina Maresma Olivella, student representative
of the Law School. Parliament at the graduation
ceremony for the 2012-2013 academic year.

Our mission

Rooted in Catalonia and open to the world, the UOC is an innovative university whose mission is to provide lifelong learning to people to help them and society advance while researching the knowledge society.

The UOC's educational model is based on personalization and supporting students through e-learning.

Our vision

The UOC aspires to — as part of a global network of universities — promote the creation of a global knowledge space and cutting-edge research on the knowledge society.

Through its innovative student-centred educational model, the UOC offers quality and personalized education to help its students become more competitive and to contribute to the progress of society.
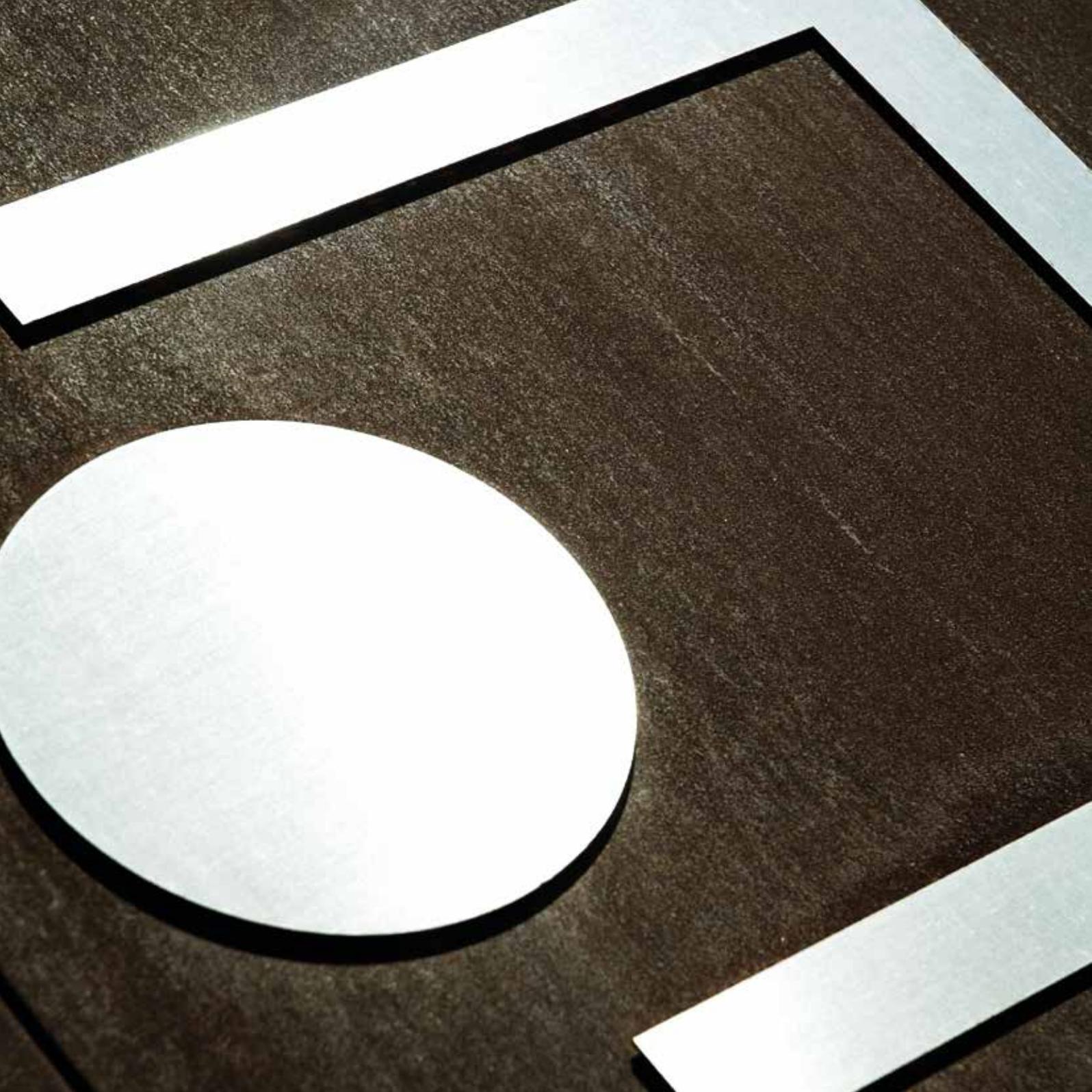
New challenges: a new strategy

Mission

Pillar 01. Cross-disciplinarity and flexibility

Pillar 02. Collaborative governance and common objectives

Pillar 03. Firm commitment to globalization

Pillar 04. Competitiveness and employability

Vision

Pillar 05. Excellence in research

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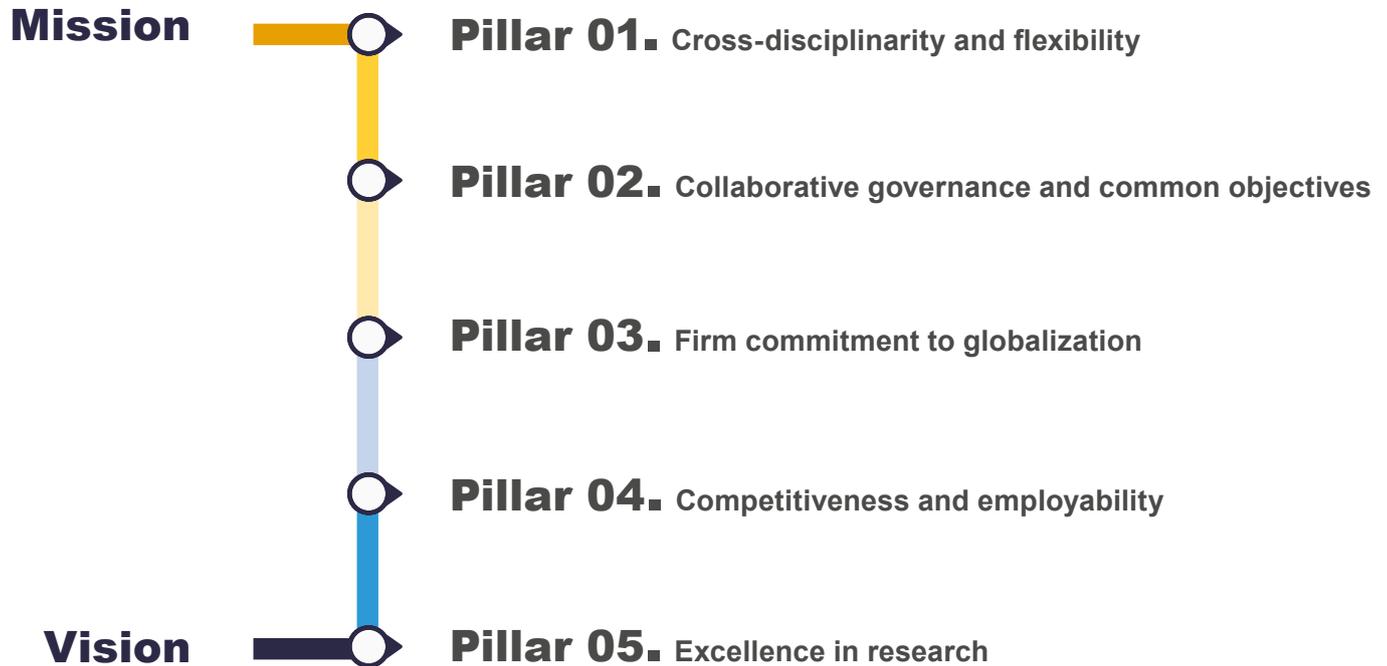
"The UOC is a knowledge-based organization and therefore must continually adapt and reinvent itself. In other words, the UOC must create an organization where innovation is encouraged and where established habits, technologies and methods of working are constantly reviewed and changed where necessary."

Tony Bates
President and CEO of Tony Bates Associates Ltd
UOC honorary doctorate 2004/2005 acceptance speech

Pillar 01.
Promoting cross-disciplinarity and flexibility

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

> **Create a learning environment that provides an intellectually stimulating, socially transforming and inclusive educational experience.**

> **Offer high-quality and multi-disciplinary education with the option to personalize curricula to give students the best chance of satisfying their personal and professional expectations.**

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

> Implement a new learning environment (activity-focused classroom/the right learning resources).

> Constantly apply a cross-disciplinary plan against student dropout.

> Apply the principle of continued improvement to the educational model.

> Promote and regulate the creation of personalized curricula according to the needs of each student.

> Promote cross-disciplinarity across the different knowledge areas.

> Complete the UOC quality model aimed at utility (personal and professional).

Strategies and actions for creating a university sensitive to the needs of each student, obtaining cross-disciplinary curricula but can be personalized and providing unlimited access to UOC services.

> **Make available at all times the technology necessary for providing ubiquitous learning and support services.**

> Digitize UOC activities as much as possible (move from an online university to a digital one).

> Implement a system plan to help guarantee the operation and evolution of the UOC.

> Create a learning object market.

"Innovation and improvements in education and learning are rarely acknowledged or rewarded. To change this, institutions must rethink their mission and build from a foundation of excellence in learning, establishing career structures that attach greater importance to educational capabilities and increasing recognition and awards for learning and educational tasks."

Dr. Rosalind James
Director of dehub, the distance and online learning network at Australia's University of New England, and co-editor of the RUSC journal
Interview coinciding with a meeting of the RUSC Editorial Board
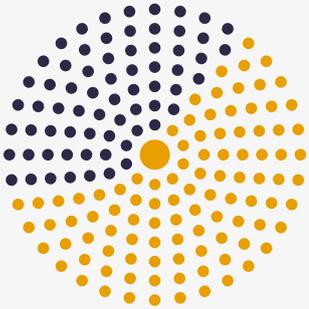
Pillar 02.
Collaborative governance

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES
> **Achieve a work environment characterised by confidence, distributed leadership, institutional commitment and the recognition of professional expectations and successes, which allows retaining and attracting talent.**	> Have an internal career plan that guarantees the individual and professional development of all UOC staff through fostering their training and identifying and retaining talent. > Redefine the system of objectives. Focus towards and involve all members of the organization towards the achieving of strategic objectives. > Increase the degree of togetherness and sense of belonging of UOC staff and collaborators to promote cross-disciplinary work dynamics and ensure the achieving of common goals.
> **Structure the UOC, academically and in terms of management, as a system oriented towards the student's educational experience.**	> Give incentives for the active participation of UOC staff in the improvement of learning processes. > Improve the student's educational experience and student relations to attend to, anticipate and meet all student needs, both educationally and in terms of student relations with the UOC.

UOC governance strategies for promoting collaborative work and decision-making for achieving institutional objectives.

> **Exercise leadership based on autonomy and accountability through participation, prior discussion and transparency in processes and decisions.**

> Foster the empowerment, responsibility and visibility of project (or project phase) leaders.

> Promote transparency and accountability to create an organization based on the pillars of autonomy.

> Promote work systems that allow the execution of policies for developing organizational excellence and the UOC's human resources.

> **Make decisions that take into account the financial sustainability of the institution.**

> Adapt the courses offered to society's needs and to the UOC's strategy and financial sustainability.

> Foster all UOC staff's awareness of financial sustainability matters.

> Have an investment and expenses rationalization programme to contribute to achieving financial sustainability at the UOC.

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"I think that the subject of governance is very important for universities and that it has to be tackled and we have to find an answer; but – as with other things – this answer has to meet the needs of those involved, of the people involved in the system."

Jaume Pagès
CEO of Universia
UOC inaugural lecture for the academic year 2013/2014
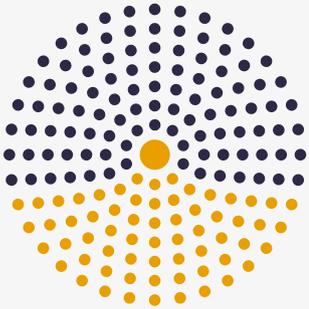
Pillar 03.
Firm commitment to globalization

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES
> Make the UOC one of the world's leading on-line universities.	> Develop a global framework for internationalization (perhaps different to the local strategy). > Be leaders in e-knowledge, e-commerce, e-learning, e-marketing, etc. > Strengthen the UOC's international presence and visibility. > Appear in rankings.
> Compete in new and broader markets to diversify revenues.	> Increase the number of students in certain countries. > Define the institutional strategy for agreements and alliances. > Prioritize internationalization programmes. > Orient and adapt the organization towards an international strategy.

Strategies for strengthening the international recognition of the UOC, extending access to higher education in different areas of the world and consolidating the global dimension of the UOC community.

> **Attract talent and improve the international and intercultural competencies of UOC staff and collaborators.**

> Foster UOC staff mobility oriented towards benchmarking (acquiring competencies and knowledge in contact with other universities and institutions).

> Develop international and intercultural competencies in UOC staff.

> **Incorporate international and intercultural dimensions in the curricula so students may acquire these type of competencies regardless of where they live.**

> Define the international experience that provides students with global competencies.

> Incorporate international and intercultural content in all new programmes and revise current programmes to try to incorporate them.

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"**Universities such as ours are essential: in parts of the developing world, where millions and millions of people live, there are very great demands for university education, and there will only be an increasing need for high-level training.**"

Brenda Gourley
Vice Chancellor of the Open University (2002–2009)
UOC honorary doctorate

Pillar 04.
Fostering competencies and employability

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

> **Be recognized for orientation towards the needs of society and focusing on active learning through taking into account the workforce reality and including cross-disciplinary competencies in all knowledge areas.**

> **Make visible societal gains from UOC activity for promoting cultural change that attracts philanthropy.**

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

> Implement a competency assessment system, both for cross-disciplinary and specific competencies, in all UOC programs.

> Promote a line of research on the employability of students.

> Promote a programme for creating ties that fosters student participation in their socio-labour environment.

> Publicize the contribution of value that the UOC makes to society.

> Increase the participation of faculty, researchers and collaborating teachers in the open dissemination of knowledge.

> Implement a programme of corporate social responsibility.

> Create a funding system based on societal contributions that allows promoting projects and initiatives of public interest.

UOC strategies for improving competitiveness and making the UOC community a dynamic space for exchanging experiences and fostering entrepreneurship.

> **Make the UOC community (students, lecturers, management staff, researchers, teaching collaborators, alumni, and companies and associated institutions) a truly active network that benefits the community itself and society in general.**

> Elaborate a plan for revitalising the UOC community to take advantage of all its potential.

> Promote a model of support and crowdfunding for developing entrepreneurial projects in the UOC community.

> Define and guarantee the presence of UOC people in debates on important matters in society.

"The worst mistake we could make is to resist change. All institutions must change. E-learning is not simply about solving the problem of how knowledge is distributed; universities must offer shorter programmes that focus more specifically on employment prospects and help students to create their own jobs. This is the change we need."

Sir John Daniel
President of the Commonwealth of Learning (2004–2012)
Interview coinciding with his speaking at the EFQUEL Innovation Forum 2013
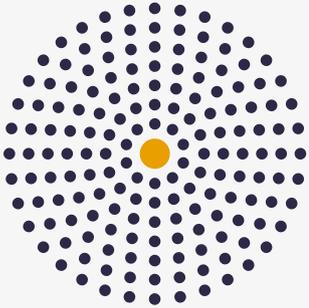
Pillar 05.
Promoting excellence in research

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES
> Be an internationally recognized university for cutting-edge research on the knowledge society and for excellence in translational research on online education.	> Further internationalize the research centres. > Consolidate the IN3 and eLearn Center as leading research centres in their fields contributing to the sustainability of the research. > Analyse the needs and opportunities of feedback from and across the research, innovation and training activities that takes place at the UOC to guarantee knowledge transfer. > Define internal mechanisms for assessing excellence in R&D activities.
> Increase the production of excellent research from the UOC as a whole and define a strategy for disseminating and transferring the knowledge relating to all UOC activity.	> Develop a plan for publicizing and disseminating research to make it attractive to possible companies and attract investment/funding. > Strengthen the UOC's profile as a research university. > Foster and draw attention to knowledge transfer activity.

UOC strategies for achieving excellence in research and fostering knowledge transfer.

> **Offer doctoral training that is in touch with the academic and professional world based on excellent research that allows the undertaking of doctoral theses in the UOC's knowledge areas.**

> Promote an environment that facilitates the devotion, recognition and equal opportunity of UOC staff in R&D activities.

> Promote thesis supervision by UOC faculty and research staff.

> Build ties with companies and institutions for the undertaking of doctoral theses.

> Improve the academic management of doctoral programmes.

"Powerful techniques are essential but they cannot be expected to do the job alone. Sound theory, well constructed hypotheses, and careful experimental design are just as indispensable, as is, of course, a wise interpretation of the facts."

Hanna Damásio
Dana Dornsife Professor of Neuroscience and director of the Dornsife Neuroscience Imaging Center, University of Southern California, Los Angeles

Implementing the strategy

The UOC implements this strategy via 19 action plans for achieving strategic objectives in the six pillars of the UOC's roadmap.

01.
BE UOC

Defines how the UOC organises work, how the resources are managed efficiently for contributing to the organization's sustainability, and how the UOC is committed to developing staff and their careers and promoting accountability, the recognition of success and the social conscience of the institution.

UOC COMMITMENT
> Devise and implement the UOC's Social Responsibility Plan

HUMAN RESOURCES
> Create a performance assessment system
> Devise and implement internal staff career plans
> Create a map of UOC sites (current and future)
> Implement a system for defining and assessing objectives
> Establish a coaching and training plan

TEAM IMPLICATION
> Develop policies and actions for developing affinity with the University
> Action plans for fostering leadership and responsibilities
> Increase communicative actions

VIABLE UOC
> 3-year financial projection
> Rationalise expenses–investment
> Analytic accounting
> Internal control

02.
UOC IN PROGRESS

Covers all projects being implemented and/or designed that affect UOC activity, students, tools and the educational model. Continual improvement as a quality constant in the educational and support process.

ROLE REVIEW
> Specify the position, levels and profiles of UOC collaborating teachers
> Define measures for achieving greater participation from collaborating teachers in the development of the UOC
> Develop measures for increasing sense of belonging of collaborating teachers
> Review the various academic duties and roles
> Devise measures for assessing the quality of the teaching of collaborating teachers

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION
> Implement a new system of management, commissioning and developing of learning resources
> Improve the process for producing learning resources in the current model
> Establish an open access policy for disseminating excellence in the production and the maximum visibility of content
> Design an innovative and benchmark experience for the UOC student that makes use of ubiquitous learning resources

NEW EDUCATIONAL MODEL
> Revise the current educational model
> Design the new educational model
> Implement the new educational model
> Assess the new educational model
> Disseminate the new educational model
> Extend the culture of the digital lecturer

03.
NEXT UOC

Includes the long-term action plans aimed at rethinking the educational model and services from a global and ubiquitous perspective that must improve the UOC's social contribution and constitute a competitive advantage.

UOC VIABLE TECH
(Information systems master plan)
> Community relations and sales management (CRM)
> Create a new work environment and improve the user experience (UXP)
> Review the classroom and create new teaching tools
> UOC work mobility and ubiquity (sub-plan 0301)
> Business intelligence and data management (BI)
> Create a new global academic management system (SIS-ERP)
> Other business transformation projects
> Cloud technology and migration plan
> Digital training and empowerment
> Technological security plan

UBIQUITY TOOLS
> Define the UOC mobility policy and ubiquity strategy
> Review the current situation
> Create the mobile and multi-device learning workspace (for students and teachers)
> Dissemination and support to the UOC community
> Create a new workspace, taking into account the ubiquity of the UOC worker
> Make progress with assessment ubiquity
> Create an observatory of future trends
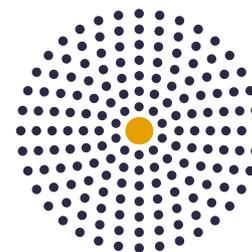
04.
NET.UOC

Groups the areas that connect us to society, which makes the institution's value contribution more effective and strengthens the relationship ecosystem and the institution's presence and position.

UOC COMMUNICATION

> Devise the Comprehensive Communication Plan
> Define a global framework
> Create the UOC Spokesperson Catalogue for providing knowledge to society
> Define a programme for making the UOC present in major debates

INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

> Develop a proposal for priority presence in formal networks
> Define a regional presence proposal
> Develop a philanthropic funding search programme
> Define the institutional strategy for local and international collaboration
> Foster the cooperation channel as an instrument for creating institutional ties

05.
GLOBAL UOC

Sets out the action plans for defining (framework/alliances), structuring (business) and guaranteeing (processes) the increase of the UOC's international presence in a constant and sustainable manner.

GLOBAL DIMENSION

> Identify countries for prioritising commercial actions
> Contact universities in target countries to establish alliances for increasing the number of international UOC students
> Work with UOC Departments to create a portfolio adapted to the needs of international markets
> Consolidate international commercial presence (Chile, Colombia) and define a new commercial strategy for Mexico

EXPANSION PLAN

> Detect new portfolio opportunities
> Identify and implement BI strategy
> Identify and promote LATAM opportunities

INTERNATIONALISATION PROCESSES

> Align processes for carrying out an expansion plan

NEW BUSINESS MODEL

> Build an internal value proposal
> Define a commercial strategy for each market
> Promote the growth and consolidation of UOC Empresa

06.
UOC R&I

Promotes action plans for improving research, UOC innovation and transfer for contributing to the improvement of competitiveness and employability.

IMPROVE R+i MODEL

> Assess and recognise R+i activity
> Promote quality in research and innovation to foster excellence and productivity
> Define conditions for becoming an innovative university

R+i DISSEMINATION FOR ATTRACTING OPPORTUNITIES

> Transfer knowledge and technology for obtaining resources derived from R+D+i
> Define measures for increasing participation in R+D+i projects
> Improve the impact of internal and external communication for all R+D+i activity
> Promote quality in R+i activity to increase excellence and productivity

COMPETENCIES AND EMPLOYABILITY

> Assess competencies
> Define an end-of-degree work experience programme
> Create a line of research for analysing the impact on e-learning and employability
> Devise a proposal of valuable services for the UOC community
> Create a business intelligence tool for assessing how well courses match the labour market

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

> Devise an entrepreneur programme

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