



# University of Rzeszów

## Strategic Vision 2030

### The five pillars that underpin the University's developmental plans for the next five years.

It is essential that the University of Rzeszów (UR) build upon the solid work that has taken place during the first quarter century of its existence, and that any development strategy take into consideration both the university's short history and the incredible scope for progress that is presented across a multi-dimensional spectrum in the local region. This development requires clear thinking and direction to ensure that UR is well placed to take advantage of local, national and global changes, while making sure that we do not lose sight of our values or stray from the essence of our mission. To ensure absolute clarity in the pursuit of this mission, a strategic vision has been cultivated that will allow

the university to flourish and grow, structured around five key pillars: LOCALITY, NATIONALITY, INTERNATIONALITY, SUSTAINABILITY, AND INCLUSIVITY. Coherence and cohesion is provided at the implementation level by working within each pillar across three distinct dimensions: **micro** - referring to an individual level, **mezzo** - referring to the level of groups and communities, and **macro** - at the social and institutional level. Ultimately, this strategic approach will provide the framework for the immediate dynamic and sustainable development of UR and the architecture for future expansion and growth.

University of Rzeszów, Rzeszów, Poland

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# Locality

**As a classically young university, the University of Rzeszów has to ensure that its development is built on the firmest of foundations. With this in mind, the first pillar of UR's development strategy must be based around the concept of locality, and the necessity of building strong and sustainable relationships with a range of stakeholders, including local institutions, businesses and people within the city of Rzeszów but also throughout the broader Voievodship of Subcarpathia in Poland.**

On the micro-level, UR undertakes to build a reputation as an ethical and reliable employer for both the administrative staff and the faculty, whether they be didactic or research fellows. By providing a reliable and stable environment, we aim to instil in our staff the confidence to pursue their goals fearlessly and with the utmost determination, thus enhancing their personal chances of success in their endeavours. Generating atmosphere of achievement will further act as an enticement to attract the brightest minds and talents from the local area to consider their future in academia, thus creating the framework for a sustainable development plan, and ensuring that UR enjoys a bright future. Furthermore, by ensuring a safe and secure working environment, this will allow the implementation of policies to promote the key educational philosophy and focus of social and emotional learning for the promotion of good mental health and wellbeing. By orientating more holistically towards the cognitive, social, emotional, and relational aspects of learning and development at all levels, our students will be well equipped to build on their success with us in a rapidly changing technological ecosystem, ensuring they are able to survive and thrive in a leading role in setting standards for future global citizenship.

On the mezzo-level UR aims to actively encourage and promote its outreach to local educational institutions, organisations, and businesses in order to foster a stronger sense of community and catalyse the development of solutions that would





ultimately lead to mutual benefit and further entrench the concept of sustainable development for all of our local stakeholders. By actively working with local secondary educational establishments throughout the region, through a range of on-campus initiatives and a well-developed outreach programme it is hoped that we will be able to ensure that the brightest minds in the region decide they can trust their future to UR, which would lead to a further enrichment of the region's human capital in addition to the obvious effect on academic achievement within the UR. This engagement will have a positive effect on how UR is perceived at the community level: by fostering better relations with local authorities, for example, UR is better able to function and develop both in terms of its academic output but also the enhancement of infrastructure, which is a key dimension of long-term improvement. A second branch of this vision is to enhance UR's cooperation with the private sector: Rzeszów is home to many locally based SMEs that form the backbone of the local economy by providing employment opportunities to the population, and vital revenue to the local authorities. As well as developing new solutions for the benefit of our partners, they will be able to provide our students with valuable internship opportunities to help build the region's human capital, cementing our strong symbiotic relationship.

With Rzeszów being the administrative capital of Subcarpathia, it is home to many governmental, non-governmental, and regional organisations with whom healthy relations create excellent research potential that has tangible results for the local communities. By cooperating institutionally at the macro-level, it is hoped that UR can work constructively with our partners to help shape and implement practices and policies, and lead the way in pushing the boundaries of world-leading research that has a truly local basis and impact. Indeed, it is only through being attuned with the local environment and its incredibly rich diversity (ranging from agriculture, through an incredibly well-developed IT sector, to pharmaceutical companies, a significant healthcare sector, and cutting-edge aviation and defence industries) that UR will be able to maximise its own potential.

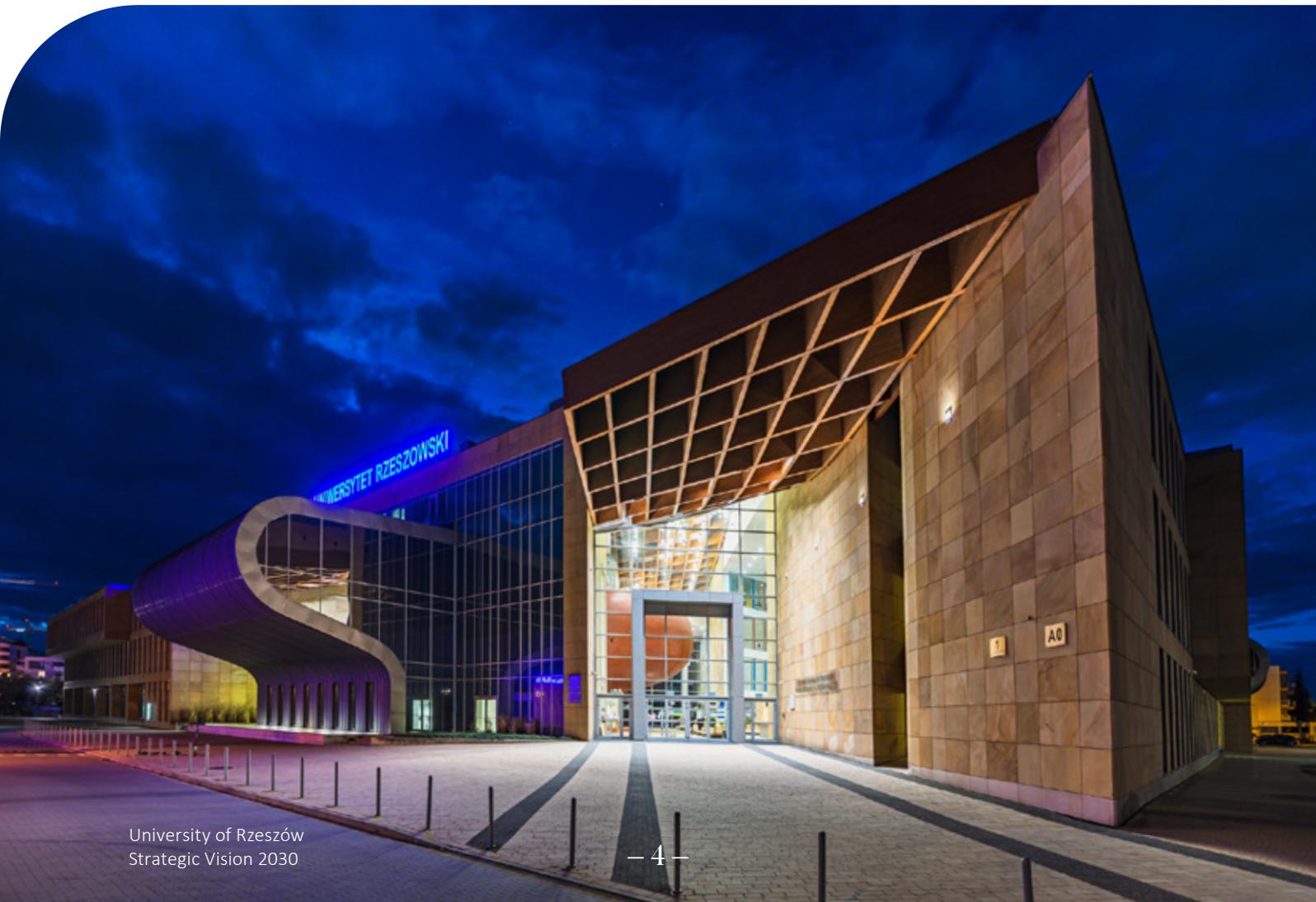
Overall, it is essential to embrace our roots, and UR was founded on the amalgamation of a number of local higher education institutions, and that sense of locality should remain at the forefront of our strategic thinking.

# Nationality

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Since the fall of communism in 1989, Poland has enjoyed a period of unparalleled development and growth. The University of Rzeszów recognises this dynamic change and uses this as a model for its own pillar of national development as we seek to take a central role in Poland's continued advancement, holding true to the axiom that national success will breed local success. It is also essential to work to increase the presence of UR at the national level, especially as the Subcarpathian region takes on an increasingly prominent role in national and international affairs. Furthermore, enhancing the visibility and standing of UR make it more appealing to prospective applicants from the entire country and abroad, thus leading to greater benefits at the local level.

Focussing on the human element of our developmental strategy, we seek to ensure on the micro-level that, from the office of the Rector down, our faculty and students actively work to ensure the developing presence of UR at a national level. The best way of enhancing this visibility is by ensuring the highest level of exchange with our national partners within the academic community. This strategy includes taking a central role in ensuring the success of initiatives such as the MOST academic exchange programme, through which not only do our students at undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral level have the opportunity to travel the country to learn and develop at other higher education institutions, but our own university plays host to many visitors who bring their own unique experiences to Rzeszów. Likewise, by encouraging our faculty to take the initiative in sharing the fruits of their innovative research through conferences, workshops, and symposiums, UR will become a national hub of scientific development and the exchange and transfer of ideas through sharing at a national level that which is best locally, while at the same time remaining open to external influence and direction. Our strategy to increase the presence of the UR on a national scale will also benefit from a more focussed and systemic approach to grant applications, and building the architecture to ensure greater success, which ultimately leads to improved funding at the local level and an increased presence nationally.





On the mezzo-level the best starting point is the need to take a central role in the development of inter-institutional cooperation, whether that be finding a landing ground for cooperation with the Rzeszów University of Technology, the University of Information Technology and Management or one of the more than 20 regional higher education institutions spread throughout Subcarpathia, or strengthening our ties with our partner universities from across Poland, especially through the encouragement of inter-institutional research projects and the adoption and promotion of programs such as the ERC's Mentoring Initiative. Ultimately, through helping to bring a cluster approach to the academic world it will be possible to help amplify not only the visibility of UR on a national scale, but also Polish scientific achievement on a global scale, thus helping to promote the national policy of the internationalisation of Polish science. This success, however, needs to be built on the foundation of strong and stable networks and collaborative partnerships, with UR, despite its geographical location, firmly at the centre.

Institutionally, working through organisations such as CRASP [the Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools in Poland] or the PRF [Polish Rectors Foundation], UR will help push the agenda of academic development on a national level, influencing policy and helping to elevate the collective image of Polish science and academics, while at the same time promoting an ethical approach that sits in line with our regional values. Equally, UR maintains a commitment to sit at the forefront of the maintenance of ethical standards in education and research and employment which we hope will become the benchmark to which all institutions aspire.

It is important to stress that the regional character of UR is important in helping to ensure that the trajectory of national development does not become focused on the centre to the detriment of the peripheries: by ensuring our increased presence and visibility on a national level, we can ensure that all regions of Poland can move forwards in lockstep.

# Internationality

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Given its geographical location at the heart of Europe, and the fact that the city of Rzeszów lies on the border with Ukraine and Slovakia, UR is uniquely placed to sit at the forefront of the drive towards greater levels of internationalisation in Polish universities. The third pillar of our development strategy is connected, therefore, with the drive towards internationality and the need to deepen our levels of cross-border engagement

Furthering our work in the development of world-wide networks of partners that facilitate staff, faculty, and student exchange and collaborative research remains at the heart of UR's development strategy. Focusing on the person as the fundamental building block of our international pillar, we seek to maximise the potential of staff and student mobility. The more that we can encourage our administrative and support staff to travel and learn from our Erasmus+ partners, the more we can help develop our own best practices, while at the same time sharing our own vision with the broadest number of partners. The situation is analogous when it comes to our faculty; as we encourage our staff to explore

the world and its limitless possibilities; every lesson learnt and every relationship founded leads to a betterment of our own position. Equally, in our drive to help educate well-rounded and successful global citizens, it is part of our mission to help our students to explore the world, giving them all of the help and support they need to participate in exchange programs, to see the world, appreciate its incredible diversity and develop a truly global perspective. The reverse is also true, in that every visitor UR receives as a part of the Erasmus+ programme brings a new perspective, new experiences and a wealth of experience and expertise which can be tapped and help facilitate our own growth. This is why UR is committed to providing an open and welcoming environment, epitomising the richness of legendary Polish hospitality. Ultimately, as UR facilitates and encourages this international exchange, there will be an increased chance of building an international network of partners that will enhance research possibilities for our own faculty, leading to the significant improvement of our academic environment, and strengthening the international academic community.



As Rzeszów becomes a more attractive location for international investment, so too do the opportunities increase to work with international businesses and increase our global outreach and experience, bringing local achievements into the global limelight. On the mezzo-level UR will be seeking to enhance its burgeoning reputation in the fields of medicine and health sciences to bring together in groups likeminded organisations that wish to push the boundaries of what is possible. This internationalisation of our integration with the private sector will be facilitated by our dynamic implementation of a broad range of courses in English, which as well as increasing the diverse nature of our student population will also facilitate the ability of our faculty to function on the international stage.

On the macro-level, the UR has the opportunity to build on a regional legacy of excellent collaboration with international institutions, including the European Union and the Visegrad Fund in enhancing international cooperation. Our geographically central location presents the perfect opportunity to establish the University as a hub of academic and scientific cooperation and development, and our approach will include actively seeking international partners for collaborative enterprises, both from the academic sphere and also the private sector.

Turning UR into an international hub of research and didactic excellence will not only have immeasurable impact on the local economy, but also facilitate our mission of creating fully-functional global citizens, which is why the international pillar of our development is integral to our overall vision.



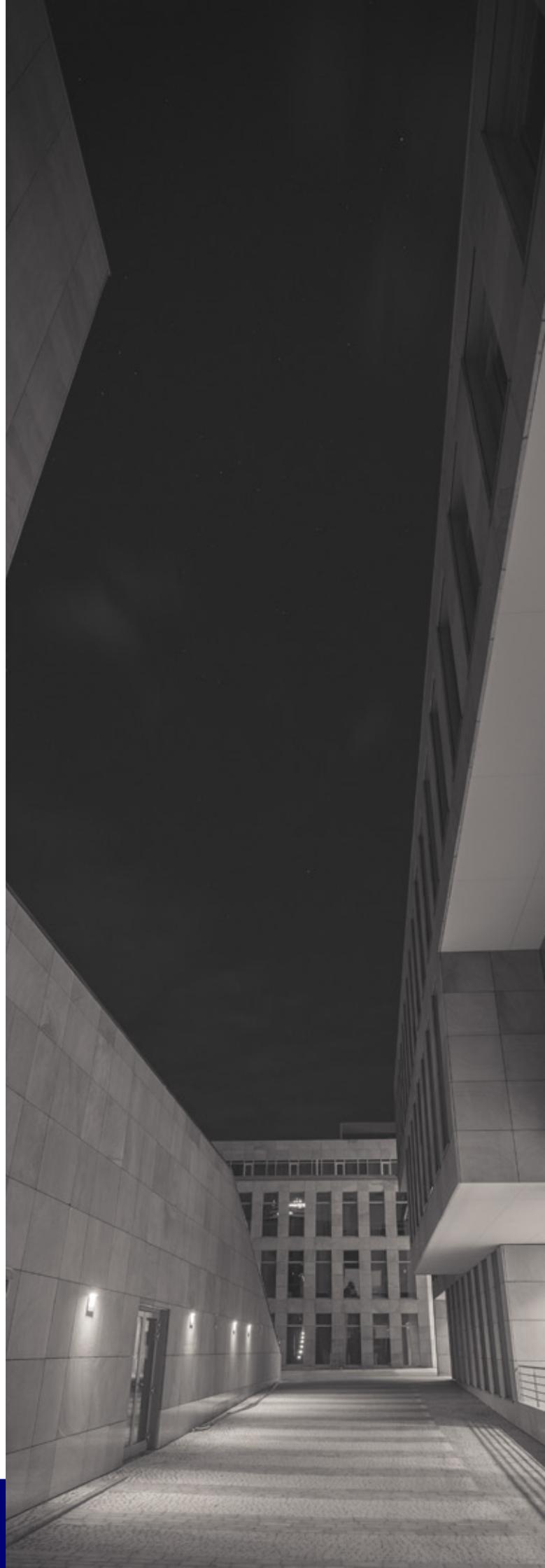
# Sustainability

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The concept of sustainability works on two levels: developmental and environmental. As has been previously outlined in other areas of our development plan, UR seeks to actively promote the implementation of sustainable plans that will lead not to short-term gains that bring instant results with little in the way of lasting legacy, but rather tangible outcomes that can be used as springboard for further development, and that will help build a viable future for the entire UR community, including its manifold stakeholders.

Taking the lead in environmental sustainability, UR has assumed the mantle of regional leader in the European Union plan to ensure the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Adhering to the EU's 2030 Agenda, UR has already established the Rzeszów University Centre for Sustainable Development [RUCSD], an independent body existing outside of the faculty structure, responsible for ensuring the identification and implementation of SDGs at a faculty level, within curriculum development, in research design, and in teaching practice. As well as internally, UR's role as regional leader entails its active outreach, supporting initiatives in both the public and private sectors, thus ensuring that developments within UR are not limited solely to the benefit of the academic community, but the broader society as a whole.

Thus, on the micro-level, UR seeks to foster a healthier approach amongst staff and students towards the issue of sustainability by increasing awareness, incorporating sustainability into curriculum design and ensuring internal policies at the university are compliant with the aims and guidelines set out by RUCSD. Consequently, by paying attention to the quality of ecosystem in which we live and work, it is possible to ensure a healthy working environment that protects the wellbeing of everybody connected with UR, in accordance with our commitment to the promotion of social and emotional learning, and sustainable goals. The ultimate goal of our micro-development plan will be the establishment of an Institute for Sustainability which will act as an academic counterpart to our extant RUCSD.





By sharing the results of our research, UR will, on the mezzo-level, help to promote sustainability throughout the local community, especially in the private sector and local communities through our social outreach programmes. It is also hoped that, through our support for local incubators and the transfer of innovative technologies, we will be able to help lead the way in areas such as:

- green tech;
- the human impact on local eco-systems;
- responsible management of finite resources;
- the protection of freshwater;
- shaping agricultural practices;
- sustainable forest management;
- responsible urban planning.

The sharing of such practices will also help to the building of sustainable relationships, which is a key element of our desire to ensure a thriving local community.

The transfer of best practices to local and regional institutions, as developed by the RUCSD, will be the key component of our macro-level development, especially assisting in the EU drive to net zero by 2050. This transfer will be facilitated by enhancing our outreach programme to ensure regular consultations both at a formal and informal level, and ensuring that UR remains open and willingly inclined to collaborate with local, regional, and national authorities and remains committed to a commonly agreed upon set of policies.





# Inclusivity

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The notion of inclusivity in the modern understanding is multi-dimensional in character and UR strives to ensure that it remains inclusive at every level.

Above everything, UR seeks to ensure that higher education is accessible to all, regardless of age, identity or background. Accessibility includes ensuring that UR's outreach programme covers even the most rural of areas in the Subcarpathian region, and ensuring the right financial support is made available to all who need the assistance to make their dreams of a higher education come true, regardless of their chosen course of study. At the other end of the age spectrum, UR takes a leading role in the U3A movement, and has been fulfilling its mission of enabling the over-55s to learn for fun since 1983. Since 2014 as well as offering a weekly lecture, there have been four thematic seminar groups with a total of over 450 members. UR retains this commitment to the broadest possible access base at the heart of our strategic thinking.

Accessibility in terms of employment is another area in which UR is seeking to ensure a level playing field. Not only does UR maintain a firm commitment to equal employment opportunities for all, but equal study opportunities for all, regardless of the identity, ethnicity or nationality of the individual. Increasing the diversity of our university population is an essential aspect of this ambition, and this drive will be enhanced by the internationalisation programmes that will be implemented during the current development cycle. Equally, accessibility must be understood in terms of the inclusion of all candidates regardless of their level of sensory, developmental, physical or behavioural disability, and the university retains its proud adherence to zero toleration of any attempt at exclusion.

Higher education is for all, and should remain for all without prejudice.

# Mission

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The mission of the University of Rzeszów is built on our commitment to three fundamental pillars in which we are:

## Socially

orientated by working in harmony with the local community, regional institutions, and the private sector to create and strengthen the bonds of trust, and develop a sustainable ecosystem in which all stakeholders can thrive.

## Ethically

orientated towards our students, staff, faculty, and alumni to foster an environment in which each and every individual can maximise their potential both at the University and in the world beyond.

## Globally

orientated in the conduct of high-quality research that has the potential to bring about meaningful change for the better for now and future generations, and to prepare successful future citizens of a truly integrated European society.



# Mission and Values

# Values

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The University of Rzeszów maintains a commitment to uphold a commonly held set of values that underpin each and every aspect of university life.

## Optimism

Adopting a positive, optimistic approach to development allows the University to position itself at the forefront of scientific and academic developments, meaning we are better able to adopt the role of trend setters rather than followers.

## Pride

Taking pride in our actions provides a sense of true worth to our achievements, providing a strong foundation for our researchers to strive for more, and our students to aspire to be the best version of themselves.

## Trust

Trust is mutual, which is why as well as placing our implicit trust in our staff, faculty and students to always act in their best interests, and the interests of the University, we also endeavour to earn the trust of all of our stakeholders in the broader community.

## Courage

It requires great self-belief to forge new pathways, and it is inherent upon the University to instill a sense of courage in both faculty and students by providing unwavering support as they push themselves to extend their horizons.

## Excellence

The desire to achieve excellence lies at the heart of the University, whether it be in fostering relations with the local community, delivering the highest possibly quality of education to our students, or supporting our staff in their academic and scientific endeavours.



# Mission and Values