



CENTRIA

University of Applied Sciences

Strategy 2025-2028



FACING THE FUTURE

You are currently reading the new strategy document of Centria University of Applied Sciences (UAS), which was approved in spring 2024 by the Centria UAS Board of Directors. For an organisation, a strategy is a common thread, a common understanding summed up together, taking us from this moment to the future we desire.

The journey is often as important as the destination and I believe that to be the case also now. During our strategy work, we have examined central issues, created a shared understanding, and looked into the future. This strategy was drawn up together with our students and personnel, listening also to our stakeholders. The different encounters during our strategy work inspired many new ideas that have now been refined into future-oriented choices. This is the strength of a shared strategy.

The messages from our stakeholder have served as a mirror for us at Centria UAS. As a result of close interaction, we can see ourselves, the goals of our work, and the needs of our stakeholders – the very reasons for our existence.

I would thus like to thank all our students, staff, and stakeholders for all these encounters, lively discussions, and

the important contributions made to Centria UAS.

The purpose of Centria UAS is to do good. The message of our strategy could be summed up, for example, as the notion of a sustainable working life career and a degree providing security in times of change. We want to secure our ability to forecast the needs of our region and show the direction toward a future. We all need to believe in the future.

Our operating environment, covering three different regions with a population base of over 200,000 inhabitants, is at the core of green transition, which means that Centria UAS has a particular responsibility. We have identified our role as a central provider of higher education and research, development, and innovation (RDI) in the region. Our focus is on developing the region's resources and supporting employment. Through our operations we strengthen the vitality of our region. One of the changes we aim for is to be closer to the region and its working life and strive towards better interaction.

According to its new vision, Centria UAS aims to show the way towards a sustainable, better future.

Tapio Huttula
Rector, CEO

THE OPERATING ENVIRONMENT OF CENTRIA UAS

201 027 inhabitants



Source: Statistics Finland, StatFin; Population structure (2023)

TRENDS AFFECTING THE FUTURE

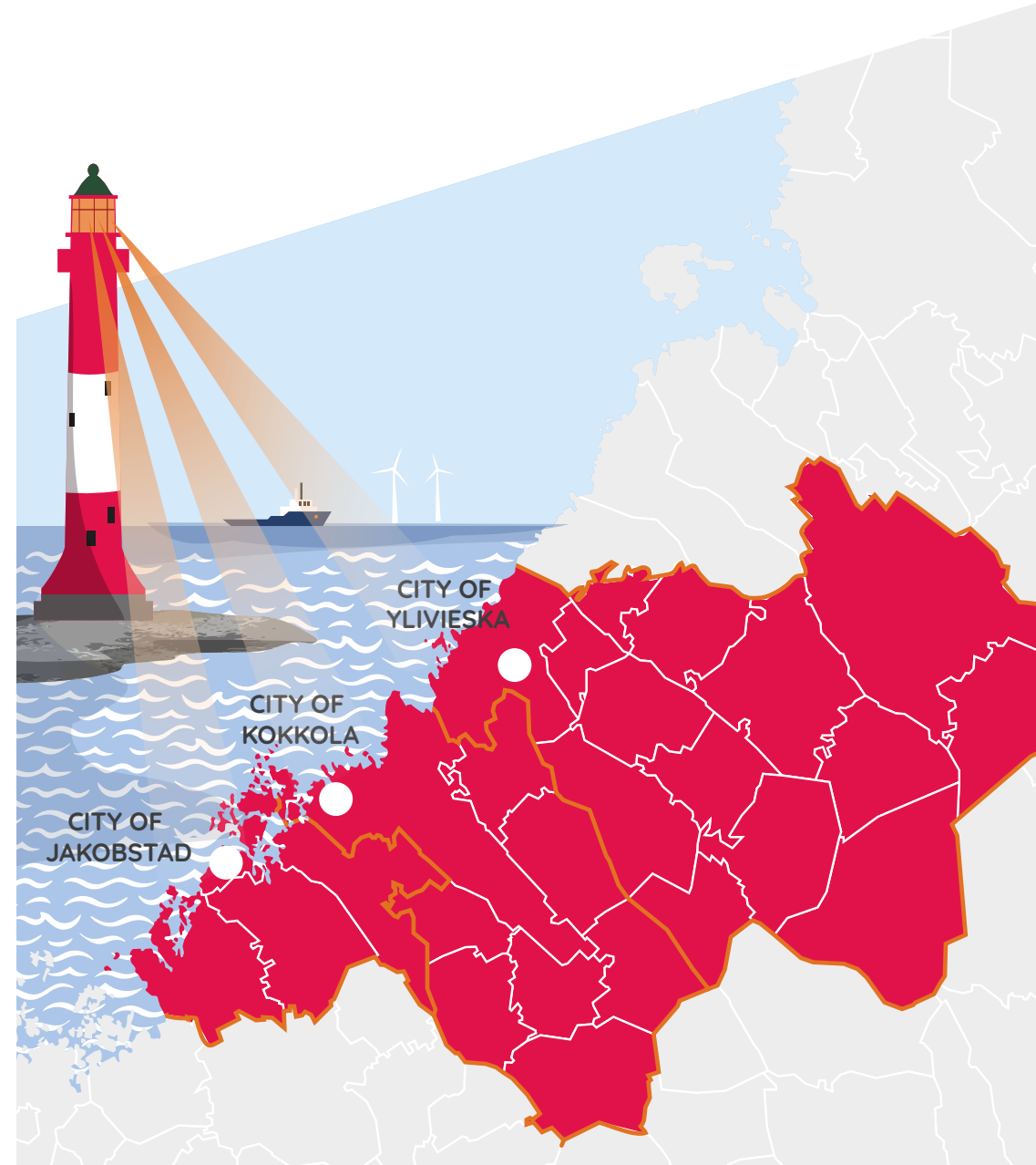
Nature's carrying capacity eroding - Growing well-being challenges - The battle for democracy intensifying - Competition for digital power gearing up - Economic foundations cracking (Sitra 2023)

The list of megatrends by the Finnish Innovation Fund Sitra, updated in 2023, provides an overview of the trends to which Centria UAS needs to respond. The megatrends highlight five key themes for the strategy, through which we can seek to understand the ongoing change and reflect on the kind of world we want to build for the future.

As a university of applied sciences, through our RDI activities, we create new knowledge, which enables us to influence future directions and contribute, for our part, to a more sustainable future. Building a sustainable future demands new kinds of expertise. Through our teaching activity, we educate future experts and changemakers for working life.

To solve the complex problems at hand, we have identified three perspectives for our 2025-2028 strategy, through which we will contribute to solving future challenges. In this strategy we define our relations to the individual, to our cooperation, and to the aspect of time.

We want to offer an inspiring learning experience for every individual, as well as the skills to learn, by which expert growth continues in working life and the work becomes meaningful. In this fast-changing world, it is crucial for a higher education institution to understand change in order to develop the operations and find new solutions to the challenges of this time and influence future developments. The meaning of cooperation is emphasized. As an institution of higher education, we alone cannot affect the future progress. By strengthening our interaction, we get closer to both working life and our region. Together we enhance the learning opportunities and the impact of our actions.



SITUATIONAL AWARENESS REACHED FROM STRATEGY PLANNING

1/3

RELATIONS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

COMPETENCE NEEDS are constantly evolving and, in addition to professional core competence, our stakeholders in working life strongly emphasise generic competences and working life skills. Learning to learn and collaboration skills are examples of meta skills needed in working life. A new curriculum was finalised in 2021 and adopted in 2022, and it also contains descriptions of generic skills. In the changing world of work, updating the study contents and keeping it up to date will be more important than ever.

HyFlex teaching has been developed to enable more flexible study options for our students. Continuous development of the study implementation is important so that different study methods are possible, and resources are used wisely.

The individuals of our diverse student body need more and more guidance and support at different stages of their studies. This need for guidance also affects the teachers' work.

RELATIONS TO TIME / CHANGE / THE FUTURE / KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE

CENTRIA UAS has developed its knowledge-based management, placing special emphasis on internal operational indicators. There is much information at our disposal, which is why it is essential to identify the information that will help us develop our operation. In addition to guiding our operational activities, we must learn to utilise information to assess the future, requiring an understanding of external signals.

The change in working life is fast, with continuous demand for new competence and needs. To ensure that our degrees meet the competence needs of our region, we must proactively strive to understand the changes in working life.

Working life needs renewal. To support and promote change, for us, as a higher education institution, comprehending the future is essential.

RELATIONS TO COOPERATION / THE REGION / WORKING LIFE / SOCIETY / OUR NETWORKS

THE RDI ACTIVITIES at Centria UAS are strong, and our personnel's opinion is that RDI can be brought even closer to the companies in the region and to our students. It is important to develop our internal collaboration so that our RDI activities and their diverse environments can be utilised more effectively by corporate actors and in our teaching. This requires reforming operation procedures and having the ability to adjust our operation models, as well as our competence.

Through our RDI activities, we can support the integration of students in the region by providing practical training and jobs that can function as stepping stones towards local careers.

Our stakeholders have communicated their willingness to deepen the cooperation in different ways that bring studying closer to working life.



SITUATIONAL AWARENESS REACHED FROM STRATEGY PLANNING

RELATIONS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

The key strength of our campuses are the versatile laboratories, the use of which could be further enhanced. Our staff stresses the importance of introducing practice in the studies at the earliest possible stages. We can also offer our laboratories more extensively to companies as platforms when developing their own activities.

The collaboration between RDI and teaching has been developed during the current strategic period by describing the student's RDI pathway. We must develop our collaboration systematically, improve the transparency of our operations and create clear structures.

Our stakeholders and students recognise the importance of continuous learning also after the completion of a degree. The strengthening of expertise can be supported through different training opportunities, through which the new know-how gained also influences working life.



RELATIONS TO TIME / CHANGE / THE FUTURE / KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE

Students, the experts of the future, are expected to be the driving force for change in working life to enforce a "cultural change" at the workplaces, requiring new methods and technologies.

The operating region of Centria UAS develops at a strong pace, and its educational opportunities are considered an important aspect of the region's ability to attract and retain talent. Our stakeholders value Centria UAS as an important partner and want to intensify the cooperation to further develop this region.

Our stakeholders recognise the need for international competence. The educational institutions in this region play an important role in educating international experts for the region's needs, but also in helping companies employ new international staff members.

Centria UAS is successful, according to multiple performance assessment indicators. While the operation is functioning well, it is important to examine the impact and efficiency of the activities and focus on further improving the quality of the operations.



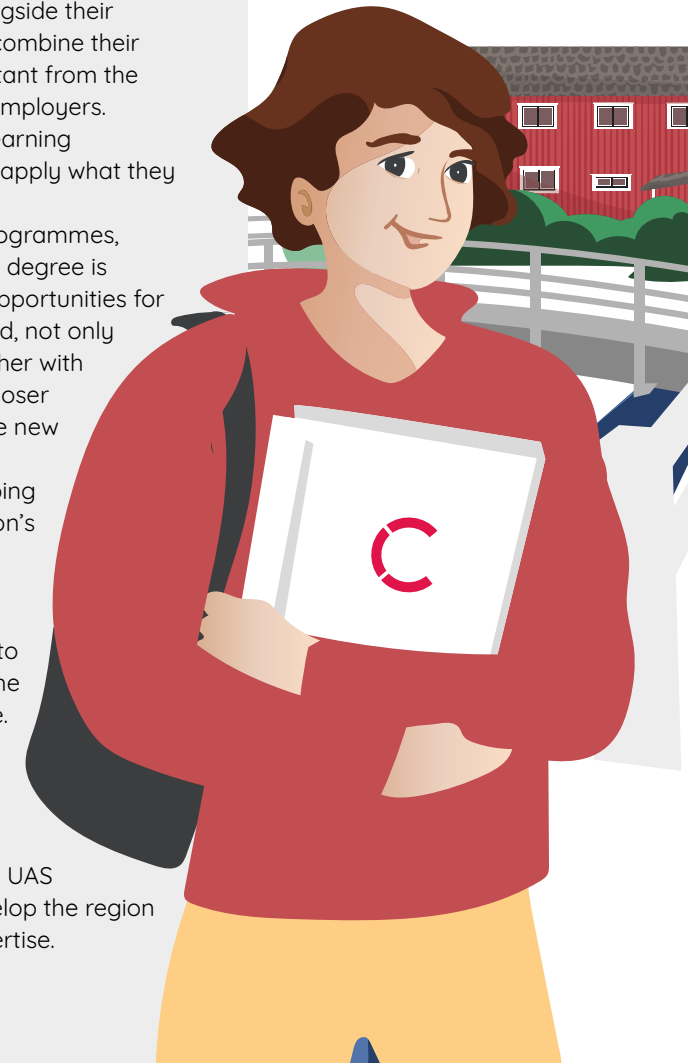
RELATIONS TO COOPERATION / THE REGION / WORKING LIFE / SOCIETY / OUR NETWORKS

Many of our students work alongside their studies. Enabling our students to combine their careers with their studies is important from the viewpoints of both students and employers. Working life also offers genuine learning opportunities where students can apply what they have learned in practice.

Employers value our degree programmes, and hence also graduating with a degree is considered important. Different opportunities for co-learning could be better utilised, not only within Centria UAS, but also together with working life, allowing us to seek closer learning experiences that produce new knowledge and know-how.

Our operating region is developing rapidly, and the role that the region's educational institutions play in enabling the region's growth has been recognised. The region's stakeholders expect Centria UAS to provide competence in line with the region's trade and industry profile.

Centria UAS is expected to take a more active role in the region's ecosystems in order to secure its up-to-date understanding of the local development trends. Centria UAS is also envisioned to actively develop the region through new knowledge and expertise.



SITUATIONAL AWARENESS REACHED FROM STRATEGY PLANNING

3/3

RELATIONS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

The role that UAS Master's degrees play in working life has been acknowledged, but their level of recognition still requires more work. There is also a need for vocational work-based doctoral degrees, awarded by universities of applied sciences.

Finnish and international students at Centria UAS typically study in their own groups, with few mutual encounters during their studies. A closer integration of these student groups would allow Finnish students to practise their internationality skills and the international students would have the opportunity to familiarise themselves more with the Finnish society and put down roots here. It is important to support international students in their efforts to understand Finnish workplaces and the required working life skills.

RELATIONS TO TIME / CHANGE / THE FUTURE / KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE

The impact of our activities must be assessed from different perspectives, permitting a more knowledge-based approach to development and decision making.

Communications and publications are concrete tools for our influence. By developing these, we can more effectively share the results of our work for the benefit of our society.



RELATIONS TO COOPERATION / THE REGION / WORKING LIFE / SOCIETY / OUR NETWORKS

Centria UAS is expected to take a more active role in the region's ecosystems in order to secure its up-to-date understanding of the local development trends. Centria UAS is also envisioned to actively develop the region through new knowledge and expertise.



DESIRED CHANGES:

Inspiring learning experiences, expert growth, and enhancing the meaningfulness of work.

DESIRED CHANGES:

A deep understanding of change and our time, creating a vision for and belief in the future

DESIRED CHANGES:

Closing in on the region and working life, promoting better interaction

OUR VISION

Centria UAS leads the way to a sustainable and better future.

OUR MISSION

We promote the highest levels of learning, based on know-how from RDI activities and working life.

OUR VALUES

- ✓ Approachable and reliable
- ✓ Valuing diversity and competence
- ✓ Enabling change and encounters
- ✓ Determined and boldly experimenting

Strategic choices and desired changes

SUSTAINABLE CAREERS

Inspiring learning experiences, expert growth, and enhancing the meaningfulness of work.

ANTICIPATION AND IMPACT

A deep understanding of change and our time, creating a vision for and belief in the future.

REGIONAL VITALITY AND PARTNERSHIP

Closing in on the region and working life, promoting better interaction.

OUR VISION

Centria UAS leads the way to a sustainable and better future.

OUR MISSION

We promote the highest levels of learning, based on know-how from RDI activities and working life.

VALUES AND OPERATING MODE

APPROACHABLE AND RELIABLE

We look at issues from the individual's perspective. We are easy to approach, and we listen and provide our support. We can put ourselves in the position of the individual or shareholder. For our students, personnel, and representatives of our stakeholders this leads to meaningful learning experiences and valuable new knowledge. Building the future starts with building trust.

VALUING DIVERSITY AND COMPETENCE

Our strengths consist of diverse know-how, tasks, and perspectives. We approach issues with curiosity, courage, and an open mind, discussing and valuing different points of view and respecting each other.

ENABLING CHANGE AND ENCOUNTERS

Know-how, knowledge, and science are our shared capital. By sharing them and learning new together, we can help our students, personnel, and stakeholders respond to new challenges. We meet the needs and challenges of our operating region. Centria UAS is a facilitator of meaningful encounters and collaboration.

DETERMINED AND BOLDLY EXPERIMENTING

The impact of our activities is the result of our holistic understanding and goal-oriented collaboration. Good results are the sum of the intertwined efforts of various individuals. Even the most difficult challenges can be overcome through bold experimentation and creative cooperation.

OUR PROFILE AND STRENGTHS

Centria UAS is a central developer of know-how for the trade, industry and working life of the export-oriented diversified region.

Centria UAS simultaneously focuses on both present changes and future needs. This makes understanding the development of society and technology, the changes in working life and professions, as well as the construction of new information and solutions, crucial when fulfilling our responsibility.

The profile of Centria UAS stems from the trade and industry of the region. The profile highlights the strengthening of the export industry, promoting the green and digital transitions, safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage, and improving the ability to anticipate future changes.

The strengths of Centria UAS include its sense of community, its student-centred focus, its RDI and internationality.

The strength of the teaching at Centria UAS is its pioneering pedagogical approach in promoting learning among a diverse body of students. At Centria UAS students are part of a multidisciplinary student community. The pedagogical methods and student-oriented guidance promote learning in cooperation with working-life.

The strengths of the RDI activities are found in the research teams serving the region's trade and industry, working life and education. The core of the RDI operations is in chemistry, renewable energy, production technology, well-being, entrepreneurship, remote work and its management, in all of which digitalization is the common denominator.

Internationality is visible in the organisation's intercultural competence, the number of international degree programmes and their appeal, as well as in the scope and diversity of the international project network.

STRATEGIC CHOICES AND DESIRED CHANGES

RELATIONS TO THE INDIVIDUAL

STRATEGIC CHOICE Sustainable careers

DESIRED CHANGES

Inspiring learning experiences, expert growth, and enhancing the meaningfulness of work

- Sustainable degrees and meaningful work
- Developing expertise
- Comprehensive approach to work

RELATIONS TO TIME / CHANGE / THE FUTURE / KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE STRATEGIC CHOICE

STRATEGIC CHOICE Foresight and impact

DESIRED CHANGES

A deep understanding of change and our time, creating a vision for and belief in the future

- Proactive and impactful decision-making
- Ability to thrive in times of change and envision the future
- Change-makers - the ability to influence

RELATIONS TO COOPERATION / THE REGION / WORKING LIFE / SOCIETY / OUR NETWORKS

STRATEGIC CHOICE Regional vitality and partnership

DESIRED CHANGES

Closing in on the region and working life, promoting better interaction

- Meaningful co-learning
- Cooperation benefitting all parties and partner when developing know-how, knowledge and operation
- Network-oriented working methods



DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES EMPHASISED IN THE STRATEGY

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Collaboration for the development of a healthy society and working life

Co-learning- a bridge to renewable working life

Impactful operation and foresight

Internationality as a central activity

Raising the scientific level

CORE STRATEGY

Supporting the region's green and digital transition

New dimensions of on-the-job learning

Anticipatory actions and knowledge-based management

Qualitative employment of international students

Establishing peer-reviewed publishing practices



