Universität Stuttgart

Structural and Development Plan of the University of Stuttgart

2026–2030

www.uni-stuttgart.de

Structural and Development Plan of the University of Stuttgart 2026–2030

Imprint

Published on behalf of the

Rectorate of the University of Stuttgart

The German version of this document was adopted by the University Council with the approval of the Senate on 26 June 2025.

This English translation is provided for information purposes only. The German version is the authoritative version.

© University of Stuttgart 2025

Image credits: © University of Stuttgart

Table of Contents

Foreword by the head of the University Council I

Foreword by the Rector II

Part A Image and profile of the University of Stuttgart 1

A.1 Mission statement and vision 2

A.2 Academic profile 3

A.3 Strategic goals 6

Part B Performance dimensions and cross-sectional areas 7

Preamble 8

B.1 Performance dimensions 9

B.1.1 Research 9
B.1.2 Teaching, university studies and continuing education 12
B.1.3 Knowledge and technology transfer 15

B.2 Cross-sectional areas 18

B.2.1 Climate protection and sustainable development 18
B.2.2 Diversity and equal opportunities 21
B.2.3 Internationalization 23
B.2.4 Appointments 25
B.2.5 Recruitment and personnel development 27
B.2.6 Early career researchers 29
B.2.7 IT and digitalization 31
B.2.8 Communication 33
B.2.9 Campus development and campus culture 35
B.2.10 Management and resource planning 37

Foreword by the chairman of the University Council

The Structural and Development Plan for 2026–2030 clearly outlines the University of Stuttgart's vision for its development in the coming years. It provides guidance for stakeholders in research, teaching and continuing education, as well as for the exchange of knowledge and technology with society and the business community. It also focuses on how we interact with each other and how we can shape a respectful, forward-looking work culture on our international, diverse campus.

The plan brings together a wide range of perspectives while setting ambitious goals. Achieving these goals will undoubtedly be challenging – especially in the face of international competition for visibility, excellence and talent, as well as in a rapidly changing political and social environment. But I am firmly convinced that the University of Stuttgart is ideally positioned to face these challenges with confidence and turn them into opportunities. Located in the heart of a region with outstanding economic institutions and innovation spirit, the university can drive global progress in research, society and technology.

Our shared goal is to further unlock the potential of the University of Stuttgart through continuous improvement, openness to new ideas and the courage to make science and education more visible, understandable and accessible. Especially in times of profound social upheaval and economic transformation, we need smart, creative and forward-looking solutions. The University of Stuttgart, with its interdisciplinary focus, technical orientation and strong programs in the natural sciences, humanities, social sciences and economics, offers an excellent environment for this.

A key area of focus in this regard is the development of new approaches to teaching. Modern, internationally oriented study programs, new pedagogical approaches and the targeted development of skills that are in demand in a globalized world are essential to the future-readiness of our university. We want to create academic programs that attract students from all over the world, promote diversity, are practice-oriented yet research-based and prepare our graduates for the complex challenges of tomorrow.

The University Council will actively support the implementation of the Structural and Development Plan over the next few years. Together with my colleagues, I look forward to supporting the Rectorate in this important task and actively contributing to shaping the future of the University of Stuttgart.

Stuttgart, June 2025

Wilfried Porth

Chairman of the University Council

Foreword by the Rector

The University of Stuttgart is located in the center of a major European high-tech region. It is a magnet for students and researchers from around the world. The close ties between our research university and its vibrant scientific, economic and cultural region present a unique opportunity. Research achievements can have immediate effects in real-world environments. Conversely, the university draws on and reflects on ideas from the business and cultural sectors.

With this Structural and Development Plan, we are establishing concrete guidelines for the years 2026–2030 based on an analysis of our strengths and weaknesses; however, particularly with regard to planning for professorships, we are also looking beyond the year 2030. We aim to further strengthen our internationally recognized basic research and our collaborations across disciplinary boundaries – both internally and in cooperation with our partner institutions. I am convinced that the university should build on Stuttgart's unique research and innovation ecosystem in order to work with partners to tackle the complex challenges at the interfaces between science, technology and society.

The University of Stuttgart fosters independent research and teaching at the highest level. In today's world, the preservation of independence is more important than ever. Academic freedom does not merely mean the independent pursuit of new insights, dissemination of knowledge and value creation – it also forms an essential foundation of democracy. Independent education, curiosity-driven research and the cultivation of international academic networks foster a sense of community far beyond the institution itself.

The ways in which the University of Stuttgart fulfills its responsibility to society as a whole are also reflected in the vision "Intelligent Systems to benefit society," which forms the basis of our strategy. In particular, the university's vision supports its commitment to shaping science, education, academic encounters and exchange in a way that enriches people and their environment, while remaining reflective and responsive to global transformations. The University of Stuttgart therefore considers it its duty to fulfill its responsibilities to the best of its ability for the benefit of society.

The Structural and Development Plan addresses issues that are of particular importance to the people at our university. Many of them have contributed valuable ideas to this plan – through their participation in numerous committees, workshops and working groups involved in drafting this document. The Structural and Development Plan is not only a mandatory document, but also a catalyst for strategic thinking and an iterative process of reaching consensus on shared goals. At the same time, such a document always reflects only a brief moment in time. The landscape of academia is changing, which is why we, as an institution, must continually reinvent ourselves – using the resources and opportunities we already have at our disposal or those we can implement in the future. We would have certainly welcomed the support offered by the "Universities of Excellence" funding program in this regard. However, even without participating in the competition during this funding period, I am convinced that the University of Stuttgart remains committed to cutting-edge research and excellent teaching.

During the 2026–2030 planning period, we aim to further improve the working conditions for our researchers by making significant progress on key projects – ranging from building infrastructure to digital transformation. One area of progress since the last planning period is that, for the first time, we are able to present a detailed chapter on climate – even though our ambitions are limited by structural constraints. But the same applies here: If we continue to strengthen the existing sense of belonging at our university as the foundation for all progress, we can make a real difference together.

Stuttgart, June 2025

Prof. Dr.-Ing. Peter Middendorf

Rector

Part A

Image and profile of the University of Stuttgart

A.1 Mission statement and vision

The University of Stuttgart's **mission statement** describes the university's self-image, its values and its mission as a public research and educational institution.

> The University of Stuttgart is a leading, technically oriented German university with a global presence. Located in an economically strong region that provides an extraordinary center for innovation as well as a high-quality and diverse cultural offering, the University of Stuttgart sees itself as an important hub for university-based, extramural and industrial research – with areas of specialization in both knowledge-based and application-oriented research. As an internationally renowned research university and educational institution, it promotes cutting-edge research and guarantees high-quality, holistic, research-based teaching.
>
> The University of Stuttgart offers modern infrastructure and implements innovative concepts for research and teaching that contribute to building knowledge and developing strategies for a sustainable society. The Stuttgart Way stands for the interdisciplinary integration of engineering, natural sciences, humanities, management, economics and social sciences in research and teaching on a foundation of excellent subject-based knowledge. The University of Stuttgart excels at building networks and connections as well as researching and enabling varied points of interaction between humans, technology, business, society and culture. It is committed to the principles of good research practice and reflects on the opportunities and risks associated with its scientific activities.
>
> The University of Stuttgart is committed to the freedom of science and the integration of research and teaching. It aims to inspire others towards academic pursuit, champions the principles of scientific research and knowledge creation and strives for open access to scientific results and methods. The University of Stuttgart not only develops individuals into outstanding experts in their respective fields, but also opens up opportunities for lifelong learning. In doing so, it shapes personalities that think globally and interactively and act responsibly, and fosters the skills and motivation necessary to work towards a future worth living.
>
> Founded in 1829 at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution, the University of Stuttgart today acts as a powerful trailblazer for innovation in a region characterized by strong economic and scientific sectors and a vibrant cultural life. Through its research and teaching, it contributes to economic success, prosperity and sustainability in society and fosters societal dialog and exchange. The university sees itself as a driving force for change towards a society characterized by environmental, economic and social sustainability.
>
> All members of the University of Stuttgart treat each other with equal respect and fairness, regardless of status, gender, background, skin color, religion, beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation and other diversity characteristics. The University of Stuttgart is committed to taking action in order to bring about true equal opportunities and equal participation in all areas of the university. The university considers it its mission to support its members to the best of its ability. It enables individuals to fully realize their potential and actively promotes a healthy work-life balance. It places cooperation and appreciation at the core of its leadership philosophy and is committed to ensuring the greatest possible transparency in its decision-making and administrative processes. It fosters connections with its alumni, partners and sponsors.
>
> The University of Stuttgart advocates for open-mindedness, individualism, community spirit and sustainability. It brings together students eager to learn, motivated staff, outstanding lecturers, excellent researchers and visionary inventors, and provides a space for creativity and interaction. Thanks to this culture of integration, it is able to create and pass on knowledge helping society prepare for future challenges in a thoughtful way.

The **vision statement** of the University of Stuttgart combines the university's mission and strengths with a societal perspective and a positive vision for the future:

Intelligente Systeme für eine zukunftsfähige Gesellschaft (DE)

Intelligent systems to benefit society (EN)

The vision statement serves as a guiding principle for the university. In particular, the university's vision supports its commitment to shaping science, education, academic encounters and exchange in a way that enriches people and their environment, while remaining reflective and responsive to global transformations and taking responsibility for contributing to the good of society.

A.2 Academic profile

The University of Stuttgart is characterized by its broad range of academic disciplines in engineering, natural sciences, humanities, economics and social sciences. The University of Stuttgart is organized into **10 faculties** with around **160 institutes**, consolidating the university's subject expertise.

1. Architecture and Urban Planning
2. Civil and Environmental Engineering
3. Chemistry and Materials Science
4. Energy-, Process- and Bio-Engineering
5. Computer Science, Electrical Engineering and Information Technology
6. Aerospace Engineering and Geodesy
7. Engineering Design, Production Engineering and Automotive Engineering
8. Mathematics and Physics
9. Humanities
10. Management, Economics and Social Sciences

In addition to the university's institutes, cross-disciplinary central facilities and interfaculty centers serve as bridges between the faculties.

The faculties of the University of Stuttgart collaborate in a variety of ways in research and teaching, as well as in the transfer and communication of science and technology.

Throughout its history, the University of Stuttgart has specialized in a wide range of scientific disciplines, contributing many years of research and teaching that is both research-oriented and practice-oriented. The University of Stuttgart is particularly known for its work in the following subject areas, referred to below as **research fields** (listed in alphabetical order): "Clean Energy, Processes, and Mobility", "Formal and Computational Sciences", "Intelligent Engineering Systems", "Life Sciences and Bioengineering", "Quantum, Matter, and Materials", "Reflecting on Humanity and Society", "Sustainable Construction and Cities". These research areas not only highlight the University of Stuttgart's distinctive areas of specialization, but also demonstrate how the University of Stuttgart is helping to address major societal challenges. The university contributes to fields such as sustainable energy and mobility, environmental protection and health and has developed expertise built up over many years – ranging from basic research to application-oriented approaches.

While the University of Stuttgart's scientific profile is characterized by the breadth of its research areas, seven interdisciplinary profile areas, hereinafter referred to as **strategic profile areas**, have emerged at the forefront of research. These profile areas

- are organized as cross-disciplinary networks
- deliver scientific excellence, as evidenced, for example, by competitively acquired third-party funding,
- offer outstanding conditions for early career researchers,
- tap into innovation potential for the entire university,
- demonstrate overall strength in terms of structure, collaboration and development.

Strategic profile areas (→ link) (listed in alphabetical order):

- Aerospace Technologies
- Architecture and Adaptive Buildings
- Biomedical Systems and Robotics for Health
- Digital Humanities and Societies
- Production Technologies
- Quantum Technologies
- Simulation Science

Changes made to the strategic profile areas compared to the 2021–2025 Structural and Development Plan: Aerospace Technologies was added as a profile area due to considerable research achievements. The Biomedical Systems area was renamed as Biomedical Systems and Robotics for Health and will undergo significant strategic expansion, in part due to its activities within the Cyber Valley. The former Autonomous Systems area has been integrated into the activities of the existing and new strategic profile areas and is no longer listed as a separate unit. The Digital Humanities area now also incorporates social science perspectives and reflects corresponding research achievements and synergies in the expanded title "Digital Humanities and Societies".

Fig. 1 Electric aircraft e-Genius

Aerospace Technologies: The strategic profile area of Aerospace Technologies is inextricably linked to today's mobile society driven by information, communication and knowledge, and encompasses numerous fields of engineering and the natural sciences, such as aerospace systems, lightweight construction, energy and communications technology, materials science, physics and geodesy. Aerospace Technologies thus takes on a key role in pushing technology forward, branching out far beyond traditional subject boundaries. Baden-Württemberg is a highly successful global hub for research and industry, and the University of Stuttgart plays a prominent role in this. As one of Germany's leading technical universities, it has a strong foundation of expertise built up over decades and makes a significant contribution to the further development of the field through its teaching and research activities. Research is supported by access to excellent infrastructure including various wind tunnels, test benches and computing clusters – some of which are unique on an international scale.

Fig. 2 Pavillon (demonstrator)

Architecture and Adaptive Buildings: Major challenges such as rapid urbanization, an enormous need for new construction, remodeling and renovation, immense consumption of resources, significant CO_2 emissions and waste production, as well as a lack of productivity in the conventional construction industry, demonstrate that new approaches to planning and building for the future are needed. The Architecture and Adaptive Buildings area focuses on finding solutions to these challenges and thereby creating the conditions necessary for a high-quality, livable, socially just and sustainably built environment. The profile area builds on the traditionally close connection between architecture, urban planning and civil engineering at the University of Stuttgart, and looks further afield to disciplines such as computer science and robotics, geodesy, production and systems engineering as well as humanities and social sciences, thereby expanding established research methods with state-of-the-art digital methods and interdisciplinary approaches, particularly computer-based modeling, simulation and manufacturing. The profile area is highly connected internationally and is one of the university's flagship programs.

Fig. 3 Robot system

Biomedical Systems and Robotics for Health: Understanding the evolutionary complexity of biological systems is the foundation for applying "natural" principles to digital models, technical systems and biomedical solutions, for example robots, cyber-physical systems, sensors, adaptive materials and even engineered molecules, biological networks and cells. Innovations in bio-intelligent technologies and related advancements in healthcare are only possible within a framework integrating natural sciences and technology with reflections on societal and ethical concerns. New combinations of technologies, smart materials and biological systems are enabling rapid technological progress, for example in the individualization of diagnoses and treatments. At the University of Stuttgart, researchers are finding collaborative success in this interdisciplinary field ranging from basic to applied research. The profile area draws on existing expertise in cyber-physical systems, modeling, control engineering, mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, quantum physics, nanotechnology, polymer chemistry, biotechnology, medical technology, computer science, philosophy of technology and risk research. A particular advantage of the university's location is its proximity to clinical partners and the cutting-edge research partnership in Cyber Valley.

Fig. 4 SRF Re/producing Realities / VISUS Powerwall

Digital Humanities and Societies: The strategic profile area Digital Humanities explores and reflects on how digitalization processes and digital research methods can provide new opportunities and shape conditions for the humanities as well as the social and economic sciences. Digitalization is studied at the University of Stuttgart as a research subject, leveraged in methodology and utilized as an interdisciplinary interface with innovative research and teaching concepts (such as the Digital Humanities Master's degree) developed in collaboration with computational linguistics

and simulation science. This profile area (which includes institutionalized centers such as SRC Text Studies and SRF Re/Producing Realities) combines core competencies in the humanities, social sciences and economics with digital methods. Close collaborative partnerships with archives (DLA), computing centers (HLRS) and international centers of excellence (Center for Digital Narrative, University of Bergen) serve as models for interdisciplinary basic research far beyond the university's immediate vicinity and make the profile area an important hub within the university's national and international networks.

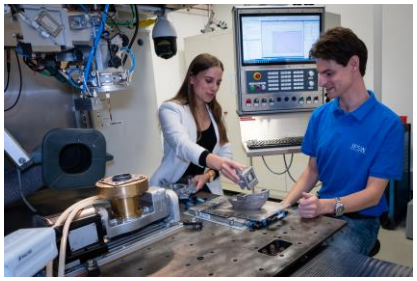

Fig. 5 Laser Technologies (IFSW)

Production Technologies: Modern production technologies developed in the high-tech region around Stuttgart and beyond are at the core of the state of Baden-Württemberg's economic success and technological leadership, and make a significant contribution to societal prosperity. Approximately 1,000 researchers at the mechanical engineering faculties of the University of Stuttgart collaborate with other faculties and partners from industry and academia to conduct research and development in response to current and future challenges facing our society in fields such as mechanical and plant engineering, automotive engineering, materials science, process engineering and environmental engineering, as well as chemistry, optics and medical technology. Synergies resulting from the integration of research and teaching at the institutes, as well as from dialog and collaboration among departments in joint research programs with industry partners, lead to pioneering solutions and innovation strategies. In light of current societal transformation processes brought about by the globalization of value chains, digitalization and sustainability efforts, all of which have a significant impact on the technology sector, the Production Technologies area at our university is therefore of the utmost importance.

Fig. 6 ZAQuant

Quantum Technologies: Quantum technologies are a forward-looking field of research with the potential to provide crucial solutions to today's most pressing problems, combining the fundamentals of quantum physics and chemical material design with practical aspects of engineering. Examples include applications of quantum sensor technology in the fields of personalized medicine and renewable energy, as well as quantum information processing and quantum computing for highly complex problem-solving. The Quantum Technologies area at the University of Stuttgart is distinguished by its broad spectrum of activities, ranging from basic research to the development of technological applications, by intensive, worldwide collaborations with renowned research institutions and industrial companies, and by its state-of-the-art research infrastructure. The strategic profile area offers outstanding opportunities for early career researchers and students through world-class research, knowledge transfer and networking activities.

Fig. 7 Vortex formation (Cluster of Excellence SimTech / Dürrwächter, Kempf, Munz)

Simulation Science: For centuries, scientists have been developing mathematical models to describe complex phenomena. Computer simulations make it possible to mirror such systems digitally, predict future behavior and gain insights into how to design and control these systems. Simulation science has become an indispensable part of research and development and plays a crucial role in furthering our society's technological progress. The large amounts of data generated by sensor measurements, data collection, experiments and simulations open up new avenues for knowledge creation, supported by the systematic integration of formalized knowledge and close interaction between users and simulations. Originally rooted in mathematics and engineering, simulation research at the University of Stuttgart now touches on nearly all scientific disciplines. The Simulation Science area at the university also encompasses Germany's first consecutive Bachelor's/Master's degree program in simulation science.

A.3 Strategic goals

In order to implement its mission statement and vision, the University of Stuttgart has set itself the following strategic goals.

Networked disciplines – the Stuttgart Way

The Stuttgart Way encourages collaboration among complementary specialist disciplines as well as interdisciplinary perspectives in teaching, opening up unique opportunities for innovation in research and cooperation on future-oriented projects. The university brings together researchers from engineering, natural sciences, the humanities, economics and social sciences to support the integration of different thematic and methodological approaches in research and teaching, and maintains close cooperation with partners that are leading in their fields.

Globally renowned research university

The University of Stuttgart is a world-renowned research university at the cutting edge of scientific and technological progress. We have achieved this position through strong disciplinary research and a focus on interdisciplinarity. We rely on our early career researchers to strive for innovation, and we recruit and promote outstanding achievers in all phases of the academic career path. We strengthen cooperation with strong regional, national and international partners and create excellent framework conditions and infrastructures for researchers.

Appealing to students

The University of Stuttgart attracts talented, ambitious students and fosters their interest in science from the start of their studies through research-based teaching and learning. We create an environment that gives students access to high-quality, integrated degree programs, empowers them towards success in their degree and helps them develop their personality. We establish a lifelong connection with our alumni through varied and engaging offers.

Committed and reliable employer

The University of Stuttgart attracts creative, enthusiastic people at all stages of their professional careers to its workforce. The university is committed to equal opportunities, diversity and work-life balance. We nurture a leadership culture based on appreciation to cultivate the enthusiasm and motivation of our employees and provide opportunities for continuing education and personal development.

Innovative partner for knowledge and technology transfer

The University of Stuttgart is an innovative, responsible and internationally recognized partner for knowledge and technology transfer with industry, science, culture and society. With a long history of excellent, visionary researchers, the university serves and strengthens the surrounding region, provides a place for societal reflection and paves the way for innovation.

Taking responsibility for international engagement and interconnection

Prioritizing internationalization means promoting diverse perspectives and approaches. Students and researchers from all over the world study and research together at the University of Stuttgart, bridging cultures and subject areas. This exchange is the key to developing measured responses to global challenges by fostering innovative excellence, creativity and success. The University of Stuttgart integrates international and intercultural perspectives into its research fields, methods, content, programs and working practices and cooperates with its international partners on the basis of open exchange. We offer an attractive environment and are committed to the protection of human rights, equal opportunities and academic freedom.

Sustainable development as the guiding principle of all actions

The University of Stuttgart takes responsibility for shaping a sustainable society and environment. Through research and teaching, we contribute to developing the scientific foundations, skills and awareness for sustainable solutions, and we transfer our knowledge to economy and society. Ecological, economic and social sustainability are the benchmark for all our actions and decisions.

Part B

Performance dimensions and cross-sectional areas

Preamble

For each performance dimension and cross-sectional area, this document lists strengths and weaknesses and provides an assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period. The following symbols are used for this purpose:

Strengths

- ✓ Strong track record with further successes during the reporting period
- ↗ Positive development during the reporting period
- → Strong area, but no significant development during the reporting period

Weaknesses

- ↗ Positive development during the reporting period
- → Weak area with no significant development during the reporting period
- **!** Particularly challenging area

Further details are provided in the accompanying text for each item.

B.1 Performance dimensions

B.1.1 Research

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Internationally successful top-flight research and researchers with global renown	↗
Forward-looking, distinctive research profile (further development of strategic profile areas and research fields)	↗
Close interdisciplinary collaboration and teamwork at eye level (“Stuttgart Way”)	✓
Success in securing national and international third-party funding	✓
Efficient cooperation with external research institutions in Stuttgart and with regional research institutions and networks	✓
Successful partnerships with businesses in the Stuttgart high-tech region	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Research performance potential not yet fully realized in all areas (e.g., publications, support for early career researchers, acquiring third-party funding)	→
Room for improvement in recruitment of top international researchers at all career levels	→
Need for expansion of international networks	→
Pooling and sustainable allocation of infrastructure resources and technical expertise in need of improvement	↗
Attractiveness for researchers limited by critical university construction situation	!

In a region with particularly strong scientific, economic and cultural institutions, the University of Stuttgart plays a central role as a hub between university, extramural and industrial research. It aims to achieve a leading international position in both basic and applied research.

The University of Stuttgart’s research profile (→ Part A) is reflected both in its focus on seven strategic profile areas of high scientific and societal relevance in which it holds a leading international position, as well as in seven additional characteristic research fields that define the university’s research identity. The university’s unique approach to interdisciplinary research, the “Stuttgart Way”, is a fundamental strategy that is integral to the University of Stuttgart’s characteristic research profile. Building on strong academic disciplines, the university conducts systematic and intensive interdisciplinary research to develop viable solutions to the complex and multifaceted challenges facing our society in the future.

This is supported by a complex and diverse network of research consortia, some of which were established through highly competitive grant processes and also cooperate with other research institutions from science and industry (e.g. ARENA2036, ICM, QSens, Cyber Valley). In order to further expand interdisciplinary networking, internal collaborative structures in accordance with the “Stuttgart Way” were established in 2014 on the recommendation of the Research Council and with the support of the Senate. The research networks established to date have been evaluated positively and have achieved great success in research and in acquiring third-party funding. In 2024, the university initiated efforts to make network structures more flexible in order to further improve their value contribution and effectiveness. In addition, structured support for third-party funding proposals (DFG research networks, EU funding, funding for early career researchers, awards, foundations) has also been expanded.

The University of Stuttgart has therefore demonstrated particular strength in acquiring competitive third-party funding: it has improved its track record in securing international EU funding (currently 15 active ERC grants: → www.uni-stuttgart.de/eu-grants) and remains strong in the acquisition of third-party funding (currently 2 Clusters of Excellence [EXC], 4 Collaborative Research Centers [SFB] and 2 Transregios [SFB-TRR] where one of the co-spokespersons is from the University of Stuttgart: → www.uni-stuttgart.de/dfg). The university has been especially successful with strategically selected initiatives during the current competition phase of the Excellence Strategy. Nevertheless, the university could still improve, particularly in securing individual DFG grants, as there is a downward trend in this area. Publication performance also remains below average compared to similarly structured universities, such as those in the TU9, despite the university’s new publication guidelines. This applies mainly to the number of papers published in peer-reviewed journals.

Through measures such as systematically highlighting research achievements on university websites and proactively curating PR content on current research content, including for social media platforms, the university has been able to enhance its visibility. However, there is still room for improvement in shaping the university’s reputation, particularly on the international stage, which is also reflected in the

reputation surveys conducted by major higher education rankings. Despite a sustained upward trend, the absolute figures are not yet comparable to universities in top positions.

Establishing and expanding international alliances and networks remains a key focus area of the University of Stuttgart (→ B.2.3). The university has established close and structured partnerships with the University of Bergen and a wide variety of other joint projects with international universities across various departments, such as with the University of Melbourne in the field of aviation and with George Mason University in the field of climate resilience research.

Even though a large number of internationally renowned scientists are already conducting research at the University of Stuttgart, as evidenced in recent years by an increasing number of awards for our researchers (e.g. 2023 Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Prize for Prof. Menges), the further recruitment of top international scientists remains a challenge. Despite individual successes (such as the Alexander von Humboldt Professorship for Prof. Schmalstieg), there is still room for growth in the recruitment of leading international researchers. The university has implemented initial successful measures such as establishing a central appointment management system and advertising open-topic professorships; work is also currently underway to intensify active recruitment (→ B.2.4). Further expansion of support systems and infrastructure is intended to increase the university's appeal as a place of research. A major obstacle lies in the poor condition of some university buildings with limited options for renovation.

In the area of open science, the University of Stuttgart has implemented numerous measures and achieved success: it was one of the first universities in Germany to sign the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), it has also drawn up the "Statute of the University of Stuttgart for Ensuring Good Scientific Practice" and "Statute of the University of Stuttgart for Handling Misconduct in Science", increased the proportion of open access publications, founded an open access working group and a SimTech Diamond open access journal. An open science strategy is currently being developed to consolidate these measures, continue them in a systematic manner and expand upon them.

In addition to this, the university is intensifying benchmarking efforts: The university bibliography ensures central storage and quality assurance for bibliographic data; the third-party funding report has been digitalized; and a digital inventory of large-scale equipment is available. In 2022, a ranking office was established to conduct benchmarking for the major international rankings. The university has also expanded its research data management and introduced the role of research software engineers at the institutes. Nevertheless, the potential in the area of administration has not yet been fully realized, and a large percentage of university data is currently available only in analog form (on paper or in files) and is stored in a decentralized manner.

Equipment pooling is ensured by the internal AMICA (Advanced Materials Innovation and Characterization) network, the involvement of the Research Council and the equipment committee as well as through the large-scale equipment atlas. With equipment becoming increasingly specialized and the market becoming increasingly monopolized, maintenance contracts are a new important focus area, showcasing that there is not only a need for effective pooling, but also for procuring long-lasting equipment.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**Research performance continues to show steady improvement, particularly in the area of publications and competitive third-party funding.**
2.	**The University of Stuttgart expands its recruitment of international and national researchers.**
3.	**Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approaches for a sustainable society are developed further.**
4.	**High-performing and high-growth areas are further expanded, strategically supported and aligned with relevant future topics.**
5.	**The University of Stuttgart offers excellent research conditions, particularly with regard to infrastructure, digitalization and advisory services.**

Prioritized measures
Expanding support systems for successful research strategies Seed funding is established at the university and expanded further, and additional advisory services are introduced (particularly for early career researchers and awards). Outstanding publications are given greater visibility, and the Research Council is approached for support in proposal submissions, in addition structured peer mentoring is established at the university. *Progress indicators: peer-reviewed publications; acquisition of competitive third-party funding; prestigious prizes and awards; Humboldt and Heisenberg professorships*
Supporting networking and knowledge transfer The network structure of the Stuttgart Way is made more flexible and a program for (international) networking and cooperation is established at the university. *Progress indicators*: *increased network activities*; *interdisciplinary publications; third-party funding networks; successful collaborations with companies*
Strengthening the profile areas Additional funding instruments (for teaching and early career researchers) are established for the profile areas. A reporting system is established to raise the visibility of research achievements. *Progress indicators: increased publication output by the departments; third-party funding acquired; number of qualification publications; performance analysis*
Aligning the appointment strategy with the university's research profile The open-topic appointment procedure is used to attract top talent in all disciplines. When establishing or filling new professorships, greater emphasis is placed on how well a candidate's research profile aligns with that of the university. Central appointment planning is continued. The evaluation procedure for junior and tenure-track professorships is simplified. *Progress indicators: number of professorships successfully filled; simplified evaluations*
Promoting benchmarking Structured reporting, particularly on internal programs and initiatives, is expanded, including through participation in benchmarking networks. *Progress indicators: regular comprehensive reports; success in rankings*
Improving internal and external branding To increase visibility and foster interdisciplinary collaboration, research achievements are regularly reported and engaging (research) events are held. *Progress indicators: surveys on research reputation; increase in events of high international renown in research (e.g., conferences); online visibility of research achievements*
Intensifying the strategic use of research infrastructure The pooling of large-scale equipment, including maintenance contracts, is expanded and procedures for managing follow-up costs associated with maintenance contracts are established. *Progress indicators: number of pooling projects; successful, standardized management of follow-up costs and maintenance contracts*
Digitalizing research-supporting infrastructure The university actively participates in the development of collaborative infrastructure and carefully selects which resources can be made available individually or as part of a shared pool. *Progress indicators: completion of ongoing projects (e.g., bwStorage for Science), publication of existing resources*

B.1.2 Teaching, university studies and continuing education

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
One of the nine leading technical universities in Germany (TU9), offering research-oriented and practical teaching and learning in a highly attractive research and business environment	✓
Strong interdisciplinary approach in teaching – early emphasis on the relevance of interdisciplinary experience (interdisciplinary key competencies, FÜSQ)	↗
Sustainability aspects and ethical competencies integrated in teaching (e.g., how to deal with technological risks)	↗
Support for student entrepreneurship through teaching and university startup programs	↗
Accredited advisory and support services for new students	✓
Comprehensive range of digital supplementary and support services, particularly for the early stages of study (90% of Bachelor's students use these services, as of 2024)	↗
Target group-specific outreach programs for school students of all grade levels (Try Science, Research Campus, Fehling Lab, degree studies while at school, etc.)	↗
Established best practices for the transition from Bachelor's to Master's degree programs	✓
High proportion of degree-seeking international students at the University of Stuttgart	✓
Above-average speed and success rate in graduates entering the job market	✓
Resource-efficient and effective quality assurance system for teaching	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Decline in the number of first-year students	!
High dropout rates in some programs (Bachelor's degree programs)	!
Long average duration of studies	!
Only partially realized overall concept for academic continuing education	↗
Room for improvement in the reflection and integration of AI tools into teaching and examinations	↗
Outgoing mobility in exchange programs below expectations	→
Room for growth in programs taught in English	↗
Extracurricular advisory and support structures for students in teaching degrees not yet established at the Professional School of Education (PSE)	↗

During the reporting period, various evaluation and review procedures as well as restructuring measures were carried out that have informed the updated strengths and weaknesses listed for the planning period. New items were added to both sections. Three previous challenges (*leveraging the potential of interdisciplinary key competencies, teaching ethical skills, implementing digital teaching/learning formats*) are now listed as strengths; one challenge (*extracurricular advisory and support structures for students in teaching degrees not yet established at the Professional School of Education (PSE)*) developed from an item previously described as generally positive (*Center for STEM teacher training in Baden-Württemberg*). The list includes only those points that remain relevant to further developing potential and addressing shortcomings. Items that are not unique to the University of Stuttgart (*Strengths: broad range of high-quality courses, promotion of student engagement; student satisfaction*) or that have lost relevancy due to changed framework conditions or in comparison to more pressing issues (*Weaknesses: room for improvement in student-to-faculty ratio in some areas; systematic approach to supporting high-performing students for early involvement in research could be expanded*) were removed from the list.

The reform of the curricular → interdisciplinary key competencies (FÜSQ) has provided clarity for students both in terms of structure (transparency) and content (range of courses). The wide range of courses on various topics is designed primarily to help Bachelor's students gain interdisciplinary experience and knowledge. The next step is to work with the faculties to further develop interdisciplinary teamwork across faculties as a teaching and learning format and gradually incorporate this approach into Bachelor's degree programs.

The integration of sustainability topics into the curriculum represents a milestone that underscores the relevance of the topic and the strategic focus of the University of Stuttgart. Interdisciplinary key competencies in the area "Sustainability and Social Responsibility" address various aspects of sustainability from scientific and political perspectives. Reflection modules are also offered by institutions such as → SFR IRIS (Reflecting on Intelligent Systems In the Next Generation – RISING). As part of the network → SDG-Campus, the University of Stuttgart promotes the Sustainable Development Goal 13 "Climate Action" and contributes several courses to the certificate program (→ B.2.1).

The → programs for students on entrepreneurship and startups were very well received during the reporting period. Through a wide selection of courses, workshops and various other events, students learn about the necessary tools to start a business, empowering them to establish startups with exemplary → success stories (→ B.1.3).

The pandemic and the suspension of in-person instruction contributed to accelerating the development and (partial) shift of teaching toward digital formats. Online teaching and learning formats are an integral part of the teaching toolkit and are used to support in-person instruction (→ B.2.7). The Artificial Intelligence Software Academy (→ AISA Training), launched in 2022, offers certificate programs teaching AI skills to students. The university is continuing efforts to expand the use of AI tools to support student learning (e.g., measures from the → digit@L project).

Developments spurred on by the → Professional School of Education (PSE) transitioning into permanent operation (effective April 1, 2024) and the accompanying release of an updated cooperation agreement will be treated as a priority during the planning period in order to streamline existing activities. The added value brought about by the PSE for students in teaching degrees must be specified and communicated to the target group; its reach (visibility and objectives) both within and outside the partner universities must be expanded; and collaboration among academic disciplines within the partner universities must be improved.

The number of first-year students has remained stable but low since 2022/23. The countermeasures implemented (expanding offerings for school students, expanding university marketing, introducing paperless enrollment, actively supporting applicants, etc.) have, at best, merely stalled the downward trend so far. A large-scale professional marketing campaign is planned for 2025. A corresponding branding strategy is intended to increase the visibility of the University of Stuttgart as an attractive place to study. The university is also expanding its programs aimed at school students and continuously releasing updated information on degree programs on its websites (→ stuKUS, etc.).

In addition to the low number of first-year students, our main priority remains improving academic success rates by reducing dropout rates and shortening the duration of study, particularly in engineering degree programs. The review process for the technical study programs conducted in 2023 provided important impetus for the further development of all study programs. The university administration has issued and developed recommendations and guidelines for measures that address aspects like curriculum structure with regard to the feasibility, sustainability and attractiveness of the degree programs (→ Appendix 4). The gradual implementation of the measures laid out in the agreements has already begun. The initial effects of the reforms are expected during the planning period. In addition to the reorganization of exam periods, the Central Administration plans to reintroduce individual academic progress monitoring in 2025, originally planned during the reporting period. The university is collaborating with the STEM degree programs to define program-specific criteria that reliably point towards individual students facing significant issues during their course of study and thus help ensure that appropriate support services can be offered. To enhance the appeal of degree programs, appointment procedures and agreements will also be adapted to place greater emphasis on teaching and mentoring skills and relevant experience (→ B.2.4). Furthermore, the university is aiming to align campus development efforts with the interests of the student population (→ B.2.8). Various innovative projects have already been implemented during the reporting period, such as a makerspace for creative, interdisciplinary and accessible collaboration.

The university further plans to expand the range of courses taught in English, particularly in Bachelor's degree programs, as part of the above-mentioned reforms in the planning period. The →Guidelines for designing foreign language and multilingual degree programs, which are already available, offer support during the establishment of new programs (→ B.2.3).

Under the umbrella of → academic continuing education, a number of courses offering microcredentials have been promoted and implemented. The university continues to pursue the goal of consolidating individual measures and maintaining a range of options for technology and knowledge transfer tailored to specific needs. The consolidation and overall concept for the area of academic continuing education will be completed during the planning period.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The University of Stuttgart demonstrates an increase in the number of first-year students.**
2.	**The University of Stuttgart's degree programs are aligned more closely with students' needs.**
3.	**The conditions for university studies at the University of Stuttgart and for international exchange are more attractive for both domestic and international students.**
4.	**The University of Stuttgart offers its members a more attractive range of academic continuing education programs and develops university-level continuing education programs tailored to the needs of companies, public institutions and private individuals.**
5.	**Teacher training and continuing professional development for teachers are increasingly geared towards future academic and societal needs.**

Prioritized measures
Significantly expanding student marketing The university initiates reforms to increase the university's appeal as a place to study, including a branding campaign and the consolidation and strengthening of student and degree program marketing. Target group-specific outreach initiatives in schools are significantly expanded. The university works towards expanding its course offering available to students while still in school. *Progress indicators: numbers of applicants and first-year students; applicant surveys; student surveys*
Further developing degree programs and modernizing curricula Reforms aimed at creating a student-friendly exam system are initiated and implemented (scheduling exams close to the lecture period, avoiding exam backlogs and establishing exam-free periods). An individual academic progress monitoring system is established. The university promotes the modernization of its Master's degree programs and the streamlining of foundational Bachelor's degree programs. Curricula are expanded to include high-demand transformative knowledge, skills and future-oriented topics. Cross-faculty, interdisciplinary teamwork is further developed into teaching and learning formats. Courses are designed with diversity in mind and faculty members are supported through related programs. *Progress indicators: data on exam organization and performance; dropout rates; duration of study; student surveys; progress reports (degree program reports)*
Promoting student mobility (incoming/outgoing) The number of courses taught in English is significantly expanded, especially at the Bachelor's level. By increasing incoming mobility, the number of outgoing students can also be increased. The management of student mobility is facilitated by systematic data collection in C@MPUS. *Progress indicators: trends in exchange program participation; analysis of module handbooks/course catalog; progress reports (degree program reports)*
Expanding and consolidating academic continuing education programs Organizational responsibility for all academic continuing education offerings is consolidated through the establishment of an umbrella institution. At the same time, new small-scale programs (micro-credentials) and certificate studies are implemented in response to changing qualification requirements resulting from transformation processes in industry and society. *Progress indicators: programs on offer by the coordination office for continuing education; inquiries; progress reports*
Strengthening and expanding the Professional School of Education (PSE) The university collaborates more closely with partner universities across all school subjects taught. The PSE's reach both within and outside the university is expanded. Through the university's partnership with the Center for School Quality and Teacher Education (ZSL), additional and new professional development opportunities for teachers are created. *Progress indicators: student surveys; progress reports*

B.1.3 Knowledge and technology transfer

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Driving force behind Stuttgart's status as a leading high-tech region in Europe.	↗
Outstanding successes in cooperation with industrial companies and acquisition of industrial funding	✓
Visionary, direct integration of research and knowledge transfer activities with excellent partners, such as Cyber Valley or ARENA2036 ("Industry on Campus"), offering unique opportunities for early career researchers and teaching development	✓
Globally visible accelerator: STARTUP AUTOBAHN	→
Established structures for participatory knowledge transfer and civic dialog	→
Knowledge and technology transfer integrated as a performance dimension informing management decisions through funds and advisory structures with the involvement of non-university partners	↗
High visibility and key structures and processes in the areas of startup support, business relations and career services: Transfer Center of the University of Stuttgart (TRACES)	↗
University of Stuttgart Foundation as a modern funding tool	↗
The Stuttgart Way – outstanding interdisciplinary collaboration that enables innovative transfer projects across disciplinary boundaries	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for growth in societally relevant projects and ventures resulting from university research results	↗
Unrealized potential in implementation speed and agile personnel exchange in collaborative projects	↗
Structures for the systematic teaching of entrepreneurial skills during university and doctoral studies could be further expanded	↗
Further potential for increasing the visibility and networking of knowledge transfer activities within the university and for diversifying the transfer channels	→
Success in knowledge and technology transfer not always measurable	→

Knowledge and technology transfer is an integral part of the University of Stuttgart's structural and development planning and, alongside research and teaching, is a central task and priority in all cross-sectional areas. The university pursues a holistic approach that focuses not only on technological innovation, but also on societal progress and sustainable development. The topic is centrally managed at the University of Stuttgart by the Vice Rectorate for Science Transfer and International Affairs and the Cooperation Council, which advises the Rectorate on cooperation with extra-university research institutions and industry associations.

The University of Stuttgart has further expanded its role as a key driving force maintaining Stuttgart's position as a leader in high-tech innovation across Europe. With two active Clusters of Excellence – "Integrative Computational Design and Construction for Architecture" and "Data-Integrated Simulation Science" – the university is one of the leading locations for basic research in Germany. The University of Stuttgart's achievements in this area are highlighted by its once again outstanding ranking in the THE Impact Ranking 2024, in which the university achieved the maximum score in the "Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure" category. Participation in events such as the High-Tech Summit 2024 further reflects the university's close ties with regional and national industry partners in these areas. Through these and a variety of other measures, the university has further strengthened its role as a catalyst for progress and cooperation throughout the region.

The University of Stuttgart's success in the areas of technology transfer and collaboration is also reflected in its outstanding acquisition of third-party funding. In 2023, the university acquired over €260 million in third-party funding, marking a further increase during the reporting period (third-party funding in 2020: approx. €225 million). In addition, more than €350,000 were generated during the recent period from trademark rights.

The University of Stuttgart Foundation was established in 2023 for the purpose of acquiring further funds and supporting the University of Stuttgart's activities. The mission of the University of Stuttgart Foundation is to strengthen the university as a renowned institution of learning and as a driving force for a prosperity in the region. The foundation is intended to contribute to resource stability and ensure the sustainable financing of the university's various tasks and activities. The goal is to strengthen scientific, research and educational excellence at the University of Stuttgart and to support the academic pursuit of all members of the university community, both intellectually and materially. To this end, the University

of Stuttgart Foundation offers private donors and supporters from the business community the opportunity to make a long-term and responsible commitment. These contributions are essential to ensuring that the University of Stuttgart can continue to build on its position in a sustainable and purposeful manner.

With the establishment of the new TRACES Transfer Center in 2023, the University of Stuttgart created an organizational and stable framework for transfer activities and the associated startup support. Since late 2023, TRACES has successfully served as a central point of contact for staff and students in the area of knowledge and technology transfer, handling a wide range of strategic and operational tasks. These include:

- Promoting entrepreneurship and supporting startup ideas and initiatives under the umbrella of *Entrepreneurship*.
- Coordinating partnerships and industry collaborations, as well as networking with external partners in the area of *Business Relations*.
- Providing targeted support for career guidance and career planning at the interface between university studies and professional life, in cooperation with industry partners, as part of *Career Service* activities.

TRACES saw immediate success within its first year and has since grown to over 10 employees, whose diverse areas of expertise allow them to effectively cover a broad range of tasks. Further details on the work of TRACES are available online: → traces.uni-stuttgart.de.

At the same time, the University of Stuttgart has also further strengthened its outstanding, long-standing partnerships with prestigious companies during the reporting period, in part with the help of state and federal funding. Successful completed and currently active collaborative projects carried out in cooperation with the Transfer Center include:

- **Lighthouse competition Startup Factories, qualification for full application as NXTGN Startup Factory** (US/TRACES helps organize this project), Federal Ministry for Economic Affair and Climate Action
- **EXIST Potentials** (coordinated by ENI/TRACES), Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
- **Female Accelerator** (coordinated by TRACES), Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg
- **Experimental space "Invest in her Business"** (coordinated by TRACES), Ministry of Economic Affairs, Labor and Tourism of Baden-Württemberg, nationwide startup agency (bga), funded by the Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth
- **EXIST Women (2023–2024 and again in 2025),** (coordinated by TRACES), Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
- **INSPIRE2Start** (INSPIRE BW Hubs MWK) (coordination of the hub by TRACES), Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts of Baden-Württemberg
- **University partner network as part of CARS 2.0** (coordinated by TRACES, joint project with the ICM), Stuttgart economic region (WRS)
- **FIT project** (participation of TRACES) in collaboration with the International Office of the University of Stuttgart

Furthermore, the university is characterized by its strong networks in the field of knowledge and technology transfer, including participation in leading interdisciplinary and cooperative research initiatives. The Cyber Valley, ARENA2036 and STARTUP AUTOBAHN projects, all of which were established before 2020 and are among the University of Stuttgart's most renowned initiatives, were particularly successful during the reporting period.

The **Cyber Valley** is Europe's largest research network in the field of artificial intelligence. As part of the Cyber Valley network, the university works closely with other universities as well as partners from industry and academia to jointly advance cutting-edge research on future-oriented topics such as robotics and machine learning. The focus is not only on basic research, but also on the effective transfer of knowledge and technology.

ARENA2036 is another example of successful networking with industry. As part of the initiative, the university collaborates with 60 partners from industry and research on future-oriented topics in the areas of mobility and production. ARENA2036 utilizes a shared space to not only facilitate the efficient establishment of knowledge and technology transfer, but to also improve innovation performance and intensify collaboration.

The University of Stuttgart is a successful founding partner of the startup accelerator **STARTUP AUTOBAHN**. The accelerator gives technology-oriented startups at the university access to an innovation ecosystem with numerous collaborative partnerships in national and international industry. The initiative also opens up further potential for improved and expanded collaboration on entrepreneurship projects in the future.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The role of knowledge and technology transfer as a driver of innovation is made more visible at the University of Stuttgart.**
2.	**A university-wide data management system that includes all transfer partners is established.**
3.	**Cooperation with stakeholders from industry, society, politics and international networks is strategically expanded.**
4.	**Entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial mindset are recognized and promoted as core competencies of all stakeholders.**
5.	**The alumni, foundation and fundraising departments are strategically aligned and integrated with each other.**

Prioritized measures
Developing a stronger stakeholder focus in external communications and public relations, including by leveraging synergies with the new Vice Rectorate for Science Transfer and International Affairs at the University of Stuttgart There are clear and consistent communication channels for all target groups in the field of knowledge and technology transfer, including specific points of contact for initial inquiries and further communication. The websites on knowledge and technology transfer activities at the University of Stuttgart are restructured. The Vice Rectorate for Science Transfer and International Affairs enables thematic synergies to be leveraged in a targeted manner. This includes in particular a stronger international focus for transfer activities. *Progress indicators: benchmarking; reports; international transfer projects; international networks and partnerships*
Introducing a central digital platform for internal data management available to all relevant transfer partners The university facilitates data collection and management in all areas of knowledge and technology transfer. This includes the development and use of a central platform, e.g. the Research Information System (FIS). *Progress indicators: number of knowledge and technology transfer projects recorded and managed*
Expanding collaborative projects with industry, society and politics and professionalizing existing partnerships in the new TRACES Transfer Center The Transfer Center's central role in professionalizing knowledge and technology transfer activities is further strengthened. Existing industry collaborations are expanded and new partnerships are initiated and established. Additional interdisciplinary transfer projects are initiated, e.g. Startup Factories. *Progress indicators: number of collaborative projects; amount of funding acquired*
Consolidating existing programs and developing new offers to support startups and provide training for founders at all faculties and for all educational levels within the University of Stuttgart The university develops additional entrepreneurship education programs for employees, students and doctoral candidates. Female entrepreneurship is specifically promoted and expanded. Startup initiatives and spin-offs across the university's entire range of academic disciplines receive comprehensive support. Awareness of startup opportunities ("entrepreneurial mindset") continues to be promoted at all faculties. *Progress indicators: number of startups; support offers and courses*
Strengthening university-wide knowledge and technology transfer with the involvement of alumni, the university foundation and additional fundraising The university develops a proactive alumni strategy. The new university foundation is systematically involved in knowledge and technology transfer activities. *Progress indicators: alumni network size; engagement rate*

B.2 Cross-sectional areas

B.2.1 Climate protection and sustainable development

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Researchers with a high international reputation who excel at communication and are highly visible in many areas of sustainable development	✓
Successful and renowned research relevant to sustainable development in fields such as architecture, construction processes and materials, urban planning, energy generation and storage, mobility and socio-technical systems	↗
Large number of degree programs and courses with a focus on sustainability and interdisciplinary content	✓
Organizational support for sustainable development, e.g. through the Green Office, Una Terra, real-world laboratories, round tables on climate/sustainability and diversity, Vice Rectorate for Sustainable Development	↗
Practical research, high level of innovation and efficient knowledge transfer through close networking and collaboration with corporate partners, strong entrepreneurial culture and support for spin-offs and startups in the field of sustainability	✓
High levels of intrinsic motivation among many stakeholders, numerous decentralized initiatives and a bottom-up culture of collaboration	→
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Limited ability to influence the high proportion of fossil fuels in the energy supply due to use of combined heat and power plant and significant building renovation requirements	!
Introducing incentive programs for institutions to conserve energy and resources is proving difficult due to the current energy infrastructure and impacts of past developments.	!
Increasing demands and responsibilities in the area of sustainable development cannot yet be fully addressed by existing structures and processes, and are not yet sufficiently transparent or visible in the context of sustainable operations (EMAS, Energy Efficiency Act for computing centers).	↗
Room for improvement in visibility and communication of existing research and teaching priorities and successes in the area of sustainable development (central website on research and teaching related to sustainability, “green” course catalog, internal communication)	→
Interdisciplinary integration of sustainability into the curriculum (e.g., additional interdisciplinary certificate for students) not yet fully implemented	→
The potential for integrating sustainable development into research and teaching through structural support has not yet been fully realized.	↗

Through the establishment of the Green Office (2021) and the Vice Rectorate for Sustainable Development (2024), the university promoted the structural integration of sustainability, which in turn increased general awareness and visibility of sustainability requirements and measures. These new institutions also offer additional support for measures and initiatives. Through transparent communication of requirements and responsibilities, sustainability will also be integrated into structures and processes in the above-mentioned performance dimensions during the planning period.

The University of Stuttgart conducts excellent research in areas relevant to sustainable development (e.g., EXC IntCDC, SFB 1244, ERC Ubisphere, ICM, H2-Wave) and houses outstanding infrastructure, such as the wind tunnel, ARENA2036, the research sewage treatment plant, the HLRS and the demonstrator high-rise building. Also worth highlighting are the university’s achievements in the area of knowledge transfer (1st place in the category SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, THE Impact Ranking 2025) as well as its practice-oriented, interdisciplinary curriculum, including in the fields of renewable energy, environmental engineering and architecture and sustainable construction. The University of Stuttgart’s outstanding position is also evidenced by numerous individual awards, such as the Leibniz Prize (Prof. Menges, 2023), high-profile sustainability awards (Prof. Saliba, 2024; Prof. Birkmann, 2024; Prof. Sobeck, 2023) and the Bavarian State Medal for outstanding services to the environment (Prof. Wieprecht, 2024). The university plans to further exploit this potential in the future through structured data collection, communication and promotion.

During the reporting period, sustainability requirements in operations, research and teaching have increased significantly and have not yet been fully incorporated into the university’s structure and processes. Consequently, steps have already been taken to strengthen sustainable development through additional staff and improved processes, as well as to implement new technical and IT solutions, such as a management system. At the same time, the greatest challenge on the path to climate neutrality lies

in the area of buildings and energy, where the university has no means of directly addressing the renovation backlog and transitioning away from fossil fuels for energy supply in buildings. In response to this challenge, the university is working towards closer, solution-oriented cooperation with the UBA and the FM and has already implemented initial measures.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**Structural integration: Responsibilities and processes for implementing and promoting sustainable development are structurally embedded and established in all areas of activity.**
2.	**Visibility and communication: Initiatives, measures and achievements in the area of sustainable development are communicated transparently and made visible to the relevant target groups.**
3.	**Structured support for research, knowledge transfer and teaching: Sustainable development in research, teaching and knowledge transfer is promoted in a strategic and structured manner.**
4.	**Sustainable operations & climate neutrality: Energy and resource consumption in the university's day-to-day operations, as well as in procurement and new construction, is continuously reduced with the goal of achieving net greenhouse gas neutrality by 2030. Thanks to its environmentally and socially sustainable design, the campus offers a high quality of work and life.**
5.	**Empowerment, participation, networks: University members and status groups are empowered to contribute to and promote sustainable development on campus, in research and teaching and in society. Sustainable development stakeholders at the university are actively connected through internal and external networks.**

Prioritized measures
Restructuring and strengthening sustainability governance in administration, operations, research and teaching Organizational charts, task profiles and processes for developing the sustainability strategy, communicating requirements and content and implementing measures at the operational level are available for all areas of activity. *Progress indicators: climate protection management implemented; number of energy officers meets set targets; number of full-time equivalent positions in the area of sustainability including energy management and climate protection; sustainability officers for research, teaching and operations appointed in all departments*
Expanding the sustainability website to include information on research, teaching and knowledge transfer as well as up-to-date overviews of key metrics, consumption figures, targets and measures The sustainability website of the University of Stuttgart communicates information and key figures relating to sustainable development, including the respective points of contact as well as relevant research focuses and degree programs. The sustainability strategy, as well as the current goals, measures and successes, are made transparently available to the general public. *Progress indicators: central overview of sustainability research and degree programs related to sustainable development; energy consumption; CO_2 balance sheet and sustainability report; status of current climate protection measures; green course catalog incl. SDG campus (incl. sustainability certificate)*
Establishing a fund to support sustainability measures and launching sustainability awards to promote research, teaching and knowledge transfer Projects and measures that promote sustainable development in all three dimensions receive targeted funding from the university. Outstanding contributions in the areas of research, teaching, campus development and operations are recognized with awards. *Progress indicators: funds allocated for sustainability measures; sustainability awards for research, teaching and projects*
Implementing an incentive system for energy savings Resource consumption is reduced through participation in energy-saving initiatives at the institute level and by rewarding particularly sustainable approaches in research, teaching and operations. *Progress indicators: incentive system developed and implemented; decrease in energy consumption*

Establishing further training and information programs on sustainable development
Educational offers and training courses are developed and implemented to raise general awareness. The principles of “Education for Sustainable Development” (ESD) are integrated into existing and new courses. Sustainability considerations are consistently taken into account in the design of administrative processes as well as in the operation of laboratories and workshops.
Progress indicators: training and continuing education program established; at least one course available for staff in research, teaching and administration

B.2.2 Diversity and equal opportunities

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Recognized as a top university for advisory structures that contribute to the compatibility of university and private life	↗
Life cycle concept to increase the proportion of women at all qualification levels: - Increase in the proportion of female professors (5%) - Gradual increase in the proportion of female researchers (3%) - Slight increase in the relative number of female students, especially in STEM subjects	→
High proportion of women in many payroll groups in administration, as well as a high rate of promotions and payroll group upgrades for women	↗
High percentage of international students – 22.4%, which is above the German average	→
Diversity in research and teaching, strong interdisciplinary research (Stuttgart Way) with cross-faculty Clusters of Excellence and profile areas, strong cooperation between science and industry: e.g., ARENA2036	→
Long-standing, well-established monitoring of equal opportunities with a proven track record of developing self-imposed goals (both university-wide and at faculty level)	✓
Diversity and equal opportunities integrated as cross-sectional issues in a single staff unit, structurally embedded and represented at all levels of the university	↗
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for improvement in integrating gender and family equality as guiding principles in management and administration	↗
Incentive systems for supporting and appointing female researchers could be expanded; low proportion of women in mid-level faculty, among early career researchers and in professorships; stagnation in the proportion of female students, further efforts required	→
Low proportion of women in leadership positions and room for improvement in the development of structured career paths	→
Low proportion of professors and early career researchers from outside Germany	→
Diversity in team and status group composition remains low in many areas and could be improved; unrealized potential in attracting prospective students from non-academic backgrounds	→
Difficulties in recruiting highly qualified female researchers, exacerbated by a shortage of skilled workers and export control regulations	!
Room for improvement in implementation of measures prompted by monitoring results; sense of responsibility among institute and faculty leadership for target achievement must be strengthened	↗

The University of Stuttgart is recognized as a top university for advisory structures, e.g., through its certification as a “family-friendly university” (since 2012; recertified in 2015, 2018). The dialog process was successfully completed in 2022. Other examples include the implementation of the anonymous counseling platform “evermood” and measures resulting from the diversity audit (e.g., expanding the onboarding program and promoting diversity-sensitive appointment procedures). The increase in the proportion of women in professorships is partly attributable to active recruitment, which has been required by law since 2021 and is implemented in all committees, as well as the consistent integration of gender expertise in appointment management. Diversity and equal opportunities are structurally embedded and represented as cross-cutting issues at all levels of the university, e.g., in the diversity committees in the faculties, the Diversity Round Table and as mandatory agenda items in the committees (Rectorate decision). Examples of measures to improve the integration of the gender dimension and family-friendly policies include the publication of guidelines for calculating academic age and for facilitating business travel with children.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The University of Stuttgart fosters an inclusive university culture.**
2.	**Diversity factors are promoted as a catalyst for excellent research.**
3.	**The university works towards weakening the “glass ceiling” along the academic career path.**

4.	**The proportion of women in professorships and the proportion of women (at the professorial level) in the university's internal committees increases faster than in the past. Female professors should make up 30 percent of membership in committees.**
5.	**Diversity management is increasingly professionalized and expanded in all areas.**

Prioritized measures

Strengthening diversity-sensitive recruitment and retention of employees and students, and expanding corresponding offers for awareness-raising and professional development, especially for leadership personnel

The University of Stuttgart is committed to providing optimal working and study conditions as well as future perspectives. It focuses on fostering an inclusive university culture in which members enjoy working and can reach their full potential. To increase the university's appeal to potential new members, recruitment efforts are adjusted and expanded to include diversity factors. Measures such as professional development offers or the establishment of a large childcare center improve working conditions and future prospects, further strengthening the sense of belonging among university members.

Progress indicators: number of students and staff members from previously underrepresented groups; number of career levels at the university

Structuring proposal drafting support for diversity and gender and greater integration and consideration of diversity factors in research

The University of Stuttgart is committed to excellence in research, for which diversity in all dimensions is an essential prerequisite. The University of Stuttgart pursues increased success in acquiring third-party funding through a systematic approach to supporting research proposal submissions in integrating diversity and gender aspects by means of clear guidelines and transparent processes. Diversity factors are identified in research content, made visible and taken into account from the very beginning.

Progress indicators: number of successful proposals (research networks, e.g. Clusters of Excellence) in the acquisition of third-party funding; rankings

Strengthening the portfolio of measures along the academic career path

The proportion of women at all levels is increased by raising awareness of and steadily reducing gender-based barriers. The long-term goal is to achieve a balanced gender distribution. The existing portfolio of initiatives in the area of gender equality is further expanded with a focus on intersectionality, in cooperation with other university stakeholders. Achievements of women in research and teaching are showcased in early career phases in order to empower female early career researchers, and corresponding processes and structures are established (→ B.2.6).

Progress indicators: increase in the relative proportion of women with the aim of achieving at least a representative, and ideally equal, gender distribution; establishment of an internal career monitoring system

Implementing gender equality and equal opportunities in all stages of the appointment process

In line with the HRK's voluntary commitment to greater gender equality in appointments, the implementation of gender-equitable appointment procedures is further professionalized, including through the development of standards and procedures for the active recruitment of women. Continuously improving the gender distribution at the professorial level facilitates greater representation of women in university committees, particularly those with leadership responsibilities at both the central and decentralized levels.

Progress indicators: increase in the relative proportion of women with the aim of achieving at least a representative, and ideally equal, gender distribution

Consistently integrating diversity and equal opportunities in structures and processes as well as in onboarding and professional development for all university members

The University of Stuttgart embeds diversity as a key success factor in its overall strategy and across all areas. In a holistic approach, aspects of diversity inform various components of process design. The goals set out in the diversity concept and the gender equality plan are firmly integrated in research, teaching, technology and administration. Awareness-raising and professional development are promoted for all university members, particularly those in leadership positions, and administrative processes are aligned more closely with diversity concerns (→ B.2.5).

Progress indicators: satisfaction surveys; number of nominations for the "Fü(h)r Divers" award; number of diversity and equal opportunities projects in the faculties

B.2.3 Internationalization

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Wide range of international collaborations in research, teaching and knowledge and technology transfer, including the development of various partnership models	→
Strategic institutional integration of internationalization at all management levels and in all committees	✓
Attractive international (Master's) degree programs and a steadily increasing number of courses taught in English	→
High proportion of international students (> 20%) compared to the national average (approx. 13%)	→
Researchers of high global renown and with strong individual commitment to internationalization	✓
High-quality support and advisory services for students provided by the International Office	✓
Wide range of courses and services offered by the Language Center	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for improvement in international visibility of the university as a whole, unrealized potential particularly in opportunities for strategic partnerships and alliances	↗
Partially inconsistent data on international mobility	→
Internationalization of curricula could be optimized and English-language instruction could be expanded further	→
Potential of mobility windows in degree programs not yet fully realized	→
Room for growth in proportion of international professors, especially from non-German-speaking countries, and outgoing mobility among researchers	↗
Potential for international academic networking among doctoral students, postdocs, researchers, professors and administration not yet fully realized	↗
Room for improvement in the flow of information between central and decentralized stakeholders in some areas, as well as in the availability of international advisory structures and services (including relevant English-language documents)	↗

The university has strengthened its governance in the area of internationalization by strategically integrating internationalization at all management levels and within committees through the establishment of the Vice Rectorate of International Affairs within the university administration, as well as through the restructuring and expansion of the International Office. Communication between central and decentralized stakeholders was improved through strategic realignment of the well-established Steering Committee Internationalization with the involvement of all faculties, and by strengthening structured exchange formats between different units in the administration.

The high quality of the International Office's individualized and target group-specific support and advisory services for students is reflected, for example, in the Intercultural Mentoring Program, which was awarded the Federal Foreign Office Prize in 2024 and serves as an example of best practice for other German universities. In addition, the International Office (including the attached Welcome Center for international researchers) provides specialized support to all students, researchers and administrative staff, for example in setting up and implementing collaborative projects. In order to shape an international campus, the university offers programs for language and intercultural training and awareness-building, support and advisory services to help students navigate challenges in both academic and non-academic settings, and new opportunities through participation in competitions.

The Language Center's range of courses and services was further expanded during the reporting period. This includes both structured and flexible courses, for example on academic writing in English (bilingual writing workshop), intercultural qualifications and science communication. Services for translating relevant documents into English were expanded, in particular through the establishment of a translation position and the centralized provision of new AI-powered translation tools.

The University of Stuttgart participated in international education fairs in cooperation with the DAAD and Baden-Württemberg International in order to keep international students informed about the university's range of programs. This also helped ensure and expand the University of Stuttgart's visibility online and in person at the national and international level.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**Existing international partnerships and networks are consolidated and expanded through additional strategically focused collaborations.**
2.	**The University of Stuttgart's international competitiveness and reputation are improved.**
3.	**The university consistently works towards internationalizing learning and teaching.**
4.	**The University of Stuttgart further promotes a welcoming culture on campus.**
5.	**Internationality is implemented in management, infrastructure and communication.**

Prioritized measures

Expanding strategic partnerships and identifying new opportunities for cooperation in focus regions

The University of Stuttgart actively expands its strategic partnerships and develops new cooperation opportunities based on its internationalization strategy. It promotes mobility and networking in science and administration, for example through programs such as Erasmus+, Global Glimpse Fellowships and Future Mobility Grants. In this way, the university contributes to sustainable institutional cooperation. It establishes new double degree programs and provides institutional guidelines for this purpose. Existing support and advisory services, for example for initiating new collaborations, establishing network projects or dealing with legal issues, are expanded further (→ B.1.3, → B.1.1, → B.2.8).

Progress indicators: surveys; number of programs/services offered; number of applications and grant recipients; analysis of viable new contacts and networks relevant to the research profile

Promoting mobility and networking in university studies, research and administration

The University of Stuttgart offers international opportunities to students in order to prepare them for the global job market, where they can act as globally responsible participants. To this end, the university defines binding mobility windows in every degree program and improves the recognition of study achievements by implementing the Lisbon Convention across all degree programs with mandatory compliance by all examination committees. The university further expands short-term programs for international students from partner universities as well as the range of courses taught in English to ensure reciprocity in exchange programs. The University of Stuttgart develops recommendations for internationalizing curricula in terms of content and methodology and, on this basis, expands the range of courses taught in English or in multiple languages at the Bachelor's level. Faculty members have access to expanded information and support services regarding funding and qualification opportunities as well as the establishment of international networks to promote projects such as the development of blended and virtual courses or joint learning materials. Existing exchange programs for administrative employees are further promoted.

Progress indicators: outgoing mobility; incoming mobility; number of applications and grant recipients in mobility programs; proportion of courses taught in English; student surveys; monitoring of graduates and their career paths after university studies; faculty surveys

Promoting international competitiveness

The University of Stuttgart pursues a more targeted approach to promoting publications in international peer-reviewed journals and acquiring projects in internationally significant funding programs. It identifies additional opportunities to actively attract international talent and further exploits the potential of international alumni. It improves science communication, strengthens international brand-building and promotes a welcoming culture on campus. For example, the Welcome Center is strengthened as a central point of contact for international researchers, internal bilingual communication is expanded and attractive meeting places are created.

Progress indicators: benchmarking; reputation surveys; publications and impact; patents; surveys; proportion of international students and employees

Establishing management systems, structures and processes at all levels to support sustainable internationalization

The University of Stuttgart establishes a professional data management system for international activities, job advertisements, existing partnerships and international research projects. This supports the university-wide management of knowledge and data related to international activities, collaborations and research projects, and makes such activities more visible. At the same time, a fund for strategic internationalization is set up. The university develops strategies for interculturally sensitive communication and internationally focused recruiting to strengthen its global presence. Given the growing importance of international talent acquisition, the International Office also further expands its quality assurance efforts in appointment procedures. Administrative processes are designed to be effective and streamlined. In addition, the alumni network receives adequate resources to strengthen and effectively utilize international connections.

Progress indicators: number of initiatives launched through the internationalization fund; international benchmarking; surveys; questionnaires; feedback interviews

B.2.4 Appointments

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Introduction of tenure-track professorships with guidelines for quality assurance and evaluation	↗
Comparatively quick average turnaround time for appointment procedures with further potential for shaping the process during the negotiation period	↗
Structured processes through digitalization and professional support	↗
Consistent incorporation of gender expertise and reduction of bias through relevant guidelines, supporting measures and the active involvement of the consultant for gender equality	↗
High degree of internationalization in many departments, above average in national comparison	↗
Well-organized, centralized appointment management system to accompany the entire process from the establishment of a professorship to the appointment	✓
Stuttgart Way as a unique selling point shapes outstanding conditions for top researchers and leads to a high success rate in appointment and retention negotiations, even with competitive counter-offers	↗
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Limited competitiveness due to relatively rigid state regulations compared to other federal states (W1 prior service requirements, no W2 professorships, open rank only possible to a limited extent, highly regulated appointment procedure, etc.) and infrastructure that is, in some cases, severely outdated and overburdened.	!
Below-average proportion of female professors by national and international standards, with only a slight increase in recent years	→
Knowledge management and internal communication on appointment procedures could be improved in some areas; as a result, process efficiency and the integration of specific expertise depend heavily on individual stakeholders, which also affects the quality of onboarding for newly appointed professors.	→
Some appointment policies geared more towards maintaining the status quo and less towards future potential or the university's overall vision	→
In some areas, established resource allocation frameworks and structures at institutes limit the scope for institutional renewal and profile refinement.	↗
Management and leadership skills often play only a secondary role in appointment procedures.	!

During the reporting period, central measures were introduced to professionalize appointment procedures and professorship administration in general. In addition to the modernization of the approval and appointment processes (2021) and the introduction of a central appointment management system (2022), another key development was the launch of an appointment portal (2024), which will be rolled out university-wide following the successful completion of the current pilot phase. As part of the process review, the integration of gender expertise in appointment procedures was also expanded, including through a stronger commitment to active recruitment and the involvement of the consultant for gender equality in appointment management. The university has already successfully reduced the average duration of appointment procedures during the reporting period through measures such as establishing standardized monitoring of all appointment procedures by the office of academic appointments, simplifying and digitalizing process steps and shifting relevant decisions forward to the approval process. The Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts' delegation decree on strengthening the autonomy of higher education institutions (2023) has also contributed to an accelerated appointment process.

One challenge that remains is that appointment policies in some departments are strongly oriented toward maintaining the status quo. In combination with continuing fluctuations in the quality of active recruitment and the partially limited visibility of advertised professorships outside of German-speaking countries, this sometimes results in a limited pool of applicants. As part of the revised approval process, however, measures were taken to give greater consideration to future potential and the university's overall vision, to reevaluate established resource allocation frameworks and to create new standards and procedures for active recruitment. Significant developments in this respect include the first-ever implementation of open-topic appointment procedures in Baden-Württemberg during the reporting period, the amendment of the State Higher Education Act to allow for top-level appointments, and the increased establishment of tenure-track professorships. Tenure-track professorships require further consideration, as this career path is still seen as less attractive in some fields. Further opportunities would arise from amendments to legal requirements regarding both prior service periods and open-rank job advertisements (W1/W3), as this would promote interdisciplinary acceptance and, consequently, the desired cultural shift.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The average duration of appointment procedures is further reduced by increasing process efficiency, which also promotes the recruitment of outstanding, internationally recognized researchers and promising early career researchers.**
2.	**The average size of applicant pools increases overall thanks to further optimization of structures and processes with regard to selecting the best candidates and reducing barriers and bias in appointment procedures.**
3.	**Previously under-examined qualifications such as interdisciplinary or leadership and management skills are incorporated as mandatory selection criteria in appointment procedures. Skills related to teaching and supervision are given greater weight as selection criteria.**
4.	**Faculty interests and university strategy are more closely aligned with regard to the subject focus, resource allocation and qualification requirements of professorships.**
5.	**Through targeted efforts to foster a cultural shift, alternative career paths to a professorship are accepted across all disciplines as equivalent to habilitation.**

Prioritized measures
Promoting digitalization, increasing efficiency and enabling access to information The appointment portal is established university-wide at all faculties and, in the medium term, will cover the entire process from approval through to the final appointment. Process efficiency is continuously optimized through the ongoing development of policies and guidelines. The administrative burden, particularly in the tenure-track area, is reduced by streamlining the evaluation process. Access to information is facilitated by setting up a central website. *Progress indicators: appointment portal implemented at 10/10 faculties; new version of tenure-track statute adopted; central website for the approval and appointment process*
Improving equal opportunities and integrating diversity in appointment procedures Appointment committee members are made aware of the importance of fair and transparent appointment procedures through training programs and incentives. Centralized structures support active recruitment. Advisory services for international researchers are expanded, and uniform, transparent guidelines are established (e.g., language acquisition requirements). *Progress indicators: position for active recruitment established within the office of academic appointments; training program designed, established (successfully carried out at least twice) and accepted; teaching demonstrations and job interviews in English accepted throughout the university; significantly increased proportion of female professors, especially in the technically oriented faculties*
Introducing mandatory standardized and structured applications and interviews Applicants to a professorship are required to answer questions in the appointment portal regarding leadership, gender and diversity, as well as intercultural and social skills. Structured interviews are introduced across the board in appointment procedures, specifically also taking interdisciplinary qualifications into account. If necessary, a member of the personnel development team is consulted. *Progress indicators: comprehensive implementation of structured personnel recruitment processes; development and consistent use of questionnaires and evaluation catalogs*
Consistently enforcing requirements from the approval guidelines To strengthen the dialog between university and faculty leadership regarding the establishment of professorships, a comprehensive profile agreement is consistently required. As a rule, a preliminary colloquium is held to determine the subject focus of a professorship. For all professorships, baseline resource requirements are defined in terms of personnel and space as well as building requirements, providing greater flexibility in the use of university resources and the decision-making authority of university and faculty leadership. *Progress indicators: requirements of the approval guidelines established as benchmarks without exception*
Increasing the attractiveness of various career paths to a professorship The university maintains a dialog with the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts on the competitive advantages of liberalized recruitment requirements for W1 professorships. Tenure-track ambassadors are established within the university to communicate the benefits of their career path. Tenure-track professorships receive greater support, for example through improved framework conditions, a guaranteed baseline of resource allocation and optimized processes for the quality-assured definition of evaluation criteria, e.g. by the tenure committee. Error acceptance is included in career path discussions, allowing for the possibility of negative evaluations and highlighting exit options from academia. *Progress indicators: each faculty establishes at least one tenure-track professorship during the SEPUS 2026–2030 period; process consulting by the tenure committee*

B.2.5 Recruitment and personnel development

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Diverse and heterogeneous working environment with high social prestige	→
The university offers a wide variety of roles and is an attractive employer thanks to modern, innovative job profiles (e.g., in research management) and a high degree of flexibility in terms of working time allocation and areas of responsibility.	↗
The university offers a comparatively attractive and varied working environment that generally provides a high degree of autonomy and flexibility as well as short decision-making chains in some areas.	↗
Comprehensive professional development and training opportunities for researchers and administrative staff, as well as leadership training available free of charge	✓
Permanent certification as a “family-friendly university”	✓
Multiple awards for corporate health management (Corporate Health Award)	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Lack of strategic personnel planning: For example, there are no established structures to retain qualified employees after the end of fixed-term employment contracts. Furthermore, there is no systematic record of specialized staff and supervisors as a basis for defining expectations of the respective management level.	!
Academic careers and transitions to alternative career paths at the university are difficult to plan; moreover, leadership positions in administration are often poorly remunerated compared to regional industry and academic positions. At the same time, project-based careers and alternative career paths are not sufficiently promoted and are rarely pursued in practice.	→
Room for improvement in overall personnel recruitment and retention strategy; issues include a lack of target group-specific recruiting channels, sometimes intransparent and time-consuming recruitment processes, onboarding/offboarding in need of improvement.	↗
The University of Stuttgart is not perceived as a brand, particularly by its employees, because it lacks a corporate identity and employer branding, which results in low visibility and appeal as an employer and weak employee identification.	→
Bureaucracy and legal frameworks limit the opportunities for independent work. Hierarchical structures sometimes lead to a feedback culture that could be improved and a negative error culture, which makes it more difficult to delegate and assume responsibility.	→

Recruitment and personnel development are of great importance within the employee life cycle for several reasons. Like many institutions, the university is affected by two broader societal trends and the adverse consequences of their combined effect: Firstly, the age structure of the university’s workforce means that it will be significantly affected by the retirement of members of the baby boom generation, particularly during the reporting period. Secondly, the general shortage of skilled workers also poses a challenge, particularly when it comes to filling vacant positions.

From a strategic perspective, in light of the upcoming retirements, the university must implement a structured offboarding process, work towards recruiting suitable new employees, and – last but not least – offer systematic professional development to all university employees in order to ensure the university’s long-term competitiveness and sustainability. With the establishment of a recruiting department in 2024, the first steps have already been taken toward a modern recruitment policy. Given that significant progress has been made in recent years, particularly in the area of leadership development, the goal for the planning period is to systematically build on these achievements and expand them in the spirit of lifelong learning, with the aim of establishing a holistic, needs-based personnel development program.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The university has a streamlined, digital and transparent centralized recruiting process.**
2.	**The university systematically identifies its top talent, fosters their development and supports them throughout their careers.**
3.	**Contemporary leadership models are actively put into practice and shape a management culture that is sensitive to diversity, in which leadership is viewed as an internal responsibility and is recognized externally.**
4.	**Structures are established that support employees in taking on increased responsibility temporarily or permanently (including, for example, by taking on leadership roles in junior research groups, teams or projects).**
5.	**The university is an attractive employer that is renowned both nationally and internationally.**

Prioritized measures
Modernizing and standardizing the recruitment process Uniform, centralized guidelines for recruitment procedures are established, including a service-oriented and respectful approach to applicant management. Recruitment processes are streamlined, supported by digital tools, monitored more closely at the central level and thus accelerated overall. Communication is aligned with different target groups, especially for international applicants. *Progress indicators: availability of modernized, standardized templates and guidelines for job advertisements; implementation of a uniform, suitable digital job advertisement platform; establishment of an applicant communication concept; revision and optimization of the relevant websites; duration of recruitment process*
Establishing a comprehensive strategic approach to personnel development Personnel development is further expanded as a strategic priority in order to proactively address the needs of the entire university, provide comprehensive advisory services for employees and supervisors and showcase various career paths. The communication strategy is revised with a focus on career opportunities and professional development offers, and a central careers page listing job advertisements is launched. *Progress indicators: mood barometer; participation rate in professional development programs; evaluation of personnel development measures; employee satisfaction and turnover rate*
Optimizing leadership culture The university continuously reviews modern leadership models and communicates them to supervisors, taking into account the specific characteristics of the university, such as decision-making processes in committees. Professional development offers on leadership skills are made more attractive, perceived as a benefit and in greater demand across the university. Good leadership is valued, recognized and made visible throughout the university. *Progress indicators: continuation of the Fü(h)rDivers award and development of comparable formats; participation rate in leadership development courses*
Strengthening and delegating decision-making authority and responsibility Employees are encouraged and systematically empowered to assume professional responsibility for decisions, resources and personnel. To this end, tasks within teams are also aligned more closely with individual skills and capabilities and role-based approaches within a team are promoted. In addition, temporary leadership models for team and project leaders are strengthened by increasing the transparency of existing options, creating room for flexibility and highlighting existing possibilities and opportunities. This is accompanied by the development of a process- and learning-oriented error culture that supports a nuanced understanding of errors, fostering a psychological sense of security through accountability and role models. As a first step toward a more open culture of accountability, the university promotes low-threshold participation processes that are followed by feedback and response processes. Benefits are offered to serve as incentives rewarding exceptional performance and the assumption of responsibility (indirect benefits, coaching, professional development and continuing education, etc.). *Progress indicators: several pilot projects with exemplary character; employee surveys; number of voluntary employee appraisals; low-threshold participation processes established, accepted and followed up; consistent tracking of leadership responsibilities in SVA*

B.2.6 Early career researchers

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Comprehensive qualification program for doctoral candidates and postdocs to acquire skills needed for careers in academia, business and society (in German and English) including career strategy counseling formats	↗
Mentoring programs for doctoral candidates, postdocs and junior professors in German and English	↗
Central, multilingual application portal for doctoral candidates and postdocs (JoinUS)	↗
Internal funding line for early career researchers that promotes independence and autonomy and, in the long term, contributes to the independent acquisition of third-party funding or qualifies early career researchers as project leaders, for example	↗
Full-time ombudsperson for teaching and doctoral studies since 2013 with many years of consulting expertise, pioneering role in the field of conflict management through activity as spokesperson in key national and international networks	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for improvement in national and international marketing strategy for early career researchers to increase visibility as a renowned research university and lack of a recruiting program for early career researchers	→
No uniform, centrally defined framework for heads of junior research groups (e.g., individually determined authority to supervise and examine doctoral candidates, no central record, no special benefits)	→
In some cases lacking awareness of (personal) self-promotion among early career researchers and their advisors; room for improvement in the visibility of early career researchers' supervisory activities	→
Room for growth in the digitalization of processes in doctoral candidate management	↗
Ombudspersons for scientific misconduct not sufficiently visible for early career researchers	→
Limited scope for converting fixed-term contracts to permanent positions and for reducing the number of fixed-term employment relationships (including due to the WissZeitVG) exacerbates critical dependencies.	!
Inconsistent assignment of doctoral researchers to different member groups of the university (students, doctoral candidates, employees) depending on their employment relationship due to LHG regulations	!

Offers from various institutions for early career researchers were consolidated on a central page (landing page) and are therefore easier to find.

The certificate program "On track to university professorship" was continued.

Advisory services related to cotutelle procedures were expanded and professionalized through the creation of a 50% legal position. A qualification program for dual doctoral programs (DPP) was established and expanded through the creation of a 50% consultant position.

A project to introduce a quality management system for doctoral studies in accordance with LHG Section 5 Para. 1 (QUSProm) was launched under the leadership of the Vice Rector for Research and Early Career Researchers with operational implementation by GRADUS and the Quality Development Unit. As part of this project, a survey of doctoral students and their advisors was conducted. This allowed for an examination of various issues relating to doctoral studies (particularly academic advising) from both perspectives.

The visibility of early career researchers was increased through targeted public relations efforts and structured nomination processes for research awards.

The Code of Conduct and the guidelines for the "handling of cases of abuse of power and exploitation of dependent relationships" have been implemented.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The University of Stuttgart succeeds in expanding its recruitment of outstanding national and international early career researchers.**
2.	**Early career researchers are offered attractive and continuously improving working conditions.**
3.	**Additional support services are available for individual career planning.**
4.	**Early career researchers at the University of Stuttgart have greater international visibility and are better connected.**
5.	**All offers for early career researchers are designed with diversity in mind.**

Prioritized measures
Implementing active recruitment and standardizing and digitalizing recruitment processes A program promoting direct communication with outstanding international early career researchers (Research with US) is established. The application and recruitment process is optimized through standardization and the widespread implementation of the JoinUS application portal, and the transition to working at the University of Stuttgart is made easier by introducing an onboarding program. All relevant information is provided in English. Advisory services on research and career structures in Germany as well as the information and decision-making resources available to prospective graduates, especially for female students and those in STEM subjects, are expanded. *Progress indicators: number of international applications; JoinUS user numbers; surveys on transparency in application processes; increase in the proportion of international early career researchers from 25% to 30%*
Improving conditions for early career researchers The qualification program (courses taught in German/English) is continuously expanded. Based on the findings of the quality management system for doctoral studies (QUSProm), the conditions for doctoral candidates are continuously improved (including through an option to extend contracts for doctoral candidates on parental leave in externally funded projects). An onboarding program is introduced and standardized regulations are established regarding the rights of heads of junior research groups to supervise and examine doctoral candidates. Alumni are more strongly integrated as mentors and role models. *Progress indicators: satisfaction with research and supervision conditions (QUSProm surveys); number of structured doctoral programs and industry doctoral collaborations; survey on satisfaction with training and mentoring programs; changes to doctoral regulations*
Supporting individual career planning The university strengthens support structures for the postdoc phase (support for professional development, guidance in making career choices between academia, business and civil society). Together with the uniqUS staff unit, a program is established for postdocs titled “On track to leading a junior research group or to a junior professorship”, offering support services such as assistance with grant applications. Support services for doctoral candidates and postdocs as they transition into careers in business and civil society are expanded (career compass “Society”). *Progress indicators: number of appointments and heads of junior research groups; survey on satisfaction with preparation for career paths within and outside the university*
Increasing the visibility and mobility of early career researchers An awareness campaign on how to self-promote and increase personal visibility is launched, accompanied by workshops on online presence and science communication. Support for award nominations is expanded. Efforts to promote outgoing mobility for doctoral candidates and postdocs, particularly to the university’s strategic partners, are intensified (→ B.2.3 Internationalization). *Progress indicators: online presence of early career researchers; record of number of awards received; number of stays abroad*
Integrating diversity into the design of all offers for early career researchers Diversity-related considerations are integrated into qualification programs as a matter of course and taken into account in mentoring programs. Workshops are offered to raise awareness of a diversity-sensitive leadership culture (→ B.2.2 Diversity and equal opportunities). *Progress indicators: diversity awareness in qualification measures and mentoring programs; number of participants in workshops on diversity-sensitive leadership culture*

B.2.7 IT and digitalization

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Excellent basic IT infrastructure and outstanding research infrastructure in the HPC/DIC environment; high-performance computing center as a central facility of the university	✓
Strong foundation of expertise, well-defined concept and strategic support for open access/open science, research data management and digitally supported teaching	↗
High level of commitment from researchers and IZUS to the National Research Data Infrastructure	↗
Significant successes in making research output available via open access	↗
University bibliography available as a basis for bibliometric evaluations, development of a university-wide publication management system underway	↗
Excellent infrastructure for e-learning approaches (e.g., recording equipment in most lecture halls)	→
Establishment of a digitization center (3D scans of university collections)	↗
Campus management system fully implemented	✓
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for growth in e-science concept; comprehensive introduction of research information system still pending	↗
Functional gaps in the ERP system (Enterprise Resource Planning)	↗
Lack of IT support in numerous administrative processes (e.g., travel management, applicant management, digital records)	↗
Tools for collaboration in interdisciplinary teams not yet implemented university-wide	↗
Personnel bottlenecks in the operation and support of various IT applications	→
Challenges in recruiting young talent for IT positions	→
Computing centers and university library buildings substandard in terms of construction and energy efficiency	!

The university was able to further build on nearly all of the strengths identified for the 2021–2025 reporting period, such as the HPC infrastructure at HLRS and in the state of Baden-Württemberg (bwHPC), in which the University of Stuttgart plays a major role both in terms of investment and usage.

In addition to “traditional” open access publications, the University Library has been supporting open access book publications by members of the university since mid-2023 and is also involved in the BMBF project “Diamond_Thinking”. Significant progress has also been made in the area of research data management, for example, in the development of a prototype digital assistant for research data as part of a project funded by the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts. The JupyterHub, a service developed as part of the NFDI4Ing consortium, has also been available since 2023.

The university made significant achievements in further developing and completing the university bibliography and in linking the publications stored in the PUMA publication system to the Research Information System (FIS). Major progress was also made in the introduction of university-wide specialist applications, for example, SAP S4/HANA was introduced, creating the basis for closing functional gaps in the ERP system. The campus management system was updated to a new responsive user interface. Nevertheless, the university must continue to promote numerous digitalization projects during the 2026–2030 planning period, as there remains a significant need for digitalization. The Digital Council is currently developing a digital strategy listing digitalization needs and aligning them with the university’s strategic goals.

A change management project involving student representatives was launched in the area of digitally supported teaching and a comprehensive digitalization program for the administration was also initiated. Both initiatives have already achieved valuable results during the reporting period.

There are however still areas with untapped potential and further room for growth, for example, the media technology installed in lecture halls is significantly outdated. There is a massive investment backlog in the area of building infrastructure. The long-overdue renovations of both library locations are scheduled to begin during the 2026–2030 planning period, thereby laying the groundwork for the necessary expansion of the digital information infrastructure (→ B.2.9).

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The University of Stuttgart provides a needs-based, innovative IT and information infrastructure and offers digital support for additional centralized and decentralized administrative processes.**
2.	**The research activities of the University of Stuttgart are managed digitally and research results are made visible internationally in a structured manner, driven by "Open Science" and in accordance with the FAIR principles.**
3.	**Remote work arrangements for employees and students are supported digitally to meet individual requirements and facilitated by attractive and innovative spaces for collaborative work and learning.**
4.	**The University of Stuttgart promotes knowledge transfer and internationalization with effective digital tools.**
5.	**The university leverages IT services to increase energy efficiency and sustainability in IT operations and facility management.**

Prioritized measures
Providing targeted support for the development and storage of research software An interdisciplinary "Center for Research Software Engineering" is set up to advise and support researchers in the use of research software according to the FAIR4RS principles. *Progress indicators: establishment of "Center for Research Software Engineering"; assigned staff*
Providing and maintaining digital platforms for the storage, presentation and exchange of research information and data The FIS Research Information System consolidates data from various sources and organizes it so that it is visible and systematically accessible to the public via a portal. Digital platforms (bwSFS, DaRUS, etc.) for the exchange and storage of research data are provided for interdisciplinary and cross-university research projects. *Progress indicators: availability and use of the platforms; detailed and current data in the FIS; international visibility of the FIS; FIS established as primary system*
Implementing "ERASMUS without Paper" and introducing the "European Student Card" The University of Stuttgart digitalizes the administrative processes of the Erasmus+ mobility program and facilitates the exchange of data on international mobility with "ERASMUS without Paper". The European Student Card is introduced as proof of enrollment throughout Europe while also allowing access to services on university campuses. *Progress indicators: implementation of ERASMUS without Paper; introduction of "European Student Card"*
Expanding digital options for remote work All employees can access key digital infrastructure from any location without additional hardware, collaborate seamlessly with their colleagues and access digital communication tools. *Progress indicators: minimal efficiency losses in hybrid collaboration; availability and productivity when working remotely*
Digitalizing the employee life cycle Key HR processes, from recruitment to offboarding, are digitalized and implemented consistently in all areas. In addition to an application portal with corresponding process support and interfaces for mapping the recruitment process in a continuous environment, the personnel file is fully digitalized (→ B.2.5). *Progress indicators: digitalization of personnel files; introduction of digital application management; establishment of a digital recruitment process*
Increasing the energy efficiency of the university's IT and building infrastructure The energy efficiency of central IT infrastructure is increased through the use of modern hardware. Significant energy savings are achieved in the university's buildings through intelligent, IT-based control and management systems (→ B.2.1). *Progress indicators: transparency of energy consumption; verifiable savings*
Increasing resilience to cyber attacks The university strengthens its technical and organizational information security measures, thereby ensuring a high level of resilience against cyber attacks, rapid response capabilities and a quick resumption of university operations in the event of a critical incident. *Progress indicators: "Business Continuity Management" plan; successful simulations and tests*

B.2.8 Communication

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Clear strategic focus for all communication activities	✓
Target group-oriented communication of socially relevant topics from strategic profile areas and other research fields	✓
Strong communication partners through networks and cooperations	✓
Tailored communication mix organized by topics, target audiences and channels	→
Polished appearance on websites, in social media and in print	→
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for growth in science communication	↗
Strategic focus of student marketing could be improved	↗
Room for improvement in international communications	→
Lack of an overarching event strategy for the entire university	!
Communications efforts could be further digitalized	→

The University of Stuttgart's strategic communications management is consistently aligned with the university's vision, strategic goals and performance dimensions. University Communications makes the university's guiding goals, values and performance promises transparent to internal and external stakeholders. Through internal consulting, services for members and internal communication measures, the university strengthens its organizational identity and fosters a sense of belonging among its members. Through external communication measures, the university enhances its visibility, legitimacy and acceptance among societal stakeholders, enters into dialog with society and increases its appeal to potential researchers, faculty, employees, students, cooperation partners and sponsors.

University Communications functions as a cross-media newsroom with specialized topic teams focused on the areas of research and knowledge transfer, teaching and continuing education, as well as institutional and internal communications, ensuring that communications efforts are tailored to specific target audiences and are strategy- and topic-driven. Clearly defined responsibilities for the various communication channels serve to ensure ongoing quality assurance and further development.

Active networking increases the reach, effectiveness and efficiency of communication efforts. This includes a university-wide communication plan coordinated with faculties, institutes, facilities and administration as well as partnerships with other universities and research institutions. Partnerships are maintained with the communication networks of TU9, the Stuttgart University and Science Region association (chaired by the University of Stuttgart) and the Stuttgart SciCom network, and the university collaborates with the state capital Stuttgart, for example at the Stuttgart Science Festival, and with the Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts in student marketing, with the LRK and HRK, Cyber Valley and the Federal Association of University Communications.

Universities are facing increasing competition both in acquiring research funding and in attracting students, early career researchers and employees. At the same time, in a society undergoing massive changes, greater efforts must be made to promote the legitimacy and acceptance of science. Declining student numbers pose additional challenges for the University of Stuttgart. Therefore, it is necessary not only to strengthen science communication and knowledge transfer but also to strategically realign and significantly intensify student marketing and employer branding. During the 2021–2025 reporting period, efforts included revising the presentation of the research profile, particularly with regard to the Excellence Strategy, strengthening communication efforts for early career researchers and testing new measures and channels, particularly in online marketing, social media and outreach to school students. The decision to launch a new student marketing campaign established a clear strategic focus for external communications.

In the future, greater attention will be given to the development of a central event strategy and associated event management, which was temporarily put on hold during the COVID-19 pandemic. New and improved event formats serve to foster a sense of belonging within the university, facilitate the transfer of knowledge to society and attract future students. To meet the growing demands on University Communications while working with limited staff resources, the digitalization of communications efforts must be consistently advanced through the use of appropriate research, editorial, content and evaluation tools.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**Diverse and target audience-specific science communication fosters societal dialog.**
2.	**Strategically realigned and intensified student marketing helps attract suitable students.**
3.	**Stronger internal communication fosters a shared identity.**
4.	**A strategically planned and reorganized event management system enhances the university's public image.**
5.	**Digitalized processes and tools enable efficient, effective and high-quality communications work.**

Prioritized measures
Supporting researchers and central facilities in dialog-oriented knowledge transfer Knowledge transfer is a key responsibility of researchers as well as of various central university institutions and University Communications. Activities by different stakeholders are better coordinated, supported and consolidated through central communication channels and events. Suitable platforms and formats are further developed for this purpose (e.g. Science Day, cross-media bilingual relaunch of the magazine "forschung leben" (living research), video formats for social media). Knowledge transfer is not seen as a one-way street, but as a dialog with society that generates new research topics and questions. *Progress indicators: inclusion of researchers and their topics in target group-oriented communication formats at events, in media coverage, social media and university publications*
Planning, implementing and evaluating a student marketing campaign Through cross-media, national and international marketing campaigns, the University of Stuttgart aims to raise its profile and appeal as a place to study, thereby increasing the number of qualified applications, enrollments and first-year students in its Bachelor's and Master's programs. *Progress indicators: marketing outreach; brand awareness and image; demand for academic advising; number of applications; enrollments and first-year students*
Further developing internal communication measures and channels Important topics related to university development and administrative services, in particular relevant change processes, are actively communicated to the university. To this end, central event formats and communication channels such as employee newsletters and websites are further developed in a user-oriented manner, both on a technological level and in terms of content. The employee and student websites are further developed into a consistently bilingual, service-oriented intranet. *Progress indicators: website hits, time spent on websites as well as satisfaction levels measured through user surveys*
Developing a central event strategy and establishing event management As part of a central event strategy, clear objectives, target groups, formats and guidelines are developed for public events that shape the university's reputation. A central event management unit is intended to ensure that events are conducted professionally and in compliance with the law, to procure and manage external services and to provide all necessary services from a single source. *Progress indicators: visitor numbers; internal customer satisfaction and visitor satisfaction measured through participant surveys*
Implementing digital processes for editorial management, content creation and success monitoring Topic planning and newsroom organization is increasingly supported by appropriate editorial management software, while media relations, social media and newsletter distribution is supported by suitable CRM tools as well as digital monitoring and engagement tools. Access figures and dwell times for key websites are systematically analyzed to support continuous quality improvement. Suitable AI tools are identified, tested and used in a legally compliant manner for topic research and content creation. *Progress indicators: selection and procurement of suitable tools; satisfaction with process improvements measured through employee appraisals; output and media response*

B.2.9 Campus development and campus culture

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Large university campus in Stuttgart Vaihingen, close to nature and easily accessible by all means of transportation	✓
Outstanding research infrastructures and demonstrators (including ARENA2036, demonstrator high-rise building SFB 1244, HLRS, new research building project LCRL) directly on campus	✓
Both campuses located in the immediate vicinity of important research and cultural institutions as well as numerous other universities	✓
Campus in the city center in a central location and in the immediate vicinity of the main train station and civil society institutions	→
Scientific expertise and innovative projects in the field of mobility (e.g. ICM, MobiLab) and sustainability (e.g. Green Office, EKUS hoch i) well-established and integrated into the Rectorate at the executive level (Vice Rectorate for Research and Sustainable Development, Vice Rectorate for Science Transfer and International Affairs)	↗
Student campus life benefits from an increasing number of open learning spaces and a committed student body (Campus Beach, Winter Beach, Freiraum with café, etc.).	↗
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
Room for improvement in dining and hospitality options, particularly on the Vaihingen campus, low recreational value and a lack of seating in indoor and outdoor areas, greatly reduced quality of stay on campus.	!
Low presence and visibility of the University of Stuttgart in the city and insufficient integration into the cityscape	→
The structural condition of buildings and infrastructure (renovation backlog) results in an unattractive first impression and increasing challenges in building usage.	!
Inefficient use of space (e.g. single use, misuse, severely restricted scope of use) resulting from highly fragmented responsibilities and property management practices that could be improved	!
Room for improvement regarding an overall university mobility and safety concept as well as in the design of wayfinding and accessibility (number and placement of signposts, multilingual signage, lighting, building and room access)	↗

As in the past, campus development and campus culture remain among the key challenges for the University of Stuttgart during the planning period. While developments in these areas are of particular relevance with regard to both the overarching strategic goals and the cross-sectional areas, the university's scope for action remains limited by the wide range of stakeholders, interests and interdependencies in this context. Nevertheless, some progress was made during the reporting period. One key success is the university acting as developer for the first time in the construction of the new research building Large-Scale Construction Robotics Laboratory (LCRL) for the Cluster of Excellence IntCDC (→ intcdc.uni-stuttgart.de). In addition, overarching structures were created to consolidate and embed sustainability (→ B.2.1) and diversity (→ B.2.2) in order to optimize the management capability of both areas.

Numerous refurbishment projects prioritized in the SEPUS 2021–2025 were initiated during the reporting period, but will also be of great importance for the SEPUS 2026–2030 as planned. At the same time, it must be noted that the number of buildings and infrastructure facilities in need of refurbishment remains high and that the progress made in refurbishment is still insufficient to ensure the long-term attractiveness and functionality of university buildings, especially for internationally competitive cutting-edge research. One particular challenge is ensuring the continued operation of the university library, whose location in the city center had to be closed during the reporting period due to structural issues with the library building.

Efforts were launched to strengthen ties with the city of Stuttgart as well as universities and research institutions in the region, which will remain a priority during the planning period. In addition, the University of Stuttgart has implemented a variety of participatory measures, often at the initiative of its extraordinarily committed student body, to further enhance the appeal of campus life even with limited resources.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The University of Stuttgart has an efficient property management system and a sustainable facility management system.**
2.	**All members of the university can participate in campus life in a way that fosters a sense of community, and have access to attractive spaces for work and learning, for socializing and dialog, as well as a wide range of recreational activities.**
3.	**The University of Stuttgart is present in the city both visually and through engaging and representative events for science communication.**
4.	**Both university locations are characterized by a high level of safety, sustainable mobility and efficient, accessible wayfinding.**
5.	**Stuttgart is perceived in politics and society as a city of science and the University of Stuttgart plays a central role in this regard.**

Prioritized measures
Developing a flexible, demand-oriented utilization concept for areas and buildings Incentive systems are created to promote resource-efficient energy and land use, with a focus on increasing the number of coworking spaces and shared learning areas that can be flexibly booked and used by as many members of the university as possible. Conference and meeting rooms are equipped with the necessary technology to host hybrid events. *Progress indicators: more flexible meeting and learning spaces; pooling and office use concepts; fewer areas that are temporarily unused*
Creating functional, attractive and representative buildings The university develops a joint strategy with the University Building Authority with a view to gradually alleviating the renovation backlog despite falling tax revenues and, in particular, to implementing the most urgent construction measures in a timely manner. At the same time, in coordination with the city and other relevant stakeholders, cost-effective measures are initiated to increase the campus' appeal (e.g., maintenance of green areas, greening of building facades, window cleaning, increased use of facades as a projection surface for art and culture). *Progress indicators: accident reduction; completion of construction and renovation projects; implementation of cross-sectional campus improvement initiatives (e.g. Glow Up)*
Creating vibrant university campuses with a high quality of stay Innovative space concepts are developed and implemented for existing areas with the goal of creating open, collaborative learning spaces, experimental areas (including makerspaces) and new spaces on campus that offer a high quality of stay. These spaces facilitate creative exchange between students and faculty across different disciplines, promote interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary exchange and serve as a platform for science communication with civil society. *Progress indicators: dining options on campus; satisfaction with campus experience; number of representative events on the university campus; visitor frequency and number of educational partnerships in the makerspaces*
Developing mobility, wayfinding and safety concepts tailored to specific situations and needs with a particular focus on accessibility The university aims to develop a pioneering concept in collaboration with relevant stakeholders in order to identify existing challenges in the above-mentioned areas and to take suitable measures that help to optimize environmental and social sustainability. In this context, mobility and accessibility are given high priority. *Progress indicators: improved campus lighting; multilingual signage; increase in accessible areas; number of covered, secure bicycle stands; progress toward a car-free Vaihingen campus*
Improving visibility in the city The university strengthens its corporate identity under the umbrella brand *University of Stuttgart* and improves its marketing by establishing a dedicated department. Advertising, media presence and merchandising help enhance the university's visibility and reputation. To this end, the university also explores opportunities to integrate its PR efforts with city marketing and to establish regular discussion formats between the Rectorate and the City of Stuttgart. In addition, the university is given greater visibility in the city, both visually with clearly marked campus areas and through the creation of attractive and representative gathering spaces. *Progress indicators: university logo displayed prominently on all university buildings; marketing department established; increasing sales figures for merchandising; regular discussions and event formats with city representatives; number of advertising campaigns*

B.2.10 Management and resource planning

Assessment of developments during the 2021–2025 reporting period

Strengths and weaknesses	Trend
Strengths	✓ | ↗ | →
Stuttgart Way as an overarching paradigm of governance, not only in research	↗
Success in acquiring third-party funding	✓
Expertise in integrating digitalization, organizational development and process management	↗
Introduction of a new and modern ERP system (SAP S/4HANA) as the foundation for increased efficiency, process standardization as well as comprehensive reporting	↗
Established methods of process optimization, including the project life cycle and student life cycle	↗
Standardized appointment process undergoing digitalization	↗
Weaknesses	↗ | → | !
In some cases, complex, bureaucratic and non-digitalized (administrative) processes and inadequate knowledge management lead to a lack of transparency regarding responsibilities and authority.	↗
Room for growth in strategic financial and personnel planning in Central Administration	→
Structures that have developed in a decentralized manner make efficient communication difficult.	→
Room for improvement in project culture, especially with regard to responsibility (conflicting priorities between line and matrix organization) and resource planning	→
The capital asset facility management (CAFM) system currently in use does not offer any incentives for efficient use.	!
Difficulties predicting outflow of funds to the University Building Authority (UBA) amid rising construction costs	!
Unrealized potential in networking with stakeholders and strategic partners of the university	↗

In 2024, the University of Stuttgart reached a significant milestone in increasing efficiency and standardizing processes in finance with the introduction of a new ERP system. Other key achievements during the reporting period include the implementation of a standardized appointment process and the development of a project life cycle approach that enables transparent and effective management of various projects focused on digitalization. During the reporting period, the University of Stuttgart maintained a leading position in the national ranking of universities with the highest levels of third-party funding and ranked third in 2024 in terms of third-party funding secured per professorship.

The university is still faced with the challenge of optimizing (administrative) processes, some of which are currently still perceived as complex and bureaucratic and in many cases are not yet digitalized. The university therefore aims to continuously improve its knowledge and process management. In the areas of finance and personnel management, there is further potential for strategic planning to sustainably improve management effectiveness and ensure the transfer of knowledge. This also applies to efficient facility management, which plays a key role in ensuring the university runs smoothly.

Prioritized goals and measures for the 2026–2030 planning period

Prioritized goals	
1.	**The Central Administration’s administrative processes are efficient, standardized, largely digitalized and clearly documented, ensuring transparency and traceability in the long term.**
2.	**The University of Stuttgart’s steering and monitoring capabilities are improved sustainably through data-driven decision-making processes and transparent performance monitoring.**
3.	**Project management, particularly in the area of digitalization, is professionalized through clear standards and transparent decision-making structures, allowing digitalization projects to be managed efficiently and implemented in a targeted manner.**
4.	**The University of Stuttgart has a long-term strategic financial and personnel planning system that ensures transparent, forward-looking and sustainable resource allocation in the areas of finance and personnel.**
5.	**Facility Management at the University of Stuttgart uses a digitally integrated infrastructure to ensure efficient workflows, optimal use of resources and sustainable energy savings.**

Prioritized measures
Further developing and expanding process management in Central Administration The University of Stuttgart actively promotes the further development of process management. This includes the continuous expansion of processes tracked through a central process platform. At the same time, process management skills are systematically developed and reinforced through clear objectives, increased use of training and knowledge-sharing formats and the clarification of process responsibilities. *Progress indicators: number of training measures carried out; number of processes recorded in central process platform; number of processes/process owners recorded*
Developing and implementing a business intelligence strategy The University of Stuttgart aims to further develop its business intelligence strategy in order to continuously optimize its management capability. In order to achieve this goal, it is necessary to identify relevant key performance indicators (e.g., finances, resources, projects) and then initiate a central business intelligence system to collect, analyze and visualize university-wide data in real time. *Progress indicators: regular review of progress towards targets (actual value vs. target value); increased ability to react to short-term changes; improved management capabilities*
Developing a project portfolio management system The project life cycle process model, which was introduced during the last reporting period, is expanded to include a higher-level project portfolio management system in order to categorize and prioritize the University of Stuttgart's digitalization projects based on criteria such as importance, size, complexity and resource requirements. The University of Stuttgart also implements a uniform project management framework that includes standards for the planning, implementation and completion of digitalization projects. *Progress indicators: regular review of progress towards targets (actual value vs. target value)*
Developing and implementing a concept for strategic personnel planning The Central Administration of the University of Stuttgart aims to develop and gradually implement strategic personnel planning, including structures for succession planning. Objectives of this initiative include ensuring the long-term availability of resources and securing expertise within the Central Administration, thereby establishing a sustainable personnel strategy. *Progress indicators: regular review of progress towards targets (actual value vs. target value); reduction in the time required to fill (vacant) positions, particularly key positions*
Expanding the existing ERP system (SAP S/4HANA) The introduction of a new ERP system in the last reporting period serves as a starting point for further expansion of the system. The University of Stuttgart develops and implements a corresponding concept to strengthen process integration across the university and continuously improve data consistency. *Progress indicators: regular review of progress towards targets (actual value vs. target value); shorter throughput time for processes; reduction in error rate for implemented processes; user acceptance*
Introducing computer-aided facility management (CAFM) software By introducing modern CAFM software, the University of Stuttgart aims to optimize the administration and use of space and resources in facility management, among other things. This includes transparent space allocation and more efficient workflows (e.g., order management for reports of malfunctions, maintenance management). *Progress indicators: regular review of progress towards targets (actual value vs. target value); shorter throughput time for processes; reduction in error rate for implemented processes; user acceptance*