

# **STRATEGIC PLAN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU YOUTH ACADEMY FOR 2023–2028**

The Strategic Plan of the University of Tartu Youth Academy is based on the University of Tartu Strategic Plan 2020–2025 and supports the implementation of the goals of the Youth Sector Development Plan 2021–2035 and the Estonian Education Strategy 2021–2035.

## **VISION**

Youth Academy offers the best opportunities in Estonia for students to systematically develop their abilities and interest in science, supports teachers in developing students and is internationally renowned and recognised in its field.

## **MISSION**

The main mission of Youth Academy is to provide and develop research and technology-based extracurricular education for pupils of general education schools, and to promote science, technology and the researcher's profession among the pupils (Statutes of Youth Academy, clause 2).

## **CORE VALUES**

- **Research-based activities**  
We are professional in everything we do. We value professionalism and are constantly improving ourselves.
- **Openness**  
We are open to new ideas and development. We rely on our traditions but are always open to innovating and contributing to positive changes at Youth Academy and in the world around us.
- **Inclusion**  
We take young people's opinions into consideration and involve them in what we do. We cooperate with partners from the public and private sectors to the benefit of students, teachers and society as a whole.
- **Human-centred approach**  
We are happy with our work and results. We value the people who work and study at Youth Academy, the motivating growth environment, and the healthy lifestyle. We respect one another's needs and individual qualities
- **Purposefulness**  
We know what our long-term goals are and we pursue them intentionally; we respect deadlines and keep promises.

### **1. Inspiring learning environment**

*The studies support and complement the national curriculum, but on the other hand, offer support to teachers and pupils according to their individual development.*

### **COURSES OF ACTION**

- **Ensuring excellent teaching quality.** We grow our strength in e-learning in cooperation with the researchers and teaching staff of Estonian higher education institutions. We pay attention to the clear structuring of Youth Academy courses (general interest, specialised and olympiad preparation courses), and design the course programmes in line with the national curriculum. We use varied forms of learning, and we pay attention to the development of experiment-based, integrated teaching of science subjects and updating the study programmes of mobile workshops. We create new and update the existing courses for basic school and upper secondary school pupils. We foster independent learning skills in pupils.
- **Supporting pupils' personal development.** We support the pupils of Estonian general education schools who are interested in research, and help develop their skills from an early school age until the end of upper secondary school.
- **Supporting teachers and supervisors.** We support teachers and supervisors in developing the pupils. We publish teaching aids on Youth Academy's website so that teachers can use them to guide and supervise their pupils. We cooperate with schools in developing study programmes and working out new ones. We support teachers' professional development.
- **Teaching of future skills.** We make sure that through teaching, we develop our learners' creativity, enterprising spirit, critical thinking, as well as cooperation and learning skills, self-management, digital and other future skills.

## **2. High-level olympiads and subject competitions**

*We coordinate the systematic organisation of olympiads and subject competitions, thereby giving pupils an extra incentive to develop their abilities.*

### **COURSES OF ACTION**

- **Organising olympiads and subject competitions.** In cooperation with the olympiad juries, we ensure the quality and smooth running of the olympiads and subject competitions (incl. tasks, assessment guidelines, etc.) and their compliance with the olympiad rules. We enhance the visibility and impact of olympiads and subject competitions across Estonia. We ensure continuity in the work of olympiad juries.
- **Preparing pupils for olympiads and subject competitions.** We offer varied opportunities for pupils and teachers to prepare for national and international olympiads, involving the best expertise from universities and professional organisations, and enhancing cooperation with other countries and hobby schools.
- **Giving recognition to olympiad and subject competition winners and their supervisors.** We develop a system of giving recognition to Youth Academy students, teachers and supervisors.

### 3. Science popularisation

*We introduce to the pupils the role of science in society, the researcher's profession and learning opportunities in Estonia.*

#### ***COURSES OF ACTION***

- **Introducing science and the researcher's profession.** In cooperation with other higher education institutions, we introduce the fields of research that are important for Estonian society, state-of-the-art science and researchers to the pupils. We carry out projects for pupils and students to support their development.
- **Introducing career options.** We introduce to the pupils the opportunities to study, teach and do research at the University of Tartu.

### 4. Inspiring and pioneering organisation

*We proceed from shared values, offering our staff opportunities to use their best potential and develop professionally; we develop an employee-friendly working environment and smart infrastructure.*

#### ***COURSES OF ACTION***

- **Implementing the talent development policy.** We are an active partner in designing and implementing the talent development policy. We cooperate with the Ministry of Education and Research, other higher education institutions, the Estonian STEM Education Union, the Estonian Talent Centre NGO and other partners; together, we contribute to integrating the formal and non-formal education and implementing talent development policy, and organise continuing education courses for teachers.
- **Valuing our staff.** We care for, notice and give recognition to our staff and people who contribute to the activities of Youth Academy. We systematically support their self-development and encourage their participation in training programmes. We apply the principles of equal treatment and the university's good practices. We consider it important to maintain good mental health. We support the health improvement of our staff and promote active exercising and a healthy diet.
- **Strengthening cooperation with organisations.** The University of Tartu Youth Academy's activities are ensured by stable and regular funding, consisting of state budget funding, payment for services, additional funding for projects and private grants. We cooperate with hobby schools, enterprises, private sponsors, and organisations from other countries with similar objectives. We promote open communication and involve stakeholders in all relevant processes.
- **Promoting communication.** The messages of the University of Tartu Youth Academy are newsworthy and informative. The messages and the channels chosen to convey them consider the trends and the target group. We inform our cooperation partners of the Youth Academy's activities and disseminate information targeted at our stakeholders. When publishing the messages, we respect data protection requirements.