

Strategic Plan for the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences 2021 – 2024

UiA's Vision: Co-creation for the knowledge of the future

UiA's Values: Openness. Trust. Professionalism. Respect.

Our Academic Culture: Academic freedom. Sustainability. Diversity.

The Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences places humans and human activities at the center of its operations. There is nothing more multifaceted and complex than humans, challenging us towards versatility, interdisciplinarity, and methodological diversity. The faculty's education and research are anchored in natural, human, and social sciences. This field of science requires openness towards - and interest in new perspectives and collaborators across disciplines and national borders. In this way, the faculty's activities align with the university's vision of "Co-creation for the knowledge of the future," and experience suggests that both knowledge and competence are most accurate and relevant when developed together with others. Over the last 10 years, the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences has seen an impressive increase in the number of research publications, study programs, students, and staff with senior and professorial competencies. Today, the faculty stands as a fully-fledged and attractive faculty with educational offerings at all levels, and with research centers and groups covering key research areas. This has been a desired and intentional development. At the same time, the faculty is bound by international conventions and the goals set nationally for the faculty's educational and research areas, and shall contribute to the university fulfilling its societal mission and achieving the goals set by the university board in spring 2020.

The faculty's strategic plan is based on the university's overall strategy and the focus areas that emerge here. The university's plan for research and development work also lays important guidelines. The faculty will follow up on the university's strategy to support the UN's sustainability goals and stimulate an open and co-creative study and work environment. The faculty continues to focus on developing the people at the faculty and building an academic culture where education, engagement, community, and critical thinking are central. This testifies to an ambition to be underway and in motion. The faculty has great ambitions for our established studies and the development of new study programs. Furthermore, the faculty has great ambitions for an increase in the scope and quality of research activity in close collaboration with the region. With such a background, the faculty has developed four focus areas with associated measures for the period 2021 – 2024.

Interdisciplinary Focus Areas – A Faculty in Motion The University Board has adopted six interdisciplinary focus areas, challenging the faculties to demonstrate how they can contribute to strengthening this focus. The Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences has therefore distinguished the interdisciplinary focus areas in the strategic plan, and made visible how the focus area is relevant to the faculty, and how the faculty plans to contribute in this strategic period.

Technology and Social Change This focus area has long been of great importance to the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences, especially through the relationship between health and technology. It is relevant for educational programs at all levels and at all institutes and is integrated into many of the faculty's research groups. Health and technology are also the scientific pivot for the Center for e-health. This center is, as known, anchored in five faculties at the university, and in itself testifies to the interdisciplinary potential of the focus area.

The faculty can primarily contribute with critical reflection on and give direction to the application areas of technology in society. It's about identifying opportunities, needs, and challenges, as well as testing and evaluating technological solutions within the faculty's various subject areas. The faculty can also contribute with well-functioning collaboration with user organizations, public services, voluntary organizations, and the business community.

The Green Shift The Green Shift is relevant to the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences in that it has a significant impact on people's health and quality of life. Knowledge of this is of great importance for future teachers and healthcare workers. It supports the ambitions to include the UN's sustainability goals as the fourth dimension in knowledge-based practice in health sciences.

The faculty can primarily contribute to this focus area through knowledge, attitudes, and skills related to a greener everyday life. For example, through knowledge about a sustainable diet, our research on active transport, and a daily life characterized by more physical activity. It's about our education and research related to living conditions, raising awareness of important factors affecting health and living conditions, and a conscious attitude towards the use of technology to strengthen decentralized offerings in education and health.

Health and Living Conditions This interdisciplinary focus area is considered relevant by all research groups at the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences and has the most touchpoints with the faculty's various educational programs. It actualizes research and development work related to physical, psychological, and social aspects of health in a life course perspective.

The faculty can contribute by leading work to highlight health and living conditions as an interdisciplinary and inter-faculty focus area at the university in close collaboration with key regional actors.

Democracy and Citizenship Democracy and citizenship are fundamentally interwoven with human health and living conditions and have great relevance for both educational programs and research fields at the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences.

The faculty can contribute with knowledge-based attention to diversity. Democratic participation is strengthened by ensuring that different groups receive education and are included in research work. The faculty focuses on co-researchers and user involvement in research and in the development of studies. Democracy and citizenship are essential for both health education and teacher training and the research associated with these areas. The faculty can thus contribute to strengthening the university's attention to and research on the preservation of fundamental human rights.

Learning and Education Learning and education are central concepts in higher education and have great relevance for the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences. It touches on central elements in the university's societal mission and is included as central parts in all our educational programs. It is also central concepts for several of the faculty's research groups, and we have researchers actively working on the importance of education for the professional fields. The faculty has particular expertise and can contribute knowledge about learning and education in practical subjects. The faculty is particularly keen to contribute when it comes to student-active learning methods, lifelong learning, and research on learning and learning processes in higher education. The faculty wishes to support that education is part of the academic culture.

Art in Society This interdisciplinary focus area is the least explored at the Faculty of Health and Sports Sciences, and as of today, we have few staff members who define this as a central part of their educational and research activities. However, it still has relevance for the faculty's educational programs, both as part of the pedagogical approach and as part of the academic content, especially within the health sciences. It can be argued that there is untapped potential in this area at the faculty. The faculty currently contributes to several collaborations involving art, culture, and health in Agder. We can contribute by integrating art into the faculty's pedagogical work, as part of research activities, and help to actualize the role of art within health sciences. The faculty wishes to participate in the discussion on the significance of art for humanity.

Education Main Goal for UiA: Our students are active participants in the knowledge community with researchers, society, and the workforce.

The faculty has attractive and inclusive student and learning environments:

1. The faculty will offer educations that meet societal needs and provide students with work-relevant competence.
2. The faculty will ensure high quality in all studies through varied, student-active, and practice-oriented learning, and stimulate pedagogical creativity and innovation.
3. The faculty will strengthen the connections between education and research, further develop research-based educations, and enhance the global perspective in the student and learning environment.

Research and Artistic Development Work Main Goal for UiA: Our research and our artistic development work are outstanding, critical, innovative, and socially relevant.

The faculty has recognized and innovative research environments:

1. The faculty will work systematically to develop and strengthen the quality of research activities.
2. The faculty will facilitate and strengthen practice-oriented and sustainable research-based innovation and service development in collaboration with regional, national, and international partners.
3. The faculty will professionalize and improve the work with development, funding, implementation, and management of research projects.
4. The faculty will further develop and strengthen the quality of the faculty's doctoral programs.
5. The faculty will identify strategic partners and strengthen international collaborations.

Community Engagement and Innovation Main Goal for UiA: We are a recognized partner with visibility and relevance regionally, nationally, and internationally.

The faculty is an ambitious and relevant social actor:

1. The faculty will offer further and continuing education that meets societal needs and contributes to building the region.
2. The faculty will improve and strengthen its research communication and thereby contribute to a critical public discourse.
3. The faculty will actively engage in co-creation projects both regionally and nationally.
4. The faculty will develop into an internationally recognized partner.
5. Actively work for a strong alumni network.

Work and Learning Environment Main Goal for UiA: We have an attractive, inclusive, and dynamic work and learning environment.

The faculty has a diverse and inspiring work and learning environment:

1. The faculty will work to ensure that all employees have a good working environment. In line with UiA's HR policy, clear requirements are set for leaders and employees to contribute to a good working environment.
2. The faculty will support the work for an open and inclusive university and facilitate the proper care of students and staff regardless of ethnicity, religion, ability, culture, gender identity, and sexual orientation.
3. The faculty will provide all employees with opportunities for career and competence development based on individual capabilities and the needs of the faculty.