

Performance Agreement 2025-2027

entered into between the

Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research

and the

Institute of Digital Sciences Austria

(Interdisciplinary Transformation University)

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Preamble

This Performance Agreement 2025-2027 is governed by the Federal Act on the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria (Interdisciplinary Transformation University) (*Bundesgesetz über das Institute of Digital Sciences Austria [Interdisciplinary Transformation University]*), Federal Law Gazette I No. 43/2024, which entered into force on 1 July 2024.

This Performance Agreement is a contract under public law and serves to jointly define the parties' mutual obligations. It specifies the services to be provided by the University on behalf of the federal government and the undertakings made by the federal government in return.

Parties

1. Republic of Austria, represented by Martin Polaschek, Federal Minister of Education, Science and Research
2. Institute of Digital Sciences Austria (Interdisciplinary Transformation University), represented by Stefanie Lindstaedt, Founding President

Term

Until 31 December 2027

A. Strategic objectives, academic profiles, social goals and human resources strategy

A1. Guiding principles of the University

The Institute of Digital Sciences Austria (hereinafter referred to as “Interdisciplinary Transformation University” or “IT:U”), which was founded in 2022 by an act of law (Federal Act on the Foundation of the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria [*Bundesgesetz über die Gründung des Institute of Digital Sciences Austria*]) and has been governed by its own piece of legislation since 2024, defines its identity around the following unique characteristics:

- interdisciplinary basic research at the interface of computer science and other disciplines – see Chapter B.,
- project-based, personalised teaching in small groups,
- mission-oriented degree programmes focused on solving the challenges of digital transformation on the path towards a sustainable future,
- application and development of digital technologies to support project-based teaching in order to ensure the scalability of this teaching model,
- service-oriented digital administration.

The following chapters will elaborate on the “models” underlying these aspects and their manifestation in the initiatives of IT:U.

IT:U understands research, teaching and Third Mission as three closely related and interconnected fields of activity. For example, issues faced by the industrial sector should serve as starting points for teaching in LearnProjects, while research findings should be directly applied in society. This close interconnection will generate impact for IT:U’s four major groups of stakeholders (students, academics and scientists, business community and society).

To give due credit to these integrative activities performed by the academics, scientists and staff working at IT:U, the University subscribes to the **DORA Principles of Research Assessment and the CoARA initiative** at EU level. In 2023, a slightly modified version of the DORA matrix was created and applied to select suitable academics and scientists. This matrix will also be used to evaluate the performance of the University as a whole in 2025 and beyond. In addition, IT:U is currently in the process of joining the international “Advancing Teaching” initiative focused on the recognition of teaching activities across academic career pathways.

Research: In terms of substance, IT:U focuses on social change and the transformation of academic and economic ecosystems in the context of digitalisation.

As described in the chapter on research, IT:U will engage in an iterative annual strategic planning process together with the International Strategic Advisory Board (ISAB) and the Founding Convention (FC) to assess whether the chosen key challenges of trust, collaboration and learning (see Chapter B1, pp. 25 et seqq.) are still relevant or whether they need to be replaced by, or expanded to include, other challenges. This allows the research undertaken by IT:U to keep pace with changing technical and social challenges.

Teaching: IT:U started to set up two PhD programmes in 2024: “Digital Transformation in Learning” and “Computational X”. Six LearnLabs have been available to students since the start of the 2024/25 winter semester. Over the coming years, IT:U plans to expand and increase the number of its LearnLabs and offer further specialisations within the scope of its PhD programmes (see the chapter on teaching). IT:U’s first master’s programme in Interdisciplinary Computing will be launched in 2025, with new specialisations being added over the next years. There are no plans to introduce bachelor’s programmes before the end of the current performance agreement period.

The educational model (see Chapter C2) will build on a project-based, hands-on approach to learning and small group sizes, with LearnLabs (equipped with the latest digital technologies) playing a key role.

Further training and career development opportunities are essential elements of IT:U’s staff development programme, as is assistance in acquiring third-party funding, publishing research results and participating in international projects. Structured benchmarking allows to draw comparisons with other universities and research institutes to identify, adapt and apply best practices. The aim is to drive continuous improvements across all levels of IT:U. Applying a wide range of excellency criteria and shining a spotlight on non-traditional academic achievements helps promote diversity and plug the “leaky pipeline”¹ in senior positions.

In this Performance Agreement, IT:U defines its identity as a novel international model university for interdisciplinary research and teaching and outlines the main focus areas in science and academia, teaching, infrastructure and human resources for 2025 to 2027.

¹Clark Blickenstaff*, J. (2005). Women and science careers: leaky pipeline or gender filter?. *Gender and education*, 17(4), 369-386.

A2. Social goals

A2.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

In accordance with Objective 4 of the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities 2025-2030 (*gesamtösterreichischer Universitätsentwicklungsplan, GUEP*), IT:U undertakes to create the right conditions ensuring that all interested and qualified individuals have equal opportunities to successfully pursue studies or work at the University. The related organisational arrangements will be aligned with the Strategic Development Document and laid down in the part of the Bylaws on equal opportunities and women's advancement, which the Founding Convention plans to adopt by early 2025. Practical measures will be implemented in line with an Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement, which is subject to regular evaluation and revision.

This affirmative action plan is based on the latest state of the art and good practice examples adapted to the needs of IT:U. Equality policies will be selected and designed with the participation of the relevant target groups, having special regard to intersectional impediments.

Based on regular evaluation, the Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement focuses on all forms of currently relevant marginalisation and defines both specific and intersectional measures of affirmative action. IT:U conducts regular reviews of its human resources strategy and periodic evaluations of its teaching practices to ensure that the plan can be adapted in response to new challenges and developments faced by the University.

Furthermore, special attention is being paid to the interface of diversity and digital transformation.

A2.2. General social goals

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are strategically reflected and implemented across various levels.

When joining the University, all members undertake to uphold the values set out in the Code of Conduct, supported by the following measures:

- The social dimension (see below) and the SDGs are taken into account as much as possible in the design and implementation of processes and internal rules. For example, sustainability is addressed by funding *Klimatickets* (annual tickets covering all public means of transport in Austria) for staff members and by ensuring that public

transport is the only means of transport eligible for reimbursement on business trips within Austria.

- In terms of space and infrastructure, accessibility and sustainability are essential criteria. To address these aspects, measures focusing on energy, mobility and the use of resources are being developed.
- The primary focus of research and teaching at IT:U is on the challenges associated with digital transformation processes, which are closely linked to social issues on the path towards a sustainable future, as well as on developing and conveying interdisciplinary solutions.

Similar to research projects, outreach activities are designed in alignment with various SDGs both as regards partnerships and in the context of Third Mission activities. A special focus is placed on addressing girls and women, not only by having female students and researchers act as STEAM role models but also by actively dismantling prejudices and stereotypes. To tackle the aforementioned challenges, it is also necessary to actively promote gender equality and equal opportunities for marginalised groups². An intersectional Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement is being developed to adequately address the complexity of barriers, discrimination and adequate counteractive measures. This plan foresees measures at all levels of the University, ranging from the six action lines laid out in the National Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education to staff development and Third Mission activities. As gender equality in education has been declining since the COVID-19 pandemic, the affirmative action plan is particularly geared towards women. Special consideration is given to non-traditional educational pathways and additional impediments such as care commitments. A major focus is on career development aligned with different stages of life and on the prevention of career dropouts. To this end, resources are developed and good practice examples are adapted based on the National Strategy on the Social Dimension of Higher Education with a view to transferability as well as with the help of and in cooperation with the UniKid-UniCare Austria network (UUA network). Specific measures, such as preparatory boot camps and gap years, scholarships, tuition fee exemptions and practical support, will be defined by the Collegial Body for Equal Opportunities³ in the Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement in the first half of 2025. An additional focus is on inclusion and thus on spatial, digital and procedural accessibility. This is implemented through a partnership with myAbility in consultation with experts from the field. To ensure the compatibility of studies and/or work with care commitments, IT:U seeks to undergo external evaluation and is currently still looking for suitable partner institutions. Such evaluations are performed in the context of official certifications, such as the "hochschuleundfamilie" audit ("University and Family") to be undergone during the current

² In addition to sex and gender, this includes age, ethnicity, social background, physical and mental impairments, sexual orientation, religion and ideology. Other dimensions may be added over time.

³ Composed of the Equal Opportunities Officer and of student and staff representatives.

period. Further certifications (e.g. equalitA) will be planned and implemented in future performance agreements.

A2.2.1. Initiatives related to general social goals

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Equal opportunities and women's advancement	Achieving equality in terms of sex, gender, age, ethnicity, social background, physical and mental disposition, sexual orientation, religion, ideology and intersectionalities through measures defined in the Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement (see above)	<p>2025</p> <p>Develop an Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement</p> <p>2026</p> <p>Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement in place</p> <p>2026/27</p> <p>Selected measures implemented; collect data for evaluation in 2028</p>
2	Inclusion of people with disabilities	Through a partnership with myAbility, people with disabilities are consulted as paid experts to establish and expand accessible infrastructure and thus position the University in the medium term as an attractive place of study or work for people with disabilities. Staff training ensures that the accessibility thus established is maintained in the long term.	<p>2025</p> <p>Identify (potential) barriers and counterstrategies on a digital and process level</p> <p>Train staff working in IT, HR and marketing and communication</p> <p>2026</p> <p>Develop and start to implement an action catalogue to promote inclusion/accessibility</p> <p>2027</p> <p>Barriers in digital infrastructure and processes removed to the greatest extent possible</p>
3	Compatibility of studies, work and family life	Support measures such as financial aid and practical assistance derived from good practice of the UUA network make it possible to reconcile studies / a professional	<p>2025</p> <p>Scholarship programme set up</p> <p>2026</p> <p>Best practices integrated in the Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's</p>

		career and care commitments.	Advancement; network resources available 2027 External evaluation – “hochschuleundfamilie” audit
4	Target group marketing	Targeted measures are to be developed and implemented (role models, dismantling prejudices/stereotypes) to address, in particular, female students and students who would usually not consider pursuing (STEM) studies.	2025 Develop a concept 2026-2027 Implement measures
5	Sustainable IT:U	Make sure that sustainability is a core element of teaching (education for sustainable development), research, Third Mission and operations	2025 Develop a sustainability concept 2026 4th BG report 2027 Implement measures

A2.3. Science communication/knowledge transfer to society

Science communication and knowledge transfer are important processes to ensure that the knowledge generated at academic institutions translates into broad economic and social benefits. Technological innovation and scientific advances are often deeply intertwined with the business world and society, with universities acting as a bridge between academic research and practical application. Outreach activities such as the Long Night of Research (*Lange Nacht der Forschung*), citizen science projects, science fairs, hackathons, etc. aim to give people of all ages and educational biographies the opportunity to participate in IT:U’s research activities both on site and virtually (draft of IT:U’s Strategic Development Document 1.3.7). IT:U supports the strategic efforts and measures pursued by the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) to strengthen trust in science and democracy in Austria (DNAustria), in particular the central information platform for learning opportunities about science and democracy (Discover.DNAustria), the Science and Democracy Ambassadors initiative or the Science Week for schools, among others.

The implementation of these efforts is based on a science communication strategy which defines clear goals and expectations for science communication and knowledge transfer. Introducing collaborative tools promotes knowledge sharing as well as communication and coop-

eration, while networking events and conferences aim to enhance exchange between students and researchers. The effectiveness of science communication and knowledge transfer strategies is measured by conducting evaluations.

A2.3.1. Initiatives related to science communication/knowledge transfer to society

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Develop a science communication strategy	Develop a science communication strategy to serve as a basis for science communication and knowledge transfer	<p>2025 Science communication strategy developed</p> <p>2026 Collaborative tools selected based on the science communication strategy</p> <p>2027 Selected measures are being implemented</p>
2	Science communication formats	Develop science communication formats to present current methods and topics to a wide audience	<p>2025 Stakeholder network created</p> <p>2026 Develop and implement three participatory science communication formats, organise Long Night of Research</p> <p>2027 Establish a total of five science communication formats with stakeholders</p>

A2.3.2. Targets related to science communication/knowledge transfer to society

No.	Targets	Indicator	Baseline 2024 (31 Oct 2024)	Target value		
				2025	2026	2027
1	Science communication formats	Number of communication formats implemented (cumulative)	0	0	3	5
2	Science and democracy ambassadors	Number of academics and scientists involved (cumulative)	0	1	2	3

A3. Quality assurance

A3.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

The activities surrounding quality assurance primarily aim to achieve Objective 3 (Improve the quality and efficiency of university teaching) and Objective 4 (Promote career development for young academics and artists as well as equality and social inclusion) of the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities. The other objectives set out therein are supported indirectly/implicitly by defining processes for all areas and tasks of the University and by assuring process quality.

The Strategic Development Document provides for quality assurance based on the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA). In practice, this involves the precise measurement and careful assessment of a variety of transparently communicated quality criteria, allowing for such criteria to be usefully applied in contexts other than research as well. Additionally, IT:U is committed to the principles of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). Specific evidence-based quality criteria for the relevant fields of activity are currently being compiled.

A3.2. Initiatives related to quality assurance

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Develop a quality assurance concept	<p>In a first step, a quality assurance concept is drawn up as part of the establishment of an internal quality assurance system.</p> <p>Regular internal evaluation of all courses and teachers is an essential first step, followed by the gradual further development of core processes.</p>	<p>2025 Quality assurance concept drawn up</p> <p>2026 Evaluation of all courses held in the first academic year completed</p> <p>2027 Establish and define other core processes</p>
2	Guidelines for ensuring good academic practice	<p>Practical guidelines for ensuring good academic practice for researchers, teachers and students</p>	<p>2025 Guidelines in practical use and application</p> <p>2027 Evaluate, critically review and, if necessary, refine guidelines</p>

3	Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity (OeAWI)	Membership to strengthen networks in academic and artistic integrity	2025 Membership obtained
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A4. Human resources strategy

A4.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

IT:U aims to build a team of professors, academics, scientists and teachers from a variety of disciplines who are committed to the highest standards of interdisciplinary research and education. This also includes developing new functional profiles in consultation with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF). Academic excellency not only means conducting research in one's discipline at the highest level but also meeting highest standards in mentoring young academics and teaching. The educational model of IT:U thus relies on professors and teachers who bring both the necessary expertise and a keen interest in teaching to their role. IT:U aims to attract individuals who are enthusiastic about guiding and working closely with students to foster an environment where knowledge is not just imparted but actively promoted through meaningful engagement and cooperation. Academics and scientists should be open to overcoming conventional barriers between disciplines, striving to achieve a deeper understanding and explore innovative ideas. This openness to interdisciplinary cooperation enriches the academic community, all while fostering a culture of creativity and innovation. Based on a diversity concept for filling professorships and management positions within the scope of the Affirmative Action Plan for Equal Opportunities and Women's Advancement, the implementation of a diversity culture is firmly embedded in IT:U's human resources strategy.

Led by the Founding President, a team of national and international professors, academics, scientists, lab experts and learning coaches within the Department Science & Education is working to support students throughout their learning journey and research activities. Along with their teams, the four Founding Directors responsible for

- Learning
- Study Portfolio & Student Affairs
- IT Solutions, Operations & Development
- Outreach, Network & Cooperation

provide all support and other services for teaching, research and students that are considered state-of-the-art for a modern university. In addition to ensuring the smooth running of teaching and research activities, this also includes topics such as programme development, internationalisation, Third Mission, quality assurance and equality.

On the administrative side, the Managing Director oversees the provision of services to support the successful running of degree programmes and research activities. The following teams will be established for this purpose:

- Human Resources (HR) & Employer Branding

- Finance, Controlling, Procurement & Grant Office
- Legal & Compliance
- Marketing & Communications
- Real Estate & Facility Management

The work culture at IT:U is characterised by participatory processes. Regular employee surveys can provide valuable feedback on staff satisfaction and motivation. The aim is to establish a culture of innovation that is actively supported by all employees by creating a work environment conducive to creativity and innovation.

A4.2. Initiatives related to human resources structure/development

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Professorships ⁴ tenured/tenure track	Publish international advertisements of vacant tenured and tenure-track professorships to increase the number of professors	2025-2027 32 tenured/tenure-track professorships filled by 31 Dec 2027
2	Fellowships ⁵	Fellowships are foreseen in addition to tenured and tenure-track positions	2025-2027 All planned positions filled by 31 Dec 2027
3	Postdocs	Every tenured professor is granted two postdoc positions	2025-2027 All planned positions filled by 31 Dec 2027
4	Set up the Department Science & Education	<p>Assistants will be hired to perform back-office functions for professors, each of them providing administrative assistance to a group of three professors (Support Science).</p> <p>Furthermore, the Founding Directors "Study Portfolio & Student Affairs", "Learning", "IT Solutions, Operations & Development" and the future Founding Director "Outreach, Network & Cooperation" will (continue to) set up their respective divisions and hire additional staff to support students and researchers throughout their learning journey and research activities.</p>	<p>2025 Rules for Support Science cooperation in the respective divisions established and requirements defined</p> <p>Advertise the position of Founding Director Outreach, Network & Cooperation</p> <p>2025-2027 Advertisements prepared & recruitment process started for, in particular:</p> <p>Study Portfolio & Student Affairs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • programme development, • programme management, • International Office, • EduCare and student support, • quality management, • equality/Code of Conduct/Honour Code <p>Learning:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • project-based learning, • learning operations, • LearnLabs, • ProjectSpaces

⁴ cf. Article 2 of Part IV of the Provisional Bylaws

⁵ cf. Article 4 of Part IV of the Provisional Bylaws

			<p>IT Solutions, Operations & Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • system architecture, • software development (CMS, LMS), • security, computing and data centre, IT operations and support, • process management, • requirements and project management <p>Outreach, Network & Cooperation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • network building, cooperation with businesses, science and society, • knowledge transfer, • Third Mission
5	Set up the Department Central Services	<p>To ensure the successful running of degree programmes and research activities and to raise the profile of IT:U on a national and international level, it is necessary to establish appropriate management and service activities that need to be (further) developed by hiring additional staff.</p> <p>This includes the following divisions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal & Compliance: which includes, among others, contract drafting and review, drafting policies and guidelines, and advising the Founding Board; • HR & Employer Branding, • Finance, Controlling, Procurement & Grant Office: which includes, among others, accounting, payroll accounting, controlling (management accounting), procurement, and the submission, administration and accounting of R&D projects; • Marketing & Communications, and • Real Estate & Facility Management. 	<p>2025</p> <p>Advertise the position of legal expert</p> <p>Advertise the position of HR business partner</p> <p>2026</p> <p>Advertise the position of legal expert</p> <p>Advertise the position of HR expert</p> <p>2025-2027</p> <p>Advertisements prepared & recruitment process started for, in particular:</p> <p>Finance, Controlling, Procurement & Grant Office:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finance business partners • controlling (management accounting) • purchasing/procurement <p>Marketing & Communications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • content creator • video expert • social media expert • trade fair and event management <p>Real Estate & Facility Management:</p> <p>2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building services

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cleaning 2026 • building services
6	Diversity concept	Develop a diversity concept for filling management positions, professorships and scientist positions	<p>2025 Develop a concept with the participation of stakeholders</p> <p>2026 Implement the diversity concept in search committees/recruitment procedures/human resources development concepts</p>
7	Develop functional profiles for academic staff	As a novel university with its own legal framework, IT:U has the opportunity to develop novel and innovative functional profiles for its academic staff. This process will be conducted in consultation with the BMBWF.	<p>2025 Define functional profiles for academic staff in consultation with the BMBWF</p> <p>2026-2027 Develop career models for academic staff and publish them in the Bylaws</p>
8	Training and staff development	Establish tertiary-level training for academic/artistic and general staff, in particular as regards IT:U's project-based learning model (PBL). Draw up staff development measures.	<p>2025 Establish in-service training for IT:U staff</p>
9	Career paths for academic staff	Measures to promote individual career development as well as communication and support structures. The aim is to provide researchers, and in particular early-career researchers, with transparent information about employment opportunities and career paths both inside and outside of IT:U.	<p>2025-2026 Draw up a concept</p> <p>2027 Implement measures</p>
10	Further performance appraisal criteria for academic staff	IT:U endeavours to apply a broad range of excellency criteria to appraise the performance of academic staff and to make visible and promote non-traditional academic achievements. In doing so, IT:U relies on DORA and CoARA recommendations.	<p>2025 Draw up a concept for performance appraisal of academic staff</p> <p>2026 Join CoARA; start to implement the concept</p> <p>2027 Evaluate and, if necessary, revise the concept</p>

11	Indicators in human resources strategy/development	Define indicators to measure and monitor human resources development and junior staff development, in particular as regards appointments, academic staff and the gender pay gap	<p>2025</p> <p>Define indicators together with the BMBWF</p> <p>Starting in 2026</p> <p>First data delivery; if necessary, adjust and widen the scope</p>
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A4.3. Targets related to human resources strategy/development

No.	Targets	Indicator* (cumulative)	Baseline 2024 (31 Oct 2024)	Target		
				2025	2026	2027
1	Professorships tenured/tenure track	Number of professorships filled	11	22	28	32
2	Fellowships	Number of positions filled	5	10		
3	Postdocs	Number of postdoc positions filled during the period covered by this Performance Agreement	14	22	32	36

*All figures stated in this table refer to headcount.

A5. Location development

A5.1. Location-based impacts

IT:U's location and its infrastructure are purpose-oriented: the teaching model of IT:U places students at the centre of the educational process and turns them into (pro-)active participants in their learning journey. Degree programmes are built on projects, with project-based learning at the core of IT:U's educational concept. New skills are developed through hands-on assignments which are worked on and completed in project form. This means that students actively participate in projects to shape their learning paths. While this form of project-based learning is considered ideal according to the latest educational standards, it places very high demands on the number and quality of teachers as well as on new concepts for physical space and infrastructure.

Some initial basic infrastructure with six teaching/learning labs and office space for administrative staff, teachers and researchers has already been established on the first and second floors of SCP4. If IT:U is to grow as planned, more space will be required than is offered by the two floors at SCP4 until the new campus has been completed. Therefore, additional space will be rented in the vicinity of the JKU campus.

The existing premises on the first and second floors of SCP4 covering approximately 3,000 square metres have been adapted as far as possible to suit the requirements of learning, research and administrative operations, while synergies with JKU are being exploited. To accommodate the planned expansion of IT:U, it will be necessary to rent additional space starting from the winter semester of 2025. An architectural design competition was held and completed to select the best proposal for the construction of the new IT:U campus. Additionally, a space allocation and function plan has been agreed and detailed planning has begun in coordination with the prime consultant.

As the City of Linz decided in October 2024 not to go through with the necessary rezoning at the moment, the aforementioned planning process has been temporarily suspended. The City of Linz, the province of Upper Austria and the federal government agreed and laid down in law several years ago that IT:U was to be based in Linz and, in particular, at a site in close vicinity to JKU. This continues to be IT:U's preferred location. If IT:U's location were to be moved elsewhere, it would be necessary to redefine the spatial requirements due to the loss of useful synergies between IT:U and JKU and to adapt the space allocation and function plan. It is intended to obtain clarity on this matter in the first quarter of 2025 so that planning can proceed.

To continue to grow the number of staff members and students at IT:U as planned, it is indispensable to rent additional space on an interim basis to operate and expand IT:U. The Donaufeld property, which has been rented in the meantime, meets all requirements of a teaching and research institution, as it currently houses the R&D department of a microchip

development company. The property spans 6,000 square metres and offers sufficient lab infrastructure, seminar rooms and office space. Due to a relocation of the current tenant, the property will be available from the start of the fourth quarter of 2025. It is also in close proximity to the JKU campus within a walking distance of a few minutes. The lease runs 10 years and is subject to a minimum term of 5 years. This period of 5-10 years is ideal to bridge the transitional period until IT:U is able to move to its new campus.

Several partnerships are already underway or planned to strengthen Upper Austria's business environment.

One example is the partnership with Upper Austrian Research GmbH (UAR), with whom IT:U engages in regular exchange through one or two annual coordination meetings throughout the performance agreement period. UAR is a key player in research, technology and innovation policy in Upper Austria. Since its formation, UAR's central mission has been to act as a strong research partner who provides companies and businesses actively striving for innovation with uncomplicated support in their R&D activities.

By participating in two annual meetings and two annual workshops of the Council for Research and Technology of Upper Austria (RFT OÖ), IT:U contributes its academic perspectives on next-generation technologies to enhance Upper Austria's profile as a great location for business and industry.

Last but not least, IT:U has established an Industry Sounding Board aiming to strengthen dialogue between scientific research and industrial practice. The Industry Sounding Board brings together leading companies such as voestalpine, Fronius, KEBA and Dynatrace to join forces with IT:U in designing interdisciplinary degree programmes.

Additional institutional partnerships and alliances will be established with stakeholders from the worlds of business, industry and society to generate benefits for both sides, allowing for research findings to be transferred and communicated to the industrial sector and for current issues and challenges to be incorporated in projects, final papers and research activities. This enables graduates to engage in an active exchange with the business community and companies to tap into a pool of highly skilled workers.

A5.1.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

IT:U requires a functional infrastructure to achieve the objectives defined in the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities. Location development is therefore indirectly related to all objectives set out therein and directly related to the sub-objective of aligning local structures to make Austria an attractive place to study and conduct research for people from all over the world. In terms of location, cooperation with JKU covers the infrastructure specified in the cooperation agreement. There are also plans to establish a

computing centre for shared use and operation, giving rise to potential synergies. In terms of substance, cooperation between IT:U and JKU is enhanced by a doctoral partnership agreement for the PhD programme in Digital Transformation in Learning.

The establishment and implementation of a state-of-the-art computing centre is included as a key infrastructure project in IT:U's Strategic Development Document. This computing centre is to act as the technological backbone of all universities in Upper Austria and will be built in close cooperation between the universities and the federal government. The plans for the computing centre will be drawn up in close coordination with JKU based on a cooperation agreement governing the use of infrastructure.

A5.1.2. Initiatives related to location-based impacts

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Rent the Donaufeld property	Due to the limited space available at SCP4 (3,000 square metres), it is necessary to rent additional space until the new campus has been completed. The Donaufeld office building spans 6,000 square metres and offers excellent infrastructure for teaching and research.	<p>2025 Move</p> <p>2026 Operation</p>
2	Computing centre (together with JKU)	Develop a concept for a shared computing centre (subject to the implementation of the applicable agreement under Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act [<i>Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz, B-VG</i>])	<p>2025-2027 Develop a concept and draw up plans</p>

B. Research/advancement and appreciation of the arts as well as knowledge/technology transfer

B1. Research strengths/advancement and appreciation of the arts and their structure

IT:U understands teaching, research and Third Mission as three closely related fields of activity that will generate impact for its four major groups of stakeholders: students, academics and scientists, the business community and society.

The focus on impact requires IT:U to advance its strategic planning process⁶ for building future research strengths and key research areas in an iterative and collaborative way, i.e. together with all groups of stakeholders. Digital transformation and computer science will be at the centre of all research activities at IT:U to live up to its status as a technical university. The impact-based approach also means that any priorities to be defined in terms of content will always be set with a view to solving specific key challenges in the context of digitalisation and the SDGs.

To achieve this, it will be necessary to integrate the perspectives of various academic disciplines and to actively promote the principle of academic “convergence”⁷. Approaches to solving key challenges should therefore be developed by academics and scientists who engage in interdisciplinary work at the interface of computer science (in particular AI) and another discipline “X”: “Computational X” is the foundation on which IT:U’s research profile is built, with computer science as a “lingua franca” taking the role of an intermediary between the individual academic disciplines.

IT:U will use the DORA matrix (see A1) to perform quality assurance and to evaluate the performance of academics and scientists. This matrix will also serve as a basis for the career models to be developed during the term of this Performance Agreement.

B1.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

In addition to **IT:U’s inherent key research area of “Computational X”**, a first iteration of the strategic planning process in 2024 identified three key challenges as roadblocks impeding the introduction and use of digital technologies in business and society: **trust**, i.e. how to design and build digital systems that humans can trust, **collaboration**, i.e. how to seamlessly

⁶ For information on IT:U’s strategic planning process, see the Strategic Development Document, Chapter 2.1.1. (draft)

⁷ cf. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) News, 2011: The power of ‘convergence’ (URL: <https://news.mit.edu/2011/convergence-0104> , accessed on 18 November 2024)

collaborate with digital systems, and **learning**, i.e. how to learn effectively with and through digital systems.

In keeping with Objective 1b of the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities, IT:U intends to develop (for the time being) the following three interdisciplinary key research areas to meet these challenges (cf. draft of the Strategic Development Document, pp. 22 et seqq.):

1. Trusted Digital Systems
2. Human-AI Collaboration
3. Innovative Learning Technology

The three key challenges as well as the inherent focus on Computational X have served as structuring elements in the development of PhD and master's programmes (see C1.3.1 and Initiative C2.2.6).

The Bylaws of IT:U provide for a process to further flesh out the interdisciplinary key research areas in the Strategic Development Document. A working group consisting of professors and experts, taking due account of Austria's RTI Strategy 2030, will prepare a draft of the Strategic Development Document, which will then be commented and deliberated on by the International Strategic Advisory Board. A revised version of the Strategic Development Document will be submitted to and voted on by the Founding Convention.

Furthermore, setting up a Grant Office (research service centre) and developing a third-party funding strategy will ensure the best possible use of national, European and international funding opportunities in line with IT:U's focus on interdisciplinarity, cooperation and transdisciplinarity.

B1.2. Initiatives related to research strengths/advancement and appreciation of the arts and their structure

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Develop a research strategy	Participative development of a research strategy for IT:U (in the course of the iterative revision of the Strategic Development Document) with the involvement of professors and taking into account the objectives defined in the federal government's RTI Strategy 2030	2025-2027 Refine the Strategic Development Document on an annual basis, with the initial key research areas being further specified and, if necessary, revised

2	Set up a Grant Office, see also B4.2.1	<p>Set up and put into operation a research service centre for the coordination of third-party-funded projects</p> <p>Develop a third-party funding strategy</p>	<p>2025 Grant Office founded</p> <p>2026/27 Grant Office operative</p> <p>Integrate a third-party funding strategy into the Strategic Development Document for 2027</p>
3	Membership in the Complexity Science Hub	IT:U strives to become a member of the Complexity Science Hub and intends to create a professorship.	<p>2025 Membership requested and granted subject to approval of the CSH meeting of members</p> <p>2026/27 Advertise and fill a professorship in Computational Economics in consultation with the CSH</p>
4	Indicators in research	<p>Define indicators to measure and monitor the research performed at IT:U with regard to third-party funding acquisition, publications and knowledge transfer to the business community. In addition to enabling general comparisons to be drawn with intellectual capital report indicators of public universities under the Universities Act (<i>Universitätsgesetz, UG</i>), the set of indicators to be developed must ensure that the attainment of IT:U's strategic goals is taken into account and made measurable (interdisciplinarity, cooperative projects with businesses, open access, cooperative research projects in the context of project-based teaching, startups founded by students, solutions developed with a view to solving the key challenges, etc.).</p>	<p>2025 Define indicators together with the BMBWF</p> <p>Starting in 2026 First data delivery; if necessary, adjust and widen the scope</p>

B1.3. Target related to research strengths/advancement and appreciation of the arts and their structure

No.	Target	Indicator	Baseline 2024 (31 Oct 2024)	Target		
				2025	2026	2027
1	Acquire third-party funding	Project applications filed with public funding agencies (such as Austrian Science Fund, Christian Doppler Research Association, European Union...) per research group (cumulative)	0	1-2		

B2. Large-scale research infrastructure

Research infrastructures are to be understood as defined in the Austrian Research Infrastructure Action Plan 2030. Participation in the Austrian Research Infrastructure Database of the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) allows for coordinated procurement and cooperative use of (open-for-collaboration) research infrastructure (RTI Strategy 2030, Objective 1; Austrian Research Infrastructure Action Plan 2030, pp. 18 et seq.; Objectives 2b and 2c of the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities). IT:U has been registered in the Austrian Research Infrastructure Database since 2024. (see forschungsinfrastruktur.bmbwf.gv.at/en)

For more information on the shared computing centre to be set up with JKU, see Initiative A5.1.2.2.

B2.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

Depending on the outcome of the location development initiatives (Chapter A5), IT:U will develop a strategy to ensure the synergistic, cooperative and coordinated use of research infrastructures, particularly at its location, together with partners from the industry and in teaching (LearnLabs). As a general rule, IT:U's research infrastructures will be offered as *Open for Collaboration* in the BMBWF's Austrian Research Infrastructure Database.

In parallel with the development of a research strategy as part of the next Strategic Development Document (Initiative B1.2.1), IT:U will also formulate its strategy for research infrastructures based on the key research areas to be further specified, including first approaches on how to best participate in European research infrastructures (ESFRI), i.e. in existing national consortia.

B2.2. Initiative related to large-scale research infrastructure

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Use synergies in research infrastructures	<p>Together with its research strategy yet to be developed, IT:U will map out a strategy on using national and European research infrastructures.</p> <p>IT:U will acquire its own equipment infrastructure depending on the outcome of the location development initiatives (Chapter A5) and the further specification of the key research areas (B1.2.1), but in any case subject to a needs assessment in consideration of comparable research infrastructures available via the</p>	<p>2026</p> <p>Perform a needs assessment for investments in and access to existing national or European research infrastructures</p> <p>2027</p> <p>Integrate a research infrastructure strategy into</p>

		<p>BMBWF's Austrian Research Infrastructure Database. Where possible, synergies will be used, e.g. user fee systems are preferred to purchasing new equipment.</p> <p>As a general rule, IT:U's research infrastructures will be listed as <i>Open for Collaboration</i> in the BMBWF's Austrian Research Infrastructure Database.</p>	the Strategic Development Document for 2027
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B2.3. Target related to large-scale research infrastructure

No.	Target	Indicator	Baseline 2024	Target		
				2025	2026	2027
1	<i>Open-for-Collaboration</i> research infrastructures	Number of research infrastructures published as open for cooperative use in the Austrian Research Infrastructure Database of the BMBWF	0	>1		

B3. Knowledge/technology transfer to the business community and exploitation

B3.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

At IT:U, generating knowledge and promoting technological progress should not be an end to itself, but should always have a practical application in mind. Communicating knowledge and putting it into practice are just as relevant as generating knowledge as such. The Strategic Development Document therefore provides for appropriate structures and alliances to be set up.

There are multiple strategies to ensure the transfer of knowledge into practice. On the one hand, a strong focus is placed on equipping students, i.e. the researchers/workforce of the future, with transdisciplinary and analytical skills. On the other hand, traditional formats of academic publications are supplemented by Third Mission activities geared towards specific target groups and practical applications (cf. A2), which includes joint projects with partners in industry and business (see draft of the Strategic Development Document, 1.3.7). During the first performance agreement period, an Outreach Centre will be set up to act as a point of contact for the business community.

The Outreach Centre will also take on the role of a technology transfer office, offer advice and support services, and develop a strategy for protecting and exploiting intellectual property. The activities of the Outreach Centre and of IT:U in knowledge and technology transfer will be reported to the BMBWF on an annual basis using an online tool (list of questions) supplied by the BMBWF.

To foster an active dialogue with the business and industrial community in Upper Austria, IT:U collaborates with various partners and plans to forge new alliances. To support these activities, an Industry Sounding Board has been set up (cf. Chapter A5).

B3.2. Initiatives related to knowledge/technology transfer to the business community and exploitation

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Set up an Outreach Centre	The Outreach Centre will also fulfil the tasks of a technology transfer office (TTO). Networking measures will be implemented to build up a network for technology transfer from and to the industrial and business community.	2026 Develop a concept 2027 Set up the Outreach Centre

			Develop and publish a strategy on protecting and exploiting intellectual property
2	Startup culture	<p>The goal is to establish a startup culture for students very quickly while setting up R&D and degree programmes. The TTO (Outreach Centre) will provide the required support services.</p> <p>IT:U will focus on creating its own startup culture, acquiring skills related to exploitation models and, in particular, networking. Membership in the Entrepreneurship Center Network will be conducive to supra-regional networking. The ECN will also enable IT:U to benefit from existing best practices in building successful startups (e.g. spin-off framework, sample contracts, etc.)</p>	<p>2026 Develop a strategy</p> <p>2027 Implement strategy goals, network, and obtain membership in the Entrepreneurship Center Network (ECN)</p>

B4. The University in the context of the European Research Area

B4.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

In keeping with its international profile, IT:U strives for close cooperation and strong networks within the European Higher Education Area, which includes participation in EU funding programmes such as Horizon Europe. Early engagement with the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), the National Contact Point supporting universities in applying for EU funding (“ERA-Dialog”), will allow IT:U to best prepare for and take due account of the EU’s Tenth Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10) when developing its research and third-party funding strategy (B1.2.1, B1.2.2). IT:U’s impact-oriented philosophy and focus on present-day social challenges is in line with the mission-oriented approach of the current Horizon Europe framework programme.

B4.2. Initiatives related to the University in the context of the European Research Area

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	European Research Area	<p>Set up a research service centre to assist with applying for funding and grant administration</p> <p>Contact and communicate with the National Contact Points (NCPs) of the FFG</p> <p>In its research and third-party funding strategy (see B1.2.1 and B1.2.2), IT:U will put a particular focus on the European Research Area (ERA). Strategic considerations concerning the use of European funding opportunities (such as the Framework Programmes) are taken into account just as much as the initiatives of the current Austrian Action Plan for the European Research Area (ERA-NAP).</p>	<p>2025 Grant Office founded</p> <p>2026/27 Evaluate participation in FP10 in consideration of IT:U’s strategy when reviewing the development of the research strategy (see B1.2.1)</p>
2	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions	Suitable Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions will be selected and promoted	<p>2026 Structure implemented to provide support in applying for scholarships under Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions</p>

3	UNINOVIS	Set up a partnership with the UNINOVIS network of universities	2025 Take up relations with UNINOVIS
4	Cybersecurity Skills Coalition – European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (CSC-EDIC)	Participate in CSC-EDIC as a partner	2025 Negotiations under way on participating in CSC-EDIC 2026-2027 Define content and involve research groups

C. Teaching

C1. Degree programmes

Together with research and Third Mission activities, teaching students is one of the three pillars of any higher education institution. Accordingly, IT:U places particular emphasis on teaching and the design of degree programmes with a view to meeting the challenges of our time.

C1.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

IT:U will develop degree programmes demonstrating the highest standards in teaching, thus offering students a comprehensive and academically sound education. Degree programmes should be firmly grounded in research and focus on acquiring skills on all academic levels. The manifold degree programmes offered by the University are aimed at students from various academic backgrounds and, thanks to their inclusive design, offer adequate conditions enabling all students to finish their studies in due time (“academic feasibility”) regardless of their personal circumstances.

C1.2. Assessment of performance in terms of degree programmes

In order to be able to quantitatively assess IT:U's performance in terms of its degree programmes, the specific requirements for teaching-related performance indicators will be explored together with the BMBWF during the current performance agreement period. As far as possible and reasonable, consideration should be given to compatibility with the relevant performance indicators of public universities under the Universities Act (*Universitätsgesetz, UG*). The indicators to be developed should allow for a certain degree of comparability between IT:U and other public universities, while at the same time taking into account the special framework and strategic objectives of IT:U.

1	Indicators for degree programmes	Define indicators to measure and monitor IT:U's performance in terms of its degree programmes, in particular with regard to graduation (with/without stay abroad), examination activity (i.e. a certain minimum number of examinations actively taken by students in an academic year) and student mobility (outgoing/incoming). In	2025 Define indicators together with the BMBWF Starting in 2026 First data delivery; if necessary, adjust and widen the scope
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		addition to enabling general comparisons to be drawn with intellectual capital report indicators of public universities under the Universities Act, the set of indicators to be developed must ensure that the attainment of IT:U's strategic goals is taken into account and made measurable.	
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1. List of bachelor's and master's programmes⁸ in place (winter semester 2024/25)

None

2. Degree programmes set up in cooperation with other educational institutions⁹

None

3. Doctoral/PhD programmes in place

Name of the degree programme	Code	Type of degree programme	Notes
PhD programme in "Digital Transformation of Active Learning"	U UZ 794 820 906	PhD programme	in cooperation with JKU*
PhD programme in "Computational X"	U UZ 794 825 906	PhD programme	

*This cooperation with IT:U was not concluded within the meaning of section 54d or section 54e of the Universities Act.

C1.3. Initiatives related to degree programmes

IT:U will offer PhD programmes focusing on digital transformation starting in the 2024/25 academic year and master's programmes starting in 2025/26. With a view to offering the first bachelor's programmes in 2029, preparatory arrangements will be initiated in the current performance agreement period.

⁸ within the meaning of section 7 of the Universities Act, sorted according to ISCED 4 (ISCED-F 2013)

⁹ within the meaning of section 54d or section 54e of the Universities Act

1. Initiatives to establish new or change existing degree programmes

No.	Name of the degree programme	Planned implementation	Relation to research/ advancement and appreciation of the arts as well as the development plan	In cooperation with other tertiary educational institutions
1	Master's programme in "Interdisciplinary Computing"	2025	Master's programme	

2. Initiatives to discontinue degree programmes

None

C2. Organisation of teaching/learning

Today's education system is tasked with providing higher education that meets the challenges of our time. IT:U is in the privileged position of not having to work within the confinement of pre-defined locations and procedures, but of being able to rethink teaching and its organisation from scratch. Accordingly, the logical consequence is to move away from traditional lecture formats towards project-based hands-on formats with small group sizes.

As set out in Chapter A1, IT:U's unique characteristics are its project-based learning methodology together with its LearnLabs and the development and implementation of teaching and learning technology (LearnTech).

As a general rule, learning at IT:U takes place in LearnProjects in groups of 5-10 students. Each LearnProject will work on a challenge to be analysed, in a first step, from the perspective of various disciplines. As the LearnProject progresses, teaching content will be introduced to the project (e.g. through seminars) and applied immediately. At any point in time, each student will work on one LearnProject only. Over the course of one semester, students will work on a number of LearnProjects that may differ in terms of complexity and duration. Students will be supported and instructed not only by their professors, but also by other learning professionals (such as lab experts, coaches, academic instructors).

In the interest of bringing together teaching, research and Third Mission, proposals for a challenge to be dealt with in a LearnProject may originate from researchers, the industry, NGOs, society, communities, etc., or from students themselves. A committee will examine the challenge for suitability and compatibility with the curriculum before it is actually introduced into a LearnProject.

Students are evaluated based on seminar performance assessments and project results as well as participation in LearnProjects. Throughout their studies, students will gather records of the skills they acquired within the IT:U Competence and Skills Framework, thereby filling their qualification portfolio. A degree will be awarded if students have verifiably obtained all competencies and skills required by their curriculum. In addition to the above, various performance assessment methods such as evaluation grids, peer evaluations and presentations can be used to assess a student's understanding of a particular subject and their ability for cooperative problem-solving. Formative assessment provided during a project allows for continuous feedback and the chance to improve, thus fostering a dynamic learning process. Assessments will cover not only academic knowledge, but also skills relating to team work, communication, creativity and problem solving, thus promoting a holistic approach to education that puts students on the path to success in a rapidly changing world.

As IT:U's methodology of project-based learning (PBL) is relatively resource-intensive, the University must also develop approaches and digital tools that ensure the scalability of this methodology in the years after 2027.

The spatial elements involved in teaching are LearnLabs and seminar rooms, where students are introduced to technologies and teaching contents, and ProjectSpaces for self-directed learning. Optimised curriculum design will allow for two small groups at a time to share a ProjectSpace and two small groups per day to be taught in a LearnLab.

Nevertheless, to ensure the required scalability of its teaching methodology, IT:U must work on and develop new learning technologies (LearnTech). In fact, developing and testing new LearnTech is part of IT:U's mission. Consequently, these new technologies will be incorporated directly into teaching at IT:U, with a major focus on shifting teaching to the digital space. If IT:U succeeds in fully or partly digitalising

- work in ProjectSpaces
- learning in LearnLabs
- and seminars

by developing appropriate LearnTech tools and online teaching models, on-site learning spaces (LearnLabs, ProjectSpaces and seminar rooms) will be available to be used by an ever-increasing number of student groups over the years. We are convinced that physical attendance can be replaced, in part, by technology-based distance learning (such as self-study at home, attending online seminars from home, etc.) over the coming years.

C2.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

The introduction of project-based learning requires new methods of dealing with performance assessments, learning objectives and teaching materials. IT:U is working on developing and formalising these methods.

Learning modules will familiarise students with theories, methods and technologies of digital transformation, which they can apply when working on projects. IT:U strives to develop and offer a wide variety of high-quality learning modules. The number of learning modules will increase along with the number of degree programmes and students.

In addition to the wide range of disciplines being taught in Linz, international student mobility will have its place as well. Extracurricular support will be offered to increase academic feasibility for all students regardless of their personal circumstances.

C2.2. Initiatives related to the organisation of teaching/learning (including academic feasibility and internationalisation)

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Erasmus	IT:U joins the Erasmus+ network	<p>2025 Sign the Erasmus Charter</p> <p>2026 Establish an International Office</p>
2	Provide for mobility windows in curricula	All existing and planned degree programmes offer mobility windows starting from the 3rd semester	<p>2026 Taken into account in curricula development</p>
3	EduCare Centre	Set up and operate a contact point for extracurricular student support throughout the entire student lifecycle, focusing on support with application, admission, and re-registration procedures. Services will also include the library and the Student Welcome Service as well as support structures such as mental health services and a Writing Centre. Further formats to increase academic feasibility will be developed as needed.	<p>2025 EduCare Centre established as an active contact point for students Library (in electronic form at first) set up for students, researchers and teachers</p> <p>2026 Set up mental health services Establish an ombuds office at IT:U</p> <p>2027 Offer welcome activities</p>

4	Develop the project-based learning (PBL) methodology and continue developing it in an iterative way	A central element of IT:U's PBL methodology are LearnLabs, where students are supported by professors and learning professionals such as coaches, LearnLab experts and lecturers. Canvas LMS will be used to implement the PBL methodology and will be further developed as needed, with a special focus on evaluation of and training for teaching staff (cf. A4.2.8).	<p>2025 Initial PBL methodology developed and implemented in first curricula</p> <p>2026 Review PBL methodology V1.0 and refine to create V2.0</p> <p>2027 Review PBL methodology V2.0 and refine to create V3.0</p>
5	Develop and continue developing first LearnLabs	LearnLabs are a key infrastructural element of project-based learning. Currently, there are 6 LearnLabs with more in the planning stage.	<p>2025-2027 Based on the Strategic Development Document, develop 3-5 further LearnLabs and open them for students</p>
6	Specialisations in the PhD programme in Computational X	The PhD programme in Computational X offers various specialisations, with two further specialisations yet to be added: working title "Human AI Collaboration" and "Trust"	<p>2025-2027 1-2 further specialisations</p>
7	Specialisations in the master's programme in Interdisciplinary Computing	Set up further specialisations in the master's programme	<p>2027 1-2 further specialisations</p>

C.2.3. Target related to students and degree programmes

No.	Target	Indicator	Baseline 2024 (31 Oct 2024)	Target		
				2025	2026	2027
1	Increase the number of students (MA)	Number of students in MA programmes (cumulative)	0	40	116	232

C3. Continuing education

Self-regulated lifelong learning beyond academic qualifications is highly relevant, especially in times of rapid change and considering the increasing rate at which the half-life of knowledge is diminishing. Continuing education certificate programmes are a suitable means of meeting these challenges.

Higher education institutions usually design these certificate programmes to build on or supplement their degree programmes. As IT:U is currently in the process of developing its first degree programmes, continuing education certificate programmes will be addressed only in the upcoming performance agreement.

D. Other spheres of activity

D1. Cooperation

D1.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

The Strategic Development Document provides for national and international alliances in the areas of both research and teaching, specifically in the context of doctoral programmes. Such alliances are to connect various higher education and research institutions and ensure a good relationship with businesses and society, with the involvement of both the administrative structures based in Linz and the relevant administrative units of the federal government.

D1.2. Initiatives related to cooperation

IT:U intends to establish strategic alliances with higher education institutions and non-university academic institutions, and to engage in an active dialogue with businesses and society in the form of joint teaching and research projects as well as Third Mission activities. Sharing expertise and experience in the sense of a community of practice is something that IT:U strives for across all subject areas. With a view to sharing best practice and experience with other higher education institutions, IT:U will join well-established structures and networks. At the time this Performance Agreement is entered into, some alliances have already been forged by joining the association “Forum neue Medien Austria” (FNMA) to promote synergies between digital educational programmes as well as the UniKid-UniCare Austria (UUA) network described in A2.2. Another item on the agenda is to join the Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity (OeAWI) to strengthen and integrate academic and artistic integrity. In terms of international cooperation, strategic partnerships will be forged to pursue common goals of interdisciplinary research or cooperation on teaching methods such as project-based learning. These alliances differ from higher-education partnerships aimed at student mobility. Cooperation with Austrian universities is planned with the Johannes Kepler University Linz (JKU), the University of Arts Linz, the Paris Lodron University of Salzburg (PLUS) and the Vienna University of Technology (TU Wien). The specific objectives of the individual cooperative efforts are to be negotiated by the individual university rectors.

Should the occasion arise, IT:U will participate in the BMBWF-funded nationwide university projects on cybersecurity and “Academic AI Services”.

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Cooperation with University of Arts Linz	Cooperate in research and teaching (define joint interdisciplinary fields for teaching, research, advancement and appreciation of the arts and design)	<p>2025 Cooperation agreement: negotiate and conclude, if possible</p> <p>2026-2027 Implement projects etc. as provided for in the cooperation agreement</p>
2	Cooperation with JKU	Establish cooperation with a view to joint strategic growth, promoting Upper Austria as an attractive location for higher education and leveraging synergies	<p>2025-2027 Regular coordination meetings and start of joint projects</p>
3	International cooperation	Develop international alliances	<p>2025 Establish contact and explore the potential for collaboration with a selection of international partners</p> <p>2026 Establish 1 international alliance</p>
4	Complexity Science Hub	Become a member and establish research cooperation (see also Initiative B1.2.3)	<p>2025 Membership granted</p> <p>2027 Research cooperation established</p>

D2. Internationalisation

D2.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

An International Office will be set up as a single point of contact to ensure that stays abroad, joint educational programmes, research projects and other activities in the framework of international cooperation are managed in a structured and transparent way. To enhance research security in international cooperation, IT:U has already been actively involved in initiatives on research security and foreign interference and has designated suitable contact points at IT:U. To ensure that the goals of these initiatives are met and sustained in the long term, appropriate processes will be put in place at IT:U.

D2.2. Initiatives related to internationalisation

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Set up an International Office	Implement and activate the International Office as a single point of contact with a special focus on partnerships in the USA	2025 Set up an International Office 2026 Work out an internationalisation strategy
2	International relations/ partner institutions	Set up research and teaching partnerships with international higher education institutions	2026 Establish 2 partnerships with higher education institutions
3	Develop and implement measures to enhance research security	To enhance research security and resilience in international cooperation and mobility, specific measures will be developed to raise awareness of related risks and introduce appropriate safeguards to be able to detect and prevent foreign interference at an early stage. In developing these measures, due consideration is given to the recommendations issued by the European Council on enhancing research security (Council Recommendation (EU) C/2024/3510 of 23 May 2024). The internationalisation strategy will be developed with due consideration of the	2025 Single point of contact designated; report in the 2 nd meeting with the BMBWF to monitor fulfilment of the goals of this Performance Agreement, with a written report to be sent before the meeting

		<p>European fundamental values and principles of international cooperation and a risk appraisal will be performed.</p> <p>A single point of contact will be set up for coordination.</p> <p>Specific measures and guidelines will be developed and implemented to address all affected organisational areas such as legal affairs and contracts, human resources, mobility management, physical security, etc.</p> <p>All of the above will be accompanied by awareness-raising measures.</p> <p>Cybersecurity matters, in particular the attribution of cyberattacks, are recognised as part of foreign interference. Given the existing legal framework and established structures, however, network and information system (NIS) security/cybersecurity is not considered a core area for measures to be taken to enhance research security. What must be ensured is a coherent strategic approach within the organisation and an appropriate exchange of information as well as proper integration of NIS/cybersecurity matters in research security (such as a policy for hardware taken on business travel).</p>	<p>2026</p> <p>Risk appraisal completed; specific measures and/or guidelines implemented</p> <p>2027</p> <p>Apply; evaluate; adjust</p>
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D3. Administration and administrative services

D3.1. Relation to the Austrian National Development Plan for Public Universities and the Strategic Development Document

Efficient administration and clearly defined administrative services are the backbone of any well-functioning higher education institution. Lean structures with clear responsibilities and flat hierarchies are conducive to creating and sustaining IT:U's working and learning culture as envisaged in the Strategic Development Document.

D3.2. Initiatives related to administration and administrative services

No.	Name of the initiative	Brief description of the initiative	Milestones in implementation
1	Digitalisation strategy	A digitalisation strategy will be developed with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. The strategy will cover the areas of research, teaching and administration.	2025 Requirement meeting with all stakeholders Develop strategy Define targets related to operationalisation 2026-2027 Achieve targets
2	Finance, project and HR controlling	IT:U will manage its finances itself; external reporting to stakeholders, in particular to the BMBWF, will be set up.	2025 Set up a finance, project and HR controlling system 2026 Comprehensive controlling and reporting Establish suitable KPIs in consultation with the BMBWF 2027 Comprehensive system of reporting to the BMBWF
3	Employer branding	Establishing IT:U as a great place to work is essential for attracting highly qualified teaching, research and administrative staff.	2025 Involve all stakeholders to define requirements 2026 Strategy paper completed Targets and measures defined

			Start implementing 2027 Implement
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D3.3. Target related to administration and administrative services

No.	Target	Indicator	Baseline 2024 (31 Oct 2024)	Target		
				2025	2026	2027
1	Participate in education fairs	Number of fairs (per year)	0	3	5	5

Summary of initiatives

No.	Name of the initiative	Page in the Performance Agreement
A. Strategic objectives, academic profiles, social goals and human resources strategy		
A2.2.1. Initiatives related to general social goals		
1	Equal opportunities and women's advancement	10
2	Inclusion of people with disabilities	10
3	Compatibility of studies, work and family life	10 et seq.
4	Target group marketing	11
5	Sustainable IT:U	11
A2.3.1. Initiatives related to science communication/knowledge transfer to society		
1	Develop a science communication strategy	12
2	Science communication formats	12
A3.2. Initiatives related to quality assurance		
1	Develop a quality assurance concept	14
2	Guidelines for ensuring good academic practice	14
3	Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity (OeAWI)	15
A4.2. Initiatives related to human resources structure/development		
1	Professorships – tenured/tenure track	18
2	Fellowships	18
3	Postdocs	18
4	Set up the Department Science & Education	18 et seq.
5	Set up the Department Central Services	19 et seq.
6	Diversity concept	20
7	Develop functional profiles for academic staff	20
8	Training and staff development	20
9	Career paths for academic staff	20
10	Further performance appraisal criteria for academic staff	20
11	Indicators in human resources strategy/development	21

A5.1.2. Initiatives related to location-based impacts		
1	Rent the Donaufeld property	24
2	Computing centre (together with JKU)	24
B. Research/advancement and appreciation of the arts as well as knowledge/technology transfer		
B1.2. Initiatives related to research strengths/advancement and appreciation of the arts and their structure		
1	Develop a research strategy	26
2	Set up a Grant Office	27
3	Membership in the Complexity Science Hub	27
4	Indicators in research	27
B2.2. Initiative related to large-scale research infrastructure		
1	Use synergies in research infrastructures	29 et seq.
B3.2. Initiatives related to knowledge/technology transfer to the business community and exploitation		
1	Set up an Outreach Centre	31 et seq.
2	Startup culture	32
B4.2. Initiatives related to the University in the context of the European Research Area		
1	European Research Area	33
2	Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions	33
3	UNINOVIS	34
4	Cybersecurity Skills Coalition – European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (CSC-EDIC)	34
C. Teaching		
C1.2. Assessment of performance in terms of degree programmes		
1	Indicators for degree programmes	35 et seq.
C1.3. Initiatives related to degree programmes		
1	Master's programme in "Interdisciplinary Computing"	37
C2.2. Initiatives related to the organisation of teaching/learning (including academic feasibility and internationalisation)		
1	Erasmus	40
2	Provide for mobility windows in curricula	40
3	EduCare Centre	40

4	Develop the project-based learning (PBL) methodology and continue developing it in an iterative way	41
5	Develop and continue developing first LearnLabs	41
6	Specialisations in the PhD programme in Computational X	41
7	Specialisations in the master's programme in Interdisciplinary Computing	41
D. Other spheres of activity		
D1.2. Initiatives related to cooperation		
1	Cooperation with University of Arts Linz	44
2	Cooperation with JKU	44
3	International cooperation	44
4	Complexity Science Hub	44
D2.2. Initiatives related to internationalisation		
1	Set up an International Office	45
2	International relations/partner institutions	45
3	Develop and implement measures to enhance research security	45 et seq.
D3.2. Initiatives related to administration and administrative services		
1	Digitalisation strategy	47
2	Finance, project and HR controlling	47
3	Employer branding	47 et seq.

Summary of targets

A. Strategic objectives, academic profiles, social goals and human resources strategy		
A2.3.2. Targets related to science communication/knowledge transfer to society		
1	Science communication formats	13
2	Science and democracy ambassadors	13
A4.3. Targets related to human resources strategy/development		
1	Professorships – tenured/tenure track	21
2	Fellowships	21
3	Postdocs	21
B. Research/advancement and appreciation of the arts as well as knowledge/technology transfer		
B1.3. Target related to research strengths/advancement and appreciation of the arts and their structure		
1	Acquire third-party funding	28
B2.3. Target related to large-scale research infrastructure		
1	<i>Open-for-Collaboration</i> research infrastructures	30
C. Teaching		
C2.3. Target related to students and degree programmes		
1	Increase the number of students (MA)	41
D. Other spheres of activity		
D3.3. Target related to administration and administrative services		
1	Participate in education fairs	48

Undertakings made by the federal government

The University receives a global budget in the total amount of EUR 104,184,038 (pursuant to the Agreement under Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act [*Bundes-Verfassungsgesetz, B-VG*]) to perform its tasks and implement this Performance Agreement in the period from 1 January 2025 to 31 December 2027. Additionally, the University receives the indexation amount accruing every year (pursuant to Article 2 (5) of the Agreement under Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act). The funds are allocated as set out in Annex 2 of the Agreement under Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act based on a payment schedule to be updated quarterly.

According to the Agreement under Article 15a of the Federal Constitutional Act between the Federal Government and the Province of Upper Austria on the Establishment and Operation of the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria and its annexes, the province of Upper Austria shall contribute to the financing of the University during its development stage. The contributions made by the province of Upper Austria are not included in the global budget agreed above and will be made available by the province of Upper Austria on a separate basis.

Other agreements

Reporting

The President agrees to meet with the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) twice a year to monitor fulfilment of the goals defined in this Performance Agreement. The Founding Convention must be provided with a report following these meetings.

Pursuant to section 17 para 3 subpara 3 of the Federal Act on the Institute of Digital Sciences Austria (Interdisciplinary Transformation University), a report on the implementation of the targets and initiatives defined in this Performance Agreement must be submitted by 30 March of each year for the preceding year. Monitoring of the performance agreement must follow a pre-defined structure specified by the BMBWF and comply with the BMBWF's system and data requirements. Reporting on the initiatives must include a colour-coded status (red/amber/green) for the relevant year under review. After the second budget year of a performance agreement period, monitoring of the performance agreement must also include a forecast of the expected results of the individual initiatives and targets.

Administration of funds

1. Together with the financial statements, the Interdisciplinary Transformation University Austria (IT:U) shall electronically submit a corporate governance report under Chapter 15

of the Federal Public Corporate Governance Code 2017 (*Bundes Public Corporate Governance Kodex, B-PCGK 2017*) every year based on the model provided by the BMBWF.

2. Upon submission of the draft performance agreement for the performance agreement period 2028-2030, the University undertakes to electronically provide a cost estimate for the services to be provided under that performance agreement based on the model prepared by the BMBWF.

Provision of data and indicators

1. The BMBWF and IT:U agree that IT:U shall transmit student and study data held as part of its student records to the BMBWF and statistical data relevant for compiling federal education statistics to Statistics Austria via the technologically standardised data network of universities and higher education institutions for the purpose of statistics, management/controlling and performance assessment until such time as IT:U is specifically included in the Education Documentation Act 2020 (*Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz, BilDokG 2020*) and in the Regulation on the Statistics of Universities and Higher Education Institutions and on Education Documentation (*Universitäts- und Hochschulstatistik- und Bildungsdokumentationsverordnung, UHSBV*). This serves to ensure compliance with data protection requirements.
2. IT:U must ensure that the student and study data for the 2024/25 winter semester are available in the data network of universities and higher education institutions via the designated interface on the data retrieval dates of 2 January 2025 and 13 March 2025.
3. Together with the BMBWF, IT:U participates in developing plausible, meaningful indicators designed to reflect, in particular, the University's performance in the areas of research and teaching.

Other agreements

Without prejudice to any other legal provisions, IT:U agrees to discuss matters pertaining to its **human resources structure planning** together with the BMBWF upon request.

IT:U undertakes to refine the implementation of the **European Framework for Research Careers, including the European Charter for Researchers**, which was published in December 2023, as needed and to take into account the findings of the Higher Education Conference Working Group on "Research Assessment and Career Paths for Researchers: National Recommendations for Austria in the Context of the European Research Area" (published in April 2024). Furthermore, IT:U undertakes to become a member of the Austrian Agency for Scientific Integrity (OeAWI).

Insofar as the national funds (in particular the global budget) available or allocated for projects co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) are insufficient, additional costs incurred as a result of such projects may be covered from EU funds.

For each project that is co-financed by the ERDF, universities must define in advance, in a legally binding and transparent manner for ERDF auditing purposes, the amount of the funds allocated from the global budget to secure the financing of the project costs.

IT:U supports measures taken by the BMBWF for “online onboarding” (admission without submission of documents using the ID Austria/eID) and digital student ID cards (using the federal government’s digital ID card platform, similar to the digital driving licence) and promotes the implementation of such measures within its sphere of responsibility.

Measures in case of non-fulfilment

The BMBWF is responsible for providing the budgetary funds specified in this Performance Agreement.

The University is responsible for ensuring that the initiatives and targets specified in this Performance Agreement are completed and achieved. It is committed to the principles of economical, transparent and efficient budgetary management and undertakes to reach a balanced budget over the 2025-2027 performance agreement period. This is evidenced by a break-even net result, at least cumulatively over the three years, taking into account any adjustments to profits carried forward and/or reserves from previous periods. Within the agreed budget and the applicable legal framework, the University shall autonomously take any corrective action that is deemed necessary to achieve the set targets based on ongoing monitoring.

If – at the latest when forecasting the expected results in the context of performance agreement monitoring – it becomes apparent that the agreed initiatives or targets cannot be completed or achieved, appropriate steps or corrective action must be taken during the current performance agreement period in consultation and agreement between the parties following a detailed analysis and explanation of the underlying reasons. This also applies accordingly if it is impossible to achieve a balanced budget cumulatively over the 2025-2027 performance agreement period due to general economic conditions.

Amendments to the Performance Agreement

This Performance Agreement may be amended or supplemented during its term by mutual agreement of both parties in the event of major changes to the conditions underlying this Performance Agreement.

Any amendments or additions to this Performance Agreement must be made in writing and are subject to publication.

Vienna, on

Linz, on

For the
Republic of Austria

For the
Interdisciplinary Transformation
University Austria

Federal Minister of Education,
Science and Research
Martin Polaschek

Founding President
Stefanie Lindstaedt