Strategic Plan of the School of Law of the University of Tartu for 2017-2022

This draft has been adopted

MISSION

The mission of the School of Law of the University of Tartu is to shape the academic foundations necessary for the continued functioning of the Estonian legal system and to educate highly qualified, responsible lawyers for the Estonian and international market through high-level, research-based teaching.

VISION FOR 2022

The School of Law is the leading and innovative centre of law and legal education conducting high-level, internationally competitive educational, research and development activities for the benefit of the functioning of the Estonian legal system.

CORE VALUES

In its activities, the School of Law adheres to the core values of the University of Tartu: research-based activities, academic freedom and autonomy, openness to novel ideas, cooperation, a human-centred approach and individual development, and responsibility.
FACULTY OBJECTIVES AND MEASURES

STUDIES

The objective of the School of Law of the University of Tartu is to be the leading provider of research-based higher education in the field of law in Estonia across all levels of study. Studies will provide the knowledge and skills necessary for working in positions (above all as judges, prosecutors, attorneys-at-law, and notaries) requiring the highest legal qualifications.

OBJECTIVES IN STUDIES

- Students at the School of Law value learning and are capable, motivated, diligent, and active. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Introduction of the options for studying at the School of Law of the University of Tartu by various methods;
  - Application of admission criteria allowing for the acceptance of highly capable students;
  - Introduction and dissemination of good learning practices to students;
  - Finding new ways of recognising the best students.

- The curricula of the School of Law correspond to the needs of society and employers. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Development of curricula in cooperation with employers;
  - Involvement of practitioners and foreign lecturers in the study process;
  - Dissemination of information introducing the options for international study and learning experiences.

- In teaching, the various needs of students are considered and up-to-date teaching methods and materials are used. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Teaching of Law via both non-distance and distance learning;
  - In addition to providing a strong theoretical foundation, development of the practical skills of students, including general skills;
  - E-learning methods;
  - Application of good teaching practices;
  - Encouragement of faculty members to participate in activities that increase their teaching competence;
  - Compiling and updating of textbooks on the main fields of law.
• The learning process and specialisation-related development of students are supported. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  o Encouragement of students to develop their study skills;
  o Encouragement of students to use the help of tutors;
  o Cooperation with employers to facilitate the intermediation of internship and job offers.

• The best opportunities for continued education in law are offered to various target groups. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  o Development of part-time study opportunities in Tallinn;
  o Development of curricula in collaboration with employers.

DOCTORAL STUDIES

The main objective of the School of Law of the University of Tartu regarding doctoral studies is to train an internationally competitive future generation of legal academics.

OBJECTIVES IN DOCTORAL STUDIES

• The School of Law increases the number of student places for non-distance learning every year. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measure:
  o Use of private and public sector resources to finance the creation of student places for doctoral students outside the state activity support.

• Doctoral students of the School of Law publish international publications more frequently (including as co-authors). This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  o More frequent and efficient informing of doctoral students about existing resources that support publishing, including DORA and ASTRA measures;
  o Increased attention towards assuring that supervisors work with doctoral students in a more motivated and systematic way.

• At least half of the doctoral students enrolled at the School of Law of the University of Tartu graduate within a period of study comprising the nominal period of study plus two years. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  o Regular review of the progress of doctoral students and provision of support to ensure that at least four doctoral students reach graduation in each calendar year;
  o Implementation of co-supervision.
RESEARCH

The objective of the School of Law of the University of Tartu is to be a leading, internationally recognised centre for high-level research in law as well as the fields of inter- and multidisciplinary legal research. The School of Law has strong centres of excellence in high-priority areas of research and is the primary centre in its field for the development of the scientific foundations necessary for the functioning of the Estonian legal order, guaranteeing the scientific analysis of the Estonian legal system.

OBJECTIVES IN RESEARCH

- The School of Law offers science-based solutions to societal and legal issues. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Hiring of assistants to increase the effectiveness of research activities;
  - Increased allocation of resources to the assistants’ fund.

- The School of Law is internationally competitive in the following areas of research and scientific inquiry: international law (including Russia-oriented studies), comparative study of legal cultures and IT law (legal issues in the digital world). This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Hiring at least one Research Fellow in high-priority areas of research;
  - Creating centres of research (the centre of international law in Tallinn).

- The mobility and international research experience of the Research Fellows has increased. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - More frequent use of various academic mobility programmes’ funding options;
  - Creating and developing a system for appointing substitute faculty.

- The research staff of the School of Law will publish high-quality works that carry significance and are important in both the Estonian and European Union legal landscapes. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - To increase the time available to faculty for the purpose of working on publications, the creation of a system for appointing substitute faculty (the possibility of temporarily releasing a person from performing his or her teaching duties and allowing that free time to be invested into doing research and publishing);
  - Finding ways to involve internationally recognised academics in the activities of the School of Law both through long-term employment opportunities, post-doctoral programmes, etc. as well as via short-term work visits and giving guest lectures;
  - Increasing the effectiveness of the faculty/research assistant system.

- The publications of the research staff of the School of Law have higher visibility in the future. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
THE SCHOOL OF LAW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TARTU AND SOCIETY

OBJECTIVES IN THE SOCIETAL CONTEXT

- Law is valued equally with other scientific disciplines in the Estonian academic landscape; the research financing system is more just from a legal perspective (not solely based on bibliometrics) and takes into account the specific nature of law. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measure:
  - Resolutely explaining that law is of national importance and a national science worthy of increased funding that allows to maintain and further the democratic and rule-of-law foundations of the Republic of Estonia.

- The School of Law is a strong and recognised partner to the public sector to whom the latter turns for expert advice, from whom area-specific studies can be procured, and in cooperation with whom area-specific high-level events and conferences are organised. The School of Law of the University of Tartu is consistently and systematically involved in societal discussions. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Continued dissemination of the results of applied research, especially via law commentaries, case law analyses, etc.

- The School of Law assures the dissemination of important and current area-specific works to the public, introducing its own work and stimulating public discussion. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:
  - Publication of current and important research results via the School of Law’s online resources and, when possible, media channels;
  - Active participation and advising by representatives of the School of Law on current topics in public discussions of societal matters;
  - Publication of area-related articles and important information on the School of Law’s website;
  - Remaining up-to-date on area-related discussions in the media, using media monitoring as necessary;
  - To assure increased media visibility, carrying out communication with the public under the name of the School of Law of the University of Tartu when possible.
• The School of Law plays an important role in supporting the creation of an innovation- and entrepreneurship-friendly legal environment. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:

  o Supporting the development of a legal environment conducive to democratic governance;
  o Initiating research into and public discussion on topics and issues important to Estonian society;
  o Active participation in legislative drafting.

THE ORGANISATION

OBJECTIVES IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ORGANISATION

• The staff at the School of Law of the University of Tartu receive salaries comparable with other paid positions\(^1\) outside the university that require legal qualifications. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:

  o Representatives of the School of Law raising the issue of low salaries both in the public and in the university more resolutely in the future;
  o Actively seeking new supplementary sources of funding, which would allow, among other things, raising the salaries of the School of Law’s staff.

• The Tallinn department of the School of Law are provided with suitable working conditions that correspond to the requirements of teaching and research activities and aid in increasing the appeal of the curriculum on the international market.

• The School of Law assures a continued line of faculty and academics for important areas of law. This objective will be achieved by implementing the following measures:

  o Creation of the personnel strategy of the School of Law, prescribing the activities and measures assuring a new generation of teaching staff and academics for the School of Law, by the end of 2017;
  o Amending the system for teaching staff and research assistance to establish it more clearly as the seedbed for upcoming teaching staff and Research Fellows.

\(^1\) The system of comparison could be that of the Estonian court system and its pay scale.