

# Strategic and Operational Planning Document

## 2026–2028 Three-Year Plan

### Faculty of Design and Art

#### SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

The Faculty of Design and Art at the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano was established in 2002 with a Bachelor in Design. Initially centred on teaching, it has since evolved into a faculty increasingly recognised for its research, alongside a pioneering teaching programme of the highest international standards. Its didactic offer later expanded with the Master in *'Eco-Social Design'* (2015/16) and the Bachelor major in Art (2016/17). In 2023/24 the Faculty joined the national PhD *'Design for Made in Italy'*, and a year later launched its own PhD *'Experimental Research through Design, Art and Technologies'* (ERDAT) — a unique interdisciplinary programme that has been very well received. From 2025/26 the new Master in *'Critical Creative Practices'* (LM-65) will complete the graduate portfolio. The Faculty also offers professionalising Masters (*Master di I livello*), currently *'Future of Art Museums'* (FOAM) in close collaboration with Museion; previously *'Design for Children'* (DFC) ran for three cycles and built broad trans-institutional networks. The Faculty could be seen as a multi-dimensional interdisciplinary organ where design, art, research, and teaching converge, addressing contemporary global challenges. From its beginnings in a pioneering design programme, it has evolved into an internationally recognised institution where practices in design and art, together with research and teaching, are closely interlinked with third-mission activities. Today it is acknowledged as a significant European faculty, with international recognition, awards, and prizes for its academic and cultural contributions. Its trilingual setting sustains an international learning environment rooted in South Tyrol while connecting to broader national and global contexts.

Teaching in the Faculty is characterised by interdisciplinarity, critical discourse, and practice-based, project-oriented learning. Central to this approach are the integrated courses (*Studios* in Art, *Projects* in Design), where teams of practice-based professionals and theorists work together on semester-specific topics. This format interweaves theory and practice, encourages collaboration, and connects students directly with diverse and evolving contemporary challenges. Learning takes place in ateliers and workshops equipped with traditional and advanced technologies, supporting experimentation and hands-on practice. Within the University's trilingual and international framework, the Faculty provides a culturally diverse environment that enriches teaching and prepares students for a wide range of professional and academic futures.

Research in the Faculty of Design and Art spans diverse themes and methods, yet is unified by a strong orientation toward practice-based inquiry, interdisciplinary research, and collaboration. Instead of following fixed academic canons, it builds on critical and creative approaches to address societal, cultural, and real-world challenges. Three clusters structure this activity: MAKE, exploring artefacts, spaces, and communication; TRANS-FORM, focusing on design, art, and social practices for eco-social and political transitions; and ENABLE, addressing competences, material culture, and human development. Research across these clusters is experimental and outcome-oriented, generating artefacts, materials, exhibitions, and processes alongside scientific publications, and

advancing knowledge both through and for design and art as complementary forms of knowledge production.

The Faculty of Design and Art cultivates a collaborative ecosystem from the local to the global, with public engagement and Third Mission activities central to its identity. They disseminate research outcomes and teaching practices while opening dialogue with society. A strategy of yearly events and an evolving scope of activities enables the Faculty to respond to changing contexts and opportunities. Exhibitions, workshops, lectures, and conferences serve as channels of exchange and collaboration with cultural institutions, civic organisations, and international partners, contributing to cultural exchange, democratic innovation, and sustainable development

## SECTION 2: FACULTY MISSION AND VISION

### Mission

The Faculty of Design and Art advances education, research, and public engagement in design and art as interlinked and mutually enriching practices. Its mission is to cultivate reflective, critical, and responsible professionals who combine creativity with societal awareness and cultural sensitivity. By fostering interdisciplinary research and innovative didactic formats rooted in practice-based experimentation, the Faculty develops new approaches and transformative solutions to contemporary challenges. Anchored in its trilingual and international environment, it connects the local setting of South Tyrol with national and global contexts, preparing graduates for diverse academic and professional futures.

### Vision

The Faculty aspires to be a leading European centre of excellence in design- and art-based knowledge production, recognised for its pioneering teaching models, interdisciplinary research, and strong engagement with society. It envisions design and art as drivers of sustainable, democratic, and inclusive futures, and seeks to expand their role in addressing cultural, ecological, and technological transformations. Building on a collaborative ecosystem that links academia, cultural institutions, industry, and civil society, the Faculty positions itself as a dynamic and internationally connected platform where innovative ideas are explored, tested, and shared

## SECTION 3: TEACHING

### 3.1 Analysis of the Situation 3.1 Analysis of the Situation

The Faculty of Design and Art offers a distinctive teaching profile grounded in interdisciplinarity, critical discourse, and practice-based learning. At its core are integrated courses (Studios in Art, Projects in Design), where practitioners and theorists collaborate on semester-specific themes, combining theory and practice. Teaching is done in designated ateliers and supported by highly equipped workshops for hands-on experimental work. The didactic offer spans the BA in Design and Art (majors in Design and Art), a Master in Eco-Social Design, and from 2025/26 a new Master in Critical Creative Practices (LM-65). At postgraduate level, the Faculty participates in the national PhD *Design for Made in Italy* (2023/24) and has launched its own PhD *Experimental Research through Design, Art and Technologies* (ERDAT) in 2024/25. Professionalising Masters (Master di I livello), developed with cultural partners and other unibz faculties, further complement the offer. The Faculty currently counts around 340 students (2024). The BA in Design attracts strong and steady demand, while the BA in Art is still consolidating its reputation and attractiveness, yet already shows strong qualitative outcomes, with graduates admitted to prestigious international schools. The MA in Eco-Social Design (LM-12) receives high demand and demonstrates positive indicators, including high

continuity, CFU progression, and graduation rates above national averages. The new PhD (ERDAT) received very high demand (20 applications per 1 PhD position) and made a promising start.

### **Strengths**

- Unique project-based teaching model (Studios/Projects), combining practice, theory, and interdisciplinarity, characterised by close student–staff interaction and intensive mentoring.
- Comprehensive academic offer – two BA majors (Design, Art), two Masters, and a PhD form a coherent and diversified study portfolio.
- Stable student demand, high satisfaction and employability – strong numbers in BA Design and LM-12, very high PhD applications, consistently positive evaluations (avg. 8.2–8.5/10; AlmaLaurea above national averages), and graduates entering the job market faster than average or continuing at top international institutions
- Internationally recognised faculty profile, attracting diverse staff and students.
- Outstanding workshop facilities – traditional and advanced technologies run by expert staff place the Faculty among the best-equipped internationally.

### **Weaknesses**

- High reliance on contract lecturers – about 60% of teaching load is covered by external staff. While ensuring expertise from practice, this creates high costs, constant onboarding needs, and uneven standards.
- Gender imbalance – majority female student body contrasted with predominantly male academic staff.
- Low visibility of the Art major – Design is well recognised nationally and internationally, Art less so, requiring stronger positioning and higher applications.
- Limited space and missing infrastructure – programme growth has not been matched by facilities; the Art direction and LM-65 highlight the urgent need for an exhibition space.
- Limited systemic integration of research into teaching – while improving, connections between thesis projects and research clusters remain inconsistent.

The central challenge in the coming three years will be the development, stabilisation, and consolidation of the new Master in Critical Creative Practices (LM-65) and the PhD in Experimental Research through Design, Art and Technologies (ERDAT). Embedding these programmes within the overall study offer, ensuring their integration across levels, and attracting and sustaining applicant numbers will be decisive for strengthening the Faculty's didactic offer and securing its long-term resilience. At the same time, structural issues such as the reliance on contract lecturers, the visibility of the Art major, growing spatial needs, and the fuller integration of research into teaching remain key faculty priorities.

## SWOT ANALYSIS – TEACHING

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b> (internal to the University)</p> <p><b>S1. Distinctive project-based study model</b> – Combines hands-on learning with strong conceptual foundations.</p> <p><b>S2. High-quality programmes, infrastructure, and steady student demand</b> – Reflects strong reputation and sustained attractiveness.</p> <p><b>S3. Recognised international faculty profile</b> – Known for its innovative, transdisciplinary identity.</p> <p><b>S4. Personalised learning through close student–teacher interaction</b> – Enables intensive mentoring and deep engagement.</p> <p><b>S5. Expanding academic offer and internal competences</b> – Includes PhD, LM and growing capacity in research and teaching.</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b> (internal to the University)</p> <p><b>W1.</b> High reliance on contract lecturers – Challenges continuity and long-term development of teaching culture.</p> <p><b>W2.</b> Gender imbalance: academic, teaching staff and opposite: students – Persistent asymmetry in representation across roles.</p> <p><b>W3.</b> Lack of spaces in general and a designated exhibition space, especially for the Art programme – Limits process-driven teaching formats, public visibility, and future programme development.</p> <p><b>W4.</b> Structural limitations within the academic system – Hinders development of tenure positions and flexible teaching formats.</p> <p><b>W5.</b> Insufficient visibility of teaching excellence – Innovative formats and faculty contributions remain largely internal and under-recognised.</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> (external to the University)</p> <p><b>O1.</b> Access to EU and regional funding for educational innovation – Enables transdisciplinary and socially engaged teaching formats.</p> <p><b>O2.</b> Strengthening industry and community partnerships to meet growing global demand for applied, socially engaged design and art education – Matches rising demand for applied, impact-oriented education.</p> <p><b>O3.</b> Increased international demand for post-disciplinary and project-based education Supports and amplifies the faculty’s unique model.</p> <p><b>O4.</b> Development of cross-faculty and inter-university teaching formats – Opens pathways for shared, innovative course structures.</p> <p><b>O5.</b> Emerging technologies (AI, XR, immersive media) as drivers of pedagogical and artistic innovation ç Enriches teaching formats and creative exploration.</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b> (external to the University)</p> <p><b>T1.</b> Some high school graduates do not meet the language requirements of the faculty’s bachelor programs (B2+B2) – Limits accessibility and reduces the eligible applicant pool.</p> <p><b>T2.</b> No tuition fees in Austria and Germany, plus high living costs and scarce affordable accommodation – Makes Bolzano less competitive for prospective students.</p> <p><b>T3.</b> Growing competition from international design/art schools with strong digital delivery – Challenges our leading positioning</p> <p><b>T4.</b> Increasing administrative and compliance demands from national, regional, and internal regulations – Diverts time and focus from teaching innovation and student engagement.</p> <p><b>T5.</b> Rapid technological change may outpace institutional adaptation – Risks making teaching tools and methods feel/ be outdated or unresponsive.</p>

### 3.2 Strategic Goals (3 Years Span)

#### **GOAL T1: Consolidate the newly launched PhD and LM-65 MA programmes and ensure their full integration into the faculty's teaching ecosystem**

**Description:** Following their recent launch, the PhD and LM-65 MA programmes require a deliberate process of integration into the faculty's broader teaching and research culture, as well as its communication and dissemination strategies. This includes aligning curricula with the faculty's pedagogical model, embedding cross-level synergies between BA, MA, and PhD teaching activities, and ensuring consistent academic and administrative support for students. Strengthening internal and external communication about the programmes, alongside disseminating their achievements, will help build visibility and attract high-quality candidates. As a small Faculty, the goal is to consolidate the stability of the data outlined in point 2.4, while reinforcing programme identity, optimising enrolment and positioning these programmes as distinctive and competitive within the national and international higher education landscape.

**Associated Indicator(s):**

- *iC00a: number of new students*
- *iC00d: number of enrolled students*

#### **GOAL T2: Strengthen the integration of research and teaching across all study levels**

**Description:** To promote structural and systemic conditions that embed research activities within teaching across BA, MA, and PhD levels. This involves developing courses and projects in which scientific, academic, and professional research both informs and is informed by teaching practice, ensuring that students are introduced to research methodologies and outcomes from the earliest stages of their studies. At the same time, considering the practice-based nature of design and art disciplines, we aim to gradually increase teaching projects carried out in collaboration with public and private partners at both the local and international level. These initiatives are intended to provide students with meaningful opportunities to engage with professional contexts while offering, where possible, a modest supplementary contribution to the university. The overall goal is to foster a learning environment in which research and teaching operate in a mutually reinforcing cycle.

**Associated Indicator(s)**

This goal addresses the strategic priorities identified in the SWOT analysis (S1, S2, O2, O4). At the same time, it could further improve the following indicators mentioned above in 2.4:

- *iC14: Proportion of students continuing to the second year in the same Degree Course*
- *iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*
- *iC26 Percentage of graduates employed one year after (LM; LMCU)*

#### **GOAL T3: Increase student and graduate learning quality and satisfaction**

**Description:** Strengthen the quality of teaching, student support, and career preparation to improve graduation rates, graduate satisfaction, and employability. This includes refining didactic approaches, ensuring timely feedback and academic guidance, enhancing career counselling, and creating strong

connections between the faculty and potential employers or postgraduate opportunities. The focus is on ensuring that more students successfully complete their studies, feel satisfied with their educational experience, and transition effectively into professional or academic careers.

**Associated Indicator(s):**

*iC24 Percentage of dropouts after N+1 years*

*iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*

*iC26 Percentage of graduates employed one year after (LM; LMCU)*

**3.3 Actions and Operational Goals**

**GOAL T1: Consolidate the newly launched PhD and LM-65 MA programmes and ensure their full integration into the faculty's teaching ecosystem**

**Action T1.1: Position the GOG event as a structured cross-level academic platform for integration and dissemination**

**Description:** Reframe the end-of-semester GOG event as a core element of the faculty's teaching and research culture, ensuring meaningful contributions from all programmes — BA (Des, Art) LM-12, LM-65, and PhD, ensuring the participation of all students and relevant courses. This will transform GOG from a primarily BA-focused presentation into an inclusive academic forum where outputs from all study levels are presented, discussed, and critically engaged with, fostering both vertical (cross-level) and horizontal (interdisciplinary) integration.

- Contributions from each programme per GOG event (currently always BA (Des, Art) and MA-12 mostly but not always).
- Number of courses presenting in each GOG.

**Timing:** Implementation from AY 2025/26, at the conclusion of each semester.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

*iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Teaching; Programme Coordinators (BA, LM-12, LM-65, PhD)

**Resources:** Yearly GOG budget, designated GOG coordinators and admin responsible.

**Action T1.2: Structured faculty introduction for LM-65 MA and PhD students**

**Description:** Establish an induction process introducing new LM-65 and PhD students to the Faculty's culture, including teaching formats (Studios/Projects), academic activities, research clusters, and Third Mission activities. Orientation will feature input from programme coordinators and faculty representatives, ensuring that each course and programme is clearly contextualised within the wider teaching–research environment. The process will highlight opportunities for cross-level collaboration (BA, MA, PhD) and integrate on into the faculty's interdisciplinary profile.

- Percentage of LM-65 and PhD students participating in the mentoring programme
- (target: ≥80% by 2027)

**Timing:** First implementation in AY 2025/26; reviewed annually

**Indicators for monitoring:**

*iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*

**Responsible:** Vice dean for Teaching and Programme Coordinators (LM-65, PhD)

**Resources:** Coordination time; and mentoring activities

### **Action T1.3: Implement targeted actions to build the reputation and attractiveness of the LM-65 Master programme**

**Description:** Implement targeted actions to build the reputation and attractiveness of the LM-65 *Critical Creative Practices* — both internally and externally. In its first years, the programme will be positioned as a benchmark within the Faculty, with BA Design and Art students recognised as its primary stakeholders. Internal initiatives — including high-level workshops and lectures by outstanding international figures — will enhance its qualitative profile and stimulate cross-level dialogue. In parallel, curated collaborations, exhibitions, publications, and a focused digital presence will strengthen visibility and appeal, securing high-quality applicants and long-term consolidation.

- Number of high-profile internal initiatives (workshops/lectures) per year (target:  $\geq 3$  from 2025/26)
- Student participation across the faculty (target:  $\geq 35\%$  faculty engagement in LM-65 events by 2027)
- Growth in LM-65 applications and admission selectivity (baseline: first cohort; target: steady increase by 2027)
- Visibility outputs (publications, exhibitions, online reach) documented annually

**Timing:** AY 2025/26 onwards, with first measures introduced in the inaugural year; annual review.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

*iC00a: number of new students*

*iC00d: number of enrolled students*

**Responsible:** LM-65 Programme Coordinator and Vice-Dean for Teaching

**Resources:** EUR. 20.000 as special Budget for workshops, lectures & communication\*, faculty time

\*Depending on the availability of funds.

### **GOAL T2: Strengthen the integration of research and teaching across all study levels**

#### **Action T2.1: Annual outcome/event deriving from research-teaching activities**

**Description:** The goal is to realize at least one event and/or project within the next triennial arising directly from the faculty's research areas and the courses taught at BA, MA, and PhD levels. Such initiatives would not only provide a platform to showcase the outcomes of teaching and research and foster dialogue with external audiences and partners but also help students engage with the professional world from the very beginning of their studies.

**Timing:** First event in AY 2025/26; possibly to be repeated within the reference three-year period.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- *iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*
- *iC26 Percentage of graduates employed one year after (LM; LMCU)*

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Teaching, Vice-Dean for Research, study course directors L4, LM-12

**Resources:** External funding coming from the commissioned teaching/research activity

#### **Action T2.2: Introduction of research topics into BA and MA courses**

**Description:** Systematically introduce ongoing faculty research topics and projects into selected BA and MA courses. This will allow students to engage with live research questions, methods, and outcomes as part of their coursework, strengthening the reciprocity between research and teaching. Integration will occur through dedicated modules, workshops, or collaborative assignments, ensuring visibility of research activity within the didactic structure. The aim is also to provide students, from the very beginning of their studies, with a clear understanding of the key themes and areas of inquiry that will accompany them throughout their academic journey. This early exposure helps orient their learning path and fosters a stronger connection to the faculty's research culture.

**Timing:** Pilot in AY 2026/27; expansion in subsequent years.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- *iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*
- *iC26 Percentage of graduates employed one year after (LM; LMCU)*
- *iC14: Proportion of students continuing to the second year in the same Degree Course*

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research; Programme Coordinators (BA, LM-12, LM-65)

**Resources:** Faculty coordination time; alignment with ongoing research budgets.

**Action T2.3:** Faculty research introduction for new PhD cohorts

**Description:** Establish a structured research introduction for each new PhD cohort, as a complementary element to the induction process (non-ECTS). Faculty members and research cluster leaders will present their ongoing research projects, themes, and methods, highlighting opportunities for collaboration. This will give PhD students an early orientation in the faculty's research culture, foster connections with faculty members, and build synergies with BA and MA activities. The action will be closely integrated with the broader induction programme defined in T1.2.

- Participation of PhD students in the research introduction (Target: 100%)
- Positive feedback on relevance and clarity in annual PhD survey (Target: ≥80% positive rating)

**Timing:** First implementation in AY 2025/26; repeated annually for each new cohort.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

*iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research; PhD Programme Coordinator; research cluster leaders

**Resources:** Faculty coordination time

**GOAL T3: Increase student and graduate learning quality and satisfaction**

**Action T3.1:** Structured on-boarding and out-boarding for contract lecturers

**Description:** Develop clear procedures for introducing and concluding the collaboration of contract lecturers, who currently account for around 60% of teaching staff. This includes a standardised on-boarding process (orientation, teaching guidelines, integration into Faculty culture) and structured out-boarding (collecting feedback, ensuring continuity for future courses).

- All new contract lecturers receiving formal on-boarding (100% by 2027)
- All outgoing lecturers completing feedback/out-boarding (100% by 2027)
- Yearly summary of conclusion and feedback to the faculty, further feeding the PDCA cycle.

**Timing:** First implementation in AY 2025/26 reviewed annually

**Indicators for monitoring:**

*iC24 Percentage of dropouts after N+1 years*

*iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Teaching; Programme Coordinators

**Resources:** Coordination and execution time

**Action T3.2: Maintaining quality and coherence across teaching staff**

**Description:** Strengthen shared standards and coherence in teaching across fixed and contract lecturers. Building on the annual start-of-year BA teacher's meeting, introducing a complementary end-of-year "debriefing" meeting, reviewing achievements, challenges, and alignment with didactic objectives. These meetings will ensure consistency, exchange of experiences, and continuous improvement of teaching quality.

- Number of joint start-of-year and end-of-year meetings held (target: 1 annually from 2025/26)
- % of teaching staff participating (target: ≥80% by 2027)
- Qualitative feedback on alignment and coherence from staff survey (target: ≥75% positive).

**Timing:** Start of AY 2025/26; ongoing annually.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

*iC25 Percentage of graduates overall satisfied with the Degree Course.*

*iC26 Percentage of graduates employed one year after (LM; LMCU)*

**Responsible:** Dean; Vice-Dean for Teaching

**Resources:** Meeting organisation; coordination time.

**Action T3.3: Systematic alumni integration**

**Description:** Foster stronger links with alumni by inviting them to contribute open lectures, share career experiences, and engage with current students. Parallel to these activities, the Faculty will study the feasibility and perspectives of creating a structured alumni network to support long-term connections, visibility, and career opportunities.

- Number of alumni lectures/events per year (1-2)
- Completion of alumni network feasibility study (by 2027).

**Timing:** From AY 2025/26; feasibility study for network completed by 2027.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Teaching

**Resources:** EUR 4.000 for, coordination time.

## SECTION 4: RESEARCH

### 4.1 Analysis of the Situation

The Faculty of Design and Art orients its research activities toward exploratory, evaluative, and participatory investigations that address the relations between Art and Design in their broadest sense and the macro areas of society, culture, technology, environment, and economy. The overarching aim is to generate and disseminate new knowledge, practices, and courses of action. Research spans classical fields such as communication design, product design, photography, art and design education, art history, aesthetics, exhibition making, and exhibition-making, as well as newer or specialised domains like eco-social design, co-design, participatory research, and transdisciplinary artistic practices. It also extends into anthropological and sociological questions, reflecting the Faculty's interdisciplinary character. Research is structured around three clusters: MAKE (artefacts and spaces), TRANS-FORM (eco-social and political transitions), and ENABLE (communication, material culture, human and societal development) — which provide thematic focus while encouraging cross-cluster collaboration and diverse methodologies. This orientation is strongly practice-based, interdisciplinary, and socially relevant.

The Faculty combines theoretical, artistic, and applied expertise, ranging from prototyping and material experimentation to cultural analysis and critical reflection. Hands-on experimentation is supported by the faculty workshops, which, while primarily dedicated to teaching, are accessible for research and provide excellent support and infrastructure. In addition, two specialised labs — the Design Friction Lab (2017) and the recent Sustainable Smart Textile Lab in collaboration with the Faculty of Engineering (2025), function as dedicated platforms for interdisciplinary experimentation at the intersection of design, materials, and technology. The launch of the PhD in *Experimental Research through Design, Art and Technologies* (ERDAT, 2024/25) has consolidated the doctoral profile and strengthened the link between teaching and research. The Faculty is also in a moment of growth, with six new professors appointed in the past two years and the forthcoming recruitment

of an ERC Consolidator Grant recipient, who will also establish a new specialised lab focusing on digital and computer-based arts, programmed artistic practices, and art–science intersections, significantly enhancing research capacity and competitiveness in national and international contexts. Challenges remain, however. Research activity is unevenly distributed and relies heavily on a small group of highly active members. Some colleagues bring strong practice-based skills but struggle to conform to academic research frameworks and output frameworks. This reflects both generational differences and the broader transition of design and art into academic research, with sensitive personal and professional dimensions. Moreover, research funding is difficult to secure: internal expertise for large-scale EU calls remains limited, while funding schemes often privilege market-oriented applications over critical, societal, or experimental approaches. National and international frameworks continue to undervalue practice-based and artistic research, complicating recognition and financing. The lack of dedicated research space, particularly for artistic and spatial practices where exhibition is integral, also constrains development and visibility.

At the same time, the Faculty is well positioned to align its research with global agendas such as sustainability, inclusion, and eco-social transformation. Active networks with cultural institutions, NGOs, and academic consortia (e.g. Cumulus, national PhD collaborations) provide strong platforms for visibility, collaboration, and funding opportunities.

Overall, the Faculty has established a distinctive research profile anchored in practice-based and interdisciplinary approaches, supported by solid infrastructure, specialised labs, and a growing doctoral programme. With a strengthened academic body and increasing expertise in competitive funding, it is well placed to expand its impact and visibility within the national and international research landscape.

## SWOT ANALYSIS – RESEARCH

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b> (internal to the University)</p> <p><b>S1. Wide-reaching interdisciplinary expertise</b> – Faculty members cover a broad range of competences across theory, practice, and hybrid approaches in design and art research.</p> <p><b>S2. Structured yet flexible research framework</b> – Three research clusters provide thematic focus while encouraging cross-cluster exchange and collaborative development.</p> <p><b>S3. Supportive environment for young researchers</b> – Open and inclusive culture supports early-career researchers in developing independent and practice-led projects.</p> <p><b>S4. Strong technical infrastructure and craftsmanship</b> – High-quality workshops and labs support research that relies on material processes, prototyping, and spatial experimentation.</p> <p><b>S5. Active national and international networking</b> – Faculty members maintain diverse collaborations with institutions, NGOs, and cultural entities across Europe and beyond.</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b> (internal to the University)</p> <p><b>W1. Limited research visibility</b> – ‘new in the scene’ (known for our teaching).</p> <p><b>W2. Uneven research engagement and dependence on a few highly active individuals</b> – Research activity is concentrated among a small group of faculty members, creating inconsistencies in output, uneven internal funding allocation, and a heightened risk of overstretching core staff, which limits the faculty’s overall research capacity and resilience.</p> <p><b>W3. Difficulties in attracting 3rd-party financing</b> – challenged in meeting requirements for large EU calls due to missing expertise and know-how.</p> <p><b>W4. Lack of space</b> – Especially for artistic and spatial research practices where exhibition and dissemination are integral to the research process, limiting the ability to develop, present, and iterate work effectively.</p> <p><b>W5. Difficulties in systemic recognition for artistic research</b> – Existing institutional frameworks prioritise traditional academic outputs, making it challenging to support and promote practice-based research in design and art.</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> (external to the University)</p> <p><b>O1. Strategic relevance of design and art in addressing global challenges</b> – aligning with pressing societal agendas (sustainability, inclusion, co-design, eco-social transformation).</p> <p><b>O2. Growth of interdisciplinary, practice-based research frameworks</b> – Rising relevance in EU and beyond.</p> <p><b>O3. Expansion of EU and national funding schemes in culture, technology, and innovation</b> – New or evolving programmes (e.g. Horizon Europe, Creative Europe, PNRR) offer entry points fitting to faculty strengths.</p> <p><b>O4. Rising demand for research-industry partnerships in creative fields</b> – Cultural and creative industries increasingly seek collaboration on applied research and prototyping.</p> <p><b>O5. Increasing visibility and networking via international alliances and consortia</b> – Broader networks and platforms (e.g. Cumulus, national PhD) create access to joint research, publications, and further initiatives and fundings.</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b> (external to the University)</p> <p><b>T1. Intensifying competition for research funding</b> – Well-established institutions dominate larger funding calls, making access more difficult for smaller or newer players.</p> <p><b>T2. Lack of systemic recognition for academic artistic research at national level</b> – Italian evaluation and funding frameworks favour traditional outputs, limiting visibility and financing opportunities for practice-based research in design and art.</p> <p><b>T3. Shifting policy priorities in research funding</b> – Frequent changes in national and EU funding focus areas may undermine continuity for ongoing research directions.</p> <p><b>T4. Economic uncertainty and budget constraints in public and cultural sectors</b> – Reduced availability of national and regional funding for research in the arts and design.</p> <p><b>T5: Increasing competition for international talent</b> – Rising global demand for researchers in design, art, and interdisciplinary fields makes recruitment and retention of high-quality staff more challenging.</p>

## 4.2 Strategic Goals (3 Years Span)

### **GOAL R1: Strengthen research capacity, leadership, and visibility in competitive funding contexts**

**Description:** Expand participation in high-quality disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and transdisciplinary research consortia across regional, national, and international programmes, ensuring faculty are positioned not only as contributors but also as coordinators of large-scale funded projects. Leverage existing networks to attract strategic partnerships and embed faculty research more visibly in global agendas, particularly through competitive, peer-reviewed and internationally recognised platforms, including leading academic conferences, high-impact exhibitions, and curated research programmes of strategic relevance. Add: high quality, international journals and exhibitions, with strong focus on qualitative work and output. Faculty sees the need to growth but prioritise quality, as such the current Avg. per capita (VQR product) is valuable and as such we aim to stabilise this number with a growth perspective.

Indicator	Most updated value (2024)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Average scientific output per faculty member (VQR products) > ( <i>unibz policy PR2, PR7</i> )	3.43 per capita (2024)	3.8	4	4.2
Number Research financing proposals	13	14	15	16
Number of competitive projects funded (EU, national, provincial) > ( <i>unibz policy PR1, PR2, PR7</i> )	5 (2024)	6	6	7
Publications in Class A journals > ( <i>unibz policy PR2, PR7</i> )	11 total (0.43 per capita)	12 (0.50)	13 (0.55)	14 (0.60)

### **GOAL R2: Broaden and balance research engagement across faculty members**

**Description:** Foster a culture of shared research activity by creating collaboration initiatives, thematic working groups, and informal exchange formats that invite participation without imposing obligations. Encourage joint proposal development, co-authorship, and shared project leadership to make research engagement accessible and rewarding for a wider range of colleagues. Support access to relevant resources, matchmaking with potential partners, and visibility for all contributions, regardless of scale.

Collaboration with NOI Park, EURAC, and local industries, there are potential opportunities for exploration and examination of art and design within a science and engineering university. One challenge is "cross-pollination" between the disciplines and across the campuses involved.

One of our goals is to create new ways to initiate conversations within and across these entities, offering a space for interaction and communication in a casual/informal manner.

This also gives unibz a platform in which other disciplines and programs (scientific, engineering) can get a better sense of what we are doing. This makes it easier for transdisciplinary communication since people will already have connections and a sense of what the other is working on.

We also firmly believe in the importance of artists/designers and other disciplines collaborating as early as possible. This means fostering the relationship from the beginning and working collaboratively rather than in parallel to create a cohesive conversation rather than an afterthought.

Growing this further, we could facilitate gatherings/community events involving remote contributors and cultivate network connections globally.

**Associated Indicator(s):**

Indicator	Most updated value (2024)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Academic staff with no scientific production (VQR products) > ( <i>unibz policy PR2, PR7</i> )	2024: 4 staff (≈15%)	3	2	1
Share of faculty members involved in funded projects (as PI, co-PI, or proj. member) > ( <i>unibz policy PR3, PR5</i> )	~30% (2024, est.)*	35%	40%	45%
Share of academic staff with ≥2 research outputs/year (VQR products) > ( <i>unibz policy PR2, PR7</i> )	~35% (2024, est.)	40%	45%	50%

\* Source: Section 3.13 (Research Projects 2022–2024). Current % is estimated; as projects are often concentrated among a few staff members, the actual share of faculty involved may be lower than 30%.

**GOAL R3: Strengthen third-party collaborations and funding beyond academic schemes**

**Description:** Build on the faculty’s growing capacities and recent experiences in securing external research funding to progressively strengthen its ability to compete in regional, national, and international funding schemes. Leverage the internal growing expertise and successfully running collaborations to enter further high-quality partnerships, with the strategic aim of gradually assuming leadership roles in large-scale, multi-partner projects, including major EU calls. For example a “database of interests” to accelerate linking people together; sort of an internal “LinkedIn”. This would offer a way of finding someone focused on a specific topic.

**Associated Indicator(s):**

Indicator	Most updated value (2024)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Total external research funding from contracts and collaborations > ( <i>unibz policy PR1, PR7</i> )	€48,500* (avg.)	50.000	60.000	70.000
Number of third-party partnership projects (industry, cultural institutions, municipalities, NGOs) > ( <i>unibz policy PR3, PR6</i> )	2 per year* (avg.)	2-3	2-4	2-5
Share of total research funding from third-party collaborations > ( <i>unibz policy PR3, PR6, PR7</i> )	22%* (avg.)	25%	28%	32%

\* ‘Most updated value’ above are based on Section 3.13 (Research Projects Eligible for Funding Based on Competitive Calls). Since yearly contract funding fluctuates significantly (€41.7k in 2022, €18.7k in 2023, €85k in 2024), the 3-year (2022-2024) average has been used to provide a stable baseline for targets.

#### 4.3 Actions and Operational Goals

Please define for each strategic goal **3-5 actions and/or operational goals**, identifying **timing, monitoring indicators, those responsible** (e.g., Dean, Vice-dean, Faculty responsible, Director of Degree Course xxx) and **resources** needed.

For the indicators, please refer mostly to the ones mentioned in Section 3.

#### **GOAL R1: Strengthen research capacity, leadership, and visibility in competitive funding contexts**

##### **Action R1.1: Enhance support for competitive funding applications**

**Description:** Organise targeted workshops in collaboration with the unibz Research Office on national, provincial, and EU funding schemes. Re-establish closer collaboration with the Province EU Office in Brussels to provide first-hand insights and matchmaking opportunities. Involve the external member of the faculty's external CRC member Prof. Dr. Anna Meroni (Politecnico di Milano), to advise and support faculty in aligning projects with National / European research schemes and agendas, as well as further activities or invited guests that may offer additional expertise and support.

**Timing:** Start in 2026; repeated annually (2026–2028).

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Number of proposals submitted (baseline ~20% → target 25-30%).
- Number of competitive projects funded (baseline 2024: 5 ,Úí target 2028: 8).
- 

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research

**Resources:** Funds for fees and hosting our external CRC member (Ca. EUR 1.000)

##### **Action R1.2: Strengthen international research networks through targeted collaborations**

**Description:** Conduct an analysis and mapping of potential international partner institutions in design, art, and interdisciplinary research, focusing on their profiles, research strengths, and relevance to the Faculty's clusters and PhD programme. Based on this mapping, prioritise 5–6 key institutions and initiate structured contacts to explore collaboration opportunities such as joint research proposals, shared doctoral training, and reciprocal exchanges. This preparatory phase ensures that subsequent collaborations are strategically aligned and sustainable.

**Timing:** Mapping and analysis completed by end of 2027; first collaboration discussions initiated in 2028; at least 2 structured collaborations formalised by 2028.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Completion of institutional mapping and prioritisation list (target 2027).
- Number of formalised collaborations with international institutions (target 2028:2).
- Number of joint research proposals submitted with partner institutions (target 2028: ≥2).

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research, supported by cluster coordinators, PhD Coordinator

**Resources:** 120h student for mapping & visualization. Invitation and travel to possible institutes (€3k annually).

**Action R1.3: Establish a model for quarterly research talks.**

**Description:** Establish a model for talks using “Leonardo/ISAST LASERs” (<https://leonardo.info/laser-talks>) as a model. We aim to initiate three talks per year; discussions between scientists, technologists, writers, engineers, designers, theorists, anthropologists, local agricultural and embedded industries. To foster an exchange of ideas, information, and ways of thinking that might not otherwise be available. To grow connections local and globally in order to proactively in initiating transdisciplinary research project.

**Timing:** First edition in 2027.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Number of participants – internal faculty and PhD candidates. (target 2028:  $\geq 70\%$  of faculty engaged).
- Attendance of unibz colleagues (other faculties) and International (target 2028:  $\geq 30$  per year).
- Become the first member in Italy of the Leonardo/ISAST LASERs (target 2028: 80% positive feedback).

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research; Cluster Coordinators.

**Resources:** Coordination time of responsible, support from Faculty admin staff and unibz communication office, event organisation (€3.000 annually). 120h student for general organisational assistance.

**GOAL R2: Broaden and balance research engagement across faculty members**

**Action R2.1:** Introduce three yearly discussion groups.

**Description:** Initiate a new format that encourages an internal culture of research exchange by introducing scheduled group gatherings formatted around discussions and constructive feedback for on going projects. Each session will offer a space for 3-4 faculty members, including the ERDAT PhD students. Groups might be made up of 3–5 colleagues. Fostering critical dialogue, transparency, and awareness of the faculty’s research spectrum, while encouraging participation across seniority levels and thematic backgrounds. We connect these discussions through and with Laser.

**Timing:** Launch in 2026; three sessions per year.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Number of sessions held per year (target: 3)
- Percentage of faculty presenting yearly (target:  $\geq 80\%$ )
- Dissemination of the published talks.

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research, supported by Cluster coordinators.

**Resources:** Coordination time

**Action R2.2: Develop a structured research activity monitoring and feedback process**

**Description:** Description: Use the existing BORIS system to create a light, supportive annual overview. Every colleague receives a reminder after year-end (February) to (i) update all research activities in BORIS and (ii) email the BORIS summary export to the cluster coordinator. The summaries of each cluster inform a faculty-level snapshot (engagement, outputs, projects) and short, constructive feedback to clusters/colleagues. The data overview would as well be helpful in consolidating the work process on the research part at the yearly ‘Annual report’.

**Timing:** First cycle Feb 2026; annually (Feb 2027, Feb 2028).

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Percentage of academic staff delivering the foreseen report.
- Staff with no scientific production (baseline 2024: 4  $\rightarrow$   $\leq 3$  in 2027;  $\leq 2$  in 2028).

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research, Cluster coordinators.

**Resources:** Coordination time

**Action R2.3:** Publish within the new Unibz book series system. Develop easily accessible Web presence showcasing current research within the program.

**Description:** Publish within the Unibz book series, the research talks in addition to selected research projects that have reached publication stage. Concept of the Faculty of Design and Art for publishing through bu,press was presented to the Rector in September 2025.

**Timing:** Resource coordination time: 2027/28; Annual thereafter.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Number of Discussion Talks.
- Collaborative Initiations and Research projects.

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research, supported by Cluster coordinators.

**Resources:** Coordination time.

### **GOAL R3: Strengthen third-party collaborations and funding beyond academic schemes**

#### **Action R3.1: Consolidate and expand the faculty's third-party partner network**

**Description:** To strengthen and strategically expand the faculty's collaboration network, a structured mapping process will be introduced. Each cluster leader will first document their active collaborations, which will then be consolidated into a comprehensive faculty-wide network map. This shared overview will provide the base for a clear picture of current partnerships and for analysing gaps, potentials, and new opportunities. The new format for group discussions will build on this preparatory work, using the mapped network as both a reference point for dialogue with existing partners and a leverage for initiating new collaborations.

**Timing:** First mapping completed by 2027; updated annually.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Mapping completed / updated.
- Number of mapped/active third-party partners (baseline: 30 (estimated 10 per cluster) target:  $\geq 36$  by 2026,  $\geq 40$  by 2028).
- Number of new partnerships initiated annually (baseline: 2; target: +1 per year).

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research, supported by Cluster coordinators.

**Resources:** Assigned faculty member; 120-hour students for mapping assistance.

#### **Action R3.2: Optimise support framework and accessibility for third-party project acquisition**

**Description:** To lower the threshold for initiating and managing collaborations, the faculty will develop a simple and accessible support platform for third-party project acquisition. This platform will include practical guidelines, standard cost/financial models, template agreements, and a clear administrative responsibility scheme (indicating who to contact, when, and for what, supported by a process flow chart). In addition, an online publication / micro-site, will be introduced to showcase successful projects, designed both to inspire colleagues and to serve as a communication tool for potential collaborators. This online publication will clearly explain the modalities of funded research and how external partners can engage with the faculty. Together, these measures will provide colleagues with clarity, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure more consistent and efficient project development.

Proposal for a shared live database to collect and share useful information. Open to faculty, PhD students and students. Categorized Database of call for conferences/paper, Publication house, Publication funding sources, Call for exhibitions, Funding sources, Events.

**Timing:** Platform in place by December 2027,

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Platform completion and launch 2027.
- Showcase document / online micro-site completed

- Share of external funding from third-party contracts (baseline: 22%; target: continuous growth)

**Responsible:** Dean, Vice-Dean for Research, Cluster Leaders supported by Faculty administrative responsible. Assigned faculty member; 120-hour students for platform assistance.

**Resources:** EUR 5.000 in 2027 for the new platform.

### **GOAL R3: Strengthen third-party collaborations and funding beyond academic schemes**

#### **Action R3.3: Frame and communicate faculty research in alignment with regional and EU**

##### **priorities**

**Description:** Embed the faculty research clusters (MAKE, TRANS-FORM, ENABLE) within the platform and the overall faculty research profile to reflect their compatibility with South Tyrol's Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) and related EU priority areas (sustainability, digitalisation, culture). This involves framing existing research activities in policy-relevant terms and actively communicating this alignment through dissemination channels (e.g. faculty research talks, cluster descriptions, project communications). The aim is to position the faculty more visibly as a viable and strategic partner for municipalities, industries, and cultural institutions seeking third-party funding under S3-related schemes.

**Timing:** Initial alignment and communication completed by end of 2027; updated annually.

##### **Indicators for monitoring:**

- Number of third-party projects explicitly linked to S3/EU priorities (target:  $\geq 1$  by 2027,  $\geq 2$  by 2028)
- Total external research funding from collaborations (baseline: €48.5k avg.; target: €60k by 2028)

**Responsible:** Vice-Dean for Research and Cluster coordinators

**Resources:** Allocated to R3.2.

## **SECTION 5: THIRD MISSION AND SOCIAL IMPACT**

### **5.1 Analysis of the Situation**

The Faculty of Design and Art has developed a strong and diversified profile in Third Mission activities. Anchored in its disciplinary DNA, public engagement and outreach are not just the dissemination of the practice but are an integral part of it. Faculty members and students contribute actively to the public sphere through exhibitions, talks, workshops, installations and artistic interventions. The Faculty also cultivates long-term partnerships with cultural institutions, public bodies, NGOs and municipalities, as well as companies and industry actors.

Ongoing yearly events demonstrate continuity, consistency, and a strategically conceived perspective. These include Diplorama! (thesis project exhibition, held triannually), Gäste–Ospiti–Guests (GOG) (end-of-semester show, biannual), and the By Design and By Disaster annual conference. Together with collaborations with Museion, Bolzano Art Weeks or BASIS in Val Venosta, these initiatives exemplify the Faculty's steady and recognisable contribution to public cultural life.

Alongside these recurring formats, ad-hoc special projects highlight the Faculty's continuous visible presence at different scales and contexts of relevance. Examples include the Shoot and Think exhibition at Photo Wien, the Reading Landscape? exhibition at Lumen Museum, or the White Rose

installation at the university square in Bolzano. These projects illustrate the Faculty's capacity to engage in distinctive interventions of local, national, and international relevance.

In recent years the Faculty has further intensified collaborations that bridge cultural, civic, and commercial actors. The Eco-Social Design MA programme (LM-12) has developed a distinctive practice of integrating NGOs, municipalities, and companies into semester projects. Industry-related collaborations have included cultural actors, food and sustainability partners, design-driven SMEs, and further innovative initiatives which continuously collaborate on a semester basis with our Bachelor in Design.

Strengths of the Faculty's Third Mission profile include an expansive ecosystem of collaborations across a wide scope of stakeholders – from culture to industry. The regularity of public events, the Faculty's interdisciplinary expertise, and its growing alumni network further reinforce its visibility and impact.

Weaknesses are rooted less in the scale of activity and more in the lack of systematic planning and coordination. Many initiatives depend on the voluntary engagement of individual colleagues, which creates uneven distribution of responsibility and an unequal load of leading or initiating collaborations. This reduces potential synergies and limits the consolidation of experiences into shared formats or long-term strategies. Furthermore, collaborations with industry and commercial partners, while promising, often remain project-based and would benefit from more structured integration. The lack of consistent tools to evaluate social and economic impact also constrains the Faculty's ability to strategically communicate achievements and demonstrate long-term value.

Overall, the Faculty demonstrates high engagement, capacity and impact in its Third Mission activities. With a portfolio that combines cultural, civic, and industrial collaborations, and a consistent record of high-quality public events, it is well placed to further strengthen its contribution to society. Key opportunities lie in developing stronger planning and coordination mechanisms, ensuring a more balanced distribution of responsibilities, and establishing systematic impact measurement, which will consolidate the Faculty's position as an active, accessible, and future-oriented actor in the region and beyond.

## SWOT ANALYSIS – THIRD MISSION

<p><b>STRENGTHS</b> (internal to the University)</p> <p><b>S1. Expansive collaborative ecosystem</b> – A broad range of partnerships with cultural, civic, and institutional actors provides a strong basis for outreach and engagement.</p> <p><b>S2. Balanced outreach profile</b> – Established presence on local, national, and international levels ensures diverse connections and visibility.</p> <p><b>S3. Deep local integration</b> – Long-standing cooperation with regional communities strengthens relevance and credibility.</p> <p><b>S4. Consistent public engagement formats</b> – Recurring events and projects have built continuity and recognition among stakeholders.</p> <p><b>S5. Growing academic capacity</b> – Expansion of staff and expertise increases potential for third mission activities.</p>	<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b> (internal to the University)</p> <p><b>W1. Limited dedicated resources</b> – Outreach relies on yearly faculty funding and staff time, with no dedicated and longer-term budget perspective or roles to secure continuity.</p> <p><b>W2. Individual engagement and lack of synergy</b> – Beyond the centrally organised activities, all other third mission initiatives depend on individual faculty members. Their efforts, often carried out in isolation, reduce potential synergies and hinder the development of greater value, scope, and outreach.</p> <p><b>W3. Competition with teaching and research priorities</b> – Third mission engagement often takes a secondary role, constrained by workload and competing obligations of faculty.</p> <p><b>W4. Underdeveloped monitoring and evaluation</b> – Documentation of outcomes and impact is sporadic, reducing visibility and learning potential.</p> <p><b>W5. Fragmented communication structures</b> – Both internal coordination and external dissemination are inconsistent, weakening recognition and synergies</p>
<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b> (external to the University)</p> <p><b>O1. Policy and evaluation frameworks rewarding third mission impact</b> – National and EU programmes increasingly tie funding and assessment to measurable public engagement, partnerships, and societal impact, which are strong sides of the faculty.</p> <p><b>O2. Integration into new academic programmes</b> – Embedding third mission activities in the recently launched MA and PhD levels creates structural alignment with teaching and research.</p> <p><b>O3. Growing stakeholder interest in collaboration</b> – Rising engagement from industry, cultural institutions, and civic actors at regional and national levels opens new entry points for cocreation, applied research, and publicfacing projects.</p> <p><b>O4. Expansion of digital and hybrid formats</b> – New dissemination tools broaden accessibility and international reach for public engagement activities.</p> <p><b>O5. Enhanced visibility through systematic communication</b> – Developing coordinated communication strategies increases the reach, recognition, and impact of third mission activities.</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b> (external to the University)</p> <p><b>T1. T1. Marginal positioning in policy frameworks</b> – At national and European levels, third mission remains structurally secondary to teaching and research, limiting systemic support, visibility, and funding opportunities.</p> <p><b>T2. Competition for cultural and market attention in the region</b> – The faculty operates in a lively but crowded landscape of cultural institutions, creative industries, and market-driven initiatives, making visibility and impact harder to sustain.</p> <p><b>T3. Fragile cultural, civic, and market funding environment</b> – Economic volatility and dependence on short-term public, foundation, or industry support threaten continuity of partnerships at all levels.</p> <p><b>T4. Pressure for market-oriented outcomes</b> – Increasing demand from public and private stakeholders for market/economic-driven results risks or conflicts our experimental, critical, and ethical values and approaches.</p> <p><b>T5. Absence of robust impact metrics</b> – Without widely recognised external standards to measure and communicate societal and industry-related impact, third mission achievements risk being overlooked by regional, national, and international stakeholders.</p>

### 5.2 Strategic Goals (3 Years Span)

### **GOAL TM1: Ensure Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation of Third Mission Activities**

**Description:** Strengthen the Faculty’s ability to account for understand and plan better its societal engagement and TM activity scope and impact by establishing a systematic framework for monitoring and evaluating its Third Mission. The aim is not only to register activities (done already in BORIS) but to assess their outcomes and broader impact in a consistent and comparable way. By integrating documentation, outcome measurement, and selected qualitative insights into a Faculty-wide yearly overview, Third Mission becomes visible as a coherent and strategic field of activity. This approach supports transparency, aligns with unibz quality policies, and provides a reliable foundation for planning, prioritisation, and accountable budgeting. The Proposed platform indicated above in R3.2 will be integral to the success of this.

#### **Associated Indicator(s):**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Most updated value (2024)</b>	<b>Goal for Year 2026</b>	<b>Goal for Year 2027</b>	<b>Goal for Year 2028</b>
Share of TM activities documented and integrated in annual overview > ( <i>unibz policy PI6</i> )	-	50%	70%	90%
Annual Faculty TM overview integrated in the yearly faculty activity report (Y/N) > ( <i>unibz policy PI1, PI6</i> )	N	Y	Y	Y
Applying the new TM ('Event') budgeting format (Y/N) > ( <i>unibz policy PI3, PI6</i> )	N	Y	Y	Y

### **GOAL TM2: Increase Visibility and Public Recognition of Third Mission Activities**

**Description:** Strengthen the Faculty’s external profile by consolidating the communication of Third Mission activities. Through consistent and coordinated communication across recurring events and special projects, supported by digital, hybrid, and press channels, the Faculty will ensure wider reach, greater visibility, and recognition at local, national, and international levels.

#### **Associated Indicator(s):**

<b>Indicator</b>	<b>Most updated value 2024</b>	<b>Goal for Year 2026</b>	<b>Goal for Year 2027</b>	<b>Goal for Year 2028</b>
Estimated annual audience reach (in-person + digital) > ( <i>unibz policy PI1, PI5</i> )	n/a	~2,000	~2,500	~3,000
Number of regional/ national/ international media mentions (based on unibz press data) > <i>unibz policy PI1, PI6</i>	n/a	5	10	15

### **GOAL TM3: Increase Faculty Engagement and Reach in Third Mission Activities**

**Description:** Broaden the scope and participation of Faculty members in Third Mission by ensuring a more balanced distribution of activities across colleagues and clusters. This includes supporting faculty to initiate and lead new collaborations, embedding Third Mission more firmly into academic work, and expanding the reach of activities to diverse stakeholder groups. Strengthening engagement at the level of individual staff will enhance the Faculty’s collective capacity, increase societal impact, and reduce dependency on a few key individuals.

### Associated Indicator(s):

Indicator	Most updated value (2024)	Goal for Year 2026	Goal for Year 2027	Goal for Year 2028
Share of faculty members actively engaged in TM activities per year > ( <i>unibz policy PI6</i> )	17	20	25	30
Total number of TM activities annually (faculty-wide) > ( <i>unibz policy PI1, PI6</i> )	51	+5%	+5%	+5%
Estimated number of stakeholders reached annually (based on activity reports) > ( <i>unibz policy PI1, PI5</i> )	50 approx	Base year	Base year +5%	Base year +5%

## 5.3 Actions and Operational Goals

### **GOAL TM1: Ensure Systematic Monitoring and Evaluation of Third Mission Activities**

#### **Action TM1.1: Establish a Faculty-Wide System for Monitoring and Evaluating Third Mission activities and impact**

**Description:** Design and implement a short, standardised reporting and monitoring form for documenting all TM activities. Each activity will be summarised across five key parameters: participants (number and type of audience/stakeholders), partners (institutions, organisations, or industry involved), planned vs. achieved outcomes, budget plan vs. actual expenditure, and relevance/impact category (e.g. cultural, civic, industry, eco-social, SDG link - United Nations Sustainable Development Goals). This will ensure consistent and comparable information across the Faculty, allow consolidation into a coherent annual overview, and provide a transparent basis for evaluating effectiveness, accountability, and resource use.

**Timing:** As of 2026 - onwards

#### **Indicators for monitoring:**

- Reporting and monitoring form finalised and shared with faculty (Y/N)
- Annual Faculty TM overview integrated in the yearly faculty activity report (Y/N)
- Share of TM activities submitted using the form (Target: all budgeted events and 80% of all other TM activities by 2028).

**Responsible:** Vice dean for Research, Cluster Coordinators

**Resources:** Utilising the proposed platform as presented in R3.2

#### **Action TM1.2: Establish a light Budgeting and Planning Format**

**Description:** Introduce a concise budgeting and planning form for Third Mission initiatives requesting Faculty resources. Each proposal will be structured along clear parameters: type of activity, expected participants and partners, intended outcomes, estimated budget allocation, expected impact/SDG link, and planned share of external financing (minimum 30% of total budget wherever feasible). Submitted forms will later be cross-checked against final reporting, ensuring accountability, comparability, and financial sustainability across activities.

**Timing:** Pilot in AY 2025/26; full implementation from AY 2026/27.

#### **Indicators for monitoring:**

- Budgeting and planning form finalised and approved (Y/N)
- Share of Faculty-funded TM activities using the new form (goal: all activities as of 2027 budget)
- Form evaluation after 1st year and possible iterations.

**Responsible:** Dean, Vice Dean for Research

**Resources:** Assigned Faculty member.

### **Action TM1.3: Consolidate an Annual Third Mission Overview**

**Description:** Compile all documented TM activities into a structured annual overview, based on the agreed reporting and budgeting formats. The overview will present a consolidated picture of the Faculty's Third Mission engagement, including scale, diversity of stakeholders, financial dimension, and alignment with impact categories (e.g. cultural, civic, industry, eco-social, SDG link). Integrated into the official Faculty activity report, it will ensure visibility in governance processes, comparability across years, and alignment with unibz quality policies.

**Timing:** First partial integration in 2026 report (spring 2027) since planning document would only relate to the following year, then full report annually.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Annual TM overview compiled and included in Faculty activity report (Y/N)
- Number of documented TM activities featured in the overview (Target: all budgeted activities)
- Evidence of overview used in Faculty planning and budgeting discussions (Y/N)

**Responsible:** Dean, Vice Dean for Research

**Resources:** Assigned Faculty member.

## **GOAL TM2: Increase Visibility and Public Recognition of Third Mission Activities**

### **Action TM2.1: Establish a Coordinated Communication Framework**

**Description:** Develop a faculty communication framework for Third Mission activities, including a shared calendar, basic communication guidelines, press office guidelines (when to communicate, what & how it is best to communicate to the unibz press office), website, and social media channels. This will ensure coherent messaging and coordinated outreach across all initiatives.

**Timing:** By end 2026

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Communication framework finalised and distributed (Y/N)
- Update / revision cycle for the framework within 2028 (Y/N)
- Number of TM activities following the framework annually (target: 70% by 2028)

**Responsible:** Dean, Vice Dean for research

**Resources:** Utilising the proposed platform as presented in R3.2. Assigned Faculty members.

### **Action TM2.2: Strengthen Digital and Hybrid Dissemination**

**Description:** Expand the use of digital and hybrid formats (e.g. livestreams, recordings, online exhibitions, podcasts/local radio) to increase accessibility and reach. Digital dissemination will complement in-person events and extend visibility beyond the region.

**Timing:** Pilot selected activities in AY 2026, broader adoption by AY 2026/27.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Share of TM events with digital/hybrid component (target: 50% by 2028)
- Total online audience reach (estimated) (target: +25% compared to starting base in 2026)
- Number of digital assets produced annually (live streams, online catalogues /exhibitions) (target: +5% yearly growth)

**Responsible:** Vice Dean for research, Cluster Coordinators

**Resources:** Assigned Faculty members.

### **Action TM2.3: Develop a Public Recognition and Media Strategy**

**Description:** Create a targeted strategy to position Faculty activities in local, national, and international media, highlighting distinctive events and collaborations. The strategy will be developed in close collaboration with the unibz Press Office and the external communication agency (BLUM) to ensure professional alignment, consistency with university-wide communication policies, and maximum outreach. The process will include building stronger relations with media outlets, producing regular press releases, and systematically tracking coverage.

**Timing:** As of 2026 - onwards

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Strategy conceived and shared with faculty (Y/N)
- Number of media mentions annually (target:  $\geq 20$  by 2028)
- Faculty website 'NEWS' section updated with TM activities at least quarterly (Y/N)

**Responsible:** Dean, Vice Dean for research

**Resources:** Assigned Faculty member.

### **GOAL TM3: Increase Faculty Collaboration in Third Mission Activities**

#### **Action TM3.1: Offer a place embedded within the platform as mentioned in R3.2 to aid collaborative ventures within the third mission activities.**

**Description:** The platform will engage all faculty members in a structured and systemic way. This ensures Third Mission becomes a shared responsibility, reduces dependency on a few individuals, and embeds TM engagement systematically across all clusters. The platform will allow for clear and easily accessible visibility for monitoring.

**Timing:** Implementation from AY 2026/27 onwards.

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Numbers of shared responsibilities/cooperations (target: annual collaboration of 10 to 15).
- Share of faculty members annual participation (target: annual growths of 2 to 5).
- Quantities of distributions to more people (target 23 to 25).

**Responsible:** Vice dean for Research, Cluster Coordinators

**Resources:** Assigned Faculty member. Platform as mentioned in R3.2

#### **Action TM3.2: Consolidate the Integration of Third Mission in Teaching**

**Description:** Consolidate and systematise the Faculty's already extensive integration of Third Mission into teaching. Many BA and MA courses and projects already include public engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and societal relevance. This action will ensure that such activities are consistently documented, strategically coordinated across programmes, and formally recognised as part of the Faculty's didactic profile. The aim is to highlight TM as a valuable element of teaching practice, increasing visibility and comparability across study levels and courses.

**Timing:** As of 2026 - onwards

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Share of courses/projects formally documented as including a TM component (Target: 50% by 2028)
- Number of distinct external stakeholders involved annually in teaching-related TM activities (Target: 25 by 2028)
- Number of public outputs (exhibitions, presentations, publications) generated by TM teaching activities annually (Target:  $\geq 10$  by 2028)

**Responsible:** Vice dean for Teaching, Study program directors

**Resources:** Assigned Faculty member.

#### **Action TM3.3: Expand Outreach to New Stakeholder Groups**

**Description:** Broaden the Faculty's Third Mission engagement by systematically reaching beyond established networks to involve new stakeholders (e.g. schools, NGOs, SMEs, public institutions,

industry, international partners) and new types of stakeholders. This action will encourage colleagues to diversify collaborations within their TM activities, supported by light coordination and facilitation from the Faculty. Expanding the range of stakeholders will increase societal reach, reduce dependency on recurring partners, and open new opportunities for innovation and co-creation.

**Timing:** As of 2026 - onwards

**Indicators for monitoring:**

- Number of new stakeholder groups engaged annually-based on activity report (Target: annual growth of 2-3 new stake holders per year)
- New geographical areas covered.

**Responsible:** Vice Dean for research, Cluster Coordinators

**Resources:** Utilising the proposed platform as presented in R3.2.

## SECTION 6: CRITERIA FOR ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

The Faculty of Design and Art has very limited capacity to autonomously allocate economic resources. Most resources are centrally allocated by the University (e.g. overall faculty budget, institutional allocations to research, personal fund – ‘fondo personale’, etc.), leaving only a small margin for allocation at Faculty level. Within these constraints, the faculty follows clear and transparent principles, aiming to distribute its limited resources fairly and consistently across programmes, and faculty members, in line with unibz policies and strategic goals.

### 6.1 Staff resources

- Requests for new professor positions are made on the basis of:
- Teaching coverage: The amount of teaching hours currently delivered through contract lecturers, with the goal of ensuring sustainability through permanent staff.
- Research needs and perspectives: Balancing the Faculty’s main fields (artistic practice, designerly practice, related theories).
- Strategic development: Expanding competencies in directions identified as important for the Faculty’s future growth (e.g., recently: spatial and artistic practices, or previously: Design & Materials).

### 6.2 Personal Fund (“Fondo personale”)

- Centrally allocated by unibz to each professor and researcher.
- The annual amount is set by unibz, not by the Faculty.
- Fully managed by the individual; the Faculty has no role in allocation or management.

### 6.3 Three-years award (“Premialità”)

- Amounts and regulations are defined centrally by unibz.
- The Faculty Dean is responsible for evaluating the material submitted by colleagues in line with unibz regulations.
- Evaluations are reviewed by the Rector; final allocation and amounts are decided centrally.

### 6.4 Research budget

- The Faculty does not have a dedicated budget for research; funding in this area is instead accessed through external grants, central unibz allocations, or via competitive instruments such as infrastructure and internal calls.

### 6.5 Infrastructure Calls, Internal Calls, and Other Institutional Resources

- All faculty members are strongly encouraged to submit proposals to CRC calls.

- Proposals are prepared individually and undergo a pre-evaluation at Faculty level, under the responsibility of the Vice-Dean for Research, and carried out according to unibz CRC standards. The Vice-Dean provides suggestions and amendments to improve proposals, assures adequate quality, and, if necessary, establishes an internal ranking. Proposals are then submitted for Faculty Council approval before being forwarded to the CRC.
- CRC evaluations are conducted through double-blind peer review, followed by an internal CRC assessment of the peer reviews received. This step helps to harmonise possible gaps or differences arising from the diversity of evaluated fields and their standards. The final decision on ranking lists and financing is taken by the CRC. The entire process is independent of Faculty influence, although the Faculty Vice-Dean for Research and the Faculty's external CRC members participate in the CRC process.

### 6.6 Startup projects

- Startup project funding is provided to new Professors to support their integration into the unibz context and optimise their adjustment to their new role. New professors must submit a detailed proposal; no Faculty approval is required. The Dean evaluates the proposal from a qualitative and standards perspective, and the Rector makes the final approval. The funds are centrally allocated (50,000 € for Associate Professors, 70,000 € for Full Professors). The Faculty has no role in determining the amounts or in the final approval.

### 6.7 Teaching budget

- **Didactic projects:** Each practical course is allocated €1,000 per semester for workshops and lectures with external experts. Courses are asked to submit their planning in advance, thus allowing redistribution so that courses needing more resources can benefit from those requiring less. This measure was introduced a few years ago and has helped consolidate the process, making financing more efficient and effective, and reducing overall costs without reducing quality or activity volume.
- **Excursions:** Based applications by course responsible before the semester start. Allocation is managed by the Dean, ensuring balance between summer and winter semesters, between study programmes, and between thematic fields (communication, product, art) and study courses (L-4, LM-12). Courses fully dependent on excursions (essential to the core of the course) are prioritised, with rotation principles applied overall to avoid imbalances.
- **Diplorama!:** The triannual graduation public exhibition and annual catalogue are financed through the faculty teaching budget as a key teaching activity. Diplorama! involves all graduates across all programmes, with a dedicated responsible for coordination, content, and budget.
- **GOG:** 'Gäste-Ospiti-Guests' – the faculty's semester-end public exhibition, is supported with a minimal budget, included within the overall Diplorama! allocation, and coordinated by designated responsible.

### 6.8 Third Mission budget

- Each year (around July), all faculty members are invited by the administrative responsible to submit proposals for the next year's Third Mission events budget. Proposals must secure at least 30% external co-financing, in line with unibz regulations.
- The Dean, as budget responsible, reviews all proposals. Where reductions are required to fit within the available budget, cuts are applied proportionally across the proposal, with the aim of funding all or as many as possible.
- Criteria include:
  - Equal distribution across colleagues (over a multi-year period).
  - Balanced support across clusters and study programmes (where relevant).

- Priority for events of high visibility and relevance to the Faculty as a whole (e.g., *By Design and By Disaster* for LM-12, or exhibitions such as *Photo Wien* for the Art major).

### **6.9 Faculty Didactic Workshops**

- Investments in workshops are based on proposals submitted by the overall workshop coordinator (and the single workshop responsables).
- Proposals are discussed with the Dean and relevant professors in the area of expertise, then brought to Faculty Council for discussion and decision whether to include it in the budget proposal, or not.
- Criteria: continuous support for ensuring highest safety standards, and high-quality teaching and innovation.

### **6.10 Monitoring and Reporting**

- Allocations are tracked on an annual basis and are reported in the Faculty 'Annual Report' (*Jahresbericht*). They are also considered within the cyclical evaluation of teaching. Monitoring remains proportionate to the relatively small sums involved, in line with unibz quality assurance requirements (e.g., E.DIP2.1 and E.DIP.3 of AVA)