

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences Strategy 2026-2030



Adopted by the Board on 9 June 2026

Strategy 2026-2030

Adopted by the Board on 9 June 2026

Content

Vision	2
Mission	2
Values	2
The societal mandate	3
Three strategic drivers (how we develop).....	4
1. Applied and work life-oriented – Our profiling signature.....	5
2. Kristiania SMART – Innovation, flexibility, and sustainability	6
3. The University Project – Accreditation rights that create room to act	7
Focus areas 2026–2030 (what we shall do as an institution)	8
1. Education	8
2. Academic and artistic research.....	8
3. Knowledge in use	9
4. Sustainable development – social and economic	9

Vision

With creativity and academic strength, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall offer tomorrow's education today.

Mission

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences exists to give as many people as possible the chance to learn, grow, and develop throughout their lives — for society's benefit.

Values

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' values express who we are as an institution, and how we make decisions that advance our mission, societal mandate, and strategic direction. In the coming strategy period, the values will not merely describe our culture – they will function as operating principles that govern priorities, resource use, and behaviour at every level. The values serve as touchstones when facing a sector and a society marked by rapid change, rising demands, and a reality in which flexibility, quality, and relevance are decisive.

- **The student comes first**

Everything we do starts with the student. That means every academic, organisational and strategic decision must be judged by one thing: does it actually help students learn, grow, and build a better future for themselves? This value is a commitment to academic quality and genuine human care — and to keeping alive our long tradition of close follow-up, clear guidance, and learning designed around real people in real, different life situations.

- **Responsible and accountable**

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences makes decisions that earn trust over time, both inside and outside the institution. Being responsible means managing our resources wisely, meeting our legal obligations, and being transparent about the quality of our teaching, research and organisation. As our ambitions grow, so does the need for solid documentation, real quality assurance, and professional governance — accountability matters more, not less. In short: we deliver on what we promise, and we stand behind the choices we make.

- **Emphatic**

Empathy isn't just a nice quality to have — it's a strategic asset. At Kristiania University of Applied Sciences, staff and students should be met with understanding, respect and genuine warmth. We want a culture that feels safe enough to make people bold: to learn, collaborate, push

back, contribute, and take the risk of developing themselves. That makes for a better student community, a better workplace, and is core to who we are as a non-profit institution that puts people first. It also means recognising that people's lives look different and building in the flexibility that lets them succeed anyway.

- **Differentiating**

This value commits us to making choices that clearly distinguish Kristiania University of Applied Sciences from other institutions in the sector – and to taking strategic steps that strengthen our unique position as a career-oriented, flexible, and student-close institution. Being differentiating means we must dare to be innovative, practice-oriented, and market-aware, while holding fast to what makes us distinctive. This value shall help us sharpen our priorities and ensure that our initiatives, offerings, and learning models genuinely build our identity and competitiveness.

Together, these values form an operational framework that will guide Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' development in the years ahead – in teaching, research, knowledge dissemination, and organisational culture. At the same time, they continue the institution's non-profit heritage and serve as a tool for making our mission and societal mandate tangible in practice.

The societal mandate

For over a hundred years, Kristiania has fulfilled its societal mandate by making education accessible, relevant, and closely connected to the needs of working life.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences is a teaching and cultural institution that, since 1914, has had the purpose of giving as many people as possible the opportunity for education, personal development, and a better life. Our societal mandate stems from the founding of Norsk Korrespondanseskole (NKS), established by Ernst G. Mortensen. Inspired by American correspondence schools – and with a clear understanding of Norwegian conditions such as scattered settlement, long distances, and limited social mobility – he developed an educational offering that made it possible for more people to take part in the knowledge society, regardless of where they lived, their financial means, or their life situation.

We have always placed the student at the centre. This has shaped Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' pedagogical approach since the very beginning, with learning organised around students' need for flexibility, individual follow-up, and a real chance to succeed. This fundamental orientation toward students' learning and development has shaped a clear and consistent student-oriented pedagogical profile, which still

forms the foundation of Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' academic identity. In this way, we realised our mission early on: to expand opportunities for education and personal development for as many people as possible, in a lifelong perspective.

Throughout the twentieth century, NKS developed programmes in step with the needs of society and working life. The institution collaborated closely with sectors undergoing change and developed programmes that provided both personal development and skills relevant to working life. This tradition – developing career-relevant education that responds to society's needs – has been carried forward and strengthened in today's Kristiania University of Applied Sciences. In a time marked by rapid transformation, skills gaps, and a growing need for lifelong learning, this starting point is more relevant than ever. Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall offer programmes that strengthen individuals' life opportunities while giving working life the skills it needs for innovation, value creation, and sustainable development. We achieve this by developing and offering programmes closely integrated with practice, business, and society. In this way, students gain experience that makes them relevant and well-prepared for working life and their chosen field. This is made possible by strong academic communities, career-relevant forms of learning, and committed collaboration with employers and industry – combined with systematic work to identify and meet the skills needs of the future.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' societal mandate is thus characterised by three fundamental commitments. First, we shall provide as many people as possible with access to education and personal development through flexible, relevant, and quality-driven learning models that enable lifelong learning. Second, we place the student at the centre of every part of our activities – pedagogically, organisationally, and culturally – as we have done since 1914. Third, we work in close partnership with employers and industry, so that our programmes continuously help develop Norway as a knowledge nation and strengthen working life's capacity for transformation and innovation.

Three strategic drivers (how we develop)

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences is entering a strategy period that demands clear direction and priorities. In addition to general challenges related to the economy, changing skills needs, the geopolitical situation, and technological development, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences faces a particularly exposed competitive situation, since our economy depends on students paying tuition fees. To address these challenges and to focus our development efforts for the years 2026–2030, we have established three strategic drivers that will guide the institution's further development and sharpen our distinctive profile in the sector.

1. Applied and work life-oriented – the practice close university
2. Kristiania SMART – innovation, flexibility, and sustainability
3. The University Project – accreditation rights that create room to act

The drivers shall help Kristiania University of Applied Sciences deliver on its societal mandate, realise its mission, and develop in line with its vision, while also clarifying what sets us apart as a career-oriented educational institution. As strategic directions for development, they translate the ambitions of the period into concrete priorities in education, research, dissemination, organisation, and collaboration with working life – and make our profile more visible and consistent.

At the same time, we recognise that requirements and framework conditions can change quickly. If developments call for it, the drivers may be adjusted during the strategy period to ensure they remain the right means of supporting our goals and keeping us on course toward our vision.

1. Applied and work life-oriented – Our profiling signature

Applied and work life-oriented shall be Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' clearest hallmark and what distinguishes us from other universities. By building on the principles of work-integrated learning (WIL) and incorporating an applied approach to knowledge and competence, "applied and work life-oriented" shall not be an ambition – it shall be a quality and philosophy woven into learning outcomes, teaching, assessment, R&D, and dissemination. Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall be the leading institution in Norway for applied and work life-oriented education and research by 2030. Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall be visible and set the tone in the national and international discourse on applied and work life-oriented education and research – as an educational institution, a research actor, and a societal partner.

Applied and career-oriented shall be Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' differentiating educational promise. It builds on the career orientation that already characterises the institution. It means a deliberate and systematic connection between theory and practice, where course design, learning activities, and assessment methods are developed to support students' progression when facing real-world problems. Applied and work life-oriented shall not be an add-on to our programmes, but the very structure that binds academic content, skills, and professional understanding together.

It also means that research shall be oriented toward the field of practice and developed in collaboration with employers and industry. And it means binding commitments to the actors of working life and industry. Applied and work life-oriented shall be what makes Kristiania University of Applied Sciences unique in the sector and gives students a documented transition into working life, while employers and industry look to the institution as the preferred partner within the higher education sector.

To succeed, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences needs robust, long-term, and mutually binding partnerships with employers and industry, including through active alumni networks. For working life and industry, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall be a strategic partner for skills development, recruitment, and professional innovation. This requires that we

establish clear models for collaboration, anchoring within industries, and professional follow-up of partners.

Purpose: Ensure a systematic applied and work life-oriented focus throughout the entire study programmes and in R&D.

Strategic goal for Applied and career-oriented:

During the strategy period, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall become Norway's leading institution in the higher education sector for applied and work life-oriented education and research.

2. Kristiania SMART – Innovation, flexibility, and sustainability

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences operates in a market where we face a lasting competitive disadvantage compared with much of the higher education sector: our economy depends on students paying tuition fees. This means we cannot compete on the same terms when it comes to funding, and that our students make an active choice to study with us. We are therefore entirely dependent on innovating and developing new, relevant study programmes faster, finding clear niches, or offering what others offer – only better. Kristiania University of Applied Sciences' competitiveness therefore rests on our ability to be more forward-looking, more flexible, and closer to the market than the rest of the sector.

To succeed, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences must be business-and operationally smart. This means combining innovation with efficient operations, developing new revenue streams, and creating an organisation that is agile and adaptable. "Kristiania SMART" is therefore a collective term for a strategic focus intended to make us more robust, more agile, more relevant, and more competitive in a market – and a world – in change. By establishing Kristiania SMART as a strategic driver, the institution takes on this challenge with a proactive stance. The driver is thus meant to capture the ambition of an institution characterised by innovation, flexibility, capacity for change, efficiency, simplification, and agile ways of working.

Kristiania SMART is a strategic focus area intended to secure our long-term sustainability. By combining flexibility, innovation, and digitalisation, we strengthen our ability to deliver on our mission. Kristiania SMART enables us to meet changing framework conditions, attract new target groups, and build an organisation equipped for continuous change.

Purpose: Prevent unnecessary bureaucracy, simplify processes, increase efficiency, and ensure robustness and innovative capacity across the organisation.

Strategic goal for Kristiania SMART:

During the strategy period, Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall become the most efficient, agile, and competitive higher education institution in Norway.

3. The University Project – Accreditation rights that create room to act

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences as a university shall stand out from other universities through a stronger and clearer profile as applied and “career-close”. This means a university concerned with impact, influence, and practical relevance in working life and society, more than a university at the forefront of basic research. It means a university that enters into binding collaborations with the organisations of working life, industry, and society. It means a university that, on a values-based foundation, places students at the centre and seeks to give as many people as possible the opportunity for personal development, relevant competence, and the foundations for a good life.

The University Project is a strategic driver for the strategy period. Becoming a university is not a goal in itself, but a means of realising Kristiania University of Applied Sciences mission: to give as many people as possible the opportunity for education and personal development in a lifelong learning perspective, for the benefit of society.

University status gives Kristiania University of Applied Sciences legitimacy, authority, and room to act to develop new study programmes, strengthen our research profile, and take a clear position in the sector. It allows us to deliver on our societal mandate with greater academic breadth and depth. To achieve this, we must document that we have robust structures, processes, and outputs in line with the applicable requirements for university accreditation.

Purpose: Ensure that Kristiania University of Applied Sciences achieves its mission through institutional autonomy, expanded authority, and greater room to act.

Strategic goal for the University ambition:

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall submit its application for accreditation as a university by the end of 2030.

Focus areas 2026–2030 (what we shall do as an institution)

1. Education

Our programmes shall be applied and work life-oriented, relevant, and designed for students to succeed – both in working life and in their continued learning.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall offer programmes that prepare students for life after graduation and give working life the skills it needs. Programmes shall be research-based, practice-close, and developed in close collaboration with employers. Teaching shall incorporate real world assignments, work placements, and industry projects that provide students with relevant experience. Curricula shall be regularly further developed with industry partners to ensure that academic content is current, applicable, and aligned with society's skills needs.

Strategic choices

- Students shall encounter real-world problems and profession-close learning situations throughout their studies.
- Study programmes are developed in partnership with employers, based on industry dialogue and continuous curriculum renewal.
- Flexible learning models shall ensure learning outcomes and completion for diverse groups of students.
- Quality in teaching, assessment, and guidance shall drive academic development and accreditation work.

2. Academic and artistic research

Research shall be characterised by relevance and applicability and shall be integrated into education and working life.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall develop academic and artistic research of high quality that helps solve challenges in working life and society. Research shall strengthen professional practice, develop new knowledge, and support our university ambitions through robust academic communities and increased external funding.

Strategic choices

- Prioritise applied academic and artistic research, developed in collaboration with employers.
- Build academic communities that support PhD programmes, external funding, and university status.
- Integrate students at all levels into R&D projects.

- Further develop interdisciplinary research areas with high professional and societal relevance.
- Strengthen research quality, academic merit, and systematic practice to ensure development and impact.

3. Knowledge in use

We shall create, share, and make available knowledge that society and working life put to use.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall develop and share knowledge that is put to use in society and working life by contributing new insight, better decision-making, and knowledge-based value creation.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall be a visible and credible knowledge actor. We shall make research and academic insight accessible and contribute to an informed public debate. At the same time, we shall work systematically to ensure that knowledge is applied and benefits society – through open sharing, commercialisation, collaboration, and social innovation. Work on knowledge in use shall be an integrated and merit-worthy part of academic activity and shall contribute to research achieving academic, professional, and societal impact.

Strategic choices

- Knowledge in use is part of academic activity. Knowledge sharing shall be integrated into academic work and recognised as merit worthy.
- Kristiania University of Applied Sciences collaborates with working life and society. We shall build strong partnerships with businesses, professions, industry, and public actors to identify knowledge needs and contribute to the development and use of new knowledge and skills.
- Innovation and value creation from Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall help translate academic and research results into societal value, through collaboration, innovation, commercialisation, service development, and open forms of cooperation with employers and societal actors.
- Professional support for knowledge in use shall be developed. Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall continue to build professional systems and support functions that strengthen communication, collaboration, innovation, and the use of research and academic knowledge in society.

4. Sustainable development – social and economic

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall be a robust, inclusive, and efficient organisation with strong academic communities and sound finances, contributing to sustainable societal development.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences shall be a socially and economically sustainable institution with robust operations, strong academic communities, and an inclusive culture that

enables both students and employees to succeed. Sustainability is about long-term financial room to manoeuvre, professional governance, efficient work processes, and an organisation that promotes social mobility, wellbeing, and quality.

Strategic choices

- Ensure long-term financial sustainability through robust portfolio management, prioritisation, and responsible use of resources.
- Further develop Kristiania SMART as a driver of digitalisation, efficient operations, and better use of organisational resources.
- Strengthen social sustainability and inclusion through flexible study paths and a learning and working environment that promotes wellbeing and completion.
- Build strong academic communities with the right expertise, good leadership, and conditions that support quality in education, research, and dissemination.
- Professionalise governance, quality, and decision-making, so that the organisation is predictable, efficient, and in line with the requirements for university accreditation.

Kristiania University of Applied Sciences Strategy 2026-2030