

Third Mission Policy at Caucasus University

When looking to the future, we envision universities without walls, these are universities that are open and engaged in society while retaining their core values. All of Europe's universities will be responsible, autonomous and free, with different institutional profiles, but united in their missions of learning and teaching, research, innovation and culture in service to society.¹

- *Universities without walls, A vision for 2030, EUA*

PREAMBLE

In the changing global environment universities are navigating a transformative landscape, acknowledging the imperative need to support societal needs. There is a distinct paradigm shift since the 2000s, recognizing universities not only as the places for academic excellence but as dynamic contributors to societal advancement. Implicitly integrated into the research mission, Third Mission (3M) aligns seamlessly with the demands of modern knowledge-based economies, emphasizing collaboration among academia, industry, and government.

As 3M gains prominence in universities' activities, it opens doors to new potential roles and fosters heightened competitiveness grounded in holistic societal contributions. At the same time, the emergence of the 'Entrepreneurial University' signifies a proactive commitment to strategically applying knowledge for societal benefit, challenging the conventional notion of universities as 'ivory towers.'

SCOPE

This policy applies to all stakeholders of Caucasus University including academic and administrative staff, students, alumni and the broader society.

CU DECLARATION OF THE THIRD MISSION

Recent globalization processes put upward pressure on high educational institutions to redesign their teaching and research missions and bring them closer to the public interests.

Embracing the evolving landscape of higher education, Caucasus University (CU) is committed to a transformative Third Mission (3M) policy that redefines its role beyond traditional teaching and research. Since its foundation in 1998, CU has championed academic excellence with a global outlook, fostering a diverse range of schools and programs. Grounded in the motto "Studium Pretium Libertatis" (Education is the Price of Freedom), CU places a premium on high-quality education, international collaboration, and practical learning. Our 3M policy acknowledges the dynamic challenges posed by the knowledge economy, globalization, and societal shifts. CU recognizes the need to transcend conventional academic boundaries, engaging in knowledge transfer, innovation, and societal

¹ Universities without walls, A vision for 2030, EUA - [universities without walls a vision for 2030.pdf \(eua.eu\)](https://www.eua.europa.eu/universities-without-walls-a-vision-for-2030)

contributions. This policy underscores the university's dedication to producing well-rounded graduates equipped with skills relevant to the contemporary world.

The Caucasus University, along with its development process, has growing number of activities which contribute and positively impact local society's social-economic welfare. Through various forms of communication and social engagement, the University is directly and indirectly engaged in social and cultural development process. So far, the third mission activities at the Caucasus University consists of an extensive array of activities, basically performed by the University administration, academic staff and students which mostly seek to increase the University's image in public. Specifically, the University's vision of the third mission activities closely resembles traditional concept of a corporate social responsibility, through which the University has enormous commitment to contribute to Georgia's economic, social, cultural and environmental development process. This commitment is well reflected in a variety of multifunctional and multidisciplinary collaboration processes at a local and regional scale through which the Caucasus University performs its active social role.

Throughout the 2022-2023 academic year, Caucasus University underwent revisions to its strategic development plan, resulting in modifications to several key objectives and the third mission indicator among others. The university declared its commitment to plan, implement, execute and assess the impact of the third mission activities within the university and beyond. For this purpose, solo strategic goal P5 "Development and implementation of programs/activities (including innovative ones) in accordance with the third mission of the university, taking into account the requirements of the market and society" was identified.

The university declared its commitment to the Third Mission within three established directions: Continuous Education (CE), Knowledge and Technology Transfer (KTT), and Societal Engagement (SE).

The activities of the university, along with the provision of quality education, are closely linked to the promotion of societal development. This is evidenced by the numerous activities carried out and planned within the university, which reflect the institution's commitment to societal values. Every activity, whether at the level of schools, departments, or offices, embodies the innovative spirit of the university. This includes a dedication to academic freedom, a strong connection to the local, regional and international community, and a commitment to inclusion and diversity.

Caucasus University shows respect for the history and culture of the country and actively works to disseminate and implement national values. This comprehensive approach ensures that Caucasus University not only contributes to individual educational advancement but also plays a significant role in the broader development of Georgian society.

In caring for the development of the country, Caucasus University aims to provide Georgian society with knowledge that facilitates activities contributing to the country's development and increased competitiveness. This reflects the university's values and its dedication to serving as a catalyst for societal progress through education, research, and active engagement with diverse communities.

CU PRINCIPLES FOR 3M

The societal engagement profile of Caucasus University is anchored in a mission to prepare highly-qualified professionals for both local and international markets. Through research-oriented teaching and learning, the university seeks to nurture morally-grounded individuals committed to democratic ideals, addressing society's educational needs. The vision encompasses a commitment to innovation, diversity, academic freedom, and proximity to local and international communities. Emphasizing academic integrity, the university aspires to create an environment where faculty are free in knowledge creation and transfer.

The realization of the university's third mission hinges significantly on the active engagement of academic staff and their respective undertakings. Every year, the Strategic Development Department collects detailed information from both academic and administrative staff about their 3M activities. This process involves gathering data on various initiatives and projects conducted individually, in groups, or within larger projects by academic and invited staff members. The collected information not only provides a comprehensive overview of the contributions made by the staff but also facilitates the correlation of these activities with the objectives of the Third Mission. Additionally, this information is used to align the university's efforts with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), ensuring that the university's initiatives support global sustainability targets.

Caucasus University, as an active participant of Erasmus+ Capacity Building National Project "SQUARE" (Strengthening the Quality and Relevance of the 3rd mission in Georgian universities), contributed to the awareness rising of the 3M in Georgian High Education area promoting its importance and relevance. More information on the project and CU's participation within "SQUARE" could be found: <https://www.square.tsu.ge/>

This strategic approach ensures a comprehensive and impactful third mission strategy. Moreover, this document closely aligns with the university's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) as well as Sustainability Policies, sharing common values and relying upon their principles. By intertwining these initiatives, Caucasus University not only meets accreditation requirements but also fosters an environment of inclusivity, sustainability, and societal contribution.

CU RESPONSIBILITY, MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF UNIVERSITY'S 3M

The monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the university's third mission, along with necessary adjustments, are overseen by a relevant offices/departments/school at CU. The Strategic Development Department conducts annual reviews of 3M activities and disseminates its findings to the university community.

At Caucasus University, the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Center is dedicated to the promotion the startup ecosystem, fostering entrepreneurial growth, and encouraging innovative projects among students. Additionally, the Marketing and Public Relations Department plays a crucial role in promoting the university's activities within the third mission framework and beyond. This department takes the leading role for promoting CU's 3M activities, raising awareness about various initiatives, and ensuring effective communication of the university's mission and values within broader community.

Meeting the standards related to the university's third mission and its societal impact is one of the most exacting conditions. To demonstrate its commitment to these principles, Caucasus University meticulously tracks and reports various metrics, including new projects, submitted applications, funded start-ups and projects with a positive impact on society.

Planning, executing and assessing CU's 3M activity impact on society is a continuous endeavor for the benefit of society.