

2<sup>ND</sup> EDITION

FEBRUARY 2025

# NEWSLETTER



**BOKU**  
**UNIVERSITY**

**AUT-BOKU 2030**  
**STRATEGY**

# SHAPING THE FUTURE TOGETHER

## A MESSAGE FROM THE LEADERSHIP

As we continue implementing the AUT Strategy 2030, we take this opportunity to reflect on the progress and the next steps. AUT is undergoing significant transformations to align with international educational standards and needs of our students and society.

The collaboration between AUT and BOKU has been instrumental in driving the key initiatives, including curriculum reforms, research advancements, and international cooperation. The work of our dedicated faculty, students, and institutional partners ensures that AUT remains at the forefront of innovation in agricultural and environmental sciences.

Together, we are not only reshaping the academic landscape at AUT but also contribute to the development of a knowledge-driven and sustainable future for Albania.

**Prof. Dr. Fatbardh Sallaku**  
Rector  
Agricultural University of Tirana

**Prof. Dr. DDr.h.c. Hubert Hasenauer**  
Program Leader  
BOKU University

## CHARTING A NEW PATH IN ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

### 1. RESHAPING THE STUDY PROGRAMS AT AUT

Research driven education is evolving, and so must our curricula. The restructuring of AUT's study programs has been a key priority, ensuring that our graduates are prepared with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in a competitive job market. The latest updates in curriculum reform include the launch of new Bachelor Programs for the academic year 2025-26, as follows:

- **Faculty of Forestry Sciences:** Two bachelor's programs: **Forestry Engineering** and **Wood Industry**, with tracks in *Wood Processing* and *Furniture & Interior Design*.
- **Faculty of Agriculture and Environment:** A new bachelor program in **Agriculture and Food science**, offering specializations in *Agronomy, Horticulture, Aquaculture, Plant Protection, and Livestock*. A new program in **Environmental Engineering**, offering specialization in *Water Management* and *Natural Resource Management*.
- **Faculty of Biotechnology and Food:** The introduction of **Agri-Food Technology** and **Food Science & Nutrition** programs, carefully designed to align with European standards and industry needs.
- **Faculty of Economics and Agribusiness:** Ongoing restructuring efforts are centred on the integrating of an interdisciplinary approach around the importance of social sciences at AUT.
- **New Academic Initiatives:** The establishment of a **Water Management program** is under review, reflecting Albania's growing emphasis on sustainable water resource governance. Additionally, a new **Bachelor program on Information Technology (IT) in Agriculture and Environment** is under review, reflecting Albania's growing emphasis on the integration of information technology with life sciences serving national challenges.



The new programs are developed under a newly established University Study Commission for Curricula development. This commission is composed of seven AUT professors and students and seven BOKU professors and students. The commission oversees the curriculum reforms, ensuring alignment with European standards, and fostering innovation in study programs. It will work closely with study programs and faculty members to refine educational approaches and strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration.

The University Study Commission has established Working Groups, which reflects the competences of the specific working groups and ensures the transdisciplinary educational approach. The working groups consists of faculty members and students. Their efforts are guided and supported by BOKU professors, who provide expertise and mentorship throughout the reform process. The study working groups are playing a crucial role in facilitating discussions, identifying improvements, and ensuring that program updates meet both academic and job requirements.

The new programs will be developed within the framework of a new academic structure, the University Study Committee, representing the required interdisciplinary competences for each program, ensuring student engagement and deeply connecting to societal needs.

# STRENGTHENING RESEARCH & INNOVATION

## 2. ADVANCING SCIENTIFIC EXCELLENCE

Research is the foundation of knowledge, and at the Agricultural University of Tirana (AUT), strengthening research capabilities has become a central priority. To foster a more dynamic and collaborative research environment, AUT is establishing interdisciplinary research groups that bridge gaps between different scientific disciplines, encouraging synergies that lead to innovative solutions. Recognizing the importance of structured research management, the university is also developing a comprehensive research database, enabling systematic tracking and support of faculty research activities.

Beyond internal improvements, AUT aims in expanding its participation in EU-funded research projects, opening doors to greater collaboration with international partners and enhancing the university's role in global scientific endeavour. A crucial step in this transformation is the strategic shift toward reducing faculty teaching loads, allowing academics to dedicate more time to research and scholarly innovation. By working closely with BOKU University, AUT is also integrating evaluation tools and quality assurance measures to ensure that its research efforts have a lasting impact and gain international recognition. Through these initiatives, AUT is not only reinforcing its position as a centre of academic excellence but also creating an environment where research is driving meaningful contributions to science, industry, and society.

## VETERINARY MEDICINE - PREPARING FOR ACCREDITATION

University education in veterinary medicine in Europe is standardized according to the European Association of Veterinary Education (EAEVE). Faculty of Veterinary Medicine has no accreditation by EAEVE and the process will start with a site visit scheduled for March 2025. An Accreditation Coordination Committee has been established to oversee the process and to ensure the compliance with EAEVE standards. The committee is working on a preliminary self-assessment report, which will help identify gaps and opportunities in AUT's veterinary program. This report will be a key discussion point during the March visit, providing a structured approach for necessary improvements to align with European accreditation requirements.

Additionally, the committee will focus on enhancing clinical training facilities, curriculum alignment, and student competency evaluations to meet EAEVE's rigorous standards.



## STAKEHOLDERS SURVEY & INSIGHTS

### 5. VOICES FROM THE AUT COMMUNITY

A comprehensive survey conducted by MARKET Institute Austria gathered insights from over 1,500 respondents, including 500 representatives from the employment market (stakeholders), 300 alumni, and the remaining participants consisting of current students, administrative staff, and academic personnel at AUT. These perspectives provide a valuable understanding of the university's strengths, challenges, and opportunities for growth.

**Key findings from this study have been instrumental in shaping our strategic decisions:**

- Strong demand for interdisciplinary education, integrating natural sciences, engineering, economics, and social sciences.
- High expectations for career-oriented and practical training, with an identified gap between theoretical learning and hands-on experience.
- Major economic concerns in Albania, emphasizing the need for stronger academic-industry collaboration and innovation-driven research.
- Growing interest in sustainability, digitalization, and agri-tech, reflecting priority areas for curriculum expansion.

**These findings reaffirm our commitment to offering education that is not only academically rigorous but also aligned with real-world challenges and opportunities.**

# AUT-BOKU 2030 STRATEGY





## NEXT STEPS AND KEY UPCOMING EVENTS

Important steps and developments are ahead because we plan to start with the reshaped Bachelor programs for the next academic year 2025-26.

- **February 2025:** Online SCC-BOKU meeting to finalize curriculum drafts.
- **March 2025:** EAEVE visit for veterinary program evaluation.
- **March 2025:** Finalizing the reshaped Bachelor study programs which are planned to be in place with the new academic study year 2025-26
- **April 2025:** Workshop on research and innovation strategies.
- **May 2025:** National Higher Education Conference, where AUT will present its restructured programs and strategic vision.

We invite faculty, students, and stakeholders to actively participate in these upcoming events and initiatives. Your engagement is essential in ensuring the successful realization of AUT's transformation.

### STAY CONNECTED

For more updates, visit our official websites:

[www.ubt.edu.al](http://www.ubt.edu.al) / [www.aut-boku.org](http://www.aut-boku.org)

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Transforming Education, Empowering the Future

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