ESTONIAN ACADEMY OF SECURITY SCIENCES

3.0 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2025–2035

Introduction

Founded in 1992, the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences is unique in the world in terms of its academic structure and value system. It integrates all of Estonia's internal security education along with undertaking research and development activities.
The educational and research institution, which was originally created with a strong sense of mission and that was ahead of its time, can be referred to as Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 1.0

After merging with other security institutions, expanding to Narva and establishing a modern teaching facility in Tallinn, it evolved into Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 2.0.

We are now ready to embark on the next phase – establishing the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences 3.0. In this development strategy, we have updated the Academy's vision, mission and values, setting three primary strategic goals to be achieved by 2035.

Our vision is to be a partner in advancing smart security. We provide training, research and research-based solutions for government authorities, the broader public sector and society as a whole. As leaders in security education and research, we educate, support and engage both citizens and security providers, offering research-based analysis to decision-makers. We aim to be both knowledgeable and boldly innovative, while fostering a culture of care for ourselves and others.

Our strategy focuses on three main objectives:

First, to foster an **ecosystem for internal security research and development**. This involves creating an environment conducive to research and developmental work and applying the outcomes of research and development across education, policy-making, business and other fields. We aim to lay the foundation for a future community of security scholars.
Second, to offer a **meaningful learning experience**. We continue developing research-based teaching, creating practical and sustainable learning environments, and supporting lifelong learning.
Third, to ensure a **sense of unity and commitment** among academy members. We seek to value and motivate our staff. Our goal is to create an environment where every employee understands their role in building smart security, where the culture supports professional growth and nurtures a collective spirit.

Together, we will make Academy 3.0 a reality!

Kuno Tammearu

Rector of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences

Development trends influencing the Academy's strategy

Internal security

In the coming years, the external environment will evolve primarily in the fields of external security, technology and the environment. One of the most significant challenges is the rise in geopolitical tensions: the war in Ukraine and sanctions on Russia will have an impact on Europe for at least a decade. Another international risk comes from China's growing influence and ambitions as a global player.

Cyber threats are also becoming more prevalent, including cyberattacks, espionage, sabotage and similar risks targeting both the state and the private sector. Emerging security challenges are additionally tied to issues of privacy, data protection and the use of artificial intelligence. Online radicalisation is also on the rise, particularly affecting young people, which in turn increases the risks of terrorist acts and the formation of terrorist networks, or people becoming involved with them. External hybrid attacks may target the credibility of internal security and law enforcement institutions, as well as attempt to destabilise critical services and infrastructure.

International conflicts result in humanitarian crises and waves of migration. Migration itself is also being weaponised to spread extremist ideologies and amplify social tensions.

Estonia's population is ageing unevenly across regions, making it increasingly challenging to fill roles related to internal security and safety. It is important to ensure that non-Estonian speakers living in Estonia see a future for themselves and engage with the broader societal development of the country.

Civic activism, polarisation and the intensity of public discourse have all increased. New technological solutions, including artificial intelligence, facilitate the sharing of opinions and the spread of misinformation in virtual communities. There is a growing need to address issues related to "societal security" to protect constitutional order and foster societal resilience and mutual trust between communities. However, a risk exists that segments of society will not fully understand the measures required to maintain continuity and some groups will not support these efforts. Thus, beyond managing crises locally and within limited timeframes, there is also a need to prepare for long-term changes, to handle any unexpected scarcity of resources and to maintain the continuity of critical services. This situation further underlines the importance of making systematic decisions based on scientific evidence.

Higher education

In the future, careers will become longer and more flexible, including transitions between learning, paid employment, entrepreneurship, freelancing and periods outside the workforce. Higher education will need to meet new expectations. Jobs and occupations are changing much more rapidly than before, and it is increasingly common for students to study alongside their jobs. This creates an expectation for higher education to adapt to varied lifestyles and preferences, as one-size-fits-all solutions no longer meet learners' expectations.

Four main trends are driving change in higher education: digitalisation, internationalisation, personalisation and high expectations for higher education institutions to help solve societal problems.[1]

Digitalisation is opening new opportunities in education, allowing greater participation in international higher education programmes and continuing education and training. This trend provides universities with an opportunity to engage more students, but it also requires offering more personalised services and differentiation, leading to additional costs.

Internationalisation opens new markets and allows talent better access to available programmes, but it also increases competition. A personalised approach, along with flexibility in the time, place, mode and scale of learning, is becoming standard and encourages diversity in higher education. Furthermore, universities are increasingly expected to support society in navigating major changes.

Research and development

Research and development (R&D) is essential for fostering innovation and is critical for building resilience and adaptability, particularly during transition processes.[2]

Innovation and practical solutions primarily emerge from collaboration within international networks. Researchers exchange knowledge and resources and share best practices across global networks of colleagues. Increasing emphasis is being placed on open science practices and transparency in research findings, which include access to academic articles and data, critical evaluation of research results, and collaboration between scientists and the public. This enables broader-scale studies and creates opportunities for developing innovative solutions to global challenges.

The knowledge-transfer model within an innovation ecosystem requires efforts to foster network collaboration and to enhance educational and research activities.[3] Increasing attention is being directed towards interdisciplinary research and development, where various academic fields and disciplines come together to address complex problems. There is also a growing focus on promoting science and establishing research centres to raise awareness of the importance of science and inspire young people to pursue academic careers.

The rapid advancement of technology and engineering is increasingly impacting society, including in the field of internal security, presenting both new opportunities and challenges that require solutions.[4] Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning are already reshaping and becoming integrated into every area of life. Digitalisation enhances data availability and analysis, allowing researchers to conduct large-scale studies and make discoveries. AI also holds the potential to transform education and security.[5]

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[1] The future of higher education. Development trends up to 2035. Varblane, U. (2022) Foresight Centre.
[2] OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2023. Enabling Transitions in Times of Disruption.
[3] Laatsit, M., Ukrainski, K., Urmann, H., Remmik, M. (2022) Universities' third mission: Estonian scientists as guides to innovation.
Centre for Applied Social Sciences.
[4] The Internal Security Development Plan 2020–2030.
[5] Koppel, K., Kuusik, A., Arrak, K., Raik, J., Niidu, A., Kõks, K., Lahtvee, P. (2023).
Alternative development trajectories of deep technologies and their significance for Estonia. Civitta Eesti AS

The Academy's vision, mission and values

VISION
We are a partner in advancing smart security

We lead developments within the field of security by taking initiative, driving discussions and guiding progress.

Our role is to anticipate the future and work with enthusiasm to shape it. This requires continuous improvement in research and development.
We serve as partners to a range of stakeholders – including students, alumni, institutions, policymakers and other universities – focusing on providing knowledge and applying technologies to collaboratively discover new, smart solutions in security.

MISSION
We are leaders in security education and research

We steer progress in internal security. To this end, we ensure high-quality education and evolve into a centre for internal security training and research that engages the entire society. The Academy is home to top experts capable of initiating essential developments in the field. The Estonian Academy of Security Sciences aspires to be the primary research-based centre for internal security in Estonia.

VALUES
We are bold, knowledgeable and caring

Boldness means being open to innovation, experimentation and learning from mistakes. We have the courage to speak up and take responsibility.

Being **knowledgeable** means commitment to lifelong learning, deep understanding, self-improvement, and sharing our skills, knowledge and experiences.

Caring begins with self-care, enabling us to extend care to colleagues, students and partners. We observe, step in and offer help where needed.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- Every member of our community – from students and alumni to staff – is valued and appreciated, and we expect enthusiasm and commitment in return.
- We initiate new directions in education and research by bringing together top expertise and initiative.
- We share informed perspectives to enhance awareness among our partners, society and policymakers, shaping developments in internal security.
- We engage diverse target groups to achieve comprehensive and high-quality outcomes.
- We educate people on safe behaviour and leverage traditional and social media to reach various audiences, fostering a habit and desire for safe practices, with particular attention to engaging school-aged youth.
- Our teaching is research-based and connected to practical, real-world challenges.

- Our R&D activities generate new knowledge and solutions that provide a foundation and support for informed, high-quality decision-making.

DEVELOPMENT GOALS

1. A functional ecosystem for internal security research and development

We are an educational and research institution with a significant role in delivering new knowledge and solutions in the field of security. Thus, we must approach research and development comprehensively, creating a well-functioning ecosystem.

1.1 Research and development work is appealing and R&D staff are well supported

Systematic support must be provided for both emerging and experienced researchers. Participation in international networks and projects is crucial, as is involving students and field experts in these projects (including international collaboration). Over time, there should be a noticeable increase in the proportion of staff engaged in research and development (particularly staff with doctoral degrees) and in their satisfaction with our research management.

1.2 Research and development activities address societal needs, push the boundaries of knowledge, and highlight key trends and their potential impact

We must understand the needs and challenges of the security field and society at large to offer relevant knowledge and innovative solutions. Constantly expanding the boundaries of knowledge is also essential: observing trends, assessing impacts and predicting changes. Achieving this requires strategic partnerships (including international cooperation) in policy development and broader dissemination of research and development outcomes (including to young people). A significant increase in both the number of academic publications and R&D projects is essential.

1.3 Research and development outcomes deliver impact and find practical applications

Applying research and development outcomes is a key objective. To achieve this, systematic opportunities must be created for testing new technologies and supporting policy-making. These steps require collaboration with partner institutions, government authorities and agencies, and research centres and businesses, both domestically and internationally. This also necessitates the development of essential infrastructure, competencies and other resources to enable practical applications.

2. A meaningful learning experience

Learning must be diverse and engaging, meeting students' expectations and needs while recognising that these are constantly evolving. It is crucial to view learning as both a skill and a habit, enabling individuals to continue acquiring new knowledge and skills after graduation. This is what defines a meaningful learning experience.
To keep pace with societal changes, we must update our curricula, ensure a high-quality learning environment, expand digital learning opportunities, integrate research and development into the curriculum, and offer learning experiences that are not overly dependent on time, location or individual circumstances.

2.1 Education is research-based and learning-centred

The content of education must be both practical and research-based, with methodologies that centre on learning itself, enabling students to also learn how to learn.
To achieve this, we need to support faculty in developing their skills (including professional, teaching, and R&D skills) and integrate more learner-centred approaches into the curriculum. Increasing student satisfaction and raising the proportion of faculty involved in research are key priorities.

2.2 Learning formats and environments are smart and learner-focused

Learning environments must be diverse, with a particular focus on digital learning options (including AI tools). To this end, we will increase the use of digital solutions, continually develop practical and sustainable learning environments in Väike-Maarja, Narva and Tallinn, and create opportunities for students to contribute to the field's advancement. The goal is to increase the graduation rate within the nominal time across all levels of study.

2.3 A trusted partner in supporting personal growth through lifelong learning

We need to support not only our own students but also people working in internal security more broadly, enabling lifelong learning. This means being flexible, offering diverse learning options and engaging a variety of target groups.
To achieve this, we must raise awareness of the Academy's learning opportunities both within the sector and among the wider public, while providing students with essential support services. A key goal is to increase employers' satisfaction with the training quality of our graduates.

3. Committed people and a sense of unity

The Academy must foster an environment where every employee understands their role and a culture that supports each individual's development. This approach helps retain top experts in the field. Building a sense of unity relies on achieving goals through collaboration rather than rigid hierarchies.

3.1 Everyone perceives their role as a partner in advancing smart security

Each employee should aspire to apply their experience, education, skills and knowledge in the best possible way to achieve the Academy's objectives. Identifying as a member of the Estonian Academy of Security Sciences should be a meaningful part of their identity and a source of pride. This includes having a general awareness of developments and fields outside their immediate area of work. Emphasis should be placed on workplace atmosphere, employee satisfaction, a stronger awareness of the significance of their work, role clarity, and increased decision-making authority and autonomy.

3.2 An inspiring organisational culture

The Academy must create optimal conditions for individual development and a sense of unity. A flexible and motivating career and incentive system is essential. The Academy's role in fostering a collective identity, or "we-feeling", is to establish a foundation that enables individuals to take greater responsibility for their motivation and development.

3.3 A people-centred leadership culture

Leaders at the Academy value their teams, prioritising motivation and an environment of trust. Goals are set collaboratively, with mutual feedback between employer and employee, and a commitment to act on it. Differences of opinion are accepted, while maintaining a focus on shared goals. Improving employee satisfaction with both direct supervisors and overall organisational leadership is essential.

Objectives, actions and indicators

OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	INDICATOR	TARGET VALUE		
			Baseline 2024	**Baseline 2030**	**Baseline 2035**
1.1. Research and development work is appealing and R&D staff are well supported	1.1.1. Implementing the R&D maturity model 1.1.2. Creating an environment conducive to research 1.1.3. Support and management structure for empowering academic staff with research responsibilities	Percentage of academic staff with R&D responsibilities	56%	≥ 60%	≥ 70%
		Number of staff with doctoral degrees holding R&D responsibilities	16	≥ 20	≥ 25
		Satisfaction rate with R&D management	Measured from 2025	N/A	N/A
1.2. Research and development activities address societal needs, push the boundaries of knowledge and highlight key trends and their potential impact	1.2.1. Strategic cooperation and policy development, including internationally, to systematically empower research 1.2.2. Expanding the promotion of internal security-related R&D to engage youth and spark their interest in the field 1.2.3. Systematic involvement of students in R&D activities 1.2.4. Greater integration of R&D with teaching	High-level publications	20	≥ 40	≥ 60
		Number of R&D projects	6	≥ 15	≥ 20

1.3. Research and development outcomes deliver impact and find practical applications	1.3.1. Developing practical internal security applications, including competencies, infrastructure, collaboration opportunities, services, solutions and studies 1.3.2. Creating attitudes and an environment to systematically gather R&D requirements and seek solutions 1.3.3. Enhancing science communication	Number of analyses and reports on practical solutions	17	≥ 40	≥ 50
		Number of applicable solutions developed through R&D	Measured from 2025	N/A	N/A
2.1. Our teaching is research-based and learning-centred	2.1.1. We develop learning-centred approaches in education and curriculum development 2.1.2. We enhance the professional skills and research capabilities of faculty	Student satisfaction with educational content and organisation	Measured from 2025	≥ 40	≥ 60
		Percentage of academic staff required to take dual responsibilities in research and teaching	48%	≥ 52%	≥ 55%
		Faculty's professional (teaching-related) self-development	Measured from 2025	≥ 40%	≥ 50%
2.2. Learning formats and environments are smart and learner-focused	2.2.1. We increase the use of digital solutions, including online learning, in degree programmes and	Percentage of graduates completing within nominal time, including:	58%	≥ 63%	≥ 72%

	continuing education 2.2.2. We develop practical and sustainable learning environments 2.2.3. We create participation opportunities for students to contribute to the development of the internal security field	Vocational education	85%	≥ 85%	≥ 90%
		Applied higher education	65%	≥ 70%	≥ 75%
		Master's studies	25%	≥ 35%	≥ 50%
2.3. A trusted partner in supporting personal growth through lifelong learning	2.3.1. We raise awareness of learning opportunities at the Academy 2.3.2. We provide leadership in career services within the internal security field 2.3.3. We ensure diverse support services for students	Employer satisfaction with graduates' training quality	3.79 (2021)	≥ 4	≥ 4
3.1. Everyone understands their role as a partner in advancing smart security	3.1.1. The right people are in the right roles, applying their experience, skills, education and growth potential in the best possible way 3.1.2. Every employee understands the Academy's	Employee commitment (incl. satisfaction with their current role, willingness to recommend the Academy as an employer and work atmosphere)	83.6	≥ 84	≥ 84

	strategic goals, contributes to their achievement and feels a strong sense of belonging within the Academy	Significance and substance of work (incl. job satisfaction, role clarity, autonomy, decision-making authority and social value)	4.4	≥ 4.4	≥ 4.4
3.2. Inspiring organisational culture	3.2.1. A flexible and motivating career and incentive system has been established to support and advance research and teaching activities for all employees 3.2.2. There is a strong sense of unity and collective identity (we-feeling) within the Academy 3.2.3. The Academy is an attractive employer that draws top professionals in the field	Organisational culture, including:	4.1	≥ 4.4	≥ 4.4
		Sense of unity and we-feeling	3.5	≥ 4	≥ 4.0
3.3. A people-centred leadership culture	3.3.1. Leaders consider and actively involve employees in achieving the	Employee satisfaction with direct supervisors	4.4	≥ 4.6	≥ 4.6

	Academy's objectives	Employee satisfaction with organisational leadership	3.9	≥ 4.4	≥ 4.4