



university of
 groningen

library

Open, Reliable and Connected: UB 2026-2031

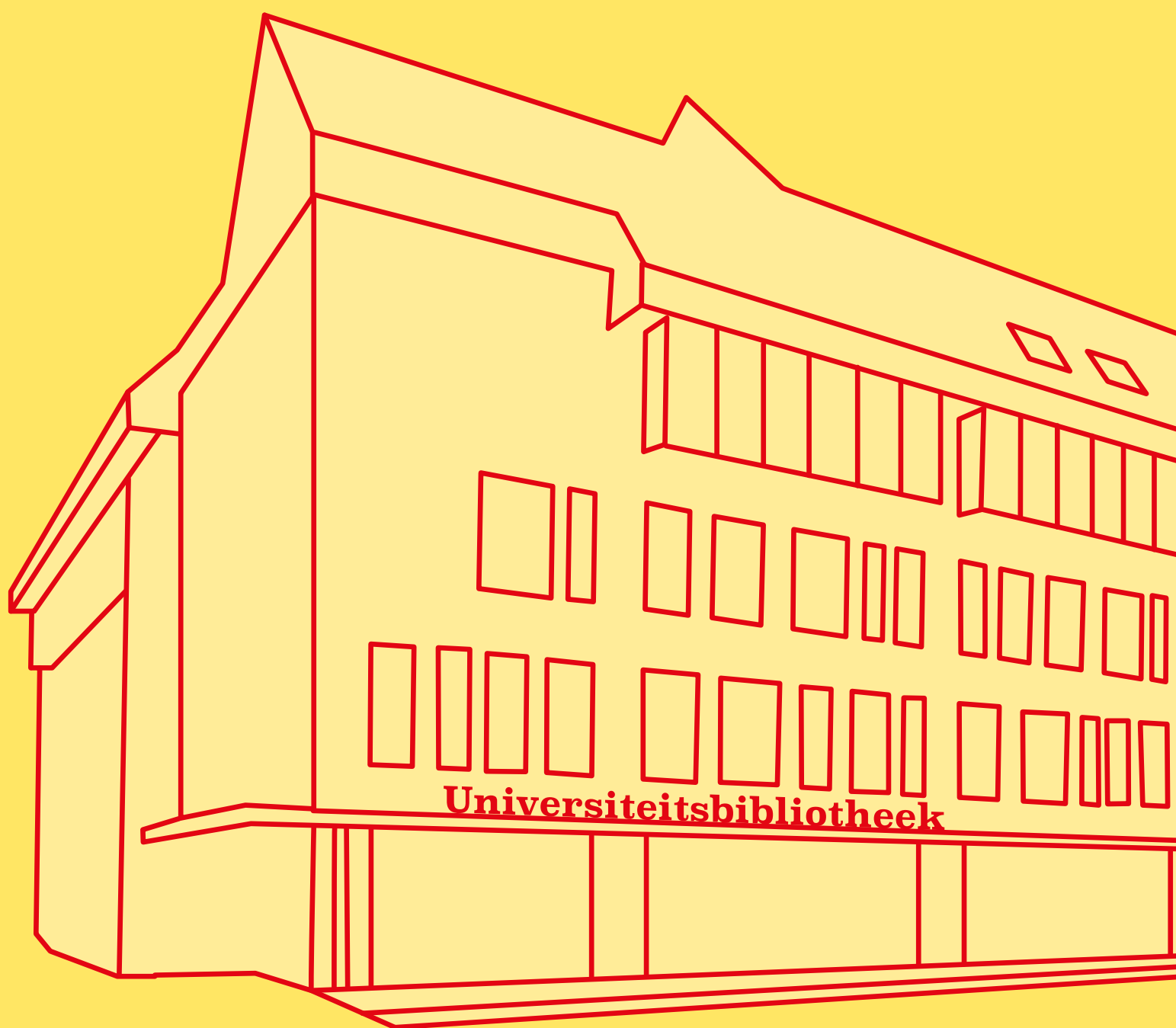


Table of contents

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND ITS AMBITIONS	3
1.2 OUR FIVE CORE TASKS, MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES	4
2. THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE UG'S INSTITUTIONAL PLAN 2026-2031	6
2.1 OPENNESS: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIETY	6
2.1.1 Open through collaboration beyond academia	6
2.1.2 Open through making knowledge publicly accessible	6
2.2 AGILITY: TOWARDS A FLEXIBLE NETWORK ORGANISATION	7
2.2.1 Agile through strong external relationships	7
2.2.2 Agile through efficient and sustainable operations	7
2.2.3 Agile through harmonisation	8
2.2.4 Agile through financial strength	9
2.3 INDEPENDENCE: STRENGTHENING THE VALUE OF SCIENCE	9
2.3.1 Independent through distinctive positioning	9
2.3.2 Independent through digital autonomy and freedom of choice in IT solutions	9
2.3.3 Independent through quality	10
2.4 DIGITALISATION AND AI IN EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND ORGANISATION	10
2.5 A CLOSE-KNIT UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY	12
2.6 TOWARDS A HEALTHY FINANCIAL SITUATION	13
3. OVERVIEW CONTRIBUTION UB TO UG INSTITUTIONAL PLAN	14

1. Introduction

1.1 THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AND ITS AMBITIONS

In an era of digitalisation, Open Science, and AI, the University Library's role is shifting further away from that of a traditional curator of knowledge towards that of a facilitator and a connector. We are an indispensable pillar in supporting the university's staff and students. We provide services designed to enhance research, teaching and impact. We tailor the development of these services to the needs of our users. In addition, we maintain close links with the region and actively collaborate with it. In this way, we support the transition to a fifth-generation university.

The University Library (UB) is a vibrant hub of the academic community. We offer our students top-class facilities and are committed to their wellbeing. We optimize the use of self-service facilities and we utilize digital resources. In doing so, we enhance the self-reliance of visitors. We present our extensive physical and digital collections as attractively and efficiently as possible. We make optimal use of our heritage collections in education and research, and in raising the profile of the University of Groningen among the general public in the region. We take a leading role in the collaboration with national heritage institutions to make these collections available as linked open data.

In the development of academic skills, the UB is the strategic partner for teaching. AI literacy is being integrated into our Information Literacy Education (IVO). Our ambition is to work with the faculties to integrate IVO more broadly into the curricula, thereby meeting the faculties' clear needs.

As experts in Open Science, we optimize the visibility and accessibility of the UG's research and teaching. We encourage the use of open-access publications and Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR) data principles, and provide support to researchers in this regard. The University of Groningen Press (UGP) makes open-access publications widely available. In doing so, the university strengthens its role in society.

We make choices to organize our services more efficiently and effectively, in line with our core values as a public institution.

We strengthen our collaboration with the faculties and the other two services (CIT and US), drawing on our own powerful and unique role and position, whereby we enable the academic community to freely access, generate, and share reliable knowledge.

The three services collaborate on interdisciplinary themes such as AI, digital autonomy and freedom of choice in suppliers, Open Science, Open Access, open education, digitalisation, the provision of administrative information (BIV programme) and support for researchers (FAIR, RDM). These themes are reflected in collaborative initiatives such as the AI Office,

Research Intelligence Services (RISe), the Digital Competence Centre (DCC), Robotic and Intelligent Process Automation (RPA/IPA), and the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL), in which the services work together to drive innovation and efficiency.

We are building on the substantive collaboration outlined above by exploring how we can collaborate more closely on aspects of working methods, organisation, and staffing. The outcomes of the ongoing studies in the areas of finance, organisation, standardisation, and harmonisation may influence these themes and the way we collaborate in the future. All three services of the university have reviewed the faculty plans. As the UB, we also consulted a number of stakeholders within the faculties and services while the plans were being drawn up. We see our substantive themes reflected in the faculties' ambitions and needs and note that we are well aligned with these. Above all, the analysis gives us reason to pay extra attention to - or prioritize - a number of topics that emerge strongly during the implementation of the plan. For the UB, these are, in particular, critical AI literacy as an extension of information literacy, as well as Open Access, Open Science, publication strategies, and copyright.

1.2 OUR FIVE CORE TASKS, MISSION, VISION, AND CORE VALUES

Our core tasks are essential activities supporting education and research that we are responsible for as University Library, in which we possess expertise as facilitators and connectors. These tasks define the objectives and obligations we commit ourselves to.

Acquiring Information and Making it Available

This is the oldest and still most important task of university libraries. This primarily involves acquiring information and making it available for the purposes of teaching and research at the university. In addition, we manage the UG's Special Collections, which we promote and make accessible for a wide audience. Finally, we record information on the UG's research output at the UB and display this on the research portal.

Facilitating the Study Environment and Collaboration in the Academic Community

University libraries form the heart of academic life. In Groningen, this has a very long tradition, dating back to the university's foundation. Thanks to its central location and layout, the UB building attracts many students to our study spaces every day. In addition to students, our collections and Special Collections also attract researchers who come to borrow or consult materials. We ensure that the UB building and its facilities are utilized as effectively as possible for teaching and research. Through our network and facilities, we facilitate academic collaboration and community building.

Providing Research Support Relating to Research Data and Research Impact

University libraries are experts in describing, securely storing, and archiving data, which means we play a crucial role in supporting researchers in the field of research data management (RDM). We do this in collaboration with the Centre for Information Technology (CIT) within the Digital Competence Centre.

By recording information about the UG's research output (core task 1), we provide data for quality assurance reports on research and have built up expertise in the field of research intelligence. Within the RISE team, we work alongside University Services (US) to analyse research impact.

Promoting Information Literacy

University libraries are experts in searching for, critically evaluating and using information, academic information in particular. These information skills are essential for the academic success of students, teachers, and researchers, and enhance the quality of education and research. The increasing spread of disinformation makes this task more important than ever. We provide students and staff with course materials and training in information literacy, digital skills, data and AI literacy, and copyright issues.

Promoting Open Science

The UB facilitates and promotes the use of Open Access, open educational resources and FAIR data, and supports the UG's Open Science programme. Through our own open-access publishing house, the University of Groningen Press, we provide a platform for the open-access publication of journals, books and series, inaugural lectures, and textbooks by teachers and researchers working at or with the UG.

Mission

The UB enables the academic community to access, generate and share reliable knowledge freely. We do so by providing high-quality, future-proof collections, services and study environments.

Vision

The UB promotes information freedom and trust in science. This strengthens collaboration and connection between the global academic community, the general public and the local region, thereby initiating positive change.

Core Values

Open

We take a leading role in achieving freely available, accessible and reusable research, data and learning resources.

Ambitious

We actively engage with our community to drive meaningful innovation and improve our service continuously with creativity and conviction: top services for a top university.

Inclusive

We want everyone to feel welcome and respected, regardless of differences, both visible and invisible, in backgrounds, experiences, perspectives, characteristics and identities.

Act with integrity

We take personal responsibility for our work, respect others and ourselves; we are trustworthy, transparent in and accountable for the choices we make.

2. The University Library's Contribution to the UG's Institutional Plan 2026-2031



2.1 OPENNESS: ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT WITH SOCIETY

2.1.1 OPEN THROUGH COLLABORATION BEYOND ACADEMIA

To contribute to more openness and active engagement with society, we are committed to connecting knowledge and collections with societal partners. We do this by establishing sustainable partnerships with external partners and by participating in linked open data infrastructure through which data is made available in conjunction with that of other heritage institutions. This enhances the accessibility, visibility, and use of collections. We also actively support, encourage, and guide research into special collections held by third parties.

2.1.2 OPEN THROUGH MAKING KNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE

In line with UG policies on Open and FAIR, we make knowledge publicly accessible. Together with the Open Access team and the University of Groningen Press (UGP), part of the Netherlands University Presses, we support UG teachers and researchers in publishing Open Access. In addition, we contribute to the realisation of a national publication infrastructure with quality assurance and editorial support for diamond Open Access. To help integrate Open Science into the research and teaching culture at the UG, we develop and support policies in this area. Examples include the UG-wide publication strategy and Open Access guidelines, as well as faculty-specific variations and implementations of these.

As a partner in the Digital Competence Centre, we support researchers in making their data FAIR, including in the areas of research data management, privacy and security, and the archiving and publication of data. As coordinator of the UG Open Science Programme, we ensure that Open Science principles are firmly embedded in research practice. We promote the accessibility of teaching materials by actively encouraging the use of open educational resources (OER).

We increase the visibility and utilisation of the UG's heritage by digitising collections and making them available as linked open data. This makes these collections more widely accessible and better utilized, and encourages research into them.



2.2 AGILITY: TOWARDS A FLEXIBLE NETWORK ORGANISATION

2.2.1 AGILE THROUGH STRONG EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

We maintain good external relations. We do this by establishing and developing long-term partnerships with our partners. We work closely with UKB, the Cooperating Dutch University Libraries and the National Library, on the development, acquisition, and management of sustainably accessible academic collections, educational support, ICT, and back-office work processes, to come to better solutions together. We are successful in jointly procuring large collections from the leading suppliers. In addition, we also negotiate directly with international publishers.

At European level, we participate in LIBER, the association of European research libraries, by taking part in working groups, conferences, and leadership programmes. This provides us with new and long-term connections within the international library community, including with organisations such as International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), UNESCO, and OpenAIRE.

The University of Groningen Press collaborates with other university presses at the national level through Netherlands University Presses and at the European level through the Association of European University Presses. These are partnerships that promote open-access academic publications and exchange knowledge and strategies to achieve shared goals.

In the field of heritage, we are stepping up our collaboration with, amongst others, the Academic Heritage Foundation. We are also investing in new partnerships relating to regional heritage.

2.2.2 AGILE THROUGH EFFICIENT AND SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS

We optimize our operations and services and designing the UB building to be as sustainable as possible.

We innovate in digital developments such as AI, data-informed decision-making (DIDM), and smart buildings by taking steps based on our long-term vision. When a change process is complex - for example, due to the involvement of multiple parties or risks associated with the use of a new, as yet unknown technology - we work project-based to ensure we can manage the desired change effectively.

We improve our processes by first identifying where optimisation is possible and then implementing these improvements. This is supported by clear governance, with defined ownership and responsibility, transparent decision-making, and monitoring performance and results. These elements are embedded in a cyclical improvement approach through Plan Do Check Act (PDCA), which ensures continuous evaluation, learning, and course correction.

To ensure we provide the best possible service, we align as closely as possible with users' needs. We do this by constantly gauging user needs and regularly evaluating them together with our users. To this end, we utilize user experience (UX) and DIDM. A concrete example is the use of self-service facilities, such as collecting prepared reservations or using the printers. By understanding user needs, we can make optimal use of these facilities and improve the user experience. By utilising digital tools such as the UB App, we can enhance our visitors' independence and their experience of the physical University Library. To optimize our range of services, we tailor them to the needs of the faculties and collaborate with them and the other two services to ensure that we can deliver our support and facilities effectively.

To ensure a sustainable workforce that can respond flexibly and effectively to future developments and to enhance their adaptability and wellbeing, we are developing a personnel plan. In this plan, we analyse our current workforce, ambitions, and internal and external developments, and draw up a roadmap for the further development of our current staff, including a succession policy that helps us realize our ambitions.

We also focus on sustainability in the design of the UB building by reducing energy consumption and optimising the building's use. For example, we analyse occupancy over a longer period and adjust the building's opening hours accordingly. Furthermore, we are facilitating a more flexible use of the building, so that the available spaces can be put to good use for lectures, meetings, and other purposes, even outside exam periods.

2.2.3 AGILE THROUGH HARMONISATION

We contribute to harmonisation through internal collaboration within the UG. We work together with the CIT in the Digital Competence Centre (DCC) and with University Services in Pure and Research Intelligence Services. We tailor the range of training courses on academic skills to best meet the needs of the faculties and the available resources of the UB and the DCC.

We contribute to the harmonisation of support processes at the UG by working with architectural frameworks. This enables us to create insights into and an overview of our processes, data, and information flows. As a result, it becomes clear where and how harmonisation is possible. We are participating in a UG-wide project to develop a UG-wide approach to process management, including the use of a shared tool to describe and manage processes.

Using our communication strategy, we communicate clearly at the strategic, tactical, and operational level about our expertise and how we can apply it in collaboration with other services and faculties, for example in relation to information literacy, heritage, Open Science and Open Access, licences, and digital autonomy.

2.2.4 AGILE THROUGH FINANCIAL STRENGTH

We achieve optimal results in terms of costs and conditions for publications and read and publish licences through national collaborative procurement. In doing so, we contribute to a better publication culture and optimal pricing. We ensure control over the high costs associated with re-use in education. We do this by monitoring acquisitions and providing advice on open educational resources. In this way, we contribute to the financial strength of the faculties and the UG as a whole. In addition, we continue exploring opportunities to work more effectively and efficiently. We are implementing changes that will enable us to continue to realise savings while maintaining the quality of our services. We are also continuing our efforts to secure external funding, particularly for projects in the areas of digitalisation and Special Collections (see also 2.6 Towards a healthy financial situation).



2.3 INDEPENDENT: STRENGTHENING THE VALUE OF SCHOLARSHIP

2.3.1 INDEPENDENT THROUGH DISTINCTIVE POSITIONING

The UG can strengthen its position through its clear and recognizable profile as a balanced and broad university. As the UB, we contribute to this by promoting the UG as an institution that upholds and promotes democratic values, reliable information, and the value of scholarship. The UB communicates clearly about its missions, ambitions, and values at the strategic, tactical and operational levels. In doing so, we focus in particular on the theme of 'Open and Independent'. In addition, we promote the creation of digital communities on open platforms such as Mastodon and PeerTube. In this way, we highlight our impact both within and outside the UG as a centre of knowledge and a driving force for this theme.

2.3.2 INDEPENDENT THROUGH DIGITAL AUTONOMY AND FREEDOM OF CHOICE IN IT SOLUTIONS

Together with the faculties, other services, and the Jantina Tammes School, the University Library is working to increase digital autonomy and freedom of choice in IT solutions. This results in sound UG policies in the areas of digital autonomy, data integration, architecture, infrastructure, and governance. Building on its experience with Open Science communication, the UB is taking on a coordinating role in communicating and strengthening community building in the field of digital autonomy by providing information on and building support for this theme.

In addition, we are actively seeking open alternatives for our data sources and technical infrastructures. Together with the Medical Library, we are gaining experience with an open-source alternative to the commercial Web of Science database and are supporting OpenAlex with an institutional membership. We are setting an example through the choices we have already made in switching from Twitter/X to Mastodon and from YouTube to PeerTube. We are participating in pilot projects for, amongst others, the European AI agent Mistral and Nextcloud for email/calendar/drive/etc..

The next step will be the assessment of the applications and systems we use in the UB to check for compliance with digital autonomy, identify risks, and grab opportunities. Based on this, we are developing exit strategies from big tech to mitigate the risks. For future tenders and licences, we are establishing digital autonomy as a criterion. In doing so, we are increasing our independence from parties that do not comply with our core values and conditions as a public institution.

2.3.3 INDEPENDENT THROUGH QUALITY

As an indispensable pillar in supporting researchers, teachers, and students, we contribute in various ways to the quality of research and teaching at the UG.

We build and manage sustainable, future-proof collections that are essential to our users. In doing so, we make maximum use of demand-driven and data-driven acquisition. We maximize the use of these collections by improving their discoverability, including by enhancing the quality of the metadata and by presenting the collections using modern technologies. In this way, the UB provides the UG with high-quality, reliable collections, optimally tailored to users, which are easily found and utilized to the full.

In addition, we develop and maintain a data warehouse and dashboard for information relating to research at the UG. Through this, we support, both at the faculty and institutional level, an understanding of research impact and data-informed decision-making regarding research.

Finally, we contribute to academic success by providing information literacy and AI literacy training that is optimally tailored to the degree programmes, as well as supporting academic skills training in library-related areas. Through the Digital Competence Centre, we also provide training on research data management, privacy & security, and the archiving and publication of data. In this way, the UB strengthens the academic skills of students, teachers, and researchers.



2.4 DIGITALISATION AND AI IN EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND ORGANISATION

Digitalisation

We contribute to the digital transformation by working with architecture and by enabling data-informed decision-making.

Within the UB, we have thoroughly mapped out our application landscape and how the applications contribute to our services. We continue to work on providing clarity regarding our processes, data, and information flows using architectural frameworks. We will develop a target architecture that outlines the changes required in our architectural and information landscape to realize our ambitions. We are also taking steps to achieve more data-informed decision-making. We have begun, on a small scale and on a case-by-case basis, to identify and address information needs. The reports and dashboards produced naturally lead to follow-up questions. We are working to organize the DIDM process effectively internally, such as by appointing a product owner for our internal information provision.

Furthermore, over the coming years we will be implementing digitalisation and linked open data projects: we are digitising key parts of our heritage and making them available as linked open data. This enables data to be made available in conjunction with that of other heritage institutions. This enhances the accessibility, visibility, and use of collections.

The guiding principle for our collection is digital-first. This acquisition policy enhances accessibility by ensuring that multiple users can access resources anytime, anywhere, and that their use can be effectively monitored. Furthermore, digital collections can expand flexibly without physical constraints.

AI

Promoting information literacy is a core task of the UB. Based on the conviction that interpretation and a critical perspective on the methods and application of AI in research, teaching, and operational management are indispensable, we contribute to fostering critical AI literacy among staff and students and to shaping the UG's AI policy.

We collaborate on this with the faculties, CIT, and US within the UG's AI Office. We have allocated a number of employees to use part of their time for this and in 2026 we appointed an AI Literacy Specialist to support these activities.

AI education forms part of the information literacy training for students, taking the form of discussions during lectures and workshops, the Critical AI Literacy module, and assessment questions on Brightspace. The Critical AI Literacy module, developed in 2024 by the UB and Educational Support and Innovation (ESI), is available on Brightspace and is freely accessible on wikiwijs.nl and edusources. We will continuously update and further develop this module in consultation with the faculties. In addition, we contribute to UG-wide awareness of the ethical and responsible use of AI by providing advice on topics on which we have expertise, such as copyright and AI tools for literature research.

To apply AI responsibly in our operations, we identify relevant AI developments, assess opportunities and necessary investments, and decide on implementation steps based on this analysis. We are investing in our staff's expertise and ensuring that they can experiment safely with AI applications in their day-to-day work. Examples of this are the internal AI courses for all UB staff and the pilot for our own AI server, MOI, in collaboration with the CIT.



2.5 A CLOSE-KNIT UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

We devote attention and resources to social wellbeing and vitality in knowledge teams and working groups. This helps to ensure that the UB remains a supportive, healthy, and inspiring workplace, even in difficult times. We listen and take initiatives to strengthen individual self-reliance and to promote solidarity across the UB community. We encourage exchange and development in the field of leadership across the various management levels (MT, department heads, and team leaders), for example through peer review sessions and training courses. We encourage our staff and offer them training and support, for instance during regular work meetings and annual R&O talks, where we focus on areas such as talent development and wellbeing.

We also foster community building within the UB both physically and digitally. Through our UB community manager, communications team, and specialists from the library's departments, we strengthen our links with the UB community and our wider network. Our physical facilities provide a meeting place for open academic discourse. We also optimize the student experience and the use of the building. We tailor our facilities and services to the needs of our users and offer the best possible hospitality by listening to our users and being approachable. In doing so, we contribute to a sense of connection and a study environment in which our students and researchers feel at home. This contributes to a positive study experience and enhances student wellbeing. We align ourselves with the UG Student Wellbeing Programme and support this through our building and our community.

Through our dialogue-driven and community-driven communication strategy in the areas of Open Science and digital autonomy, we contribute to a close-knit and open wider academic community. To this end, we are also focusing on digital community-building and positioning the UB on open platforms such as Mastodon and PeerTube. We will also explore how we can communicate with students through sustainable, value-driven alternatives to commercial social media, without compromising our principles regarding Open Science, digital autonomy, and student wellbeing.

Sustainability is a key criterion in the choices we make regarding the use and layout of the UB building, as described in section 2.2.2, Agile through efficient and sustainable operations.



2.6 TOWARDS A HEALTHY FINANCIAL SITUATION

Within the UB: During 2024-2025, the UB did not replace many staff members leaving due to natural and non-natural attrition due to a strict vacancy management policy. Further downsizing is planned up to and including 2030. This will ensure that our multi-year budget is balanced from 2026 onwards. To this end, we have made decisions to organize our services and operations more efficiently and to discontinue certain services. We will continue to explore and implement opportunities to work more effectively and efficiently, as we expect this to yield further benefits, enabling us to continue to realise savings while maintaining the quality of our services. We will also continue our efforts to secure external funding, particularly for projects in the areas of digitalisation, Open Science, digital autonomy and special collections.

University-wide: In addition, we are using our expertise to help gain better control over publication and licensing costs, as well as the high costs associated with re-use in education. In doing so, we are strengthening the financial resilience of the UG as a whole (see also 2.2.4 Agile through financial resilience).



3. Overview contribution UB to UG institutional plan

We have addressed the strategic objectives set out in the University of Groningen's institutional plan and, from our perspective, have provided further details on the impact mentioned. In the table below, we have indicated on which of the themes from the institutional plan the University Library is focusing. Our plan above provides details on how we are doing this.

