

EBS Strategy 2026-2030 – Community for Growth and Responsibility

Executive Summary

By 2030, Estonian Business School (EBS) aims to be a leading Northern European entrepreneurial university ecosystem, recognized internationally for academic quality, venture creation, and societal impact. Building on its values of community, growth, and responsibility, EBS positions itself as an agile, impact-driven institution that turns knowledge into action and action into impact.

The strategy responds to three fundamental challenges that determine long-term success and legitimacy in higher education: Credibility, Relevance, and Resilience. Addressing these challenges in an integrated way will enable EBS to strengthen its academic standing, deliver real-world value, and secure long-term sustainability as a private university.

Credibility focuses on academic excellence, quality assurance, and international recognition. EBS will strengthen its institutional systems, research capability, and doctoral education, culminating in EQUIS accreditation. High academic standards, internationalization, and global academic networks will position EBS as a trusted and recognized entrepreneurial university with standing comparable to leading state-funded institutions.

Relevance ensures that EBS education and research address real-world challenges and generate measurable economic and societal impact. Through problem-based learning, applied research, and systematic venture creation, EBS will differentiate itself as a hub where education, entrepreneurship, and innovation are tightly integrated. The Eedu ecosystem will serve as a visible platform for startups, applied research, and international engagement, while graduate success in entrepreneurship and leadership will be a key measure of impact.

Resilience underpins EBS's ability to thrive in a volatile environment shaped by demographic decline, funding pressure, and global competition. EBS will build a diversified and shock-resistant financial model, strengthen organizational capacity, and actively engage with national and international policy frameworks to ensure fair recognition and support for private universities.

Progress will be tracked through clearly defined strategic objectives and KPIs, supported by robust governance, annual strategy reviews, and continuous performance monitoring. Through this strategy, EBS commits to shaping responsible leaders, building ventures that matter, and contributing to sustainable economic and societal development in Estonia and beyond.

Context and Strategic Rationale

The Estonian Business School operates in a global higher education environment that is undergoing profound and accelerating transformation. Advances in technology, shifting demographics, evolving learner expectations, and changing policies are reshaping both the demand for education and the ways in which it is delivered. For a small, open economy such as Estonia, these developments present both significant challenges and distinctive opportunities.

Technological change, particularly the rapid diffusion of artificial intelligence and data-driven learning models, is transforming teaching, learning, and knowledge creation. Educational delivery is becoming more personalized, flexible, and scalable, requiring institutions to rethink curricula, pedagogy, and faculty capabilities. At the same time, demographic trends in Estonia and across Europe point to shrinking domestic student cohorts, intensifying competition among universities and increasing reliance on international students, executive education participants, and lifelong learners.

Learner preferences are also shifting. Professionals increasingly seek flexible, modular, and skills-based learning opportunities that can be combined with work and adapted to fast-changing labor market needs. Micro-credentials, stackable programs, and continuous upskilling are becoming central elements of a competitive education offering. In parallel, the role of business schools is expanding beyond traditional teaching and research. Universities are increasingly expected to foster entrepreneurship, support venture creation, and co-create economic and societal value in close collaboration with businesses, startups, and public sector actors.

In an increasingly competitive academic environment, international networks, partnerships, and visibility play a decisive role in institutional reputation and competitiveness. Rankings, accreditation, and meaningful international collaboration influence the ability to attract talented students, faculty, and partners. At the same time, the long-term sustainability of private higher education depends on diversified revenue streams, constructive engagement with public policy, recognition of societal contributions, and alignment with national strategic priorities in areas such as innovation, competitiveness, and human capital development.

Against this backdrop, the Estonian Business School is well positioned to succeed. Its strong entrepreneurial heritage, compact and agile organizational structure, and close ties to the business community and alumni network provide a solid foundation for strategic renewal. These strengths enable EBS to respond quickly to change, experiment with innovative educational models, and position itself as an internationally competitive, entrepreneurial, and impact-oriented business school that contributes meaningfully to Estonia's and Europe's future development.

Our Values

Community

Community is the foundation of the Estonian Business School. We are a collaborative and inclusive learning ecosystem where students, faculty, staff, alumni, and partners co-create knowledge, opportunity, and impact. We connect people and ideas across disciplines, sectors, and borders, building an international academic community that values openness, diversity, and mutual respect. By welcoming new perspectives and fostering global openness, we ensure that learning at EBS reflects the realities of an interconnected world.

Our community is defined by shared ownership and collaboration. We work transparently, honor our commitments, and support one another in achieving collective goals. Learning, research, and innovation at EBS are shaped through co-creation with external partners and society at large, ensuring relevance and real-world engagement. Through strong networks and a culture of trust, the EBS community amplifies individual strengths into shared success and lasting societal value.

Growth

Growth at EBS is driven by curiosity, innovation, and an entrepreneurial mindset. We encourage experimentation, creativity, and the courage to test ideas, recognizing that learning and progress emerge through action. By focusing on real-world challenges, we turn knowledge into practical solutions, ventures, policies, and practices that create measurable impact. We prototype, learn quickly, and continuously improve how we teach, research, and engage with society.

Our commitment to growth is research-informed and evidence-based. Academic rigor, data, and high-quality research underpin our educational offerings and strategic decisions, ensuring credibility and long-term relevance. We invest in modern learning approaches, flexible pathways, and lifelong learning opportunities that support personal and professional development. Through continuous renewal and innovation, EBS grows its people, its capabilities, and its international standing.

Responsibility

Responsibility guides how EBS creates impact and earns trust. We take responsibility for our students and people by fostering a supportive, inclusive, and demanding academic environment that enables personal growth, well-being, and professional integrity. We act with integrity, uphold high ethical standards, and take accountability for our decisions, partnerships, and outcomes. Academic quality, honesty, and respect are non-negotiable principles in our teaching, research, and engagement with society.

We are committed to the responsible use of data and artificial intelligence, ensuring that technological innovation serves human development and societal well-being. Responsibility also means caring for the planet: EBS pays close attention to its environmental footprint and integrates sustainability considerations into its operations, education, and partnerships. By focusing on

impact through action, EBS ensures that its educational, research, and entrepreneurial activities generate measurable value while maintaining the highest professional and academic standards.

Our Purpose

EBS is a community for growth and responsibility, turning knowledge into action and action into impact.

Our Core Challenges

EBS is entering a decisive stage in its development, which requires strengthening credibility, deepening relevance and ensuring long-term resilience. These three challenges are mutually reinforcing and addressing them holistically will determine how successfully we position ourselves as an international, entrepreneurial, and impact-driven university.

1. Credibility: Academic Quality, Recognition, and Trust

The credibility challenge concerns EBS's standing as a university of high academic and professional quality. To compete internationally, EBS must demonstrate robust institutional standards, transparent governance, and internationally recognized excellence. Achieving EQUIS accreditation from European Foundation for Management Development (EFMD) is both a validation of quality and a catalyst for continuous improvement.

Credibility is strengthened through a reinforced Internal Quality Assurance System, aligned strategic goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and consistent performance management across all units. The renewal of the PhD programme, the strengthening of research quality and output, and deeper engagement in international academic and research networks enhance EBS's scholarly reputation and talent attractiveness. The entrepreneurial niche reinforces credibility by demonstrating that academic rigor and venture creation are complementary, not competing, goals.

2. Relevance: High-Impact Learning, Research, and Venture Creation

The relevance challenge addresses whether EBS meaningfully prepares learners to solve complex real-world problems. Relevance requires rethinking learning design, research orientation, and engagement with practice. EBS responds by emphasizing problem-based, research-informed, and practice-driven learning, supported by technology-enabled teaching and modern pedagogies.

Flexible learning paths, skill-based segmentation, and initiatives such as the Development Accelerator ensure that education remains aligned with evolving labor market and leadership needs. The integration of prototyping, go-to-market processes, TooEarly Ventures, hackathons, entrepreneurial internships, and applied research ensures that ideas move from classrooms into

real solutions and ventures. This is where EBS’s niche becomes most visible: relevance is achieved by systematically linking learning and research with venture building and societal impact.

3. Resilience: Organizational, Financial and Ecosystem Sustainability

Resilience concerns EBS’s capacity to sustain its mission over time amid demographic decline, competitive pressure, and external shocks. Financial independence and diversified portfolio in teaching, research and venture building are central to this challenge. Growth in international student markets, lifelong learning, executive education, R&D funding, and venture-related revenues reduces dependence on tuition alone.

Operational resilience is built through aligned goals, KPI-driven management, and efficient resource allocation, supported by a reinforced prototyping and go-to-market process. Organizational resilience depends on a future-ready workforce, leadership development, and internal talent pipelines. At the ecosystem level, EBS actively engages with national policy to ensure fair competitive conditions for private universities. The entrepreneurial niche enhances resilience by increasing lifetime learner value, alumni engagement, and external partnerships.

Our Strategic Goals

Position EBS as a leading Northern European entrepreneurial university ecosystem for growth-oriented leaders and professionals to create impact beyond themselves.

| Challenge | Strategic Goal | Focus |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Credibility | Establish EBS as a high-quality, internationally recognized entrepreneurial university with strong academic and research credibility. | Accreditation progress, research quality, academic standards, international reputation |
| Relevance | Make EBS a leading hub for high-impact learning, applied research, and venture creation delivering measurable societal and economic value. | Graduate outcomes, venture creation, external engagement, ecosystem performance |
| Resilience | Secure EBS as a financially sustainable, agile, and future-ready private university with diversified portfolio and strong organizational capacity. | Financial sustainability, cost structure, talent pipeline, policy positioning |

Our Core Objectives and Key Performance Indicators

| Objectives | Baseline | Target for 2030 |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Achieve academic excellence by improving student success, internationalization, and labor-market outcomes. | Invitation to EQUIS accreditation process | EQUIS accreditation |
| 2. Deliver high-quality, impact-driven research with strong external funding and industry collaboration. | 13 % of annual revenues from externally funded RDI projects | ≥ 20% of annual revenues from externally funded RDI projects |
| 3. Build a scalable executive education platform delivering measurable impact. | -24% of executive education revenue growth per year (23/24 vs 24/25) | ≥ 20 % of executive education revenue growth per year |
| 4. Develop high-value global partnerships that enhance academic quality, diversity, and financial resilience. | 15 high-quality, systemic international partnerships | ≥ 20 high-quality, systemic international partnerships |
| 5. Position EBS as a founder-generating institution with measurable startup creation and early-stage traction. | 40 % of graduates have founded a company (≥2 employees) | ≥ 40% of graduates have founded a company (≥2 employees) |
| 6. Build a financially sustainable entrepreneurial community that strengthens identity and collaboration. | 15 startups, accelerators, incubators, and/or VC funds related to EBS | ≥30 startups, accelerators, incubators, and/or VC funds based in Eedu |
| 7. Create an efficient digitally enabled support system that strengthens staff capability, transparency, and reputation. | 4.2 points out of 5 in staff satisfaction across six different support services | ≥ 4.4 points out of 5 in staff satisfaction across six different support services |

Risk Management and Mitigation

Key risks and how they will be addressed:

- Demographic decline in student numbers → mitigate with internationalization, lifelong learning, and micro-credentials.
- Competition from global online providers → differentiate through personalized learning, entrepreneurship focus, and regional relevance.
- Financial sustainability risk → diversify portfolio and income streams (executive education, Eedu ventures, rental income, R&D funding).
- Talent attraction and retention → develop career model with different career paths, competitive compensation, and increase share of international faculty.

- Regulatory uncertainty → active policy engagement, building alliances, ensuring inclusion in national higher education frameworks.
- Reputation and brand risk → focus on EQUIS accreditation, research quality, alumni success, and thought leadership visibility.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Annual Strategy Review led by the Independent Supervisory Board of alumni, business leaders, and academics to review progress at least twice per year.
- Quarterly KPI Dashboard tracking student outcomes, research, finance, and Eedu performance.
- Employee & Student Surveys to monitor satisfaction and organizational culture.
- Rolling Adjustments: strategy refreshed every year to align with changing environment.

Our Joint Commitment to 2030

The Estonian Business School's Strategy 2026–2030 serves as an umbrella framework that ensures shared commitment from our community to joint growth and responsibility. It provides a common direction while enabling each member of the university community to translate these ambitions into concrete actions within their teams and areas of responsibility.

This umbrella strategy has been developed with the active input of students, faculty, alumni, employers, and partners, and its success depends on the continued engagement of these stakeholders. We therefore commit to maintaining an open dialogue and a culture of co-creation as we implement, monitor, and refine our strategic goals.

Our priorities extend beyond education alone. EBS is dedicated to preparing future leaders with the skills, values, and resilience needed to succeed in a rapidly changing world shaped by artificial intelligence, the green transition, and global uncertainty. Sustainability, ethics, and social responsibility will be embedded across learning, research, and venture creation.

EBS's ambition is international. We will leverage our compact size, strong alumni network, and Estonia's reputation for digital innovation and sustainability to expand our international impact. By 2030, EBS will stand as a model of how an agile, entrepreneurial business school can combine academic quality, venture building, and societal relevance.

This strategy builds on our entrepreneurial heritage while opening a new chapter of growth, innovation, and global reach. By 2030, EBS will be recognized not only as one of Northern Europe's most entrepreneurial universities, but also as a connector of people, ideas, and ventures.