



University of Pécs
Faculty of Business
and Economics

MARKETING STRATEGY

2026-2030

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INTRODUCTION, STRATEGIC CONTEXT

The marketing strategy of the University of Pécs Faculty of Business and Economics for the period 2026-2030 is based on the institution's vision, mission, and values. It primarily supports and communicates the education of excellent, solution-oriented, responsible business professionals to promote the sustainable development of the local and broader environment. It highlights the School's characteristics and values of competitiveness, excellence, and sustainable approach in creating an inspiring global community with local and regional impact. Among these communication objectives, it considers the directions formulated in the sub-strategies, both aligning with them and supporting their implementation with an encompassing, unifying brand-building purpose. In this regard, it also aligns with the fundamental characteristics of the University of Pécs brand, the newly introduced visual identity requirements and standards. This also means that while University-level marketing activities support the implementation of this marketing strategy, they are separate in the sense that this plan does not rely on them, but rather on the School's own characteristics and activities.

SITUATION ANALYSIS, STARTING POINTS

The School's market position is currently stable; however, serious challenges have emerged in both domestic and international student recruitment in recent periods.

In the case of **domestic** student recruitment

- A **significant decrease in the number of state-funded places** has occurred, on a nationally selective basis (decreased from 452 to 310 places, which resulted in an increase in fee-paying places from 176 to 336 students).
- The total number of admitted students exceeded that of the previous year; Bachelor's programmes strengthened (484 students), while the proportion of Master's (219 students) and tertiary vocational programmes (132 students) decreased.
- Within the internal distribution of Bachelor's programmes, the number of part-time fee-paying students was the smallest (63 students), the number of full-time state-funded Bachelor's students was 165, while the **number of fee-paying full-time** Bachelor's students admitted was 256, representing significant growth compared to previous years.
- In the case of tertiary vocational programmes, 93 students were admitted to full-time and 39 students to part-time programmes.
- In **Master's programmes**, for **part-time** study, 79 students were admitted, representing a significant **decrease** compared to the previous year's 114 students, and overall, including full-time studies (96 students compared to the previous year's 122 students), a decrease was observed (altogether 219 students instead of 250).
- The admission scores of those admitted showed some increase compared to the previous year; for example, in the case of full-time Bachelor's programmes, it changed from 411.97 points to 427.76 points.

- Regarding territorial distribution, Pécs and the South Transdanubia region continue to provide the majority of students (Pécs, Kaposvár, Szekszárd, Mohács, Komló), but Budapest is also becoming increasingly significant.

In the case of the **international** student recruitment market, the main changes are as follows:

- The state scholarship system (**SH** - Stipendium Hungaricum), which previously provided stable recruitment numbers, is attracting fewer and fewer students
 - o At the University of Pécs level, 442 students received scholarships (459 students the previous year, a 4% decrease is observed), and in terms of the School proportion, overall out of 247 international students, 90 are Stipendium Hungaricum recipients (36%).
 - o One of the main reasons for the decrease in total student numbers is that from this academic year, it is no longer possible to extend the scholarship status (by 2 x 1 semester).
- Among Stipendium Hungaricum countries, at the University of Pécs level, the largest sending countries are Jordan (43 students), Pakistan (41 students), Kenya (21 students), Egypt (20 students), Russia (18 students).
- Among fee-paying students at the University of Pécs level, most arrived from Germany, Norway, China, Iran, Turkey, Bangladesh, Nigeria, India, Jordan, and Russia.
- In the case of the School, most applicants, both fee-paying and Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship students, arrived last year in order from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Ghana, Nigeria, Syria, Jordan, Yemen, Afghanistan, China, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Azerbaijan, Vietnam, Morocco, India, Kazakhstan, and Russia.
- There is tremendous **interest** from Bangladeshi students toward Hungary (it has become the largest sending country), but they show significant attrition and represent a burden during the admission process. However, those students who are admitted and enroll prove to be "good" quality students.
- Currently in the admission process, not counting PhD applications, for the 2025/2026 academic year we had a total of 223 Stipendium Hungaricum and 414 fee-paying applicants, of whom 74 students have enrolled so far (the enrolled number for the 2025/26/2 academic year is still missing) – but overall, comparing these numbers also shows the generally experienced **significant attrition in the admission process**. The low enrollment rate (16%-16%-12%) experienced over the past three years (relative to the number of applicants) shows that there is a need not only to increase the number of applicants but also to support their arrival. This is particularly true for fee-paying students, where the ratio of enrolled students to submitted applications was 7.3% over the past three years.
- **Imbalances** are evident in the distribution of international student numbers. Bachelor's programmes have higher attractiveness (149 international students have enrolled since 2020), while significantly fewer for the Business Development programme (103 students) and only 85 students for the Management and Leadership programme. Additionally, to maintain international accreditation, it is necessary to maintain and further increase the annual admitted student number above 20 for this programme.
- International recruitment trends have shown growth in recent years; the total market size is approximately 7 million students, among whom India and China represented the largest proportion as sending countries. Europe's popularity as a destination is significant, with the United Kingdom and Germany being the main destination countries. Hungary overall attracts approximately 43,000 students, and besides medical programmes, the business education field represents a major attraction (5,544

students)¹. The **main sending (origin) countries** are Bangladesh, Pakistan, India, Nigeria, and Turkey.

- According to Keystone research, Hungary is among the most „welcoming” countries for international students. However, students’ decisions are primarily influenced by the **career opportunities** and access to specialized, quality knowledge offered by the desired programme, naturally at affordable costs. Among soft skills, **problem-solving ability** stands out, along with critical thinking, teamwork, and data collection and evaluation capabilities. Furthermore, professional practical and employment opportunities are important from a career perspective, as well as the university's support in this regard. It is evident that not only scholarships but also work opportunities can provide a solution for creating the financial background needed for studies. From a communication and accessibility perspective, the online space stands out, particularly social media (influencing 60% of decisions). Additionally, email and personal messaging options (e.g., Messenger, WhatsApp) are important, as well as immediate or at least within-24-hour responses. Moreover, 82% of students rely on others' opinions and recommendations when making their decisions.

While in the area of domestic student recruitment we have had adequate foundations and market insight for many years, at the international level we need to make serious investments to achieve a higher level of market knowledge. Regarding domestic recruitment, the challenge is primarily the decrease in state-funded quota numbers, while in international recruitment, we need to make progress on several markets simultaneously. Therefore, the strategy must primarily reflect this, in alignment with the School’s overall internationalization efforts.

Conclusions, priorities:

- Maintaining contact with Pécs schools is essential, but alongside this, the recruitment focus must be extended territorially – on the one hand, we must defend our own regional recruitment areas, and on the other hand, potential growth can only be expected from Budapest and "nearby" regions.
- It becomes even more important in the case of Master's programmes to retain the internal student recruitment base, and alongside this, growth can primarily be achieved through recruitment from these "non-local" regions as well, paying particular attention to those with potential business Bachelor's degrees who are already working, as well as career changers, for whom a Master's programme can represent both a new beginning and a challenge.
- There is primarily a need to strengthen Master's programmes taught in part-time mode.
- In the case of international recruitment, it is important that alongside the attraction offered by Hungary and the University of Pécs, the Faculty can also independently define its target countries and build a brand and increase awareness in them.
- In both areas, it is particularly important not only to have direct recruitment-focused messages but also to develop the School’s proper positioning, as numerous advances have been made (e.g., obtaining international accreditations, Faculty corporate relationships, career support activities, renewed Bachelor's programmes) that also make this possible.
- To maintain the EFMD accreditation of the Management and Leadership Master's programme, this programme should be given priority in international recruitment.

¹ <https://www.iie.org/research-initiatives/project-atlas/explore-data/hungary/>

OBJECTIVES

In the area of domestic student recruitment, despite demographic decline and the reduction in state-funded places, the Faculty's goal is to maintain a stable, quality student body and strengthen Master's programmes.

KPI1: Ensuring student number stability in Bachelor's programmes, achieving at least 480 students in all years, and where possible, increasing the fee-paying proportion

KPI2: Restoring Master's programme total numbers, ensuring 100-100 students annually in both full-time and part-time programmes – through increasing BSc student retention rates and developing attractiveness for those „seeking advancement” and „career changers”

KPI3: While maintaining the proportion of students from Pécs and the South Transdanubia region, increasing the proportion of students from Budapest and nearby regions – specific goal: +5-8% Budapest students by 2030

In the area of international student recruitment, the goals focus on increasing the proportion of fee-paying students in response to the narrowing Stipendium Hungaricum opportunities, improving process efficiency, and maintaining the EFMD accreditation of Management and Leadership.

KPI4: 5% annual increase in international student applications (compared to the current 223 Stipendium Hungaricum and 414 fee-paying applicants), especially from potential target countries and among fee-paying students

KPI5: Ensuring the student base necessary to maintain the EFMD accreditation of the Management and Leadership programme, recruiting at least 30 students annually

KPI6: In the case of fee-paying students, supporting the improvement of the low enrolment rate (7,3%) experienced over the past three years through communication solutions, so that this rate increases to at least 10% by 2030.

POSITIONING

Regarding the Faculty's positioning, the duality must be maintained in domestic and international markets, but there are common points and strengths that can be built upon together.

Main brand values:

- **Excellence:** quality education, accreditations, international recognition
- **Community, career:** small size, personal attention, supportive environment, developmental approach
- **Practice - and solution-orientation, soft-skill development:** corporate projects, World of Practice, teaching based on real problems, mentoring, coaching

- **Internationalization:** students from 20+ countries, English-language programmes, EFMD accreditations
- **Impact and sustainability:** responsible leadership education, corporate social responsibility, green campus, ESG orientation
- **The „place” – Pécs** as a university town and University of Pécs as a university founded 650 years ago

„UPFBE – where your career starts”

For the domestic audience, the School is a place where they not only earn a degree but begin a real career path. The positioning rests on three pillars:

Quality, modern, and practical business knowledge

The School emphasizes that its programmes not only provide theoretical foundations but are built on real corporate problems, projects, and cases. The iExpo, Hackathon, corporate workshops, and department based collaborations (MBH, Prohuman, EY, Lidl, etc.) guarantee that students become familiar with the world of practice during their studies.

Real university town, liveable environment

Pécs as a university town is one of the most important appeals: smaller than Budapest but liveable, safe, culturally rich, and more affordable. The advantage of a smaller Faculty is that students do not “get lost in the crowd” but know their instructors and peers personally. Small-group teaching, modern renovated classrooms and community spaces (Viapan Lounge, EY room, Fintelligence Lab) strengthen the “personal attention” narrative.

Mentoring, coaching, and career support

The School offers an instructor and student mentor network, Career Spot services (coaching, training), and the strength of the alumni network. Students do not stand alone: they are supported during and after their studies.

Key Message and Slogan

Main slogan: „UPFBE – where your career starts.”

Supporting message: „You can't know in advance how far you'll go, but you can choose the path that gets you there.”

This slogan expresses that while the future is uncertain, the School provides all the tools, knowledge, and support that help students find and follow their own path.

„Hidden Gem in European Business Education”

For international students, the School is a “hidden gem,” a “smart choice” that many overlook because they reflexively turn to the big names (London, Paris, Amsterdam, Munich), while the University of Pécs Faculty of Business and Economics offers equal or better quality, more personal attention, and much better value for money in one of Europe’s best and oldest university cities.

Elements of the „Hidden Gem” narrative:

World-class, EFMD-accredited programmes

The BSc in Business Administration and Management and the MSc in Management and Leadership have EFMD accreditation, which is an international quality guarantee. Only a few Hungarian institutions can say this about themselves.

Personalized, Small-Group Learning Environment

While large universities are characterized by hundred-seat lecture halls and anonymous crowds, at UPFBE students receive personal attention, addressed by name. The instructor-student ratio is favorable; group sizes are small. Lifelong friendships and connections can be made.

Excellent practical and unique, experience based opportunities as well as career support

The CAL (World of Practice, iExpo, BEDC, etc.) and Career Spot (Mentor Programme, etc.) initiatives and programmes prepare students for successful careers by connecting them with industry professionals and providing practical learning experiences.

The School's commitment to educating solution-oriented, responsible business professionals who gain a unique perspective through innovative teaching methods and experiential learning opportunities can be highlighted.

Safe, affordable, liveable university town

Pécs is one of the safest Hungarian cities, with living costs a fraction of Western European university cities, while being culturally rich (UNESCO World Heritage site). Budapest, Zagreb, and Ljubljana are nearby.

Value for money

The combination of EU quality, international recognition, and personal attention at a price that is one-third to one-quarter of London, Paris, or Berlin universities.

Scholarship and work opportunities

Stipendium Hungaricum, institutional scholarships, work opportunities in Hungary and the region.

Key message (Positioning Statement)

The Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of Pécs is a hidden gem in European higher education - a unique destination offering world-class business programmes, rich cultural experiences, and affordable living costs. It is a place where students can stand out, gain a global perspective, and develop into responsible, solution-oriented professionals.

Appeal, tone of voice és visual style:

Emotional ties can have a profound effect on prospective students, especially when choosing an institution that will shape their future and represent a serious commitment. However, prospective students and their families often make decisions based on tangible benefits such as cost, quality, and career opportunities. International students value diversity and an inclusive, safe environment during their studies. We must therefore provide clear information about our programmes, EFMD accreditation, dual degree programmes, and practical experience. The university's 650-year history can be a powerful symbol of tradition and academic excellence. Transformative experiences such as internships, studying abroad, and the cultural atmosphere of Pécs should be highlighted.

The **tone of voice** should be:

- Friendly yet professional
- Supportive and inviting to reflect the cohesive community
- Inspiring to motivate students to find their place at FBE Pécs
- Simple and clear language to ensure understanding for non-native English speakers

Regarding visual style, we intend to use vibrant student images showcasing university life, student diversity, and Pécs's cultural richness. Snapshots, small-group learning environments, alumni success stories, and career-focused activities are important. Modern design elements should be combined with subtle references to traditions (e.g., Pécs's historic architecture).

The School's brand personality is dual: simultaneously "mentor" and "explorer".

Mentor archetype

The School as a mentor: experienced, supportive, wise, accompanying students on their learning journey, helps them find their own voice, develops their abilities, and is always there when needed.

Explorer archetype

The School as an explorer: innovative, curious, adventurous, seeks new paths, opens new opportunities, and encourages students to step out of their comfort zones.

TARGET GROUPS AND MESSAGES

This part of the strategy is about defining target groups and developing messages for each.

Domestic target audiences

1. High school students from the local and broader (e.g.: Budapest) recruitment area (grades 11-12) – interested in tertiary vocational programmes + BSc

Characteristics:

Age: 17-19 years

Motivation: career choice, experience, community, employment, livelihood

Information seeking: social media (TikTok, Instagram), YouTube, Google, personal – event participation

Decision factors: programme, interest in topics, student life, scholarships, employment opportunities, expected salary (career), university costs, education quality

Main messages:

- Renewed Bachelor's programmes, specializations
- Nationally and internationally recognized diploma
- Liveable, supportive university town – "Pécs"
- Small size, personal attention

- Modern infrastructure, dormitory and community spaces (Viapan Lounge, EY room)
- Study abroad, professional internship opportunities – Pannónia scholarship programme
- Corporate projects already during the Bachelor's studies
- University scholarships (Rector's, Alma Mater, "Pécsiközgáz", MBH career starter)
- Fee-paying programme designation as "option B" – worthwhile investment (financially too)
- Wide and diverse career path, fast and easy employment after graduation
- Credits completed during tertiary vocational programmes are accepted in the BSc programme + a tertiary vocational programme's certificate replaces the advanced-level (secondary school) final exam

2. Parents and Teachers

Characteristics:

Age: 40-60 years

Motivation: reliable, good quality education, safety, return on investment, child's future – career opportunities, supporting and helping the child make a decision, finding the "right direction," and preparing for successful admission

Information seeking: Facebook, website, personal consultation, professional opinions, email

Decision factors: diploma value, employment statistics, costs, scholarships, dormitory, housing, living costs

Main messages:

- Secure employment, measurable wage premium with a business degree
- International recognition (EFMD accreditation), but the child still stays local
- Supportive, attentive environment, university town, „the child won't get lost in the crowd”
- Scholarships, support, student loans, student work opportunities
- Admission support, score calculation, guidance in the admission process

3. Master's programmes interest groups

Here we encounter several types of groups, among which we can establish the following priority order:

- **BSc students graduating from the School**

Age: 21-23 years

Motivation: staying in the familiar, safe environment ("they know me here"), extending student life, specialization, acquiring specific knowledge, achieving higher starting salary, keeping friend groups together

Information seeking: internal channels (Neptun, Teams), personal recommendations from other students, instructors and student administration office, Instagram, TikTok, internal Faculty events (MSc information sessions)

Decision factors: studying while working (schedule flexibility), automatic credit recognition, scholarships, „is it worth investing 2 more years”

- **those with business Bachelor's degrees not obtained from the School**, primarily from the broader recruitment area and Budapest
 Age: 21-25 years
 Motivation: change of environment, experiencing the “Pécs university town” lifestyle, more favorable living costs (housing) compared to the capital, obtaining a quality (EFMD-accredited) diploma at a competitive price/environment, seeking specific specializations, part-time programmes
 Information seeking: felvi.hu, Google search, TikTok/Instagram, recommendations from acquaintances, open days
 Decision factors: university rankings and accreditations, dormitory accommodation or housing quality, city atmosphere, living costs, community life, how much travel and effort part-time programmes require

- **career changers and those seeking a “step forward”, graduated a few years ago**, who are currently looking for study opportunities alongside their workplace
 Age: 26-45 years
 Motivation: obtaining the "paper" needed for promotion, systematizing practical experience theoretically, salary increase, professional networking, acquiring more marketable knowledge, transitioning to a new field
 Information seeking: LinkedIn, professional portals, Google, employer recommendations, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, recommendations from acquaintances
 Decision factors: time management and flexibility (teaching days, part-time mode), practical applicability of curriculum, tuition fee (availability of state funding).

- **those without business degrees**
 Age: 21-35 years (mixed)
 Motivation: holding a leadership position in their own field (e.g., engineer-manager), starting a business, increasing labor market value by "standing on two legs," learning business "language" and thinking
 Information seeking: Google, career counselors, felvi.hu, credit recognition information, experiences of acquaintances
 Decision factors: entry requirements (credit recognition possibilities and costs), difficulty of bridging courses, usefulness of diploma in their own field

Main messages:

- Master's programme completable in as fast as 1 year, or part-time Master's programme completable alongside work (employment opportunity alongside university)
- New, modern, transformed, practical project-based curriculum content
- State-funded places are available
- It's harder to continue later and to return to the classroom; 2 years pass quickly
- Master's degree holders have additional earnings and better employment opportunities
- More diverse, broader career path – advantages of Master's degree different from Bachelor's major (standing on more legs) – diversification opportunity
- Deeper and more specific knowledge, group work, case studies, more “personal” programme focusing on unique professional development opportunities

- Credit recognition procedure for those coming from non-business fields; for the marketing Master's programme, applicants with “any” Bachelor's degree may apply
- Study abroad opportunity still possible within the programme duration; opportunity to apply to English-language programmes as well
- Networking opportunity and future social capital, possibility to advance to PhD programmes

International Target Groups

International target group differentiation is set out by countries and motivations. For the Management and Leadership programme, defined target markets and personas can be adapted to the entire English-language programme portfolio, and due to its highlighted importance, the main recruitment solutions and areas will also align with this.

Tier 1: Core Markets – established high-volume potential

Turkey

The market rationale for selecting Turkey is based on the fact, that its market size is high with 125,000+ Turkish students' study abroad annually and it is a relatively close country with long history of knowledge about cultural and international relations aspects between the two countries. There is also a clear visa advantage: EU access for career opportunities post-graduation.

The targeted student profile is 22-28 years old bachelor's degree holders from business, engineering, economics, or social science background in Turkish universities with career aspirations for international business careers, EU-based employment, multinational corporations. They come from middle-class families able to afford EU education at competitive pricing and have CEFR B2 level English knowledge.

Hence our value proposition for them is: “Your gateway to EU business careers. As one of the closest EFMD-accredited management programmes to Turkey, we offer affordable European education, post-study work opportunities in the EU, and a strategic location bridging East and West - all within a safe, welcoming university town”.

India

More than 508 000 Indian students study abroad annually, and it is the fastest-growing source market globally for MSc programmes. Indian students demonstrate high performance, English proficiency, analytical skills. Furthermore, at the University level an exclusive agent agreement is in place with Delphini Education Support Services. Hungary offers affordable EU education compared to UK/US/Australia with post-study work pathways and a double degree partnership with Woxsen University (India) is operational since 2023 and a new partnership was just launched with S. P. Jain Institute of Management and Research (SPJIMR).

The targeted student profile is “strivers”, young (aged 23-30) graduates and professionals having business, engineering, computer science bachelor's degrees from Tier 1-3 Indian universities and cities (e.g.: Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pune, Chennai). Ambitious middle-class seeking international credential for career advancement. Their career aspirations

are international corporate roles, pursuing immigration pathway to Europe or returning to India with EU credentials.

Hence our value proposition is: “Your pathway from India to Europe. Earn an EU-accredited master’s degree at a fraction of UK/US costs, gain post-study work opportunities in the EU, and return to India with international credentials that open doors to top multinational corporations.”

Tier 2: Growth Markets – emerging high potential

Kenya & East Africa

10,000+ Kenyan students study abroad annually, and Kenya's English-language education system eliminates language barriers. We have also experienced historical enrolment and positive student performance from this region and fewer European institutions are actively recruiting in East Africa, which means less competition. Kenya serves as gateway to broader East African market (Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda) and University of Pécs has opened a joint recruitment office in Nairobi in 2021.

The targeted student profile is 24-32 years old business, public administration, development studies bachelor's degree holders from emerging middle class families, often with professional experience. Their aspirations are leadership roles in Kenyan/regional private sector or international NGOs, public sector management. They have high Scholarship intent, and it is an affordability-sensitive market.

Hence our value proposition is: "Leadership for Africa's future. Develop strategic management capabilities in Europe's safest, most affordable university city, then return to drive Kenya's and East Africa's economic transformation."

Jordan & MENA Region

Jordan has been a reliable enrolment market and Middle East students seek safe, affordable EU alternatives to overcrowded domestic institutions. Targeted students are 22-28 years old business, engineering, IT bachelor's degrees holders and graduates with international corporate careers, family business management, entrepreneurship aspirations.

Our value proposition for them is: “European education with Middle Eastern values. Study business and leadership in a culturally respectful, safe environment that bridges European standards and regional business contexts.”

Tier 3: Emerging Markets - exploratory low-volume

Balkans & Neighboring Countries (Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Moldova, North Macedonia)

Due to geographic proximity visa-free or simplified travel, cultural similarities and the growing reputation of University of Pécs in Balkans it means a potential emerging market.

Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan

Central Asia and South Caucasus represent over 1 billion people under age 25, creating enormous higher education demand exceeding regional capacity.

South & Southeast Asia: Vietnam, Indonesia

These countries represent rapidly developing and/or large economies with young demographics. In Vietnam 34,000+ students are studying abroad (2022 data), trending upward with economic growth.

Targeted students will seek affordable EU education and have business/economics backgrounds. Prospective targeted students are seeking affordable European "business" education and/or have business/economics backgrounds. The typical applicant is motivated and academically prepared, interested in business, management, and/or related Bachelor's degrees. Someone who strives to develop leadership competencies, values practice-oriented learning, and wants to study in an international, diverse, and supportive academic environment. It is also important that they have excellent English language skills and financial means allow completing an English-language Bachelor's/Master's programme.

Therefore, the main messages toward international students will be as follows:

1. Academic excellence and career preparation – meeting of historical prestige and modern opportunities

Main messages:

- EFMD-accredited, globally recognized programmes
 - Small group sizes, personalized attention, and direct contact with instructors
 - World of Practice (WoP) initiatives: corporate projects, guest speakers, internships, and real business challenges
 - CareerSpot and CAL (Center for Applied Learning) services providing mentoring support, career counseling, and industry connections
 - Strong employment results and career opportunities in EU markets
 - Development of problem-solving ability, critical thinking, and leadership skills
2. International student experience and community
 - Inclusive international community fostering lifelong friendships
 - Safe, vibrant environment, international student "mass" – university town
 - Diverse student community from 50+ countries creating global networking opportunities
 - Student ambassador programme and student mentor programmes
 - Vibrant campus with cultural programmes, events, and student organizations
 - Support services for international students, including orientation and integration activities
 3. Affordability and excellence
 - Competitive tuition fees (€2,750/semester BSc, €3,150/semester MSc) compared to Western European alternatives
 - Affordable living costs in Pécs with accessible student accommodations
 - Stipendium Hungaricum scholarship opportunities providing full tuition coverage

- Early application refund type scholarships for talented and high-performing students based on academic results
 - Excellent quality European education in medium price category
 - Transparent costs (tuition, accommodation, meals, transportation)
4. Unique Programme Features and Study Opportunities
- Dual degree programmes with ESDES Lyon and KEDGE Business School (France)
 - Mandatory international experience (CIX) to broaden global knowledge
 - Specialized MSc certificates in new business areas – e.g., Circular Economy, Strategic HRM, Data-Driven Leadership
 - Innovation and entrepreneurship development in the BD programme
 - Research opportunities and PhD programmes
 - Sustainable business and leadership curriculum aligned with global trends
5. Pécs as a University Town
- Pécs is among Europe's 50 best university cities
 - 650-year academic tradition at Hungary's oldest university
 - UNESCO World Heritage sites and vibrant cultural life (European Capital of Culture)
 - Safe, student-friendly city with affordable entertainment and dining options
 - Strategic location: Budapest (2.5 hours), Zagreb, Ljubljana nearby
 - Mediterranean atmosphere and beautiful architecture

SOLUTIONS AND TOOLS TO BE USED

The solutions and tools to be used have been determined based on the “customer journey” stages. Each stage from awareness to advocacy considers the selection, application, and student experience phases. The individual “journey” stages were designated according to Kotler's reimagined “path”, within which a key role is given to “asking”, meaning decision-making based on information from others. This requires not only building the appropriate channels through which prospective students can receive information from previous graduates and current students but also creating the appropriate student experience and encouraging its sharing. That is, one of the key points of the communication strategy is content marketing activities and building and operating a student influencer or “ambassador” programme. Additionally, another key component of the “journey” approach is “guiding” prospects through and continuously supporting the stages of becoming a student. This goal is served, especially for international students, by a new development: introducing a “lead management” system and the “MoveMe” relocation support application.

Figure 1: The suggested solutions from a customer journey perspective

Awareness, interest and desire – <u>Recruitment phase</u>	Awareness	Online advertising and PR – Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Google, YouTube and country-specific platforms	Recruitment and application-support portals and services (online ads, PR articles, highlights, newsletters): Keystone, Studyportal, study.eu, Felvi.hu, Eduline.hu
	Appeal	Fairs, webinars, open days, school visits, “Summer School” or “Bootcamp” programmes, flyers and brochures	Website and content management (news, blog, organic social media posts), SEO and AI optimisation
	Ask	Student Ambassador and Unibuddy programmes – connecting current students with prospective students	Agents plus country-specific “country representatives”
	Act	Microsoft Dynamics – CRM lead management and nurturing	E-mail marketing, newsletters
From application towards the interview – <u>Selection phase</u>		DreamApply system – supporting the admission process	MoveMe – relocation support for international students
Students – <u>Study experience stage</u>	Experience	Internal faculty events for students and internal advertising spaces	Building a marketing research-based satisfaction measurement and monitoring system
		Eduopinions - student review management	Student app Data management and visualization – decision making support
Alumni and advocates– <u>Review and advocacy phase</u>	Advocate	Student content creation system (blog, videos, podcast) – student influencer programme	Alumni programme and LinkedIn communication

Awareness stage

The goal of this stage is for the School to reach potential students, capture their interest, build the School’s brand, and position itself in the market.

In the “Awareness” phase, broad application of online and offline channels is necessary to reach the widest possible target audience. The most suitable tool for this is using online **advertisements and PR placements**.

Main platforms and solutions:

- **Google Ads & Search Engine Marketing**
- **Facebook & Instagram ads**
- **TikTok & YouTube Shorts**
- **Building PR and media relationships, publishing PR articles** (e.g.: telex.hu, index.hu, 24.hu)

Additional solutions are represented by platforms suitable for advertising that specifically cover educational programmes and continuing education topics.

- These include internationally the **“listing portals”** such as Keystone, Educations.com, Study.eu, Studyportal.
- Furthermore, in the Hungarian market, felvi.hu and eduline.hu can be highlighted.

Appeal stage

In this stage, after initial interest, desire must be created in prospective students who are already more receptive, starting to be interested, visiting the School's website, not just seeing an advertisement, but may even be willing to attend a featured event.

In domestic recruitment, solutions belonging to this phase include:

- **High school classroom teaching** (on interesting topics, by PhD students and instructors)
- Participation in high school continuing education **roadshows**
- Self-organized **open days**
- **"Bootcamp"** for high school students
- **"CultureFest"** organized by the University of Pécs
- **EDUCATIO exhibition**
- etc.

In international recruitment, the equivalent of these events is **webinars** and personal appearances at recruitment fairs in target countries. The purpose of these meetings is not only to create desire but also to obtain the prospect's contact information ("lead").

These events are also supported by School publications, **flyers, and promotional gifts**.

In this phase, an important role is played by the **website** and associated content (e.g., news, blog, organic social media content), where prospective students can encounter initial information and our own content.

Regarding the website, in addition to previous search engine optimization, a new approach is needed: **AI search optimization** (AI SEO), which requires producing more, better, more relevant original content and developing content optimization and technical background discoverable by search robots.

Ask (inquiry, information seeking) stage

Here prospective students may already have specific questions for the School (or others), and they are looking for someone to answer them. The School's task is to convince prospects with quick, friendly, and informative responses.

The **"Student Ambassador"** programme (running under the name "student helper" in domestic recruitment) aims for students, as our "agents", to represent the School in their home country and friend groups. Each year, by recruiting new students from all programmes and programme levels, primarily with regard to target countries, continuous replenishment can be ensured to build the system. Current students can thus represent the School to their peers and continuously support prospects with information. There is overlap between participants in this programme and content creators within the **"influencer" programme**. These two activities often represent similar commitment and interest. They will be those who, through their participation and responses at webinars, open days, and other events, can reinforce prospects' decisions..

Additionally, a **"Unibuddy"** system runs on the School's English-language website, which allows prospects to chat directly with a current student. Continuous recruitment of students from all programmes is also needed for this system.

Strengthening relationships with recruitment agents and continuously expanding the **agent network** is also necessary, especially in target countries. In this area, cooperation with the University-level International Directorate is necessary, as agent contract management, renewal, and new contracts fall under their “jurisdiction”. All agent contracts entail that agents recruit for the entire University of Pécs, which partly creates competition among different schools and programmes. Therefore, in this area, special clauses connected to agent contracts can possibly reward those recruiting from target countries with premiums. A special website will also be created for agents where prospectuses, videos, and most important information they can use will be highlighted, and separate webinars will be organized for them.

An additional solution could be establishing a “**Country representative**” programme for target countries, meaning that for each country, a colleague from the School staff can be involved who undertakes to represent and monitor the School’s reputation and the development of agent and university partner relationships.

Act – decision, application stage

For data-driven campaign management and segment-specific tracking, there is a need to acquire a **CRM system** (expected to be **Microsoft Dynamics**) with a special recruitment "add-on" service that enables sending personalized communication materials via email and WhatsApp. Full implementation is expected in 2026. The CRM system enables prioritization among prospects, personalized communication workflows, real-time process analysis, and integration with the university's own applicant management system (**DreamApply** application) for seamless data flow. It will help track agent performance and measure campaign ROI.

Recruitment goes beyond students “applying”. Support for arriving here is also needed, as visa processing and applications, administrative processes lead to high attrition rates. Therefore, the Faculty acquired the **MoveMe** "relocation" and integration support application. The programme starts in the 2026 autumn admission academic year, with the goal of supporting international students’ “relocation” (accommodation search, visa processing advice, arrival planning), reducing post-admission attrition by handling practical barriers to enrollment, improving student experience from admission to arrival, and demonstrating the institution’s commitment to supporting students beyond the recruitment stage.

The DreamApply system also provides the opportunity to send targeted, personalized messages at different applicant and post-application statuses. Exploiting this is also part of this approach, alongside synchronizing the system through the CRM system and developing an email marketing process. After appropriate segmentation, personalized email and WhatsApp messages can be sent in an automated manner.

Additionally, subscription systems for **newsletters** (in both Hungarian and international recruitment) designed for applicants belong here.

Experience – student journey and experience stage

Experiences gained during student life are crucial, serving as the foundation for marketing communication messages. As highlighted, the strategy is built around students becoming as committed as possible and willing to recommend their programme to friends and acquaintances and potentially even become "influencers."

To support this, internal Faculty communication platforms need to be utilized, and communication support for programmes and events at the School must be carried out. Additionally, we plan to introduce a student-oriented application that can maintain direct contact.

Furthermore, continuous satisfaction surveys and building a **"research" monitoring system** belong here, which can help identify what topics concern students, where shortcomings might be experienced, where intervention might be needed. Coordination with other Faculty processes (e.g., PVG meeting) is essential here.

It is also important that during the student journey, prospects will be recruited into the ambassador, influencer, student helper programmes. We must be able to discover who the opinion leaders are within the student base and who we need to maintain contact with, even directly.

Furthermore, for recruiting for Master's programmes, it is essential that we clearly see which "touchpoints" allow us to reach current students and convince them that it is worth continuing with us.

Advocate – commitment stage

Committed students can be involved not only in the ambassador, Unibuddy, student helper, and influencer programmes mentioned above, but the goal for all students is that they have the best possible opinion of us.

Related to this, the "junior alumni" programme has already started previously, and the **alumni** programme extension is also happening through the CAL.

Involving alumni in communication is an important solution, also in the content marketing area; podcasts, videos, and blog content will be created with them.

Additionally, building our own page on a special platform, **eduopinions.com**, will also be implemented. On this platform, not only can the School be presented, but all opinions related to the School and its programmes can be collected and publicly accessible. The essence of the platform is that based on these opinions, universities can be compared by students. These opinions can greatly help those in the "ask" stage answer their general questions, but for this to work really well, this form of opinion-giving (commitment) must be increased among current graduating students.

MEASUREMENT AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

A systematic monitoring system is necessary to measure the strategy's success and enable adaptation:

Domestic Recruitment KPIs and Measurement Methodology

KPI	Measurement method	Tracking	Responsibility
KPI1 – Bachelor's student numbers (480+ students/year)	Number of enrolled students at beginning of semester, fee-paying/state-funded distribution	Beginning of semester, annual comparison with trend analysis	Domestic recruitment coordinator
KPI2 – Master's Students (100-100 full-time/part-time)	Enrolled students in the semester (full-time/part-time separate), total 200+	Semi-annually, trend monitoring, programme-specific analysis	Domestic recruitment coordinator
KPI3 – Student Proportion from Budapest and wider recruitment area (+5-8% by 2030)	Annual: application data, enrollment data, comparison with previous year	Annual (year-end), region-specific analysis	Domestic recruitment coordinator
KPI3b – Quality (score)	Average admission scores, trend	Annually, score trend monitoring	Domestic recruitment coordinator, Study Dept. Head

International recruitment KPIs and measurement methodology

KPI	Measurement method	Tracking	Responsibility
KPI4 – International Student Applications (+5% annually)	Monthly: Keystone, Studyportals CRM data; quarterly summary	Monthly/quarterly, by target country (tier-specific) distributions	Lead Manager
KPI5 – Management & Leadership MSc (min. 30 students/year)	Number of enrolled students in the semester	Semi-annually, or continuous applicant number monitoring	Lead Manager
KPI6 – Enrollment rate increase (7,3% → 10% by 2030)	(Cumulative applications / Cumulative enrollments) × 100% (in the case of fee-paying students)	Semi-annually, by country/Tier-specific analysis	Lead Manager + Student Administration Staff
KPI6b – Fee-paying student proportion	Fee-paying students / total international students	Semi-annually	Lead Manager
Digital campaign ROI	Google/Meta/TikTok: Conversion Rate, Cost Per Lead (CPL)	Monthly, platform-specific, campaign-specific	Digital content manager
CRM funnel conversion	Awareness (impressions) → Interested (website visit) → Application → Enrollment	Monthly, bottleneck analysis (where are we losing students?)	Lead Manager

Other media indicators

Indicator	Method	Frequency of measurement
Media impressions (PR)	Media appearances (eduline.hu, felvi.hu, index.hu), PR articles	Annually, trend monitoring
Social Media Engagement	Facebook/Instagram/TikTok: followers, engagement rate (likes/shares/comments), reach	Monthly, platform-specific
Website	Google Analytics: unique visitors, landing page views, average time spent, bounce rate, conversions	Monthly, trend monitoring
Student Satisfaction	Student feedback survey (online, anonymous), NPS (Net Promoter Score)	Annually (after semester)