



Utrecht University



Improving the world
sustainably together

A solid yellow vertical bar runs along the left edge of the page.

Open mind, open attitude, open science

**IMPROVING THE WORLD
SUSTAINABLY TOGETHER**

Strategic Plan 2025
Utrecht University

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Preface

You have before you the Strategic Plan of Utrecht University. This document sets out the areas we will focus on in coming years in order to carry out our mission and work as effectively as possible toward a better world. We can do this only by combining our strengths, both internally and externally. And by demonstrating not only ambition, expertise and decisive action but an open attitude as well. We want to share our knowledge and collaborate with others to promote the scientific process and resolve the challenges facing society, today and in the future.

This plan was drafted during the period in which the COVID-19 pandemic emerged. In March 2020, we were forced to transition suddenly from discussing matters in working groups and at 24-hour conferences to exchanging ideas online.

The manner in which we have done so together clearly demonstrates the resilience of our organisation. We, the deans and the Executive Board, are touched by the incredible commitment shown by our lecturers, researchers, colleagues from the support services and students.

The COVID-19 pandemic quickly confirmed that our mission and vision are rock solid. It is precisely by cooperating in the areas of education and research across the borders of disciplines and countries that we can contribute to an adequate global response to issues such as COVID-19 and work towards the necessary long-term societal reset – rather than a mere resumption. Contributing to sustainability challenges is a top priority on our long-term agenda. To that end, this plan builds on the path we had already chosen in recent years. There is every reason – and need – to pursue continuity.

With regard to how we put our mission into practice, we must of course make continuous adjustments in response to the changing circumstances – and that includes COVID-19. Adjustments have been explored and elaborated with a large number of students, colleagues, alumni and external partners. With their help, we have created a strong focus while, at the same time, occasionally turning our sights to a more distant horizon than that of the next four years.

The recurring theme in the Strategic Plan is our full commitment to openness: an openness found in the very DNA of our institution. Through Open Science, we are bringing this openness to maximum fruition. In other words, science that is practised based on a comprehensive vision regarding the relationship with society and with the developments taking place around us. This vision must permeate every aspect of our education. It should also determine how we conduct our research and how we handle the results. ‘Openness’ is similarly a keyword in terms of our efforts to enhance the diversity of people of perspectives in our community and the manner in which we want to collaborate, communicate and transform our academic culture. We choose to focus on teamwork in which each individual can contribute and flourish in their own way.

In the following chapters, we will share our analysis of who we are and the challenges we perceive around us. Next, we will set out our strategy for the coming years in five guiding principles. These five pillars will be translated into specific objectives for the organisation, for our teaching and for our research. And finally, this document contains the plans for each faculty, in which they elaborate an individual course of action and how they intend to implement the strategy within their own faculties.

We intend to realise these ambitions and will provide annual reports on our progress. For now, we wish to sincerely thank everyone who assisted in the realisation of this plan for their tireless efforts. We look forward to maintaining our open dialogue. Let us continue to share our knowledge!

Deans and Executive Board

Note to reader: In this Strategic Plan, we use the term ‘multi-disciplinary’. Multidisciplinarity is the basis from which we realise various forms of cooperation, both between employees working in different disciplines and between the university and society. These connections may also be interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary in nature.

Utrecht University is working to create a better world

CHAPTER 1

Plant and soil ecologists from Utrecht University are replicating natural grasslands inside hundreds of containers in order to study the effects of climate change in combination with the loss of biodiversity. The Utrecht University Biodiversity and Climate Variability Experiment (UU BioCLIVE) is unique in terms of both scope and duration.



Utrecht University is a broad, Dutch and international university. Leading research feeds our innovative education. The university has strong ties to the surrounding environment, and with the city and region of Utrecht in particular. The roots of our University extend deep into the past.

We form a close-knit community and we value connection. Public values such as equality, diversity, inclusiveness, openness, accessibility and mutual respect form the starting point of our strategy and activities. Involved students, employees and alumni carry our principles forward.

The teaching at Utrecht University is modern, personal, high quality and continuously in development. Here with us, students find a challenging study climate that is aligned to their ambitions and talents. Our students are inquisitive, creative, critical and enterprising. We pay special attention to our lecturers and to encouraging and facilitating educational innovation within an environment that is increasingly inclusive and international.

A large number of Utrecht University research groups are among the best in the world in their respective fields. Multidisciplinary research at Utrecht University focuses on four themes: Dynamics of Youth, Institutions for Open Societies, Life Sciences and Pathways to Sustainability. Utrecht University participates in regional, national and international consortia that conduct thematic and topical research into societal themes.

We recognise that complex issues cannot be resolved based on a single perspective. We firmly believe that a multidisciplinary and scientific approach is the key to new insights and solutions. Together, we will improve the world in sustainable fashion.

MISSION AND VISION

Utrecht University is working to create a better world.

Our graduates have the knowledge and skills to make a substantial contribution to society. Our research is ground-breaking and focused on resolving major international issues. Our collaborative culture makes innovation, new insights and social impact possible. The core values of ambition, inspiration, commitment and independence form the basis of our university community.

Challenges in the world around us

CHAPTER 2



Utrecht University holds a place in the heart of society. Developments in the world around us play a role in determining our strategy.

SOCIAL ISSUES

Current social issues are complex and not limited to specific generations or continents, nor can they be resolved from a single perspective. Climate change, for instance, is prompting consideration of urgent social issues including the energy transition, how we structure our environment and circularity. The gap in society, between rich and poor and between people with high and low levels of education, is widening. On average, we live longer lives, which raises issues in relation to care, healthcare and health. All these challenges call for students, employees and alumni who seek out solutions and contribute to societal discourse. Fundamental research plays a crucial role in this regard.

These days, information – including scientific data – is readily available everywhere and at all times. Experts are not the only ones to form an opinion: thanks in part to new media, information has become accessible to everyone and the discussions have accelerated and intensified. Scientists must enter into an open interaction with many different parties in order to work together on solutions for social issues.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, we have been able to see the interaction between science, policymakers and politicians on an almost daily basis. The transparent nature of science contributed positively to scientific findings, uncertainties and insights being fully taken into account, in addition to political and socio-economic considerations. It is precisely by forging

connections with societal partners that we can demonstrate how academics cooperate with one another to develop and introduce their knowledge using transparent methods.

TRENDS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Globalisation and digitisation bring international knowledge and education to our doorstep. With the proverbial press of a button, our students have access to lectures from all corners of the globe. Digital technologies have yielded new opportunities in academic research. Scientists can share their data with colleagues at other universities by making it open access. The development and transfer of knowledge is no longer the sole province of knowledge institutions.

There is an increasing expectation that universities will conduct research that benefits society as a whole, especially in the case of publicly-funded institutions. International efforts are therefore under way to create an open model for knowledge sharing and collaboration. Parties

in both the Netherlands and the European Union are investing heavily in Open Science, which aims to see that research results, regardless of the form of the scientific output, are made freely available to others at the earliest possible stage. Open science deals with research, education and how we communicate with one another and with society at large.

The primary focus of university education is shifting from the transfer of knowledge towards the active application of knowledge and the development of skills. Students – the professionals of tomorrow – are gaining experience with personal skills such as self-reflection and creativity during their degree programmes. To an increasing extent, they will no longer be able to finish their academic track without interruption and combine their studies with work or other activities. Alumni can see that knowledge and the labour market are changing at a rapid pace. In order to maintain their employability, professionals must be willing to accept responsibility for their own deve-

lopment and be able to continue that development throughout their lives. All these aspects call for custom solutions and other – flexible – teaching methods. Due to the increased pressure to succeed, in combination with factors such as the limited availability of student housing, more students are experiencing mental health issues. This development calls for active policy and a more individualised approach to student guidance and accommodations.

Education and research are increasingly shifting towards the private sector. Traditional curricula are undergoing changes, stemming not only from how the education is being provided but as a result of external developments as well. New parties, both public and private, are emerging to take responsibility for portions of the curricula and develop global study programmes for professionals.

Universities are becoming more dependent on technology companies for their teaching and research infrastructure. In order to preserve the academic quality of data in this new landscape, collaboration in areas such as infrastructure is needed; this collaboration with universities in the Netherlands and beyond must be conducted in keeping with public values.

The international mobility of students and staff has grown immensely in recent decades. Students from all over the world study in Utrecht and international staff are part of our university community. Their knowledge and cultural backgrounds enrich our education and research and their different perspectives add value to the academic debate. Due in part to the influx of international staff and students, our university community is becoming more diverse. An increasing range of cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds are represented. International collaboration is crucial to the quality of universities and is actively promoted by the European Union. Despite the public debate on the anglicisation of higher education, the number of degree programmes being taught in English at the Dutch universities has greatly expanded in previous years.

INCREASED COOPERATION

Viewed in an international context, Dutch universities perform quite well. The universities contribute strongly to the Netherlands' position as a knowledge economy and its economy in general. This is resulting in a growing influx of Dutch and international students in academic education.

Investments in the system are needed, yet currently seem to be limited to science and technology and to come at the expense of funding for other fields of study. All disciplines, however, are indispensable to any society that wishes to progress: both technological development and cultural preservation, scientific discoveries as well as knowledge on behavioural change, and both fundamental and more applied research. A forward-looking society stands to benefit precisely from a multidisciplinary approach to societal challenges, which calls for investment in all disciplines.

In recent years, research funding in the Netherlands and the European Union has shifted from free and independent research to more demand-driven, affiliated research. In the case of affiliated research, companies or civic society organisations offer input to help determine the focus of the research. Immense competitive pressure exists in the research world as well, with only a small portion of applications being approved for funding. This competition contributes to an increased workload among researchers. The financial structure and increasing competition are having a detrimental effect on work pressure and the well-being of students and PhD candidates as well.

Universities and government bodies need one another in order to reduce the pressure in higher education and research and to maintain our global position as a knowledge economy. Greater cooperation and less unnecessary competition have been established as priority areas for the coming period on the Strategic Agenda of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Mitigating competitive incentives will require that institutions – in mutual consultation with the VSNU¹ and, for example, the LERU² – choose aspects with which to differentiate themselves while also identifying those areas in which they wish to cooperate.

¹ *The Association of Universities in the Netherlands*

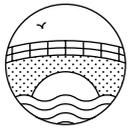
² *League of European Research Universities*

The principles that guide our strategy

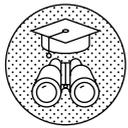
CHAPTER 3



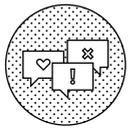
In this Strategic Plan, Utrecht University sets out its course for the coming years. With our position and mission as a firm foundation, and taking environmental factors and challenges into account, we have formulated our strategy via five guiding principles:



Collaboration across borders:
an international university with multidisciplinary education and research.



A future-proof teaching culture
that focuses on quality and innovation.



A close-knit community of involved students, employees and alumni, in which there is mutual care and concern as well as space for development, connecting with one another, knowledge sharing and an open dialogue.



A focus on sustainable development:
the Sustainable Development Goals will form an integral part of education, research and operational management;



The **transition to Open Science**, in which we will prioritise both broader recognition and rewards of our employees and the impact of education and research.

We will expound on these five guiding principles below. The specific implications for the organisation, the education and research and the faculties will be set out in subsequent chapters.

CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION

As a society, we are facing large-scale and complex challenges. Answers to these challenges can only be found by bringing together different perspectives and through intensive cooperation that transcends the boundaries of different disciplines. To that end, we have invested in four major multidisciplinary strategic research themes: Dynamics of Youth, Institutions for Open Societies, Life Sciences and Pathways to Sustainability. Excellent disciplinary research provides the basis for these four strategic themes. In coming years, thanks to the bond between research and teaching, the chosen profile will become more evident in our education. Based on the themes, our researchers will naturally collaborate with partners in government, the business community and civic society organisations.

Collaboration across borders is also the principle underlying the alliance we have entered into with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht. By taking advantage of the complementary strengths of our four institutions, we intend to strengthen and innovate teaching and research through concrete projects in the coming period as well. For students, numerous options for charting a broad personal development pathway are emerging.

We are an international university. An international environment promotes a stimulating academic and intellectual climate, an open attitude among staff and students and the expansion of scientific knowledge; it also improves students' qualifications for a globalising job market. In the years ahead, Utrecht University intends to once again take great strides in the area of internationalisation: within Europe and worldwide, we want to make more effective use of our international networks and partnerships. We are working towards a 'warm welcome' and the proper embedding of our international students and employees.

FUTURE-PROOF EDUCATIONAL CULTURE

Cross-discipline mobility is a key pillar of our teaching model. We offer our students freedom of choice so that they can, on the one hand, develop a broad knowledge base and, on the other, effectively prepare themselves for the job market, where there is a demand for professionals who possess both specialised knowledge and a broad skill set. The university will take additional steps to promote students' mobility between disciplines, faculties and collaborative partners.

We have a reputation to uphold with regard to educational innovation and the professionalisation of lecturers. In recent years, our efforts have included the introduction of blended learning via the Educate-it programme. By establishing the Centre for Academic Teaching, we have brought together all initiatives in the areas of sharing knowledge and lecturer professionalisation. Utrecht University has a long tradition of placing value on education. In the coming period, explicit attention will similarly be devoted to the importance of education in the evaluation and development of academics.

Because knowledge is increasing and changing so rapidly, alumni will need to pursue continuous professional development after graduation. Together with stakeholders, Utrecht University

is investing heavily in the development of a flexible curriculum for professionals in different phases of their life and career.

CLOSE-KNIT COMMUNITY

Utrecht University strives to be a good employer with care and concern for all our people. We want to be a university where students and employees feel at home and for which alumni cherish warm feelings. We are a tight-knit university community: people share a sense of involvement with one another and there is space for development, connecting with one another, knowledge sharing and an open dialogue. We feel it is vital that the University is accessible and inclusive and that students and employees are considerate of one another and feel they are part of a community in which interest groups, cultural communities and social, study and sports-related associations are mutually complementary.

While the well-being of students and employees is of vital importance, we have seen an increase in workload in recent years. Managing the workload of students and employees is a complex undertaking that requires a cohesive package of activities. Utrecht University is continually in search of concrete ways to reduce that workload, such as the agreement to offer temporary lecturers a minimum appointment of 0.7 FTE for a period of four years.

For this reason, we will continue to invest in supervision and support, personal development and leadership. We plan to continue prioritising the issue of workload and expect, through additional attention and appreciation for collaboration and team achievements, to contribute effectively to a healthy work and study climate.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Based on our social mandate as a public institution, we wish to contribute to the creation of a better world. In the recent period, we have made major strides in our efforts to realise sustainable operations, geared toward curtailing CO₂ emissions, reducing energy consumption, deploying sustainable alternatives and raising awareness among students and staff.

Unlike in previous years, in the coming years we will make use of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as a helpful instrument as we seek to identify challenges and potential solutions. Our education and research contribute to enhanced knowledge of all 17 SDGs. The SDG perspective is an excellent match for multidisciplinary education and research and for cross-border collaboration.

The regional ecosystem is vital to the university's development, and in return, the university makes a substantial contribution to sustainable development

in the region. The city of Utrecht and the Utrecht region serve as a testing ground for education and research. Alongside our partners, University Medical Center Utrecht and HU University of Applied Sciences, we are continuing to work on the further development of Utrecht Science Park, while also contributing to the challenges facing society, such as those with regard to primary and secondary education, the development of the city of Utrecht and biodiversity recovery.

TRANSITION TO OPEN SCIENCE

In 2017, in order to accelerate and improve the realisation of research results and their societal impact, we decided to make the transition to Open Science. By doing so, we hope to fundamentally alter the practice of education and research in the coming years. Open Science calls for an open outlook and open attitude and affects our relationship with society. Research results are made freely available to others at the earliest possible stage. Open Science touches on the structure of the research and education agenda, the diversity of that agenda and therefore the diversity of our employees. It changes the way we communicate with one another and the contact with society at large. Open Science emphasises ‘team science’ and affects our dealings with one another as colleagues. We strive to reduce individual competition and achieve an open academic culture. Providing all university employees optimum support in their work and careers will require adjustments to the evaluation system: a new framework for ‘Recognition and Rewards’.

Because this transition is a highly complex undertaking, a chapter on the organisation will now follow: the combined efforts of all parties will be needed in order to realise Open Science in the years ahead.



- 1 ● **POVERTY**
- 2 ● **HUNGER**
- 3 ● **WELL-BEING**
- 4 ● **EDUCATION**
- 5 ● **EQUALITY**
- 6 ● **SANITATION**
- 7 ● **AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**
- 8 ● **DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
- 9 ● **INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
- 10 ● **REDUCED INEQUALITIES**
- 11 ● **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**
- 12 ● **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
- 13 ● **CLIMATE ACTION**
- 14 ● **LIFE BELOW WATER**
- 15 ● **LIFE ON LAND**
- 16 ● **PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS**
- 17 ● **PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS**

The Sustainable Development Goals and Utrecht University

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are seventeen global, sustainable development goals aimed at making the world a better place by 2030. These goals were established by the United Nations, are widely supported and align seamlessly to Utrecht University's own mission. The SDGs reveal the breadth of the ecological, economic and social challenges we are currently facing. They touch on subjects including biodiversity, climate change, access to clean drinking water, education and gender equality. Utrecht University is helping achieve the SDGs through a broad range of degree programmes and innovative multidisciplinary research aimed at the further development of goals to serve as stepping stones on our way to a sustainable society. We are contributing to the SDGs through our operational management as well. Sustainable development is at the heart of everything we do.

An open and resilient academic community

CHAPTER 4



It seems so natural for Utrecht University to be a close-knit academic community in which people are involved with one another and where space exists for sharing knowledge and open debate. Yet it does not happen by itself: it requires attention and effort from all of us, each and every day. We want the community to remain this way and will therefore, in the coming period, invest in an environment in which everyone feels welcome and that they are a part of the community.

ACADEMIC COMMUNITY FOR EVERYONE

Our organisation values the contributions of all students, employees and alumni, regardless of their position, gender, ethnicity, culture, deployability or any other aspect of their personal background. Making the most of diverse qualities calls for active policy, inclusive leadership and a socially safe environment. Within the organisation, we will continue to pay extra attention to the public values of equality, diversity, inclusion, openness, accessibility and mutual respect.

The results in education, research, operational management and social impact are achieved through teamwork, in which all the talents and qualities of every employee are valued. Through recognition and rewards, we can embed respect and trust more deeply in our organisation. It impacts the way we communicate and interact with one another and with the outside world. International students and employees should feel at home and feel welcome at our university, while alumni should be a permanent part of our community.

To effectively support the formation of the university community, we will continue to invest in a warm connection,

a stimulating working environment and a lively and accessible campus. A more hybrid form of working will take shape, both at home and in the university buildings. This will also require experimentation with new methods of working and cooperation.

Lines of action

- ⊕ *We will explicitly strengthen the connecting and collaborating functions in our buildings and experiment with working methods. We have learned from our COVID-19 experiences: when elaborating the accommodation assignment, we will invest in a good balance between physical presence and online working and studying.*
- ⊕ *We will strengthen our diversity policy by establishing the ‘Equality, Diversity & Inclusion’ (EDI) steering group and appointing a Diversity Dean. We will continue to express our vision on this theme through actions including the promotion of integration in training programmes, inclusive curricula and the improvement of recruitment and selection, as well as the accessibility of our buildings.*
- ⊕ *We will work to promote extensive involvement of our community in decision-making and toward the further democratisation of that decision-making.*
- ⊕ *In early 2022, a new university-wide framework for the ‘Recognition and Rewards’ of all employees will be introduced. We will reduce the individual workload on employees using teamwork, create a calmer environment in teams and encourage complementarity. By 2025, it will be a matter of course for employees to choose a variety of career paths and specialise in different areas: education, research, impact and/or leadership.*
- ⊕ *We will improve our activities with regard to the guidance and practical support of international students and employees; this will naturally include a warm welcome for all. And we will promote multilingual meetings by means of lingua receptiva.*
- ⊕ *Utrecht University will provide high-quality and comprehensive support to students, staff, alumni and external parties. Cooperation between academic and non-academic staff, between the various support departments and between university and faculty services will be a natural part of these efforts.*

LEADERSHIP, ATTENTION TO WELL-BEING AND SPACE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Utrecht University strives to maintain a culture of openness and cooperation, a culture in which establishing connections both internally and externally is the most natural thing in the world and in which employees practise integral collaboration that transcends disciplines and/or departments. Leadership at all levels is the only way to make this culture possible. Such leadership must be open to new ideas. It must be leadership that focuses on trust, bottom-up cooperation and acting in the best interest of the entire university. To that end, leadership development is the responsibility of everyone in the organisation.

Utrecht University employees are open to feedback and change and wish to continue to develop throughout life. Managers provide employees with latitude for development and encourage efforts in that area. The university encourages all staff members to acquire personal leadership competences within their respective roles and to learn from each other at work. Leadership plays a role in all kinds of issues, whether major or minor, from the way we communicate with each other at the University to constructively flagging issues that can be improved and being mindful of others.

As an employer, we want to take good care of our people and invest in the well-being of all our students and employees. We understand that combating workload is a complex undertaking. Everyone need not do the same, nor do so equally intensively. When new initiatives arise, we will carefully assess the added value and decide whether this will replace existing work or if we can postpone certain other matters.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *With regard to leadership development, the focus for the coming period will be on agreeing realistic working methods, on establishing clear team goals, on promoting student and employee well-being and on guaranteeing social safety. When selecting managers and promoting employees to management positions, we will pay additional attention to competences in the leadership profile and to the core values of the university.*

- ⇒ *We will increase the diversity in development pathways for employees and encourage continuous development, sustainable employability and mobility. We will strengthen the range of development opportunities available to all our employees, aimed at aspects including intercultural and leadership competences, cooperating effectively and giving and receiving feedback.*
- ⇒ *We will enhance the autonomy and ownership of employees and ensure the preconditions needed to achieve a proper work-life balance. We will sharpen our focus, in part by explicitly identifying what we will no longer be doing.*

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE UNIVERSITY

In an explicit effort to help create a better world and a sustainable society and to contribute specifically to the SDGs, we want to connect knowledge on sustainability (gained through education and research) to our operational management. At the same time, we will make use of our own operations and buildings and grounds by providing an environment for academic research. During the previous period, we took the first steps toward ensuring the SDGs are recognisably reflected in our educational curriculum, and we are now continuing those efforts, basing our thinking more strongly on global development issues.

We will continue to build on existing strategies and ongoing initiatives and wish, as a university, to make a real difference in coming years in connection with the theme of sustainability. Through our operational management, we are able to contribute to over half of the SDGs, from the 'Climate Action' theme to the 'Gender Equality' theme. In keeping with the SDGs, we are working to achieve climate-neutral, zero-waste operations by 2030 and to increase the local biodiversity.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *We will tangibly embed the Sustainable Development Goals in our teaching.*
- ⇒ *Our strategic research themes focus on the transition to a sustainable society and do so in interaction with civil society actors.*



- ⤷ *In our buildings and on our grounds, we will create sustainability-related testing grounds in which we will bring together teaching, research and operational management. We will maximise our social impact by utilising renewable energy, thereby reducing our energy consumption and working toward a zero-waste university.*
- ⤷ *We will create employment opportunities for individuals with obstacles to job-market participation, be socially responsible in our purchasing practices and invest in capacity building and collaboration with partners in lower-income countries.*
- ⤷ *With regard to education, we will emphatically pursue partnerships in the region in order to promote access to equal opportunities.*
- ⤷ *In connection with the Sustainability programme, we are developing a strategy aimed at increasing biodiversity and further reducing CO₂ emissions. We are using our monitor to track the results and are comparing these to the key performance indicators.*

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT THAT IS OPEN TO CHANGE AND INNOVATION

Utrecht University wishes to strengthen and accelerate innovative power and the capacity for change. During the COVID-19 crisis, we have seen and experienced that it is possible to implement many changes and innovations within a short span of time. Everyone saw the urgency and felt the necessity. We want to cherish this agility and potential for change. Groups with a diverse composition will assemble quickly, conduct effective consultation and deliver high-quality results. We plan to address complex issues in more integral fashion, working from different disciplines and units.

Digitisation offers many opportunities to innovate and improve services. Together with automation, it offers possibilities to improve, streamline, standardise and accelerate administrative processes in the areas of education, Human Resources and finance. This will entail significant IT investments.

Lines of action

- ➔ *We will draft a domain plan for each support domain which will inform the development of quality, professionalism and working methods within that domain. Where this support is concerned, we will take integrality between the services into account at all times.*
- ➔ *We will be launching a programme aimed at efficient and future-proof business administration for the education, human resources, finance and facilities domains.*

Utrecht University uses the SDGs as an instrument to help identify challenges and potential solutions.

This figure indicates which of the SDGs take priority in our operational management.



- 3 ● **WELL-BEING**
- 5 ● **EQUALITY**
- 7 ● **AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY**
- 8 ● **DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH**
- 10 ● **REDUCED INEQUALITIES**
- 11 ● **SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES**
- 12 ● **RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION**
- 13 ● **CLIMATE ACTION**
- 15 ● **LIFE ON LAND**

Outstanding education

CHAPTER 5



Education at Utrecht University is valuable due to its strong ties to research and its societal impact. Our educational vision is based on a challenging learning environment that does justice to the fact that different students have different ambitions and talents. In the coming period, we will continue our commitment to innovative, flexible and future-proof education of a high quality.

EDUCATION FOR CRITICAL GLOBAL CITIZENS

In today's society, there is a growing demand for individuals with analytical thinking skills and the ability to connect different perspectives. This requires not only specialist knowledge, but also skills such as the capacity to critically evaluate insights and look beyond borders. To familiarise students with these qualities, Utrecht University will take a following step in the development of the Utrecht teaching model in the coming period: from academic success to successful students. The guiding principle is to train students to be critical global citizens with an eye for the importance of open society. We offer them opportunities to gain experience in different disciplines and to complete a large portion of the specialisation phase outside their own programme. Students can further expand their individual curricula by filling their free elective space with courses at the strategic alliance partners, Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht. Together with partner universities in Leuven, London, Cape Town, Sydney, Hong Kong and Toronto, we are setting out agendas for the long term.

We want to align our teaching activities with our research profile to a far greater extent than is currently the case. To that end, we are developing an attractive curriculum for all Bachelor's students in which there is room for philosophy, ethics, didactic techniques, issues of academic freedom and integrity and the principles of open society. We will also promote interdisciplinarity in the regular and elective components of the curriculum, with visible inclusion of the strategic themes. Every student will become acquainted with research from the very start of their Bachelor phase. We will integrate the principles of open science into our teaching as well.

Lines of action

- ↪ *To make room for multidisciplinary education, we plan to thoroughly evaluate the range of disciplinary electives currently on offer in the Bachelor phase.*
- ↪ *The strategic themes of the university's research profile nourish our education; we want these strategic themes to be clearly reflected in our Bachelor's and Master's programmes, as well as in our educational activities aimed at professionals.*
- ↪ *We will work together to explore whether it is possible, and how, to structure a university-wide core curriculum for our Bachelor's programmes.*
- ↪ *We will work with our alliance partners, Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht, to further coordinate the curriculum and increase the jointly offered programmes, including challenge-based education.*
- ↪ *We will actively contribute to the development of the future European agendas for higher education and research. Together with other partners in the CHARM-EU alliance, we will work on multidisciplinary educational innovations including challenged-based education, student-led education and blended learning.*
- ↪ *We will encourage the development of reusable digital teaching material, and work to see that it is centrally stored and made available to others.*

SUPPORTING LECTURERS

Education begins with expert lecturers who have been trained in both research and teaching. The 2018 Institutional Quality Assurance Audit revealed that Utrecht University is characterised by a culture of pursuing quality that includes continuous efforts to improve teaching. In order to provide high-quality education, offering adequate support to lecturers is essential – certainly in periods when lecturers are increasingly affected by excessive workload. This is why we plan to invest in support for lecturers and make educational performance our central focus in the coming period. The Centre for Academic Teaching, which was established in the previous planning period, will be the central portal for lecturer cooperation, development and support.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *In cooperation with faculty partners, we will optimise the professional development of lecturers, educational innovation and efforts to expand teaching-related knowledge in the Centre for Academic Teaching.*
- ⇒ *We will deploy learning analytics in order to further improve the quality of teaching, student counselling and guidance, and teaching materials. We will reinforce the relevant infrastructure and develop accompanying policy that takes the General Data Protection Regulation, privacy issues and ethical guidelines into account.*



CONCERN FOR STUDENT WELL-BEING

The university supports students as they explore and develop their personal and professional identities. A good start, a fitting place and well-being are vital elements in this regard, Utrecht University has established a counselling chain from lecturers to student psychologists. Despite this, the perceived workload of students has increased in recent years, with students experiencing a lack of confidence and a growing pressure to succeed. In the coming planning period, we will therefore continue the activities of the Student Welfare Task Force established in 2018.

Student organisations also contribute to the feeling of community and well-being of students, especially in combination with online education. The university therefore supports a flourishing community of study associations and other student clubs and associations, while cherishing the warm relations with the student organisations.

Utrecht University is committed to organising partnerships with universities of applied sciences in order to realise exchange. It should be possible for students to follow courses at different institutions and transfer any credits they have obtained elsewhere without incurring any unnecessary delays to their studies. We are increasing the possibilities for student mobility and encouraging an open community of students.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *We will continue the Student Welfare Task Force, which monitors and advises the Executive Board concerning measures that could prevent excessive workload.*
- ⇒ *We will launch an initiative aimed at further reinforcing and harmonising the counselling chain for students (lecturers, tutors, study advisers, student counsellors, student psychologists and confidential counsellors for inappropriate behaviour, career service and skills lab). The services will remain informal and adequately organised.*
- ⇒ *Utrecht University will invest in the possibilities for exchanging course modules with universities of applied sciences, and with HU University of Applied Sciences in particular.*

PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

In the coming years, Utrecht University intends to continue work on the modularisation of education: evaluation will be more competence-based and more of the teaching will be offered in the form of flexible units. Digital developments and the course offerings of various parties make it possible to assemble an individual curriculum. This gives students greater flexibility to combine their studies with other activities and responsibilities. Modularisation also offers opportunities to facilitate education for professionals. Graduates will continue to develop themselves, with alumni becoming students for life. Collaboration with alumni and social and strategic partners will be a two-way street and will generate new knowledge. We will nourish alumni with the latest insights and knowledge (and networks), so that they too can work towards solutions and nourish our university in turn. We wish to provide an innovative and cohesive range of educational options, from Bachelor's degrees to alumni education.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *We will expand the possibilities for flexible education.*
- ⇒ *We will offer attractive Education for Professionals programmes, together with HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht and other regional partners. The education we provide will be connected to the expertise of the faculties (including research expertise) and the strategic themes. The university will support lecturers as they develop new course options.*

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The university offers students an environment in which they are able to develop their talents to the greatest possible extent, so that, upon graduation, they are able to contribute to resolving the challenges facing society. Such challenges are often complex and defy straightforward solutions. To prepare students for these challenges, they take part in what is known as community-engaged learning during their degree programmes: collaborations with scientists, social partners and private citizens aimed at resolving social issues. This teaches students

how theory and practice are connected while at the same time enabling them to make an immediate impact on society. Because an enterprising attitude is an important competence in this regard, we will continue to focus on entrepreneurial education. Initiatives aimed specifically at societal challenges, such as UtrechtInc students, the Utrecht University Social Entrepreneurship Initiative and Dutch Students For Entrepreneurship, contribute to realising this goal.

Utrecht University feels a particular responsibility with regard to education in the city and region of Utrecht. Together with the municipality and the educational partners, the university is working on concrete solutions such as fast-track courses, work placements and supervision in schools. In addition, the university wants to spark enthusiasm among students for choosing a career in education. The university wishes to share knowledge and experience with educational partners in the region and thereby contribute to resolving the issue of inequality of opportunity in education.

Lines of action

- ⇒ Community engaged learning will be permanently integrated into the curriculum.
- ⇒ We are encouraging the entrepreneurial spirit, innovation and creativity, along with other related skills, among students and employees. We are strengthening the entrepreneurship courses in the existing curriculum.
- ⇒ Together with HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht and other educational partners in the city and the region of Utrecht, we are developing an initiative aimed at reducing the shortage of teachers, using each other's knowledge and courses, the exchange of professionals and advancing accessibility of education and equal opportunities.
- ⇒ We are exploring possibilities for enabling students to gain teaching skills and earn a Student Teaching Qualification during their degree programme.

The content of Utrecht University's degree programmes contributes to the realisation of the SDGs.

This figure indicates which of the SDGs take priority in our vision of education.



- 3 ● WELL-BEING
- 4 ● EDUCATION
- 5 ● EQUALITY
- 8 ● DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
- 10 ● REDUCED INEQUALITIES

Frontier research

CHAPTER 6



An effective symbiosis between independent research and programmed research is essential to achieving scientific breakthroughs and addressing societal challenges. At Utrecht University, independent and affiliated research complement one another, as they must if we are to realise and maintain a position in the scientific vanguard.

MULTIDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION

Utrecht University has been promoting multidisciplinary research collaborations for many years. Working within the context of the four strategic themes, researchers help find solutions to the problems facing society. The multidisciplinary research in the strategic themes is based on fundamental and applied research and features a strong disciplinary basis.

The strategic themes are now indispensable to our profile. They provide the starting point for collaboration both within the university and with external partners, such as in our alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht, and in strategic partnerships with international universities and cooperation with local and national governments, companies and other organisations. We intend to further anchor the strategic themes within our organisation in the coming period. We will use hubs, focus areas and other initiatives to continue to foster innovation of research.

Lines of action

- ⤷ *We will ensure structural funding for the strategic themes. We will also work to structurally embed the themes in our education and research policies at the faculty and university-wide levels, such as in the Professor Policy.*
- ⤷ *We will further coordinate the research being conducted within the strategic alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht and bundle the available expertise.*
- ⤷ *Together with our international strategic partners, we will be formulating projects regarding specific profile themes that can substantively enhance our research while also working to shape new forms of international collaboration that are less dependent on physical mobility.*
- ⤷ *We will be joining a larger number of international networks. For each international network, we will be formulating a multi-year strategy linked to our strategic aims. At the same time, we will be making clear choices for a limited number of strategic partners, with whom we will cultivate intensive, long-term partnerships.*

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

An effective symbiosis between independent and affiliated research serves as the basis for attracting talented academics from within the Netherlands and abroad, an inspiring work environment, motivated employees, team science and the development of the strategic themes. It is the same basis that makes the university an attractive collaborative partner and enables it to successfully secure research funding. We will also cooperate with the Utrecht University Fund to obtain funding for special research projects.

Lines of action

- ⤷ *We ensure that we remain an attractive employer for talented researchers from the Netherlands and abroad and invest in outstanding research teams, with room for independent and affiliated research with good facilities.*
- ⤷ *We provide support to research teams in order to position their funding applications as effectively as possible.*
- ⤷ *To maintain a solid share in the external funding of programmed research, we are combining our strengths within the alliance with regard to contract funding, i.e. the ‘third flow’.*

TRAILBLAZER IN OPEN SCIENCE

The university wishes to be a trailblazer in the field of Open Science, with optimum interaction between science and society. Greater emphasis will be placed on the quality of publications. Expanding the availability of research results and research data will serve to similarly increase their transparency, applicability and reuse. This will allow valuable knowledge to be shared and applied by researchers, politicians, the business community and civic institutions in our country and elsewhere. Research and education are the result of teamwork, in which every contribution is seen and valued. We are actively working toward Open Science based on the strategic themes as well.

Lines of action

- ⊕ *In late 2020, every Faculty Board will oversee the integral implementation of open science within its faculty.*
- ⊕ *Every student and scientist will work according to the principles of open science in terms of open access, FAIR Data and Software, public engagement and 'Recognition and Rewards'. Students and employees will also conduct themselves as professionals in their dealings with civil society actors. To that end, we will provide optimum support to students and employees.*
- ⊕ *We will recognise and appreciate the impact activities of our scientists. In the coming years, we want to further increase this impact by expanding the visibility of how we, through our education and research, are realising exchange with society.*

DEVELOPMENT OF YOUNG RESEARCHERS

PhD candidates and postdocs are a crucial group within our university community and are vital to the future and innovation of academic research and education. The university sees a role for itself in the professional development of all young researchers, also in light of next steps in their career, whether within or outside the academic community. In addition to academic development, the university is investing in the development of practical and personal skills in preparation for the job market. The well-being of PhD candidates is important both to the candidates themselves and to the university. Utrecht University assumes responsibility for creating a safe working environment for PhD candidates and supporting them in their personal development.

Lines of action

- ⊕ *We effectively prepare young researchers for their continued career by (among other things) helping them gain experience with teaching and research, familiarising them with academic integrity and offering them opportunities to earn qualifications.*
- ⊕ *Career Service develops activities specifically aimed at young researchers in order to prepare them for a career outside the university setting.*
- ⊕ *Under the auspices of the Graduate Committee, we are optimising the support and guidance for PhD candidates, with special attention paid to their well-being.*

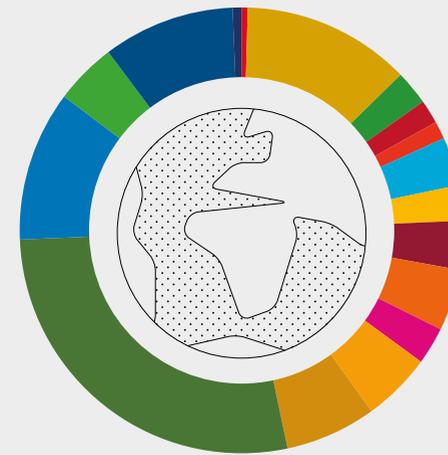
A STRONG RESEARCH INFRASTRUCTURE

Utrecht University connects ecosystems of knowledge and innovation by investing in research infrastructure in connection with the strategic themes. All major university infrastructures are widely accessible and include facilities for multiple disciplines. Where desirable, the university research infrastructure will be part of a larger national and international infrastructure, enabling Utrecht University to expand access to advanced equipment and datasets for its researchers. To ensure effective investment, we will coordinate with our alliance partners and other parties.

Utrecht University will intensify relationships in the regional knowledge chain to create space for joint innovations, sharing expertise and inspiring one another. Entrepreneurship in research will be encouraged and supported in the broadest sense: entrepreneurship, valorisation and spin-offs. This goes hand in hand with the further development and integration of entrepreneurial education into the curriculum and the more explicit 'Recognition and Rewards' of impact activities.

Lines of action

- ⇒ We will continue the Research IT programme. To the same end, we will be realising a digital infrastructure that provides a safe and secure environment for the data and infrastructure that researchers need to collaborate, including support for research data.
- ⇒ We will strengthen the entire research innovation chain, from encouraging and supporting entrepreneurship and start-ups to matching business intelligence and business development support.
- ⇒ We will develop creative workshops and testing grounds as incubators for innovation in collaboration with alliance partners and partners in Utrecht Science Park, the city and the region.



1	●	POVERTY 0,4%
2	●	HUNGER 12,3%
3	●	WELL-BEING 2,5%
4	●	EDUCATION 1,7%
5	●	EQUALITY 1,3%
6	●	SANITATION 3,5%
7	●	AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY 2,6%
8	●	DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH 3,6%
9	●	INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE 4,5%
10	●	REDUCED INEQUALITIES 2,7%
11	●	SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES 5%
12	●	RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION 6,6%
13	●	CLIMATE ACTION 27,7%
14	●	LIFE BELOW WATER 10,9%
15	●	LIFE ON LAND 4,5%
16	●	PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS 9,7%
17	●	PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS 0,7%

Utrecht University conducts pioneering research that contributes to the realisation of the SDGs.

This figure shows the number of Utrecht University publications per SDG in 2019.



Open mind, open attitude open science

IMPROVING THE WORLD SUSTAINABLY TOGETHER



Utrecht University

WITH LOCAL AND GLOBAL PARTNERS

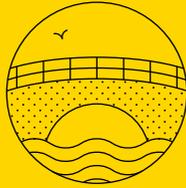
→ **UTRECHT**
City, region and residents
Educational institutions
UMC Utrecht
HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht
Utrecht Science Park
ROM Regio Utrecht
Economic Board Utrecht
Businesses

→ **NETHERLANDS**
Eindhoven-Wageningen-Utrecht Strategic Alliance
VSNU

→ **EUROPE**
Charm-EU alliance
LERU
Leuven
London

→ **WORLDWIDE**
Cape Town
Sydney
Hong Kong
Toronto

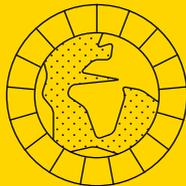
BASED ON FIVE GUIDING PRINCIPLES



collaboration **across borders**: an international university with multidisciplinary education and research;



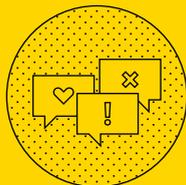
a **future-proof teaching culture** that focuses on quality and innovation;



a focus on **sustainable development**: the Sustainable Development Goals are an integral part of education, research, and operational management;



the transition to **Open Science**, in which we will prioritise both broader recognition and appreciation of our employees and the impact of education and research;



a **close-knit community** of involved students, employees and alumni, in which there is mutual care and concern, as well as scope for development, encounters, knowledge transfer and open debate.

WORKING IN SEVEN FACULTIES AND TWO COLLEGES

- ☆ Geosciences
- ☆ Humanities
- ☆ Law, Economics and Governance
- ☆ Medicine
- ☆ Science
- ☆ Social and Behavioural Sciences
- ☆ Veterinary Medicine
- ◆ University College Utrecht
- ◆ University College Roosevelt

BY LINKING OUR EDUCATION, RESEARCH AND IMPACT TO FOUR STRATEGIC THEMES



DYNAMICS OF YOUTH



INSTITUTIONS FOR OPEN SOCIETIES



LIFE SCIENCES



PATHWAYS TO SUSTAINABILITY

Faculty of Science

Fundamental
Connections

At the Faculty of Science, innovative education and world-class fundamental and applied research in biology, chemistry, pharmaceutical sciences, physics, mathematics, and information and computing Sciences come together. Our researchers contribute to society by developing new insights into the natural and life sciences. This helps us find solutions for pressing societal issues related to food, energy, climate, biodiversity, artificial intelligence and health. We feel privileged to pass our knowledge and expertise on to the next generation of change-makers and world-shapers.

The Faculty of Science is a faculty where people make fundamental connections. Our 7,000 students and 1,300 employees perform best when working together in an open environment of teams and communities. We encourage and enable the creation of these communities within our faculty. Our scientists actively contribute to the strategic themes Life Sciences, Pathways to Sustainability, Dynamics of Youth and the Driven by Data focus areas. Students connect with each other not only in their degree programmes, but also through the embedded activities of the student associations.

In continuation of the previous strategic plan, we aim to strengthen our leading position in an international academic community by building on our 11 research institutes. We attract top national and international talent as future research leaders, inspirational teachers and organisation leaders. We take good care of our students and staff and expand their space for curiosity and creativity, the essential ingredients to foster frontier science and technology. We embrace the principles of open science as a means to make scientific progress more transparent and accessible, to keep scientific careers attractive and to ensure they are also rewarding.

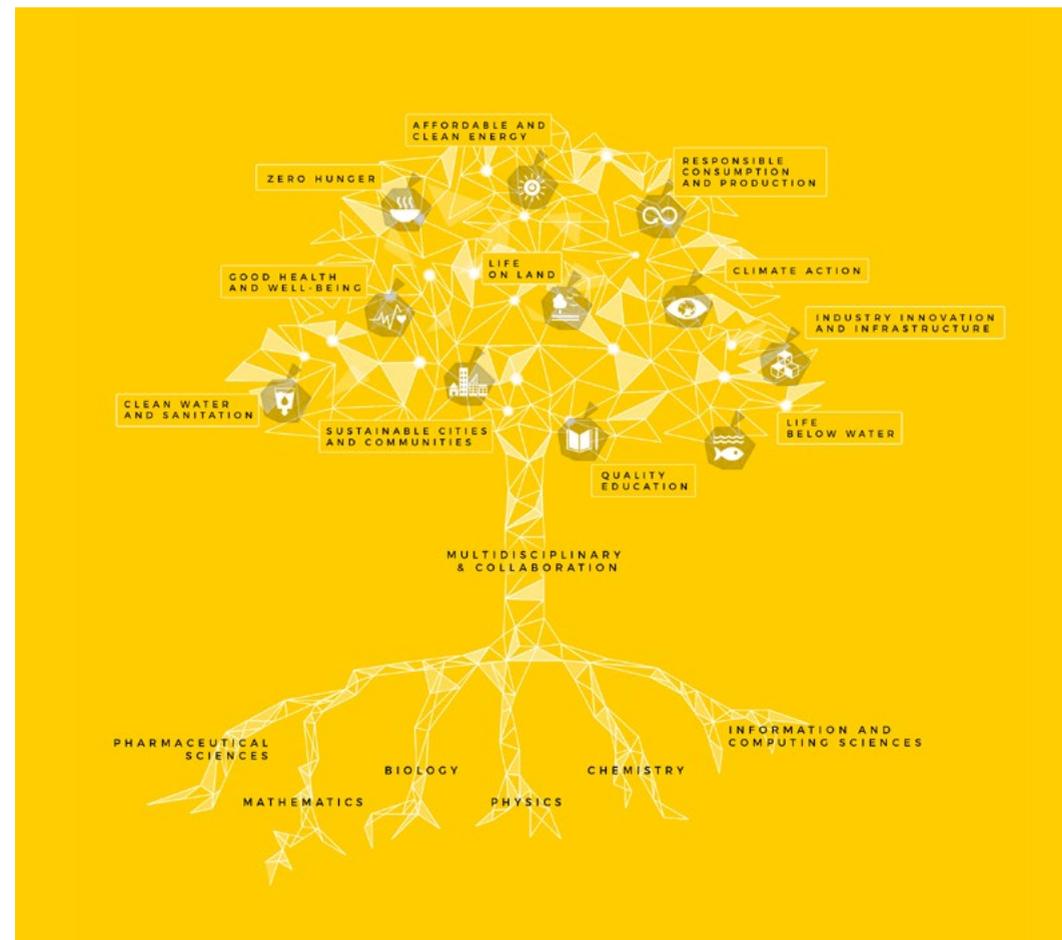
FUNDAMENTAL CONNECTIONS

Cooperative network

Our teaching and research staff maintain close ties to the people and institutions around them by working together with other faculties, universities, the private sector, and government and social organisations. The faculty's cooperative network includes local campus-based organisations as well as national and international partners. We also work closely with our alliance partners (TU/e, WUR and UMC Utrecht) and with other universities, often within powerful EU networks.

Two excellent examples of strategic partnerships are the Advanced Research Centre Chemical Building Blocks Consortium (ARC-CBBC) and the AI - Police Lab. The ARC-CBBC aims to build long-term partnerships to create a circular economy by developing more sustainable chemical processes and clean energy production routes. The AI - Police Lab is a strategic long-term PhD programme in which UU and UvA scientists work with the National Police on dedicated real-life artificial intelligence topics to improve the security in the Netherlands in a social, legal and ethical way.

Our close ties are also visible in the Lifelong Learning programmes we offer. Through these programmes, we keep professionals educated. Some programmes developed in-house, especially in Computer Science and Pharmacy, offer education specifically aimed at the labour market. With our Master's programmes Science



& Business Management and Business Informatics, we educate students with a keen interest in entrepreneurship. To strengthen our connection with alumni and external stakeholders, we are also launching a special programme to boost knowledge-sharing and cooperation between the bright minds from within our faculty and those in business, government and social organisations.

We actively invite a broader audience to engage in research through outreach activities and research programmes with e.g. the participation of the general public, patient organisations and secondary schools. This will lead to an increase in citizen science and will stimulate Open Science.

The next step

In order to feed our strong fundamental basis and forge stronger connections with the world around us, we will put even more effort into interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and education. We also believe that greater stability in the national academic funding schemes for fundamental and unfettered research, as advocated by the KNAW's Weckhuysen committee, is essential to this ambition. In addition, we will continue to work on a change in culture within the faculty: a culture with an open mind, with playfulness and with room to experiment. For this, we need an improved work-life balance, even more teamwork and continuous attention to a safe environment with support for all different types of academics, support staff and students. The following ambitions and actions, designed and supported by our broad community, will contribute to this attractive work environment and enable us to excel in teaching and research.

AN OPEN AND RESILIENT ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Taking care of our students and staff

We achieve quality in our work with each other, not at the expense of each other. In times of high workloads and an imbalance between work and personal life, we need a culture change. To achieve this, we will examine our work, our new projects and the requirements for students and staff critically and make clear choices to stay focused and reduce workloads.

Our ambition is to build a diverse, inclusive and open community with a high standard of well-being for students and staff. Our diversity and inclusion committee keeps us on track. We highly value the participation of students in the ongoing improvement of our education and organisation.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Identify at least five projects and tasks we can eliminate at the organisational level to reduce our workloads.*
- ⇒ *We guide students to draw up their own plan and make their own*

choices with regard to electives.

- ⇒ *Identify and develop future leaders who stimulate well-being, teamwork and inclusiveness. Leadership is included in our Future Leaders training and part of selection procedures.*
- ⇒ *Take further action to prevent harassment by organising regular active bystander training and intercultural awareness training.*
- ⇒ *Embrace and support diversity through a buddy programme for young, new and international staff, including PhD candidates. Appoint a faculty confidential counsellor for PhD candidates.*

Recognition, rewards and feedback

We want to make more use of rewards and positive feedback for individuals and teams. We value every student and staff member equally and acknowledge everyone's contribution to the team. Furthermore, we want to extend our learning organisation, and we see mistakes and successes as opportunities to learn and provide formative feedback.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Use the MERIT model for recognition and rewards for all staff (MERIT = management, education, research, impact and team spirit).*
- ⇒ *Create new criteria for all career paths (assistant professors, associate professors, full professors) with a fair system. Offer training for teams, share responsibilities and use peer assessment and group assessment.*
- ⇒ *Use feedback in a structural way to improve every process within our faculty.*

Honesty and integrity

Scientific integrity is an important topic for both students and staff, and we practice the standards that we preach. We also want to maintain and enhance our culture of respect, honesty and integrity. This process starts with the recruitment of new students and staff and is maintained throughout their degree programmes and careers. We encourage reflection on one's own actions in all layers of our research community.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Integrity training will be part of the core programme followed by every PhD candidate at the graduate schools of Life Sciences and Natural Sciences.*
- ⇒ *Yearly staff meeting to discuss and reflect on scientific integrity.*

Empowering the community

We usually thrive when we are able to connect with others, which is emphasised in the COVID-19 crisis. We innovate and create more and achieve greater interdisciplinarity when we work together. Utrecht Science Park and the Botanic Gardens are an essential meeting place for our community, in which our student associations also play an important role.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Design and shape buildings that suit our flexible and multi-disciplinary organisation. The redevelopment of the Kruyt location offers an opportunity to create state-of-the-art experimental facilities for life sciences and material sciences.*
- ⇒ *Pay extra attention to creating enough space to meet and connect, especially in our new buildings and the new circular pavilion in the Botanic Gardens.*
- ⇒ *Guarantee that all our buildings are accessible and user-friendly for all students and staff.*
- ⇒ *Sustain our Faculty Day, where we meet, learn and find inspiration, as an important event.*
- ⇒ *Invest in the introduction and the first year of new employees, academic staff and support staff with a buddy programme, special events and a personal approach.*

Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals

Our organisation's contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are clear, as they are the fruits of our fundamental connections. We strive for energy-efficient buildings and a sustainable use of lab environments and materials. We aim for a paperless organisation. Accelerated by the lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis, we will employ

more digital and blended education to reduce the use of paper and the necessity of travel. Within the international community, we will be more equipped for online meetings and online conferences, which will reduce our carbon footprint.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Create energy-efficient buildings and use these as living labs. The new circular pavilion at the new entrance of the Botanic Gardens is an example.*
- ⇒ *Use the digital infrastructure at the Teaching and Learning Lab lecture rooms and the studio to reduce the use of paper and the necessity of travel.*
- ⇒ *Organise and take part in more virtual conferences, thereby reducing our carbon footprint.*
- ⇒ *Start a 'Circular Materials' project to make more sustainable use of our lab materials, for example by reducing the use of plastic disposables.*



OUTSTANDING EDUCATION

In Dutch society, there is a strong demand for highly qualified Bachelor's, Master's, PhD and teacher-training graduates. Our strategy is to facilitate this demand by growing in a sustainable way, while holding on to our high-quality standards. We therefore welcome the government's plans for the science sector, including a National Outreach and Teacher Programme to which our Freudenthal Institute and U-talent programme are excellently positioned to contribute. Closer by, we want to strengthen the collaboration at Utrecht Science Park.

We want students to feel they have sufficient room to satisfy their curiosity and creativity and to shape their own curriculum. Our university teaching model is already built to provide this, but students do not always use all of the possibilities. Therefore, we will investigate what the current obstacles could be. Moreover, we believe that student well-being is essential for their development. We focus on educating good students instead of producing theses. Furthermore, we want to encourage students to move away from the familiar environment of their peers and engage in partnerships

with students from other faculties or universities of applied sciences, alumni and the private sector in new 'Science in Context' courses.

Thanks to the great efforts of our teaching staff, online education has taken a giant leap during the COVID-19 crisis. We want to maintain these gains and boost our online teaching even further, while normalising the teaching workload of our teaching staff. We understand and will exploit the differences between online and on-campus teaching while keeping them in balance. The Teaching and Learning Lab gives us access to virtual classrooms and helps us try out new initiatives. We make online learning interactive. These developments will be monitored and fostered through educational research, for instance within the Freudenthal Institute.

Lines of action

- ⊕ Follow the ambitions formulated in the plans for the science sector to educate a growing population of students in mathematics, physics, chemistry and information and computing sciences, with sufficient capacity in both Bachelor's and Master's programmes.
- ⊕ Support future sector plans in the fields of biology and pharmacy, with similar ambitions to educate more students in those fields.
- ⊕ Contribute to the 'Nationale Bètalerarenkamer' and the National Outreach Programme.

- ⊕ Enrol more students in a Master's in Science Education or the regular Master's in Education programmes.
- ⊕ Investigate and remove current obstacles for students to shape a personal curriculum.
- ⊕ Develop Science in Context courses on community service learning, courses on secondary-school teaching and interdisciplinary courses on sustainability and circularity (such as circular economy, sustainable reuse, climate and new materials).
- ⊕ Incorporate and further develop the learning methods we developed for our degree programmes during the COVID-19 crisis.
- ⊕ Use future learning spaces, such as flexible classrooms, and create possibilities for contact with students at home as well as meeting points on campus.
- ⊕ Explore possibilities to forge closer ties between our faculty and HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, for example in the area of computing sciences and circular chemistry.

Fostering new multidisciplinary degree programmes

A growing number of departments within the Faculty of Science are cooperating on new multidisciplinary degree programmes. The new degree programmes link several robust disciplines within the fundamental life sciences and natural sciences. This cooperation will foster new ideas and insights. Excellent examples are the upcoming international Bachelor's programme in Molecular and Biophysical

Life Sciences and the new Master's programmes in Bioinformatics and Applied Data Science. For these and other degree programmes, we work closely together with other faculties and we play an active role in several graduate schools. The multidisciplinary curricula will prepare our students even better for the rapidly evolving technologies in our domain.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Implement and foster the upcoming Bachelor's programme in Molecular and Biophysical Life Sciences and the new Master's programmes in Bioinformatics and Applied Data Science.*
- ⇒ *Develop and start new multidisciplinary Bachelor's and Master's programmes.*
- ⇒ *Promote multidisciplinary education and joint curricula between departments, faculties and universities through funding and support.*

Connecting with alumni and professionals

Our alumni are an important link with society. We will expand online and offline teaching for our alumni and professionals to meet the increasing demand in society, starting with Information and Computing Sciences, interdisciplinary modules on climate change and courses to strengthen teaching skills. Professionals have busy schedules, which means that programmes must be offered in a flexible and more compact manner.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Start a buddy system to connect students and alumni.*
- ⇒ *Actively involve alumni and the private sector in our degree programmes, especially regarding big challenges in the Sustainable Development Goals. Start making our teaching material available for free to our alumni, while charging for certificates.*
- ⇒ *Open up the Science in Context courses for alumni and exchange students, e.g. in combination with a summer school.*
- ⇒ *Develop Education for Professionals for our professional partners and alumni, with an EC voucher for our MSc graduates.*

Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals and the research we conduct in related fields will be interwoven in our disciplinary and multidisciplinary degree programmes. This connection has to be visible online and offline. Within Pathways to Sustainability, we will create courses for all students.

We will also start 'The Science Games': an annual competition for Bachelor's and Master's students in which students from different disciplines work together on a project. The best project will receive a Science Award. Our student associations, which play an important part in our community, will be given an active role in these Science Games.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Show and expand the explicit connection with the SDGs in our degree programmes.*
- ⇒ *Participate in Pathways to Sustainability and the Hub Sustainability Education.*
- ⇒ *Organise The Science Games.*

FRONTIER RESEARCH

Our research is based on fundamental roots with the aim to stimulate both curiosity and strategic research with national and international appeal. Our extensive technology-based infrastructures and expert researchers are embedded in national and European Roadmaps and contribute to new fundamental insights in natural and life sciences that reach other disciplines and faculties. Scientific research in biology, chemistry, pharmaceutical sciences, physics, mathematics, and information and computing sciences forms the heart of our faculty. Our research contributes to national and international initiatives of societal importance, such as the Dutch Research Agenda and the Dutch Top Sectors, Horizon Europe, the European Commission priorities 'European Green Deal' and 'Europe fit for the digital age' and the UN SDGs, where transdisciplinary research is key. The sector plans strengthen our basis in these disciplines and also give a boost to our partnerships with our alliance partners (TU/e, WUR and UMC Utrecht). We keep focusing, of course, on current and new international alliances.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Maintain a focus on obtaining fundamental insights and stimulate impactful and unfettered frontier research and innovation.*

- ⇒ *Contribute to the mission-oriented research and innovation policy in the Dutch Research Agenda and Top Sectors as well as international research schemes, including the ‘European Green Deal’.*
- ⇒ *Sustain, renew and develop our advanced technology research infrastructures and make these available for partners.*
- ⇒ *Cherish and foster cooperation with national and international partners and expand our networks.*

Creating Impact

Our research is relevant to society, and we actively respond to current and future societal challenges. An example is the COVID-19 pandemic, to which our researchers in disciplines ranging from computational to life sciences have responded swiftly. To make an impact, it is essential to connect with alumni and stakeholders and to stimulate our own staff to be more entrepreneurial. As we want to accelerate the impact on societal challenges, we strongly stimulate and promote open science. This will also give us an opportunity to be more active in public engagement.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Build and strengthen a professional alumni and stakeholders network for cocreation and future scientific perspectives, to support public engagement and to increase the visibility of our societally relevant research.*

- ⇒ *Strengthen the network function of our IMPACT committee and keep facilitating infrastructure for knowledge transfer support.*
- ⇒ *Encourage entrepreneurship and start-ups.*
- ⇒ *Apply the knowledge from our own science for the benefit of our organisation.*
- ⇒ *Support disciplinary and interdisciplinary research in a flexible way.*

Stimulating Open Science

We believe open science is the way forward. Open science aims to make science more accessible, reproducible and transparent. Fair and accessible data, open-access publications and open software allow us to really share our research and allow knowledge to be built upon. We will train both graduate and undergraduate students in open science practices and will encourage teaching staff to share material as open educational resources.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Start a faculty task force and organise knowledge sessions on open science in connection with the Utrecht University task force.*
- ⇒ *Draw up a plan of action on open software and make sure research data are FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable) to stimulate and promote open science.*
- ⇒ *Encourage teaching staff to share material as open educational resources.*

- ⇒ *Integrate open science practices in the degree programmes.*

Stimulating inter- and transdisciplinary research

Researchers within the Faculty of Science are uniquely positioned to contribute to the strategic themes of Utrecht University, which focus on Life Sciences, Pathways to Sustainability and Dynamics of Youth. Due to the wide scale of expertise and knowledge, interdisciplinary teams will be able to create and implement synergistic effects within the available hubs and focus areas.

In the strategic theme Pathways to Sustainability, our fundamental researchers contribute to climate science, zero-carbon emission technologies, circularity, food innovations and research for sustainable energy. The new circular economy hub will allow even more researchers within the faculty and their colleagues in other faculties to conduct impactful research. This research can be both fundamental and more applied in nature. Societal partners, including governmental organisations and the public sector, will be directly involved. This research will also inspire interdisciplinary degree programs.

The strategic theme Life Sciences unites research and teaching and translates them for surrounding partners, with our researchers participating in the communities for regenerative medicine, personalised medicine and one health, as well as the hubs for molecular immunology, organoids and advanced

in-vitro models. As a Science for Life community, we uphold world-class and campus-accessible infrastructure in NMR, cell-imaging, omic technologies, high-performance computing and electron microscopy, together with the material science community.

In the strategic theme Dynamics of Youth, information and computing scientists conduct research into games for ill and multi-resident children and the influence of fake videos on the processing of information on social media by young people. Neurobiologists research the brain development during the first 1,001 critical days of a child’s life.

We also collaborate in the Driven by Data research programme, which brings together all of the University’s data science, bioinformatics, complex systems, game research, artificial intelligence and mathematics specialists. The Driven by Data programme will provide the building blocks and new paradigms for rethinking the existing methodological frameworks contributing to societal issues. In addition, we work closely with our partners in the strategic alliance between TU/e, WUR and UMC Utrecht on artificial intelligence for health, living technologies and food.

Lines of action

- ⇒ *Empower the communities in the strategic themes and the focus areas by stimulating more cocreation with internal and external stakeholders.*
- ⇒ *Expand collaboration in data science, especially to include Pathways to*

Sustainability and life sciences.

- ⊞ *Support data-intensive science with our IT infrastructure and enable sharing data with a good and affordable data storage system.*
- ⊞ *Work on artificial intelligence for health, living technologies and food within the strategic alliance between TU/e, WUR and UMC Utrecht and within the national AI coalition.*

Contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals

The UN SDGs presented as the fruits in the faculty tree are clearly visible in many of the faculty's research programmes. Our researchers work on themes like biodiversity, climate, energy, health, sustainable and affordable medicine and good-quality education. With this knowledge, they contribute to our trans-disciplinary strategic themes, focus areas and hubs (future food, AI, bioinformatics, data science, health, climate). We feel it is our responsibility to educate the general public and professionals on knowledge about the basic science regarding the Sustainable Development Goals. We actively connect our surroundings to our research by creating living labs. U-talent is a good example. The public opinion needs trustworthy and solid information on facts, which we actively provide.

Lines of action

- ⊞ *Increase our cooperation with regional alliances on the Sustainable Development Goals. We will create living labs on the themes AI & mobility, biodiversity, climate, energy, future food, health, infection & immunology and good-quality education and participate in those labs.*
- ⊞ *Stimulate realistic innovations that reduce the need for animal testing.*
- ⊞ *Strengthen the hub 'Towards a Circular Economy and Society' with our sister faculties, including more focus on sustainable and circular chemistry within our own faculty.*



Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

Leading knowledge platform
at the intersection of disciplines
and challenges

The knowledge and expertise present at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine make it the leading veterinary knowledge centre in the Netherlands. It is the only institution in the Netherlands that trains students to become veterinarians and contributes, based on a unique veterinary perspective, to addressing Life Sciences-related issues on the campus and in society at large. Our most vital mission is to generate veterinary knowledge and expertise in relation to social challenges. We build bridges between science and society, and provide specialist care in our academic veterinary hospital. We actively pursue multidisciplinary collaborations within Utrecht University and with national and international partners. Our ambition is *knowing animals in order to meet tomorrow's health challenges today*. We approach those health challenges based on the One Health principle, which stems from the awareness that the health and well-being of people, animals and their environment are closely interrelated and must be studied in their shared context.

This Strategic Plan builds on the course set out by the 2017–2020 Strategic Plan. Various programmes have been initiated in the recent period, including Vet2020 (leadership and culture), LEAD (organisational structure) and A4A (positioning of clinics). In the period ahead, we will work to embed these programmes and refine our focus in keeping with the ambitions of the university.

Through our One Health research, we contribute to realising the sustainable development goals set out by the United Nations. Efforts to combat human diseases that originated in animals – such as COVID-19, influenza and Q fever – and the role that our living environment plays in these efforts, illustrate the importance of One Health and are also effectively aligned to the other sustainability goals, such as reducing climate change; making the transition to more sustainable, animal-friendly and circular forms of agriculture; enhancing sustainable food security and food safety; and fighting antibiotic resistance. This concerns research, education and clinical care within the themes of emerging infections, antibiotic resistance, sustainable agriculture and healthy wildlife and ecosystems, but also those of One Medicine and Veterinary Biomedicine.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is growing into a veterinary knowledge platform that operates at the intersection of various scientific disciplines and social challenges. Because the Faculty wishes to further strengthen and expand that platform and network function in the coming years at the regional, national and international levels, it actively pursues connections with stakeholders including alumni, those in the veterinary and human healthcare sectors, businesses, politicians, policymakers and private organisations and interest groups, as well as the general public.

AN OPEN, RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine wishes to do justice to the talents of students, employees and alumni and provide them with a challenging, inspiring environment in which they will find sustainable support for their development. Along with an attractive physical environment and innovative technical infrastructure, a social culture is an important aspect of this as well.

This culture must prioritise open communication, cooperation, supervision and support, life-long learning and modern leadership.

A new home and impetus for sustainable innovation

In the coming years, Utrecht University will invest in replacing outdated buildings with a single new main building for the faculty.

Lines of action:

- ⇒ *We will take our experiences with COVID-19 into consideration in developing new initiatives in connection with working from home (whether full or part-time) and distance learning, in designing the new main building and in making investments in the area of safe and user-friendly information technology and healthy working conditions.*
- ⇒ *Our newly constructed farm animal facility will be linked to the ‘De Tolakker’ farm and will emphasise sustainability, innovation and connection to the public and society. For our poultry and organically-raised cattle, we will realise cutting-edge facilities that will give us a unique, leading international position. At the same time, we are reducing the number of laboratory animals through innovation in our teaching and research and collaboration with external parties.*
- ⇒ *Our new faculty building will include facilities that offer optimal space for developing innovative and future-proof veterinary education and research. The new main building and the new Tolakker farm will be used to better facilitate and stimulate our teaching culture, of which knowledge transfer, socialisation and professional development are all essential aspects.*
- ⇒ *We will elaborate a plan for CO₂ reduction in order to minimise our ecological footprint by, among other things, requiring that the new construction meet a high standard of sustainability. In addition, we will help employees develop energy-conscious habits and we will promote the efficient use of facilities.*
- ⇒ *Much like human healthcare, veterinary biomedical research increasingly involves the storage of large quantities of data in various locations. Efficient access to this data serves to accelerate*

research and innovation, making it possible to realise innovations in care and prevention more quickly as well. In future, we intend to invest in making all relevant data accessible to researchers, physicians, veterinarians and the corporate sector in safe and responsible fashion (FAIRness of data).

An open working environment aimed at growth and development

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine fosters a close-knit community of students. Attention to socialisation, resilience, well-being and personal development is an integral part of our curriculum.

In 2015, the faculty launched a long-term programme that continues to this day (VET2020 and later LEAD and Leadership), guided by the philosophy and goal of strengthening employee involvement with other departments of the organisation and promoting greater engagement with the faculty as a whole. Its agenda includes policy aimed at quickly providing young employees with development opportunities; encouraging education and training for employees; and promoting leadership without losing sight of the well-being and workload of all employees and students. A balanced operational management will enable us to invest in innovation in the future as well.

Lines of action:

- ⊕ We will reserve a fixed percentage of our budget for the education and training of our employees.
- ⊕ We will better facilitate knowledge exchange between employees.
- ⊕ Temporary secondments and employee exchanges will be encouraged. We will focus specifically on career counselling for employees.
- ⊕ Deliberate attention will be paid to the topic of workload. This will require a personalised approach based on dialogue between managers and employees and between lecturers and students.
- ⊕ In 2021, we intend to draft an action plan featuring concrete measures to strengthen equality, diversity and inclusion among our students and employees.



- ⊕ *Berend-Jan Bosch and his colleagues in Virology have been conducting research into coronaviruses for years. In May 2020, they had a breakthrough. 'It was being stored in the freezer at Utrecht University's Faculty of Veterinary Medicine,' Bosch explained in a Nieuwsuur broadcast on the discovery of the antibody that blocks the new coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 from infecting healthy cells. The antibody was left over from a previous study aimed at other coronaviruses, such as SARS and the MERS virus.*

EDUCATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine prepares students to become veterinarians who use their specific knowledge profile and professional attitude to enhance the health of people, animals and the environment. These academics will be effectively launched on their career paths thanks to a good starting qualification as a veterinarian (DVM) and via work experience and further training. They will develop into professionals who operate in a wide range of positions, varying from practising vet to clinical director, researcher, adviser, inspector or policy officer. We also contribute to education pertaining to the Life Sciences themes on the campus, for instance with the One Health Master's programme. Through their dedicated efforts, broadly educated alumni strengthen the impact of veterinary medicine on sustainable development goals at every level: regional, national and global. A more diverse group of students, including those from other programmes, will promote that broad employability among our alumni. To that end, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine will open its doors for students entering from the Animal Sciences programme at Wageningen University & Research and will partner with the Faculties of Medicine and Science to develop the Bachelor's programme 'Care, Health and Society'. The Faculty will welcome the outside world in and will encourage students to turn their gaze outward in preparation for their future professional practice.

Lines of action:

- ↪ In both the Bachelor's and Master's programme, we will strengthen the cooperation and synergy with other disciplines and fields of study, such as that with lecturers and students from outside the faculty. Achieving multidisciplinary in education through increased collaboration with other faculties, both at Utrecht University and elsewhere, is an area for attention here.
- ↪ We intend, in time, to open our Master's programme in Veterinary Medicine to students from other Bachelors, starting in 2021 with students from the Animal Sciences programme at Wageningen University & Research.
- ↪ From 2022, a revised Master's programme will offer students greater opportunities to choose their own profile, while also making the structure of the education more streamlined and efficient for lecturers.

Lifelong learning

The faculty prepares students for lifelong learning: their education begins on the first day of the Bachelor's programme and will continue until retirement. From the very start, we therefore expect students to take responsibility for the direction and content of their own development. We are expanding our range of postgraduate programmes, in part through collaboration with external parties, and will determine the content based on trends and developments in the professional field.

An engaged community of lecturers and a close-knit community of students, due in no small part to the presence of flourishing, diverse and inclusive study associations, ensure students are optimally involved in determining the course of their own studies. In this way, socialisation and professional development – which, in addition to knowledge transfer, are essential components of a strong academic foundation – will be effectively integrated into the study programme.

Lines of action:

- ↪ We will forge connections between our education and society, such as through the development of community-engaged learning, an example of which would be establishing a student clinic.
- ↪ In addition to our sister faculties, we will involve parties from professional practice in designing our academic and postgraduate education; in doing so, we will reinforce the ongoing exchange of new and existing knowledge between faculty and alumni.

An innovative teaching culture

The innovation and digitisation of teaching offer many advantages for the future of our education. We will deploy digital teaching for improved knowledge transfer and smarter testing based on solid educational principles. Innovations such as Skills Labs, virtual reality as a tool for teaching anatomy, plastination, digital microscopy and virtual multidisciplinary consultation yield possibilities for more modern and effective teaching. Such innovations also offer opportunities to further reduce the use of animals in research and teaching, specifically within the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine. Innovation and digitisation can present additional benefits in terms of efficiency, thereby reducing the teaching workload.

Line of action:

- ↪ We intend to further integrate digitisation and teaching innovation within our faculty. To that end, recent experiences with online distance learning will be taken to account.

Ample scope for internationalisation

As in other disciplines, the 'global village' constitutes the professional field for veterinary medicine. Greater diversity among employees and students will help both students and the faculty to better align themselves to global networks and career options.

The faculty participates in international networks of veterinary-medicine programmes and promotes knowledge exchange between lecturers and international student exchange programmes. These and other forms of internationalisation will remain key priorities for the faculty.

Line of action:

- ⊕ We will make it easier for students at sister faculties in other countries to take courses in Utrecht. Conversely, we want to provide our own students with more opportunities to gain experience abroad. Potential means to do so include the creation of exchange opportunities within the curriculum and the expansion of course offerings taught in English in both our academic and postgraduate programmes. We intend to continue exploring possibilities for the exchange or co-creation of international online education as well.

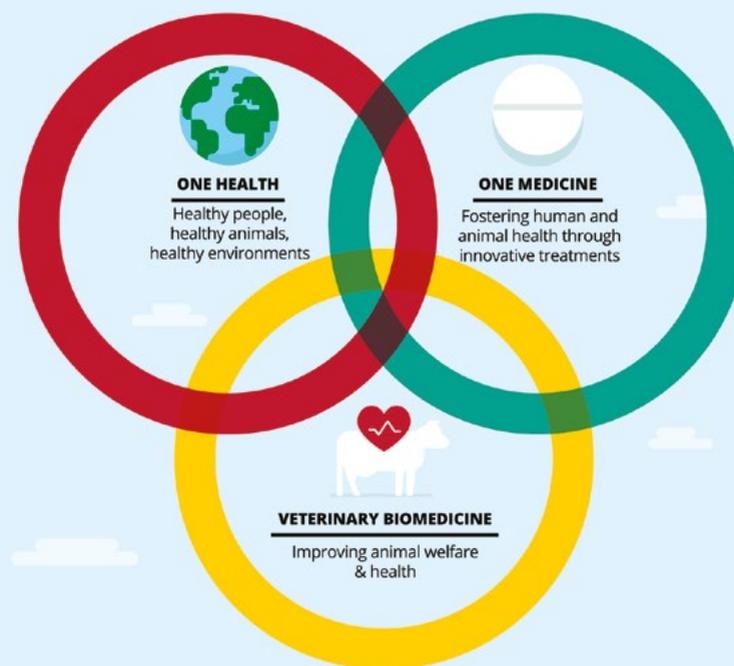
IMPACT OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Research carried out in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is an integral part of the Utrecht University multidisciplinary research theme, Life Sciences. Together with other faculties, we are identifying possibilities for further collaboration in order to add further depth to the research, particularly as our society-oriented themes are well-suited to this goal. Our research focuses on, among other things, issues of animal health and well-being as they exist in mutual relation to the health of people and our environment. It includes both fundamental and more applied research, clustered into three sub-themes: One Health (which focuses on the interplay between animals, humans and the environment), One Medicine (which concerns the parallels between human and veterinary medicine) and Veterinary Biomedicine (focusing on the emergence, diagnostics and treatment of animal diseases).

Focus on quality and talent

The faculty is rich in scientific talent, as evidenced by the leading positions held by its researchers in the Exposome NL gravitation programme (financed by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) and research consortia such as RegMedXB (regenerative medicine), as well as in various national and European research partnerships. The faculty wants to offer its researchers the scope and support they need to qualify for competitive grant programmes in the Netherlands and Europe, and by doing so, attract new talent as well.

OUR RESEARCH FOCUS



Lines of action:

- ⊕ We will make use of our refined research profile in order to attract resources and talent from the Netherlands and abroad.
- ⊕ The quality of our research will be evaluated annually based on the Standard Evaluation Protocol of the Dutch universities. The principles of Open Science figure prominently in that protocol.

A strong focus on collaboration and multidisciplinary

Research at the faculty extends from the molecular through the population level and includes multidisciplinary collaboration at each of these levels. This is reflected in the numerous alliances present in the faculty. Examples of regional and national partners are the Hubrecht Institute for Developmental Biology and Stem-cell research, the RIVM and our alliance partners Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht. The faculty is also an active partner in multidisciplinary consortia such as the Netherlands Centre for One Health (NCOH), the Regio Deal Food valley and the Data and Knowledge Hub Healthy Urban Living.

Lines of action:

- ⇒ *We will strengthen and expand the existing alliances in the coming years.*
- ⇒ *In the years ahead, we will also seek out new possibilities for entering into strategic partnerships with public, private or public-private parties in the region, throughout the Netherlands and beyond.*
- ⇒ *Those working within each research theme will elaborate a plan for community-forming and, where possible, seek out further connections with other research groups in the Life Sciences cluster at Utrecht Science Park.*

Impact on society

Research at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is firmly grounded in current social issues and challenges that emerge in connection with the sustainable development goals. Such challenges include combating diseases that originated in animals or have animal reservoirs, such as COVID-19, influenza, Q fever and many others. Yet the research also focuses on other topics relevant today, such as the health and well-being of companion animals, horses, wild animals and animals in commercial farming; the quality of our rural and urban living environments; sustainable livestock farming; and the production of safe and sufficient food, all of which have a direct link to veterinary research.

Lines of action:

- ⇒ *We intend to further strengthen the focus on relevant research themes and multidisciplinary approaches and, through our research, contribute to knowledge and technology that will prove valuable in efforts to achieve sustainable development goals.*
- ⇒ *We will further refine our research profile, such as by organising the clinical research being conducted with the Veterinary Biomedicine theme into clusters around a number of priority areas. The organisation of research into larger units will enhance cooperation and interaction while preventing fragmentation.*
- ⇒ *We will strengthen our own research ecosystem by devoting greater attention to talent policy and systematically supporting research groups through the Research Support Office, which will enable us to strengthen our external fundraising efforts.*

HIGH-QUALITY CARE IN THE ACADEMIC VETERINARY HOSPITAL

In addition to education and research, the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine has a third task as well: to provide healthcare in its academic veterinary hospital. Like human academic hospitals, this hospital combines three interconnected tasks – patient care, teaching and research – each of which supports and strengthens the others. The academic veterinary hospital offers its students a safe and representative learning environment while also acting as a national centre for referrals. It fosters collaboration with large and small veterinary clinics in the region and elsewhere in the Netherlands and with sister facilities throughout Europe as well.

The manner in which veterinary care is organised in the Netherlands and beyond is changing rapidly. In 2019, the faculty therefore developed a vision for the positioning and profile of the hospital in the years ahead.

The new vision positions the veterinary hospital as a sustainable, modern, flexible and innovative academic educational institute and clinical centre of excellence within an extensive veterinary network. It is a broad veterinary hospital that effectively represents current veterinary practice, and which offers basic disciplines at a specialist level in volumes that are sufficient to meet the educational needs of the faculty. As a result, students in Utrecht can obtain the relevant and scienti-

fically sound starting qualifications that will be vital to the veterinarian of the future. In this way, the clinics continue to make important contributions to good veterinary care and the health and well-being of animals in the Netherlands while also playing a leading role in Europe.

The hospital will apply its expertise and innovative capacity in order to develop a specific profile based on a limited number of specialisations, making itself an attractive partner for referring veterinary practices and – through its academic approach to the patient population – a natural partner for parties who conduct clinical and translational research, such as universities and businesses in the Netherlands and abroad.

The emphasis on a combination of education and research within the network of veterinary care providers positions the Utrecht veterinary hospital at the heart of veterinary medicine. Thanks to its independent academic status, however, the hospital has a role that is clearly distinct from that of commercial health-care providers.

Lines of action:

- ⊕ *In the coming years, we will reposition ourselves as both an academic training centre and a centre of excellence within a large veterinary network.*
- ⊕ *Through our patient care, we will invest in our network function in both the relationships with those who refer patients and in other partnerships with external parties in the area of teaching and providing clinical services. To that end, strong client retention and cooperation with external veterinary chains are vital.*
- ⊕ *Based on business cases, we choose research affiliated specialist care in a limited number of distinctive priority areas, such as locomotion, reproduction, oncology and the Animal Genetics Centre of Expertise.*
- ⊕ *The approach taken in patient care will shift from traditional, disciplinary care to a modern and multidisciplinary approach characterised by collaboration, efficiency, flexibility and innovation.*
- ⊕ *The collaboration with the University Farm Animal Practice will be further elaborated.*



Faculty of Humanities

The Strategic Plan of the Faculty of Humanities is embedded in the university's overarching strategic plan and outlines the course that the faculty intends to take in the coming years in order to achieve the shared university objectives, as well as the faculty's own specific aims. We have developed this vision further in a separate implementation plan, which contains specific details with a time line.

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES 2020–2025

Humanities in the Netherlands have an excellent reputation internationally, and, at national level, Utrecht University's Faculty of Humanities is a leader in this field. A flourishing humanities sector is crucial to society. Even in a high-tech, globalised world, human life consists of more than just technology and trade: art, culture and history all play their part. In addition, the humanities make a vital contribution to the structure of today's knowledge and service-based society (take the growing importance of media and communication, for example); they have the ability to both frame and intervene in the societal debate; and they are increasingly tasked with a role in addressing social problems, large and small.

Together, these observations form the core of what we want to be as a faculty: an internationally renowned faculty with a broad range of degree programmes and a broad range of research areas, both strategic and fundamental, which is not limited to the strategic themes and focus areas. The impact of this research is significant and multifaceted: economic and social, cultural, culturally critical, educational and formative. The impact of our education is no less significant: we train broadly educated, critical and socially engaged students who are ready to take up their place in the knowledge society, both in the Netherlands and abroad. The ever more multidisciplinary nature of research and education remains firmly rooted in a sound disciplinary foundation. We will maintain the wide range of degree programmes that we offer.

The trend for 'social engagement' – using humanities disciplines, in education and research, to help solve a wide range of societal challenges – will be pursued and strengthened in the years ahead, both prominently in connection with the strategic themes (particularly Institutions for Open Societies and Dynamics of Youth), in the new focus areas and in the Utrecht Centre for Global Challenges, and within individual disciplines as well (through partnerships with museums, NGOs and social institutions and through professional education).

Our education and research combine local (Dutch language, culture, multiculturalism, history, heritage) with regional (European languages and cultures, perspectives on European cooperation, migration) and global perspectives (world history, international relations, post-colonial studies). In our internationalisation policy, we therefore focus on a carefully considered mix of courses taught in Dutch and other languages (not necessarily English). And it goes without saying that we take diversity into account in everything we do.

Even in the humanities, digitisation – and reflection on digitisation – is becoming increasingly important. Building on successful initiatives such as the Digital Humanities Lab and the Utrecht Data School, in 2020 the faculty launched a Centre for Digital Humanities, which brings together expertise in this field and facilitates acquisition of the necessary knowledge and skills by students and staff.

At national level, through our consultation channels (the Council of Deans in Arts and Humanities (DLG) and the Social Sciences & Humanities Council (SSH-beraad)), we are working on reinforcing the positioning of our disciplines and raising their profile in both the public and political arenas; aligning more effectively with the knowledge and innovation agendas of the top sectors and the related Knowledge and Innovation Covenant (KIC); closer cooperation between Dutch humanities faculties (e.g. within the MasterLanguage programme and the National Platform for Languages); and on exploring the options for collaboration in connection with small programmes between the three LERU faculties in the Randstad region (University of Amsterdam, Leiden University, Utrecht University).

There are concerns over long-term funding for the humanities, even at national level. Nevertheless, over the next few years, the faculty expects, as planned, to return to a financially sound position. This assumes, however, that the current earning capacity is at minimum maintained.

The heavy workload also remains an area of concern, certainly now that the COVID-19 pandemic has obliged lecturers to rapidly transition to a new means of providing education and the majority of employees are working from home. The position of temporary lecturers remains an area for attention and concern as well. We are addressing these problems within the limited scope that we have, on the one hand by creating space in the system where possible and, on the other, through the 'Organisational culture and responsibility' programme which will be launched in 2020. Following a number of round table discussions in 2019, this programme should help make the organisation more efficient and safer and improve the cohesion of the faculty community – both factors which will reduce workload.



ORGANISATION

HR policy

We continue to strive for a more diverse workforce. In an effort to create a more balanced selection process, explicit attention is paid in the recruitment phase to attracting female candidates and in our appointments advisory committees, we use a form which requires research and teaching performance to be measured against actual teaching and research FTEs. To increase the percentage of female professors (mid-2020: 30%), our aim is to ensure that two-thirds of new professor appointments over the period of the plan are women.

In line with the Recognition and Rewards project initiated by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), we are keen to take aspects other than purely (quantitative) research output into account when assessing academic staff. In addition, the Faculty of Humanities wants to assess all staff (both academic staff and support and management staff) on both their individual and team performance. Our aim is to develop criteria which will enable us to recognise and reward teams and partnerships for their collaborative work. With this in mind, the faculty plans to introduce a new model by 2025. In 2020, we will explore the extent to which the MERIT model might serve as an example in this regard. The MERIT model is used to evaluate academic staff at universities and addresses five domains: Management, Education, Research, Impact and Team Spirit.

The faculty has built up a good track record in the field of rewarding education, having appointed both professors and associate professors based on their performance in education, educational management and educational policy and innovation.

Compared to other faculties, our faculty has a large number of associate and full professors. This is largely due to the number of degree programmes that we offer. While we are keen to facilitate the professional and personal growth of all faculty employees, the financial constraints and the staffing principle restrict the opportunities for advancement. Given the current financial situation and the high average staffing costs, expectation management will therefore be necessary.

Our faculty also has a flexible workforce of temporary lecturers who are deployed to accommodate fluctuations in enrolment and to replace researchers working on external projects. We are aware of the vulnerable position of these employees within the faculty community, and strive to offer this group long-term contracts for a substantial number of hours wherever possible.

In the case of support and management staff, more attention will be paid to the work of multidisciplinary and other teams, with a specific focus on collaboration between support and management staff and academic staff. A balance between the development, mobility and sustainability of support and management staff is important, the aim being on the one hand to provide high-quality flexible support and, on the other, to create a work culture in which support and management staff feel valued.

Organisational culture and responsibility

In autumn 2020 we will present a vision for organisational culture which will act as a benchmark in a wide variety of contexts (e.g. recruitment and selection and the annual Assessment & Development cycle) and which will provide direction for all our staff. In a nutshell, this vision is as follows: taking responsibility and, where relevant, showing good leadership is part of your job. The faculty must reflect the core values that we have formulated in this vision: Professionalism, Transparency, Responsibility, Connectedness and Safety.

Finances

The Faculty of Humanities plans to modify its internal financial allocation models in order to achieve a better balance overall. This review will give departments more scope to make decisions regarding the organisation of education and research within the constraints of faculty frameworks. Adjusting the reserve policy was the first step towards reducing the differences between the financial situation of the various departments.

In the existing teaching allocation model, the relationship between available resources and expenditure has diverged.

The teaching load model has become more of a funding model than a teaching model. We are moving towards an allocation model that establishes a more direct relationship between available resources and expenditure, in which we will reduce micromanagement and include incentives for efficiency, educational innovation and greater flexibility and enables degree programmes large and small to continue to offer good education in a responsible way.

Agile organisation

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that the Faculty of Humanities can be agile, flexible and innovative. The rapid switch to online and remote working has resulted not only in negative changes but also in positive changes from which the organisation can learn. The rapid deployment of IT tools, particularly in education, offers the potential to promote further innovation and agility in the organisation in the future. At the same time, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of contact in the community, intensive and otherwise: it is important that employees and students be able to meet one another live.

Together with its partners in the city centre, the Faculty of Humanities is delivering an integrated accommodation plan. This ensures that the wishes of the various departments are clear and aligned with available real estate. We are in the process of realising a work environment in which everyone has an effective workspace within their own community that

complies with the new workplace standard. In addition, student associations will be assigned accommodation in the vicinity of their degree programme in order to maintain strong ties with the programme and to strengthen the sense of community.

We will also use the Strategic Accommodation Plan (SAP) as a means of encouraging multidisciplinary collaboration (academic staff and support and management staff), to make operations more sustainable where possible and to further strengthen the (digital) infrastructure for education, research and operations. The SAP also provides scope for more intensive collaboration in the field of support staff in the city centre.

Internationalisation

The Faculty of Humanities is consolidating its existing internationalisation policy. International staff and students feel at home in the faculty and the broadening from Warm Welcome to Warm Stay applies to all. There is a specific focus on young academics, for whom an international experience can be crucial for their professional development and career opportunities. Structured collaborations provide excellent testing grounds for further development.

EDUCATION

Student well-being

We support student well-being by deploying an adequate number of study advisers and providing adequate support. The Faculty of Humanities has appointed wellness trainers to develop and provide prevention-oriented training sessions and working groups on topics such as managing the pressure to succeed, learning to study, prioritising tasks and graduation. By 2025, it will be clear whether the additional funding under the quality agreements has contributed to an improvement in student well-being.

Together with the student members of the Faculty Council, we are developing an initiative that will enable student well-being to be monitored more effectively. In addition, we are investigating how we can improve communication with students.

Student well-being also includes the opportunities that students experience for further development; we support this by offering opportunities such as the smart electives programme 'Kies op Maat' and the flexible study programme 'Flexstuden' and the opportunity to take multidisciplinary courses both within the faculty and outside it. Lecturers support this development by developing projects in Utrecht Education Incentive Fund (USO) and Educational Resources Pool (EMP) programmes (incentive funds for educational development). Career Services provides support and advice with regard to prospects and plans for the future.

Diversity and inclusiveness

We want to become more diverse, in the broadest sense of the word. Diversity contributes to the quality of the academic debate. The Faculty of Humanities plays a prominent role in the university's diversity initiatives. In the University's Student Intake and Selection Diversity (DIS) project, which Humanities had a hand in initiating, four of our faculty's leading programmes are working on specific plans to attract a more diverse student population.

The Faculty of Humanities also plays a pioneering role in equal opportunities education in Utrecht: Honours Trajectum Utrecht, which was developed by the faculty and offers extra-curricular education to talented secondary



↑ Lecturers Sanne Sprenger and Koen Leurs have developed a series of lessons aimed at promoting inclusive and intercultural media literacy. Through this series, they hope to draw greater attention to the lived experiences of young migrants. This project is part of the Dynamics of Youth strategic theme.

school pupils who come from a social background where university study is not the norm, is a longstanding UU-wide initiative. By working with other university projects (Debut, U-Talent diversity & inclusion, Speedcoaching, Opmaat), with schools and with the municipality (successor of Brede School Academie Utrecht), we aim to create an uninterrupted learning pathway between primary education and the first year at Utrecht University, and thereby a more diverse student population as well.

Teaching model

We are reviewing the teaching model in line with the review of the allocation model: within a faculty framework, we are giving educational directors and lecturers/teaching teams greater freedom to shape the curriculum, with a good balance between quality of education and workload.

The review of the teaching model is inextricably linked to the strengthening of engaging education through the facilitation and promotion of IT in education. We do this by providing support and professional development for lecturers, by contributing to or coordinating (faculty) educational innovation projects and by using blended learning to support flexible study and Professional Education, for example, whereby face-to-face and online learning will always coexist.

Sustainable Development Goals

The link between our education and the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals lies mainly in themes such as the strength of institutions, social justice, equality and inequality, gender, citizenship and education, heritage and heritage protection, inclusiveness and exclusion, responsible economic growth, international relations and peace, security and terrorism. These themes are central to many Bachelor's and Master's programmes. In the years ahead, the faculty will deliver the existing education regarding these themes more visibly to students in Osiris. In addition, over the forthcoming period, we will further strengthen the position of the strategic themes in our education.

Multidisciplinarity

The faculty offers a wide range of single-discipline and multidisciplinary programmes in both Bachelor's and Master's phase. We will continue to offer courses that entice Bachelor's students to study outside of their own discipline; we are investing in making these opportunities more accessible to other faculties and, by doing so, are encouraging inter-faculty study. In addition, over the next few years, we are keen to expand our tradition of developing multidisciplinary initiatives from a strong, disciplinary basis to the Master's level.

During the planning period, we will start with the Master's in Medical Humanities, which we are developing in conjunction with the Faculty of Medicine. The Faculty of Humanities is also partnering with Geosciences in the development of the Master's in Global challenges for sustainability, under the auspices of the CHARM-EU (Challenge-driven, Accessible, Research-based Mobile European University) project. And finally, the Faculty of Humanities is closely involved in the exploration and development of a new Master's concept in connection with Utrecht University's alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Centre Utrecht

Professional education

The Faculty of Humanities is developing a wider range of courses and programmes in the field of Professional Education. We are supplementing existing initiatives, for example in the hubs within Institutions for Open Societies, but also in other social domains where we see opportunities. In doing so, we are intensifying our cooperation with the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance.

Internationalisation

To ensure that the student population that is able to benefit from the added value of an international experience is as large and diverse as possible, we are developing multiple forms of virtual and physical mobility. In order to achieve this objective, we will take a different approach to our international partners: by 2025 we will have fewer partners and more intensive contact with a select group.

Differentiated language policy

Our faculty delivers degree programmes in Dutch, English, a combination of the two and other languages (German, French, Italian, Spanish) and has expertise in the Western European languages and major cultural languages such as Greek, Latin and Arabic, because we believe that our students and alumni must be able to work in a multilingual world. We are continuing to

elaborate a differentiated language policy, taking the different learning pathways and programmes into account. In addition, the Faculty of Humanities is committed to promoting Dutch language proficiency within Utrecht University.

We are strengthening the infrastructure which enables students, lecturers and support and management staff to develop their Dutch and English language skills at a professional level.

RESEARCH

Research allocation model

The faculty currently has a system of research funding (so-called 'dynamisation') in which employees' performance is assessed once every three years and research time is allocated on that basis. The system is labour intensive, generates workload and is not sustainable because it results in higher research expenditure than is actually obtained through government funding. We currently offset the latter by means of a high income generation requirement (the amount of research funding that departments must obtain from grants and business and industry), which puts departments under a great deal of pressure. At the end of the current three-year 'dynamisation' period in 2022, the research resources available from government funding will be redistributed, without an assessment procedure and with new fixed standards. We plan to present a proposal for a new allocation key in autumn 2020. This will allow the income generation requirement to be reduced, which (in the long term) will give departments scope to obtain policy resources for research (e.g. for seed money or for temporarily increasing the research time of employees).

Open Science

On the theme of Outreach and Public Engagement, the humanities already have a long tradition of sharing research results with a broad public, collaborating with external stakeholders and outreach, for example to secondary education. We intend to carry on this tradition. Each research institute and each research programme has its own narrative around

the impact of its research, and impact will feature as standard in A&D interviews.

Following completion of the Centre for the Humanities, we will embed the key contacts with the cultural sector and the city at the heart of our faculty organisation, in part via a joint effort with the Centre for Science and Culture. To this end, we will allocate a dedicated budget for outreach and public engagement activities to the research institutes.

On the theme of Open Access, 'intelligent progress' will be encouraged, taking into account the fact that the humanities cannot meet the requirements of 'Plan S' in all respects and not always at the pace desired by others. Take the problems around book publications, collections, 'hybrid' publications and publications with learned societies, for example.

We will assign primary responsibility for the theme Fair Data and Software to the Centre for Digital Humanities. In addition to the existing faculty ethical review committee and data manager, 2020 also saw the appointment of a privacy officer (in conjunction with the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance).

Sustainable Development Goals

A broad range of degree programmes goes hand in hand with a broad range of discipline-based research areas, which we are committed to maintaining. Many of these areas are already linked (often in a multidisciplinary context) to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals:

in a number of the hubs of the strategic theme Institutions for Open Societies (such as Gender and Diversity), in the focus areas and in the activities of the Centre for Global Challenges, for example. With regard to a number of themes, there are interesting opportunities for collaboration in education and research within the alliance with the Eindhoven University of Technology ('human artificial intelligence', etc.) and Wageningen University & Research (on themes such as 'healthy urban living'), which we will further develop over the forthcoming period.

Strengthening of PhD programmes

In accordance with the quality plan introduced in 2019, over the next few years, the Graduate School of Humanities will focus intensively on the training of PhD supervisors, educational training for PhD candidates and more transparent communication with regard to thesis requirements. In collaboration with our international partner White Rose College (UK), amongst others, we are working on careers guidance for PhD students. In consultation with our PhD Council, we are developing new initiatives to improve the well-being of PhD candidates. As of September 2020, there will be a greater focus on academic integrity in the PhD training.

University College Utrecht

PROFILE

University College Utrecht is an academic community committed to a Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS) education. It distinguishes itself, also from many other LAS programmes, in three ways. First, it invites students to a largely open curriculum that allows each student to craft their own unique combination of courses and disciplinary specialisations across the full range of academic fields – from the natural sciences, to the social sciences and the humanities. This is complemented by a range of multi- and interdisciplinary courses notable for their creativity and their engagement with some of the most significant challenges our societies face today: from digital citizenship to African post-colonialism, from the plasticity of the brain to the nature of order and chaos. This ‘open curriculum’ is held in place by a dedicated group of tutors, who not only guide students through the curriculum but are deeply committed to mentoring students as individuals undergoing what will be some of the most dynamic years in their lives.

The second distinguishing characteristic of UCU is that it is a close-knit residential college in which the academic buildings literally nestle between (as well as themselves house) students. Learning and living suffuse one another, even as living together as a community is an integral and necessary component of UCU's educational philosophy. Engaging each other as a social community (rather than just a 'student body') enables students to truly learn together, including through their sometimes significant intellectual, personal and philosophical differences. At the same time, UCU functions as a community for its faculty and staff members as well, making them strikingly passionate at the pedagogic and organisational levels.

Third, UCU is an international community, with students from scores of countries, an enviable and extensive exchange programme and internationally oriented faculty and staff. Its 'mixed classroom' and multilingual living units foster language awareness, intercultural communication and cooperation, and an engagement with multiple forms of diversity. At the same time, students' academic projects, off-campus studies, work, sports, volunteer and leisure activities extend well beyond the campus into the city of Utrecht. In this fashion, both a global and local awareness are fundamental to the culture of UCU.

In all of this, UCU is committed to contributing to a 'better world'. As the UCU Mission Statement emphasises, the intent of the education offered at UCU is to 'not only enable personal growth and professional advancement, but also prepare our students to fulfil their role as citizens, enabling them to serve others in a range of different roles.'

These strengths and ambitions at University College Utrecht reinforce this strategic plan. As such, the plan seeks to support and complement the goals set by Utrecht University's overarching strategy for the coming five years in a manner consistent with UCU's distinctive character and qualities. Like the UU, UCU must do so by responding effectively to increasing calls for societal 'relevance'. It must show consideration for the work pressures of students, faculty members and support staff alike, and it must strive to become a community that much better reflects the diversity of our societies and world.

At the same time, the college harbours aspirations more particular to itself, including those of:

- ⊕ safeguarding UCU's distinctiveness amidst the rise of other 'broad' bachelor's programmes;
- ⊕ strengthening UCU as a hub of educational innovation both in- and outside Utrecht University, with particular attention to the dynamic between rigorous disciplinarity and creative multi- and inter-disciplinarity;
- ⊕ putting environmental, social and political sustainability – as anchored in the UN Sustainable Development Goals – at the heart of UCU's campus, curriculum, scholarship and culture;
- ⊕ reinventing the college's residential campus concept in light of an anticipated relocation from the International Campus shortly after the end of this strategic plan (2025).

In striving to achieve this, UCU currently faces a number of challenges that will significantly shape the process and scope for implementing these goals. These include a structural budget shortfall for which a durable financial solution needs to be found; the normalisation of structural overwork by faculty and support staff that plagues UCU just as much as it does other Dutch universities; the time and effort it will take to consolidate the recent reorganisation at the day-to-day level; the effort, energy and creativity that relocating the campus will require;

and the profound effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the physical and mental health, work load, and the pedagogical and personal environments of UCU community members.

In responding to these conditions, UCU affirms its commitment to community, human well-being, and global justice. It is a college that aspires to recognise the talents of all its members, with an organisational structure and culture that reduces needless stress and promotes openness, and by a kind of teaching and learning that focuses as much as possible on the deepest needs of students and faculty. At the same time, UCU is seeking to increase its involvement in society, from a focus on specific Sustainable Development Goals, to contributing to Open Science and participating in various forms of Community Engaged Learning and Research. In pursuing these aims, it hopes to creatively deepen and expand its embodiment of its Liberal Arts and Sciences mission.



EDUCATION

Educational philosophy

UCU will remain committed to its 'open' and tracks-based curriculum. At the same time, UCU will be undertaking a comprehensive revamping of its curricular offerings in close consultation with different UCU stakeholders. The outcome of this curricular renewal will entail maintaining and strengthening disciplinary rigor while expanding UCU's multi- and interdisciplinary programme. The point will be to offer courses that are both meaningful to students' lives and incorporate cutting-edge scholarship.

More broadly, it will result in a comprehensive vision for UCU of what a contemporary Liberal Arts and Sciences curriculum should look like. The new Cluster Chairs (see paragraph Organisation) will play a critical role in this regard. They will work closely with each other, with the Director of Education, with the Fellows and Instructors within their own multidisciplinary Clusters and with the Educational Programme committee of the UCU Council. The outcome will consist of innovative co-creations that build on existing tracks, courses and collaborations. Particular attention will be given to the following:

- ⊕ *strengthening and expanding UCU's interdisciplinary offerings while creating new (multi-)disciplinary capstone projects engaging large questions and challenges, with particular attention to the third year, but also extending downward to the second and first year;*
- ⊕ *attending specifically to the visibility, coherence and vital contribution of the Sciences at UCU as a critical component of UCU's Liberal Arts and Sciences identity and programme, as well as a central component to addressing global challenges that range from climate change to pandemics, and from nuclear weapons to value pluralism;*
- ⊕ *stimulating increased UCU-UU collaborations, including through embedding sustainability in UCU's teaching and scholarship – where sustainability is conceived in environmental, socio-economic, and political terms corresponding to the SDG goals set out by the United Nations;*

- ⊕ *initiating a discussion at UCU, including a wide range of faculty members, students and support staff, on the possibility of making ‘decolonising the curriculum’ an element of the renewal of UCU’s liberal arts and sciences programme more broadly – as this may include both attending to the role of colonialism and imperialism in shaping modern arts and sciences, as well as implementing innovative decolonial courses, projects and events;*
- ⊕ *intensifying students’ research experience from the first year, in order to strengthen their preparation for the thesis and for subsequent MA programmes. This could be achieved through a range of initiatives, including by more directly relating the content of methodology courses to other courses; implementing the ‘Research Clinics’ recently approved by the Board of Studies; expanding the possibilities for laboratory experience by science students; and increasing the integration of faculty scholarship into UCU courses;*
- ⊕ *expanding and profiling UCU as a platform for Community Engagement through courses, projects, theses and internships, as well as by making Community Engagement a desired element of students’ UCU experience;*
- ⊕ *exploring possibilities for dynamically combining capstone and community engagement projects with the thesis – for example, by offering two thesis variants, one of 15 ECTS (as currently) and one of 7.5 ECTS;*
- ⊕ *organising annual retreats – including faculty, support staff and students – on the subject of teaching and learning in a Liberal Arts and Sciences education.*

In all of this, the purpose of a Liberal Arts and Sciences education should be a returning point of discussion. We should focus most of all on enabling learning and teaching that is meaningful to all involved. In doing so, UCU community members should have the full range of UCU’s resources at their disposal to give shape to such teaching and learning in the most creative, challenging and rewarding fashion.

Our residential community

As the college explores and develops an alternative location, the key elements of success brought by the current campus must be maintained. The physical entanglement of living and educational spaces is key to students’ experiential learning. This occurs in an architectural setting whose visual power and spatial relations shape all aspects of campus life. Scholarship, learning, socialisation and intellectual growth take place within a physically bounded space that is also very much a social, intimate and personal place. The college will pursue and develop location options that safeguard these necessary conditions.

One of the prime concerns in UU’s decision to relocate UCU was the issue of sustainability. UCU correspondingly commits itself to seeking to re-imagine itself at a new location in which sustainability is a central identifying feature of the campus – with regard to environmental sustainability, but also with regard to sustaining a dynamic socio-pedagogic environment whose architecture embodies both its communality and UCU’s Liberal Arts and Sciences values.

While UCU already is highly diverse with regard to the range of nationalities it encompasses, this has not yet been as effectively achieved with regard to ethnic, racial, socio-economic, and religious diversity and with regard to physical, mental and emotional disability. UCU is deeply aware that as a college it is not, in practice, open to all. It recognises that the full promise of a liberal education lies

in the college becoming a place where inquisitive and gifted students of all backgrounds can prosper. Steps being taken to address this include:

- ⊕ *partnering with Dutch schools and other societal organisations to increase the ethnic, religious, economic and disability diversity of its Dutch students;*
- ⊕ *designating money for scholarships to these students and attempting fund-raising to enable all financially needy students, both Dutch and international, to be able to attend UCU;*
- ⊕ *systematising UCU’s hiring policy, launched in 2019, to recruit a diverse range of academic and support staff;*
- ⊕ *developing programmes that make our overlapping residential, student and staff communities more aware of discriminatory structures, practices and behaviours in all aspects of campus life.*

The Diversity Committee – itself consulting with students, staff and alumni – will advise the college on how to achieve this aim, as well as initiate extracurricular programming on this topic.

Complementary to such concerns is UCU’s concern for the well-being of students, faculty and support staff. We live in a world organised along lines of intense individualisation, competition, growing unpredictability and insecurity. The current Covid-19 epidemic has made these challenges visible and tangible as never before. Such well-being falls too under UCU’s understanding of ‘sustainability’ and the college correspondingly

commits itself to further addressing this in the coming years. Initiatives in this regard will include a range of offerings from the Student Life Office; courses allowing students to carefully think through the relation between their values and lived lives; and support for staff initiatives addressing the issue of well-being specifically.

RESEARCH

Since 2019, UCU has moved actively to increase the ‘scholarship time’ of UCU faculty members. For most, this now stands at 20%, marking a significant increase.

In doing so, UCU was careful, however, to ensure that its vision and policy regarding scholarship are aligned with those of its Liberal Arts and Sciences setting and the strengths of its academic staff. Rather than aiming for a pale imitation of traditional ‘research’, UCU envisions ‘scholarship’ in a highly varied, flexible, personalised and context-sensitive fashion. That is to say: UCU conceives of ‘scholarship’ as academic practices that produce vital knowledge relevant not only to narrow and highly specialised academic discussions – though such research is essential – but also to our teaching; to our understanding of the Liberal Arts and Sciences; to our ability to strengthen the academic and public community; to enabling flourishing, inclusive diversity; and to tackling some of the most serious challenges facing our societies.

In this endeavour, UCU stands to benefit from the broader shift at Utrecht University, which rightly is moving to define research output and impact in broader terms than the standard metrics, even as it seeks to align research and teaching more closely.

With this in mind, UCU commits itself to becoming an important hub in the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL). In doing so, it will build on the work of a significant number of UCU teachers who are already participating in many USO projects, not to mention a host of UCU-financed projects. This will be evidenced through curricular changes at the college. At the same time, UCU will also take an active role in wider UU discussions about SOTL, as well as more broadly taking a leadership position among Dutch University Colleges and international Liberal Arts and Sciences programmes in discussing and disseminating the newest theoretical insights and practices. This is how UCU aims to enable multi- and interdisciplinary exchanges of research in the wider university community for the benefit of teaching and learning.

Community Based Research, often closely tied to Community Engaged Learning (CEL), is another area in which UCU is poised to make a significant contribution. Working with UU faculties, UCU staff are collaborating with the Humanities Faculty, the Research

Focus Area Migration and Societal Change, the Centre for Global Challenges, the UGlobe Decolonisation Group, and the Centre for Academic Teaching (CAT), as well as developing its own programmes such as UCU in Aruba, UCU in East Africa and the UCU Global Mental Health Project Jamaica. CEL at UCU will be further worked out to more systematically include the city of Utrecht, the city of Amsterdam (through a NIAS-financed project), other Dutch municipalities, as well as international organisations, issues, and movements. One specific area of current development relates to migration and diversity politics; another relates to the creation of a community engagement staff network and platform at UCU. Community involvement in such research is obviously crucial, and the college commits itself to creating the necessary networks, network relations management, and faculty support to ensure that this kind of research is expanded at the college.

Such collaborations with the UU are part of what will be a larger drive to expand and strengthen UCU-UU collaborations. Research affiliation and participation with UU platforms, networks and initiatives will be encouraged among UCU faculty in order to enhance their own scholarship (and teaching), and to expand UCU contributions to UU research – all the while, building on the unique features of UCU scholarship. This will happen by strengthening interactions and linkages at

all levels from the (new) Dean on down, including those of the cluster chair, the fellows and individual instructors. A further point of collaboration may be envisioned with the UU’s expanding network for Community Engaged Learning. In this ‘multi-tiered’ fashion, UCU academicians will become more fully integrated into the changing UU research landscape, even as that landscape will benefit from the distinct contributions UCU has to make.

In all of this, the UCU commits itself to systematically participating in the project of Open Science, in close alignment with projects for Open Education.

ORGANISATION

UCU aspires to be characterised by an open and transparent organisational culture, where the college administration is alert and responsive to the needs of staff and students and encourages and facilitates innovation in teaching, research, community outreach and impact. We must do this based on trust, open communication, introducing and working with the new policy of 'recognising and valuing.'

The new organisation of the college – shifting from three 'departments' in the Sciences, Social Sciences and Humanities to five multidisciplinary clusters composed of 'tracks' (disciplines) from all three departments – has brought significant change to the college. Its full ramifications, the clarification of the new roles (Cluster Chairs), units (Clusters) and relations this entails, and rich possibilities for new collaborations – including with other organisational units such as the UCU Council and the Diversity Committee – will be taking shape in the coming years. UCU's strategic plan envisions strengthening a robust governance and management structure that seeks to build on trust and transparent communication. At the same time, the new Cluster Chairs were selected specifically on the basis of their commitment to working closely with

members of their clusters on everything from curriculum development to human resource issues. The explicit goal of such collaboration is for the new cluster structure to take shape as a form that fosters an open and horizontal organisational culture. Along the way, the Dean and Managing Director, working closely with Human Resources, Cluster Chairs, Fellows and UCU Council will clarify and define the responsibilities and tasks of diverse UCU faculty and support staff in the context of this new organisation. Simultaneously, in the first year, concrete policies on the functioning of clusters will be worked out under guidance from the Dean working closely with the Cluster Chairs, to be refined in subsequent years.

The cycle of attending to the care of the college community begins with an ambitious hiring policy. The college seeks in its hiring to find the best possible candidate for positions available, casting its searches broadly and where appropriate internationally. Expanding the diversity of UCU's employees will be given high priority in these searches. For academic faculty, the college will work toward the creation of a framework for decisions on career options / tenure, with an extensive evaluation time (four years)

and with a guidance process that facilitates the success of those in the process. Time and attention will be dedicated to addressing the bottlenecks that can currently limit faculty members' career advancement at UCU and at Dutch university colleges more generally. The inaugural symposium of the newly established network of Dutch University Colleges (UCANN) suggests it may be a very useful partner in this endeavour.

More generally, and following shifting policy at the UU, University College Utrecht wants to be a place where people can shine on the basis of their own strengths, rather than having to excel equally in all points for evaluation. In close collaboration with the UCU Council, it will develop a non-metricised evaluation tool that builds on the one developed by some UU faculties. Faculty members will be assessed according to the multiple components of MERIT (management, education, research, impact, team-player) in ways that play to the strengths of the faculty member. A similarly flexible measure will be developed in consultation with support staff. These criteria will be made transparent, so that they can be used both in annual evaluations and in promotions.

Concerns about work pressure must be addressed, and in a context where the educational budget is at a deficit. The new organisation is developing a model where costs are more systematically accounted for relative to educational expenditures. The challenge will be to cut costs, and raise revenues, in ways that neither undermine the educational attractiveness of the school nor decrease the hours available to staff and faculty members to effectively do their work. This will require, among other things, a re-evaluation of the long-existing 'hours-per-task' model, potentially leading to more precise and accurate workload calculations and concrete endeavours by the Management Team to lessen pressure points.

Last but not least, to support all of this, UCU strives to create the digital infrastructure required for an inspiring and challenging learning environment befitting UCU's residential character and its Liberal Arts and Sciences educational philosophy. An upgrade of the college's digital systems is necessary, including with an eye to supporting new forms of education whose urgency was made particularly tangible during the COVID-19 crisis.



Faculty of Medicine

The Faculty of Medicine at Utrecht University and UMC Utrecht are closely intertwined and frequently collaborate in the areas of medical and biomedical education and research.

This collaboration takes place in the Medicine and Biomedical Sciences Bachelor's programmes, as well as within the Clinical Health Sciences Master's programmes and the Graduate School of Life Sciences. Research at UMC Utrecht is aligned to the strategic themes of Utrecht University, particularly Life Sciences and Dynamics of Youth. A multidisciplinary approach ensures that patients come first and can benefit in their treatment from the latest knowledge and innovative technological solutions. We are contributing to a better world by working together to improve people's health and create tomorrow's care, today.

CORE PROCESSES

We are a university medical centre that pursues innovation in service to patients and society. UMC Utrecht links professionals both within and outside UMC Utrecht who interact with patients and citizens in the context of education, research and health-care. This calls for looking beyond boundaries, a focus on quality and social impact and, above all, people with the knowledge and expertise needed to shape the healthcare of today – and that of tomorrow. These qualities are reflected in the following three core processes of the UMC Utrecht:

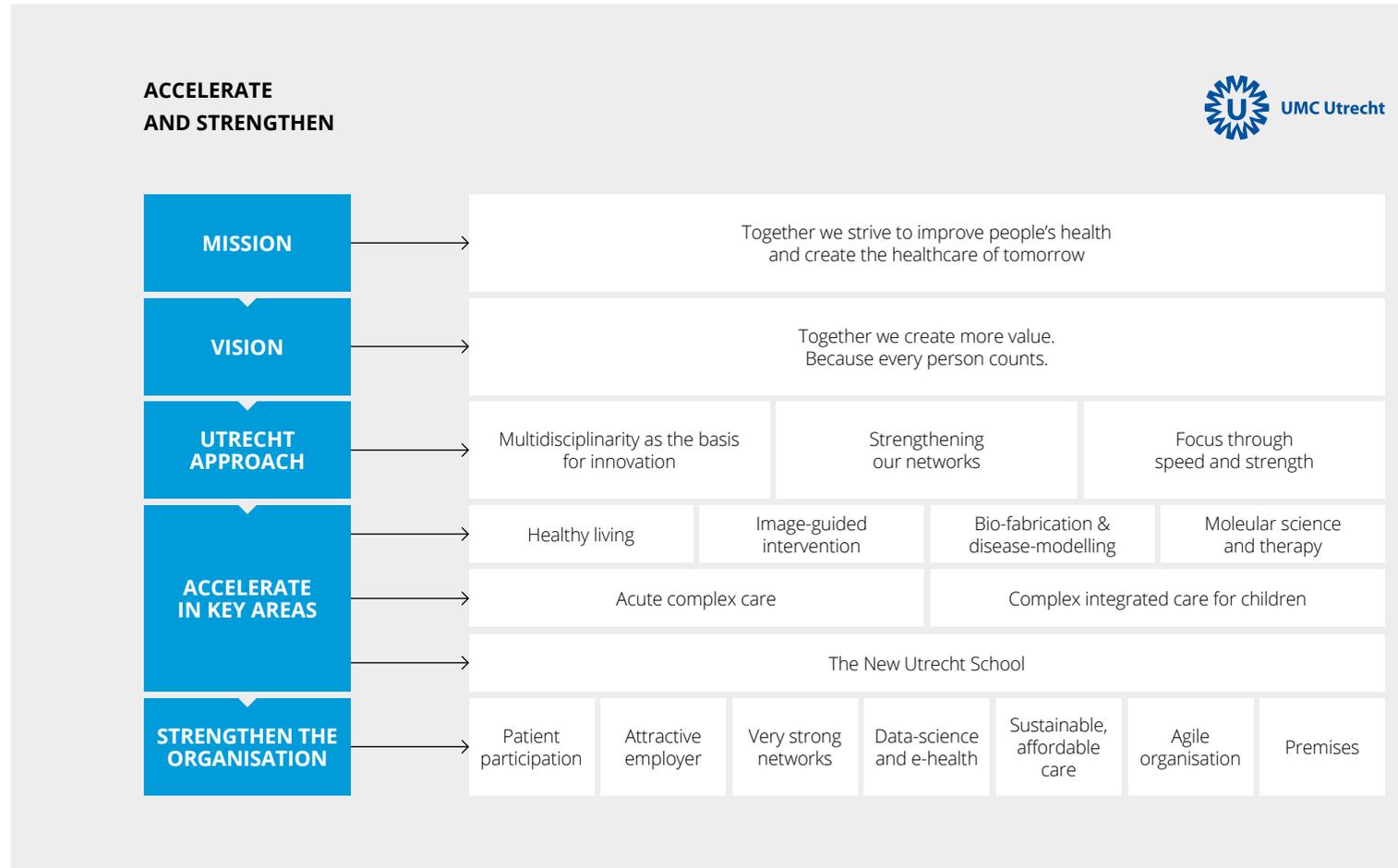
- ② We connect fundamental research and applied research. By doing so, we ensure that fundamental researchers will focus on state-of-the-art technologies that have applications in clinical practice or society. And on the other hand, we also ensure that applied researchers present their fundamental counterparts with effectively formulated questions.
- ② We apply knowledge locally and then make that knowledge generally applicable at an international level. In other words, we link our local network with our international network. Next, we make this knowledge generally available worldwide in the form of publications, conferences and education.
- ② We ensure personalised care for every individual patient while at the same time contributing to solutions for social issues. To achieve this personalisation of patient care, we increasingly take the biomedical and other qualities of a given patient into account when choosing a course of treatment. We also do this by getting to know patients as individuals and by considering the meaning they wish to give their lives when deciding on a treatment option.

CONNECTING WORLDS

In 2020, UMC Utrecht established its strategy for the 2020–2025 period in the document ‘Connecting Worlds’. The decisions in the strategies of UMC Utrecht and Utrecht University are seamlessly aligned to one another. Social impact, multidisciplinary and collaboration are central priorities not only for the university as a whole, but in how we conduct research and deliver education as well. Our approach is characterised by:

- ① Multidisciplinary: Because we believe that pioneering innovations are most likely to be found where areas of knowledge intersect, we are firmly committed to multidisciplinary in education, research and healthcare. To that end, we actively seek out knowledge areas outside the care sector in order to apply that knowledge in our healthcare.
- ② Collaboration in networks: We expand our networks in order to conduct frontier research, maintain continuity and achieve innovation in healthcare and to provide even better educational programmes. We pursue innovation together with our partners. We create strong networks at the regional, national and international levels. Because we work in multidisciplinary fashion, we also invest in partnership with parties outside the healthcare sector.
- ③ Focus: We apply focus in order to take decisions. This has previously resulted in the establishment of our priority areas and the care profile. In the coming years, we will further refine our focus by substantively accelerating our efforts with regard to seven themes. To achieve this substantive acceleration, it will be necessary to strengthen the organisation along the seven themes as well. These themes bring together education, research and healthcare. While that interplay is the source of a University Medical Centre’s strength, it can also prove complex and challenging at times.

Our chosen strategy is to make a difference in people's lives through new possibilities and groundbreaking treatments. To that end, we will connect worlds that are often kept apart.



AN OPEN AND RESILIENT COMMUNITY

Within UMC Utrecht, the organisation of education and research cannot be viewed separately from the organisation of healthcare. The ten divisions of UMC Utrecht bear integral responsibility for education, research and healthcare and the majority of employees are involved in multiple domains.

Strengthening the organisation

To achieve substantive acceleration, it will be necessary to strengthen the organisation along seven themes. The first four reinforcement measures are the most vital in terms of the education and research domains. The last three will contribute primarily to the agility of the organisation and the development of its employees in the general sense.

Patient participation: We wish to continuously learn from patients to gain an understanding of what is necessary and in order to take joint decisions, so that we can respond effectively to the needs and wishes of our patients. We are involving patients in our innovations in education, research and healthcare as well.

Attractive employer: We want to be an organisation in which colleagues feel

appreciated and heard and where they experience a sense of ownership and autonomy. We want to be an employer they speak of with pride, because they work in an environment with a visible and recognisable profile that is unique to Utrecht. Where everyone's voice is heard and the leadership is inspiring. Because everyone has their own talents, we facilitate and encourage personal development through

extensive opportunities for education and training. And we are investing in talent management, so that employees of UMC Utrecht will enjoy good prospects for further development.

In short:

- ⊕ *A talent management programme for researchers and lecturers*
- ⊕ *Continued development of the leadership programme, Connecting Leaders*
- ⊕ *Providing opportunities for education and training in connection with Professional Education*

Rock-solid networks: We want to be an activating partner who unites different worlds and is able to forge rock-solid partnerships, with additional attention for collaboration with parties outside the healthcare sector. We seek out the right parties to collaborate on new solutions in connection with a variety of challenges. We not only deploy our academic expertise and innovative power to support the region, we also use our national and international networks to increase the impact of our innovations.

To that end, we enter into strategic alliances with regard to education, research and healthcare. The alliance between Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and Utrecht University is a clear example of this. Our collaboration with strategic partners abroad – such as University College London, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University

of Toronto and KU Leuven – will gain new impetus through the internationalisation programme.

In addition to geographical borders, UMC Utrecht also focuses on working across the borders of specific disciplines. Our priority areas and our curriculum integrate different disciplines in order to address scientific and social issues. We explicitly involve patients in these efforts, for instance through the Patient Participation programme.

In short

- ⊕ *Regional collaboration with nearby hospitals and care organisations*
- ⊕ *Intensive collaboration within the TU/e, WUR, UU and UMC Utrecht alliance*
- ⊕ *International collaboration with strategic partners University College London, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, the University of Toronto and KU Leuven*
- ⊕ *Cooperation with patients through the Patient Participation programme*

Data science and e-health: data, artificial intelligence and digital technology are driving innovation in the field of science. They are making it possible to offer personalised care, both in terms of specific medical interventions and with regard to customised care in the patient's home or nearby. These aspects enable us to provide the right care in the right place.

We are innovating our range of digital care options, so that care which can feasibly be provided at home can actually be offered at home. To achieve this,

we are developing e-health applications and ensuring they are suitable for a wide spectrum of uses.

Sustainable and affordable healthcare: the UMC Utrecht is financially sound. To do our part for the realisation of appropriate, affordable and accessible healthcare, we are steering towards the necessary achievements in education, research, healthcare and support at socially-acceptable costs. We are doing this by standardising processes and clarifying responsibilities and authorities, enabling every employee to contribute – based on their own duties – to high quality and affordability in the services delivered.

With regard to sustainability, we contribute to healthier patients, employees and students by minimising our negative impact on the climate and the environment. Ways we are working to achieve this include reducing our CO₂ emissions; pursuing sustainable real estate, circular operational management, clean water and wastewater and sustainable mobility; and creating a healthy environment.

In addition to enhancing the sustainability of our own healthcare and operations, we want to contribute to knowledge development with regard to increasing sustainability of care processes and the relationship between health and sustainability. We will also be integrating sustainability into our educational curriculum in the years ahead.

Agile organisation: In order to be prepared for social issues and to quickly

implement innovations in our own clinic and beyond, the UMC Utrecht organisation must be able to rapidly adapt to changing circumstances. We have invested heavily in this area over the recent period. The chosen management philosophy will need to be further refined and implemented if we are to retain sufficient clout and agility.

Our 'Together for the Patient' procedure is vital to that end. In this context, we also continue to build on the other programmes from the UMC Utrecht's strategy for 2015–2020, Connecting U. We work according to the principles of integral risk management, so that we can innovate quickly and safely.

We are enhancing our focus on results by applying this strategy to the daily practice of all teams and employees. We encourage an open and appreciative culture by continually developing our leadership and by working in multidisciplinary teams with shared responsibility, in which everyone's voice is heard.

Accommodations: An ambition document for the spatial planning of our area has been drafted in cooperation with the partners at Utrecht Science Park, the province and the city. On the north side of the area, we will focus on improving the accessibility and facilities for our patients; we will create a Health Campus at this location. In cooperation with knowledge partners at Utrecht Science Park, we are working to achieve a largely traffic-free area on the south side of the Science Park, in which we will more strongly connect the education and research functions with

one another and with new partners. In our efforts to realise both this goal and the necessary technical and functional adjustments, we are facing a broad renovation task that also offers us an opportunity to modify the infrastructure of our buildings and facilities in accordance with the ambitions set out in our strategy. We expect it will take us some ten years to achieve this drastic overhaul.

OUTSTANDING EDUCATION

In recent years, the Faculty of Medicine has invested in educational innovation and the revision of our degree programmes in order to effectively prepare our students for the healthcare of the future. We intend to continue this strategy, known as 'Fit for the Future'. We will devote additional attention to interprofessional learning and multidisciplinary education. We call this initiative the New Utrecht School.

The New Utrecht School

The realisation of the New Utrecht School has been defined as one of the substantive accelerators in Connecting Worlds. The New Utrecht School strives to see its students excel in a combination of knowledge and skills and to train them to prioritise the patient's perspective, to think critically and creatively and to be active participants in the societal debate. Students will also be prompted to take responsibility for themselves, the patient, the organisation and society.

We want to equip our students, future professionals, with the best possible tools for solving the social and

scientific problems of tomorrow. To that end, we place a high premium on our multidisciplinary and interprofessional education and on an inclusive and diverse learning environment. We also pursue innovation in the SUMMA, the broad Bachelor of Clinical Sciences (together with the Faculties of Science and Veterinary Medicine), the Master's programme in Medical Humanities (together with the Faculty of Humanities), an international Master's in Translational Medicine and The New Utrecht School for Advanced Study. Multidisciplinary collaboration between the faculties and with collaborative partners – such as the universities of applied sciences and arts in Utrecht (HU and HKU), Eindhoven University of Technology and Wageningen University & Research – is vital in this context.

In the coming years, we plan to maintain our dedication to and efforts to innovate along other themes as well:

- ⊕ *Teaching careers: We want to give lecturers the appreciation they deserve and offer them career opportunities for the core task of education. We have already achieved much in this area in the past few years, and we intend to maintain that strong effort.*
- ⊕ *Professional Education: At UMC Utrecht, we are continuously integrating the results of current research with their social applications in professional practice to create appealing and currently relevant educational programmes.*
- ⊕ *Internationalisation: We want to encour-*



age students to take part in international activities and to reflect on those experiences. In addition, we want to entice employees to broaden their personal horizons and incorporate an international perspective in their day-to-day work.

- ⊕ *Resilience: We want to offer students support in areas that are in our power as a programme to influence – i.e. monitoring study workload and providing help and resources.*
- ⊕ *Teaching science: We want to increase our students' exposure to current scientific research, including multidisciplinary research, from bench to bedside to society. We teach students about research and give them opportunities to gain experience by conducting research themselves.*

FRONTIER RESEARCH

The UMC Utrecht has six priority areas for research: Circulatory Health; Brain; Infection & Immunity; Cancer; Child Health and Regenerative Medicine. Six accelerators for research and innovation in healthcare have been defined for the 2020–2025 period. These substantive accelerators are closely related to the six priority areas and the university's strategic themes of Life Sciences and Dynamics of Youth. These accelerators, and Open Science, continue to build on the strong reputation of our research and are aligned to the major societal challenges facing academic healthcare.

Healthy living (*Gezond door het leven*) focuses on the wishes and needs of the individual, with a particular emphasis on individualisation of the processes to diagnose, predict, treat and prevent disease, and on promoting individual health. A central element of our approach is the data facility (U-Cloud) where we enrich our own data on the patient's life history with data from regional partners, and which we can link to a multitude of other data sources as well. Important partners in this ambition are municipalities, provinces, care providers, healthcare insurers, the Dutch Healthcare Authority (NZa), private parties and, most importantly, citizens themselves.

In **Image-guided Interventions**, non-invasive or minimally invasive therapies are inextricably linked to image-guided technologies (surgery without cutting). Optical and X-ray but especially MRI-guided interventions will take on an increasingly prominent role in the fields of Cancer, Circulatory Health, Brain and Regenerative Medicine. Their advantage lies in the ability to make more precise, real-time adjustments to the treatment plan and in the synthesis between diagnosis, treatment and response monitoring. With the introduction of the MR-Linac (a UMC Utrecht innovation), for instance, tumours can be irradiated with far greater precision than before, with less collateral

damage to healthy tissue. Our goal is that, by 2025, image-guided interventions become the standard for more effective, better and less costly treatment of a wide range of pathologies. Our partners in this ambition include industrial parties such as Philips, Electa and Sectra and other national and international partners like Princess Máxima Centre, MD Anderson, St Jude, Eindhoven University of Technology and the Life Sciences divisions at Utrecht University.

Biofabrication & disease modelling deals with the underlying disease mechanisms of chronic illnesses such as disorders of the musculoskeletal, cardiac or circulatory system, or neurological or kidney disorders. Our goal is, by gaining an understanding of these mechanisms, to arrive at regenerative and other treatment strategies that promote the body's own ability to recover through a combination of technology and biology. Important partners in these efforts are the Hubrecht Institute, the Princess Máxima Centre, Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and the partners in the RegMed research consortium and the Research Center for Material-Driven Regeneration (MDR).

Molecular science & therapy develops more targeted therapies for diseases by gaining a better understanding of those illnesses at the molecular and cellular level. Currently, the same treatment strategy is often applied for illnesses that resemble one another but that are actually quite different at the molecular level. Using fundamental research, we create innovative disease models and advanced measuring techniques in combination with Artificial Intelligence (AI). We then apply these tools in order to gain insights into risk factors, biomarkers and new interventions. Our partnerships with industrial parties, the Netherlands Cancer Institute (NKI), the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the Hubrecht Institute, European research parties and other Dutch parties are of vital importance in this regard.

As a trauma centre, and through the Major Incident Hospital we manage together with the Central Military Hospital, UMC Utrecht holds a unique position in terms of large-scale reception of ill and wounded persons. To accelerate in this area, we strive to ensure our **acute complex care** includes state-of-the-art emergency assistance, surgical facilities and intensive care.

With the Wilhelmina Children's Hospital and its partnership with the Princess Máxima Centre, UMC Utrecht is focusing on **complex integral care for children**. This integrality makes it possible to demystify and treat complex conditions such as perinatal damage, congenital illnesses, cardiac disease, serious inflammatory disorders and the after-effects of cancer treatments. It also helps us improve preventative care. Our ambitions call for strong collaboration between fundamental and applied researchers and for interaction with the social environment in which children grow and develop.

Open Science

In the coming years, we will maintain our dedication to and efforts to innovate Open Science. Observations in the research domain have led to the Open Science movement and were also the impetus behind Science in Transition, which was launched several years ago, partly in UMC Utrecht. The search for a new balance between 'science for science's sake' and 'science for society' has had a major impact on the education and research at UMC Utrecht. While the recent evaluation according to the VSNU's Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) has confirmed this vanguard position, it also yielded recommendations for the next phase.

The new system of appreciation and reward will act as the starting point for our yet-to-be-established talent management programme; young employees will be given tools for charting their own careers, taking Open Science principles regarding quality and impact into account.

Data sharing is an important component of Open Science. Certainly in the case of medical data, this requires a careful procedure and infrastructure for the collection, archiving and reuse of data. Another significant aspect of Open Science for medical and biomedical research is the concept of involving users in designing and conducting a study. To that end, we will continue the Patient Participation programme as a means to provide researchers with a framework for involving patients and other stakeholders in their research.

In short:

- ⤷ *The new system of appreciation and reward will act as the starting point for our talent management programme*
- ⤷ *Further implementation of Open Science principles in the area of data management*
- ⤷ *Continuation of the Patient Participation programme*

Faculty of Geosciences

Groundbreaking research and education
for a sustainable Earth

FACULTY PROFILE

The Faculty of Geosciences has the ambition to be a global trailblazer in education and research with regard to our Earth system and sustainability, from the local to the global scale. Education and research should take place in an open and inspiring environment, with room for creativity, debate and critical reflection. We pursue disciplinary innovation and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration. In the coming decades, society will face the challenge of actualising major transitions, such as those relating to the energy supply, water management, adapting to climate change and the quality of our living environments. Consequently, sustainability will be the central priority and overarching theme for our education and research in the coming strategic period. We also actively seek out cooperation with social partners and envision ourselves playing an active role in the societal debate.

Our unique combination of expertise in both natural and social sciences in a single faculty will enable us to achieve our ambitions. In the decisions we take, we consider the strategic themes, particularly Pathways to Sustainability. Through research along these themes and through multi-disciplinary education, the Faculty of Geosciences continues to realise the university ambitions aimed at facilitating the sustainable development goals (SDGs) formulated by the United Nations. The concept of sustainability and the SDGs are vast in scope: besides ecological sustainability, economic and social sustainability – and other forms – are important as well. In the period ahead, we will enter into further discussion with one another and with partners from outside the university in order to define these concepts and, on that basis, to further develop our knowledge and educational agenda.

We are contributing to the ambitions of Utrecht University by strengthening the connection between the natural science and social science disciplines. The Faculty of Geosciences aspires to be a leading institution in disciplinary research and to excel in forging connections between disciplines, not only within the faculty but across the university and in collaborations with external partners. We actively involve societal players in order to achieve meaningful impact through scientific knowledge. We enter into alliances with our national and international knowledge partners that include joint research programmes and dual appointments. This allows us to bring in knowledge that complements our own and to prepare ourselves for new future societal challenges that are, perhaps, not yet sufficiently evident today. Our unfettered and independent research will also generate new themes.

Internal and external connections lead to the new interdisciplinary insights required to address major societal challenges such as climate change, sustainability, inequality, health and digitisation. Through these connections, we continue to build on our knowledge and education with regard to planet Earth as a complete system, from deep within the Earth's core to the atmosphere, and to expand our expertise regarding social processes such as social inequality and migration. In doing so, we will



also build on the high-quality infrastructure of our laboratories in order to retain our top global position.

With regard to our education, in the coming period we will devote greater attention to multidisciplinary, building on the existing strong foundation we have established in previous years. The geo-student of the future must be ready to face a shifting international job market. It is partly for this reason that we are reinforcing our skills-oriented education, focusing on skills such as collaboration and knowledge of digital methods and techniques. We are developing new teaching methods such as challenge-based learning, and we offer students flexibility to make their own choices regarding deepening or broadening their expertise. In our education, we strive to optimally prepare stu-

dents to contribute to solutions for the challenges of the 21st century.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on our education and research. It is imperative that we learn from our experiences related to this pandemic. The guiding principle is that we continue to stand for high-quality degree programmes and research, while focusing our attention on collaboration, encounters and debate. This will require investments in new forms of cooperation and the use of novel technologies.

The Faculty of Geosciences embraces the principles of Open Science. Geoscientists firmly believe that scientific knowledge must be shared openly with their scientific colleagues and the broader public in order to realise an even greater positive impact. Cooperation between scientific disciplines and with societal partners calls for a culture of knowledge sharing. We are working to develop an agenda aimed at improving data sharing and making our research transparent and reproducible.

The Faculty of Geosciences should remain an attractive workplace and an appealing learning environment for employees and students. Our goal is to continue working toward a diverse and inclusive environment in which all employees and students are challenged to pursue their own professional development. We are committed to fostering a strong community that is characterised by equality, diversity, inclusion, openness, and trust. We are committed to fostering greater diversity in talent; continuing to work on a culture of appreciation and reward; and paying heed to the well-being of our students and employees.

Meeting our faculty's ambition goals will require a resilient and agile organisation guided by the principle that the faculty must remain financially sound. We are investing in reinforcing the support organisation in order to realise the ambitions. That means that the Faculty Office services have access to the expertise and instruments that enable the Faculty Board and the departments to take sound decisions. The Faculty Office staff will provide solicited and unsolicited advice on the course of action in relation to available resources and laws and regulations. To that end, the Faculty Office and the departments cooperate intensively based on a shared responsibility, with respect for one another and for equality. A smart and innovative organisation,

transparency and capitalising on employees' ideas are guiding principles in this regard.

ORGANISATION

The Faculty of Geosciences is pursuing effective collaboration between academic and support staff, as well as between the Faculty Office and the departments, in order to achieve optimal coordination between the primary process and support, guided by the faculty strategy as underlying principle. Together, we are establishing – and implementing – priorities for policies and improvements in the faculty. In doing so, we are making use of the diversity of ideas and problem-solving abilities among our employees. Important conditions for effective collaboration are engagement, mutual respect and equality. Transparency and streamlined internal communication are also necessary in that regard.

In order to facilitate and support our ambitions and primary process of education and research in an effective and timely way, we are continuing our efforts to improve our operational management. We are assigning opportunities for self-management, along with the corresponding tasks, responsibilities and authorities, in a clear fashion and in the right places within the faculty and the departments. Operational management and support teams are strengthening their advisory role and deployability while optimising their working methods by streamlining and/or digitising processes. Specific ambitions are to support

the departments in strategic staff planning, to implement the revised promotion policy and to deliver up-to-date, uniform management information for the departments and Faculty Board. Being a good employer and maintaining a financially sound organisation continue to be necessary starting points for success.

We will materialise the development opportunities for support staff through learning and training, along with a corresponding development plan. We will provide opportunities to identify the skills needed in relation to the ambitions, and to further develop those skills. Team-building is important in this regard. The Faculty of Geosciences is focusing on sustainable employability by developing targeted policy in the coming years and by promoting the health and well-being of its employees. We take indicators of excessive workload seriously and take action to address such signs by improving the management of workload.

The Faculty of Geosciences' ambitions in relation to sustainability are not limited to its education and research. The faculty also aspires to take on a pioneering role within the university with regard to sustainable operations. To that end, we are refining the faculty's sustainability goals – for instance, by reducing CO₂ emissions by minimising air travel, a sustainable purchasing policy, paperless offices and teleconferencing.

EDUCATION

The Faculty of Geosciences places high priority on contact teaching and regards

direct interaction between students and lecturers and between students and their peers as essential for successful learning. With a proper balance between contact teaching and teaching methods that focus on e-learning and the use of innovative educational software, so-called blended learning, we will enhance learning outcomes. We are working to identify opportunities for improving blended learning by reflecting on and learning from our experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and based on insights into how today's students learn. This is how we are positioning blended learning as an inextricable part of our high-quality education.

The faculty will continue to invest in education aimed at in-depth disciplinary knowledge and at learning to acquire knowledge through fundamental research. We will also continue to design interdisciplinary education, as society calls for such education. To that end, we will further develop and apply concepts such as challenge-based learning and community-engaged learning. Students will be taught to find solutions for societal challenges through collaboration with students, lecturers, and experts from outside the university. We are developing interdisciplinary courses for the optional course profile and restructuring minors offered within the faculty. In doing so, our investments meet a strong desire from students to better align with the job market. We are exploring whether there is sufficient interest in a faculty-wide, interdisciplinary programme and whether such a programme would be thematically distinct compared to existing curricula.

We are also taking a critical look at the skills students will need in the job market of the future. We are expanding our current skills-oriented learning pathways where needed. This includes special attention to intercultural skills, the ability to work effectively in a team, reflection skills and making use of digital technologies, including working with and applying Artificial Intelligence and large and complex data sets.

Lecturers with fitting knowledge and skills are needed if we are to achieve the aforementioned ambitions. We will therefore continue to invest in lecturer professionalisation in an environment and structure in which lecturers are able to further develop their talents and skills by working together and

learning from one another. In our efforts to recruit new lecturers, we are – to an even greater extent than in the past – looking for talent and excellence in providing education.

The Faculty of Geosciences strives to foster a student population that accurately reflects the diversity in society and wants to create an inclusive environment in which every student feels like they are a part of the degree programme and the faculty. In the various programmes offered by the faculty, students are introduced to a wide range of perspectives in terms of culture and background. Students also feel challenged to contribute to the academic discourse. Concretely, we are achieving this through several lines of action. We are increasing the diversity of incoming students by removing obstacles to enrolment where necessary and we include diverse perspectives in our curricula. We are investing in community-building, with activities that allow students to get to know one another in the context of their programme or elective courses or minors, but also outside these study-related activities.

We use our expertise to develop educational programmes for professionals. Our range of programmes is expanded to include post-graduate education. The new modules build on past experiences in mixed class rooms, with blended learning and with the online education that has been developed. Professional Education will become a permanent component of the degree programmes of the Faculty of Geosciences

and will (continue to) contribute to the societal impact of our research.

RESEARCH

The Faculty of Geosciences trains researchers and conducts research that allows to make meaningful contributions to addressing societal challenges, with a strong emphasis on sustainability. To guarantee world-class research, we have adopted a selective policy: we invest in efforts to attract undisputed scientific talent at the levels of PhD candidate, postdoc and assistant professor, along with top-tier scientists at the associate professor and full professor levels. The faculty will further invest in excellence and talent with regard to interdisciplinary research in order to become global leaders in this area as well.

The Faculty of Geosciences is extremely well-equipped to combine curiosity-driven research with mission-driven research, and in doing so, to contribute to societal impact. We intend to capitalise more effectively on our acquisition opportunities. This will require more intensive cooperation within and between the departments. This is why we are making additional investments in the organisation of seminars, workshops and debates. Together with the departments, the Faculty of Geosciences will further develop the means for supporting project acquisition. We will also train and coach researchers in their potential role concerning promoting the societal impact of scientific research. We expect research leaders within the faculty to maintain

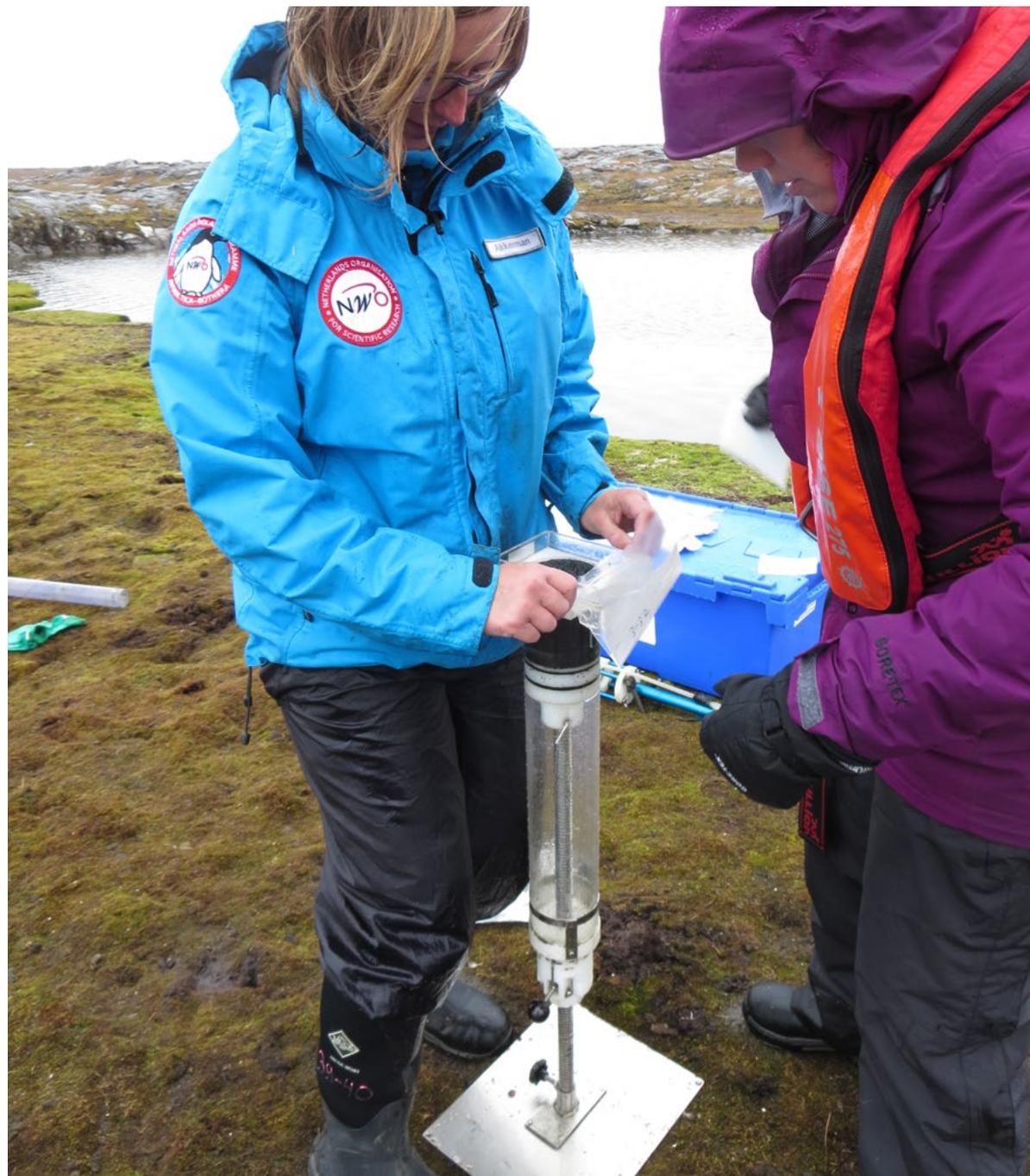
an attitude that contributes to successful team-building.

In addition to more intensive collaboration within the faculty and Utrecht University, successful collaboration with other research institutes in the Netherlands and abroad is also vital in order to permanently ensure the world-class quality of our research. We ask that our research groups enter into strategic alliances with a limited number of leading international institutes, or become a member of existing alliances. This need not be limited to research but may extend to the teaching domain as well. Alliance partners conduct joint research efforts, create opportunities for staff exchanges and organise leading conferences and seminars. In this way, we exert an important influence on developments in the particular field of research.

In the coming years, the research projects of the Faculty of Geosciences will be characterised by Open Science. Open Science has various objectives, including promoting the involvement of societal partners or the broader public in research. It also pertains to the sharing of research data (in keeping with FAIR principles), open access publications, promoting the reuse of data and making results reproducible and therefore more reliable. We intend to continue working on an agenda for promoting Open Science at the faculty.



Field research on melting glaciers on Barentsoya, near Spitsbergen.



Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance

Versatile and socially engaged

The Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance (REBO) is a faculty that stands firmly at the heart of society and focuses on the issues that affect society as a whole. With law, economics and governance, we have a strong in-house combination of academic disciplines which complement and reinforce one another. Our mission is to conduct high-quality research into social issues; to educate people so they can contribute to addressing those issues; and, in this way, to generate social impact. We contribute substantively to sustainable development, to building a just society and to shaping its institutions. Those who feel a duty in this area, and who learn and work based on public values such as integrity, inclusiveness, accessibility and equality will feel at home in our faculty.

In the recent period, we have achieved a great deal with regard to our education, research and impact. We have also grown stronger as an organisation, thanks in part to the realisation of the Faculty Service Organisation (FSO). For the upcoming period, we are committed to the further implementation of what we have begun and to strengthening our faculty profile. 'Connection and balance', the title of our previous Strategic Plan, will remain an important guiding principle in that regard. Connection here refers to the link between education, research and impact, so that our domains are optimally aligned to one another and reinforce one another's efforts. It means connections between employees (both academic and support staff) that cut across the lines separating departments, so that we may offer professional and effective support for education, research and impact. It is the connection to the university-wide strategic themes – particularly Institutions for Open Societies, Pathways to Sustainability and Dynamics of Youth – which allows more and more multidisciplinary collaboration to emerge with regard to themes that are relevant to ensuring the structure of our society is both sustainable and just. It is our connection to public, private and social partners outside the university, which make it possible (for instance) to give students the right tools for the Dutch and international job markets and to strengthen the ties with our alumni. And lastly, a thematic connection to partners in and outside the faculty, including via the interfaculty Centre for Global Challenges (UGlobe). UGlobe brings together people from different disciplines in order to study social challenges such as climate change, increasing inequality, poverty, conflicts and human rights issues, and to contribute to innovative solutions to these problems.

At the same time, we take care to ensure a proper balance between disciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to work in our education research and impact. We are also seeking the right balance with regard to new digital forms of studying, conducting research and teaching. Together with the study associations, we place a high value on a lively and visible community of students and employees. We also strive to ensure a diverse group of students and staff members, in the broadest sense of the word and in all units of the organisation. Through a diverse faculty population, we want to create communities of work and study

in which everyone can feel at home. Another aspect we keep in mind is a healthy work-life balance among students and employees and, to that end, we will continue actively looking for ways to reduce workload both in and outside the faculty. This might, for instance, mean organising the education in a different manner or setting out more differentiated career paths.

We want to play a meaningful role in disciplinary and multidisciplinary research. The goal in this regard is to deploy in-depth and frequently disciplinary knowledge in a meaningful way to address multidisciplinary issues, such as through our involvement with the strategic themes. In this way, we contribute to realising a more just and sustainable structure for our society and a different perspective on widespread prosperity. The developments in connection with Open Science present important challenges. The discussions of those challenges call for a reorientation with regard to the significance of science and place new demands on our system of recognition and reward.

We see opportunities in the area of education as well. Building on the strength of our current programmes, we wish to strengthen our focus on the social profile of our degree programmes and to invest in new teaching methods and models, including via the REBO Skills Academy. Community Engaged Learning (CEL) is in keeping with the ambitions of our faculty and should rightfully be more strongly embedded in our curriculum. This also

applies to the entrepreneurial education with which we hope to further anchor and expand our traditionally strong position within Utrecht University. In addition, we are working to further expand our range of Professional Education programmes, partly in relation to social partners and stakeholders. In this regard, too, we are seeking out connection: to society, with professionals, with new knowledge domains and with new teaching concepts.

AN OPEN, RESILIENT AND INNOVATIVE COMMUNITY

REBO stands for a strong academic community of students and employees in which we take care of one another. REBO also stands for a safe and inclusive environment in which to work and study. But none of this happens automatically. A more diverse and international population of students and employees, for instance, will place new demands on our communication and require us to effectively deploy our intercultural skills. An open, resilient and innovative community also means being able to cope with differences and diverse perspectives, and giving one another space. We strive to realise a more diverse student and employee intake, such as by eliminating potential obstacles. A more diverse intake will also require that we devote attention to the structure and content of our educational curriculum and ensure international staff and students receive a warm welcome within the Utrecht faculty community.

Accommodations play a strong

facilitating role in this context. Good shared accommodations for staff and students reinforces the sense of community within departments and faculties and encourages (potentially multidisciplinary) collaboration. The COVID-19 pandemic has further underscored the importance of encounters and of personal contact. When a portion of the education or consultation takes place online, we must put additional and more explicit effort into organising contact. This pertains to contact between first-year and other students via the student mentors and tutors, as well as that between employees (both academic staff and administrative and support staff). Managers have an important role in this regard, which is why the faculty is encouraging leadership development through means such as participation in university-wide programmes and on-the-job coaching. The rich culture of student association life within the REBO faculty forges connections between students and their peers, their programmes and the faculty. The ultimate goal is to achieve an agile and innovative organisation in which highly-engaged students, employees (academic and administrative/support staff) and alumni can easily interact and

work together toward our shared ambitions: conducting high-quality research, educating people to become socially-involved and versatile professionals and generating impact.

Multidisciplinary collaboration within the primary processes and with partners places new demands on administrators, operational managers and support staff. We are working to further strengthen the administrative consultation structure, clarify the decision-making processes and improve the information provision to administrators/board members. We are also strengthening cooperation in the operational management and support, both within REBO and between REBO and other divisions of the university. In concrete terms, we are exploring possibilities for a more intensive partnerships in the city centre with the Faculty of Humanities, such as with regard to research support provided by the Research Support Office (RSO) and in the areas of accommodations, facilities, IT and Professional Education. The Strategic Accommodations Plan offers opportunities in this regard, on which we hope to capitalise.

Digitisation is becoming increasingly standard across all facets

of the organisation. It is inherently part of the educational curricula, it is a major theme in our research and it affects all aspects of our operational management. The faculty is working to realise a user-oriented, reliable and secure IT infrastructure which will lighten and enrich the workload and studies of students and employees. Yet because the faculty cannot do this alone, we are participating in university-wide projects and programmes in the area of innovation and management. At the faculty level, we are working to strengthen knowledge and support with regard to Research Data Management (RDM); information/data and IT security; the implementation of privacy policy and the continued development of management information. In addition, the faculty intends to ensure that the support and knowledge, particularly in the area of teaching-related IT, remains at least at the current level. Our financial policy focuses on the goal-oriented allocation of resources in order to optimally support the substantive strategy of the faculty. Enhancing the quality of our data is an important area for attention in that regard.



EDUCATION FOR A BETTER FUTURE

In the REBO Faculty, we educate students who will later find jobs as executives, politicians, entrepreneurs, corporate or government lawyers, managers and financial managers, solicitors, judges and so on. We are, in short, educating the advisers and decision-makers of tomorrow. This creates certain expectations in terms of our education. Our ambition is to offer students disciplinary and multidisciplinary education and train them to be socially engaged and versatile academic professionals who are ready for the challenges of an ever-changing job market.

An ambition such as this requires state of the art curricula, innovative teaching methods and an organisation that supports lecturers to those ends. At the same, continuous attention to the well-being of students is needed as well. The combination of a relatively brief study duration and the (real or perceived) necessity of entering the job market with a sufficiently enriched Curriculum vitae has resulted in an increase in perceived pressure to succeed. For REBO, this specific combination of factors is cause for working toward a transparent, flexible and multifaceted curriculum within the educational portfolio, and to strive to strengthen and enrich the content and reinforce the position of lecturers. In addition, we strive to strengthen our position with regard to Community Engaged Learning (CEL), Entrepreneurial education and Professional Education (OvP).

Transparent, flexible and multifaceted curriculum

The regular education within the faculty has a strong disciplinary basis, owing in part to the intrinsically distinct nature of the disciplines and specific national requirements. At the same time, great attention is paid to multidisciplinary education, for instance in the form of minors, certain Master's programmes and within the honours education. In the coming period, we intend to continue our efforts to promote transparency, flexibility and accessibility in our educational programmes, so that it will become easier for individual students to pursue interdisciplinary studies. In this way, we are responding to the increased importance of multidisciplinary knowledge and skills. Put more concretely, we want to contribute to the development of interdisciplinary education for the free elective space (minors, electives), multidisciplinary Master's education and education that is connected to the strategic themes. We will also begin work on the faculty-specific implementation of the new university-wide vision on Honours education. As we update our degree programmes, we are cooperating with other faculties and disciplines, such as Humanities (PPE, etc.), Social sciences (geography, sociology, etc.) and the Sciences (mathematics, complex systems and data science, etc.).

Reinforcing and enriching the content

Students place a high value on a solid connection between academic education and real-world practice in society. This is also in keeping with the current expectations that employers and society have where professionals are concerned. Aligned to the ambition of Utrecht University, we are devoting emphatic and structural attention to major societal themes – including those in connection with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) – within our educational programmes. And by more strongly embedding Community Engaged Learning (CEL), we want to provide students with opportunities to gauge their knowledge against societal practice and, conversely, to use that practice to enrich their knowledge. Teaching methods such as CEL and work placements also make the curriculum more inclusive thanks to the stronger involvement with society and/or the local community. In this way, these methods contribute to helping a diverse student population feel at home at REBO.

An innovative and rich curriculum also includes space for skills training, in which the focus is less on knowledge and more on the insights, competencies and attitudes that are needed in order to function successfully in the modern knowledge society. We are investing in the development of a REBO Skills Academy. This will entail an integrated range of skills training programmes for all REBO students.

A portion of these programmes will be discipline-specific and part of the regular education. In addition, we will develop new faculty-wide training options in the form of extracurricular course modules on topics such as reflective and operational digital skills.

Strengthening the position of lecturers

Finally, we will strengthen our education by improving the position of lecturers. We wish to realise temporary appointments that are more robust, in terms of both content and duration, and are exploring the best way to do so within degree programmes characterised by a large number of students and strongly fluctuating enrolment. In more general terms, we wish to enhance the professional development and academic career prospects of assistant professors, associate professors and lecturers, while ensuring we do not lose sight of the organisational interest and the need to manage workload. After all: a cohesive and experienced team is exceptionally capable of creating a sense of calm in an often dynamic educational setting.

Community Engaged Learning, Entrepreneurial Education and Professional

REBO has years of experience with Community Engaged Learning (CEL), in which students work with social partners in order to build knowledge.

We want to more broadly embed this teaching method in our curricula and to contribute to the development and increased sustainability of CEL at Utrecht University. In addition, our faculty has a strong tradition of providing entrepreneurial education and will continue to promote the importance of such programmes, both within Utrecht University and in the alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Centre Utrecht. Entrepreneurial skills are crucial to arriving at new solutions based on the most up-to-date knowledge. We will embed these skills more effectively in our education, such as through the REBO Skills Academy. In addition, we are working to further expand our Professional Education, partly in relation to social partners and stakeholders. In specific terms, we will pursue collaboration with the Faculty of Humanities and the strategic theme of Institutions for Open Societies by appointing a ‘city centre director’ who will facilitate and promote the further expansion of our education.

IMPACT OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Conducting high-quality, fundamental research and publishing it in peer-reviewed journals is a vital aspect of our existence as a university. Without this, a university simply cannot survive. Yet at the same time, we acknowledge – in the movement toward Open Science – that knowledge is itself a public resource, one that rightly must be shared. The motto ‘rigour meets relevance’ means that we are always in search of meaningful forms of knowledge sharing and knowledge co-creation: sometimes in cooperation with other scientific partners and sometimes with stakeholders in society.

A strong disciplinary basis is essential and is the foundation which supports our education and research. On the other hand, the real world cannot always be divided neatly along disciplinary lines. Multidisciplinary research is therefore a powerful tool for contributing to the resolution of complex social issues. We therefore intend to continue our intensive collaboration with

the UU strategic themes and focus areas, with regard to which Utrecht University will further strengthen its multidisciplinary collaboration through the alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Centre Utrecht and by other means. We in the REBO Faculty participate in projects related to sustainability, and to the Circular Economy, Healthy Urban Living and Sport & Society in particular. Multidisciplinary is also in evidence within our own disciplines, such as in the development of Empirical Legal Studies within the Law faculty’s sector plan cluster. We will naturally also continue to participate in international consortia involving European and non-European partners, in order to strengthen both disciplinary and multidisciplinary research.

Generating social impact is a signature characteristic of our academic profile, based on the conviction that social partnerships give meaning to knowledge and allow it to create a ripple effect. That means we maintain a visible impact agenda and realise tangible results, partly in relation to varying types of partners and stakeholders. Specifically, this refers to activities such as the Dean’s Dinner and the REBO Impact Night. We reward many different kinds of impact and are constantly in search of new kinds; we encourage impact activities both large and small. In doing so, we involve our students

and study associations – for instance, in the organisation of Impact Cafés.

The starting point of a career in academia is securing an appointment as a PhD candidate. In recent years, we have worked to improve the quality assurance procedures in connection with PhD tracks, such as via the Teaching & Supervision Agreement, the four-eyes principle, job-market orientation and a stronger emphasis on internationalisation. A PhD course on academic integrity will be introduced for incoming PhD candidates. With regard to the future, the primary concern is monitoring of the established agreements and standardisation of these where possible. The workload and well-being of PhD candidates is an ongoing area of concern. Together with the PhD council, we are working to strengthen the REBO PhD community and prevent drop-outs. It is vital that we continue to invest in PhD spots (including in the Research Masters). The current financial scope for doing so is primarily the result of good scores in the indirect funding and contract-based research funding and – specifically for the Law department – the resources from the sector plan. It is important that this funding be sustained at the same level, now and in future. That will require continuous attention from scientists and pro-active support from parties including the Research Support Office.

Even after completing their PhD, employees must be given scope for

personal and professional development, including time for pioneering or experimental activities. But this will not happen on its own. More than ever, the university exists as part of a 24-hour economy that demands never-ending availability from us all. The workload and pressure to succeed on employees has been a heavy burden for quite some time. Both the faculty and the individual departments will make every effort to explore and implement effective solutions to this complex problem. This, in combination with the development of Open Science, will affect the staffing policy as well. In the years ahead, we will further refine our HR model, MERIT, and work towards a more effective balance between the various components: Management, Education, Research, Impact and Team Spirit. Employees will have more diverse assigned tasks and a wider range of career paths, in keeping with the new forms of recognition and reward. In addition to individual research and teaching performance, greater emphasis will be placed on team and impact-related achievements.



⤴ *REBO Impact Café
on the Open Stage
at TivoliVredenburg*

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Utrecht University's Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences stands for leading teaching and research in the fields of social and behavioural sciences. Our faculty is dedicated to promoting the development of young talent through a wide range of degree programmes and to facilitating an understanding of current issues in the domain of behaviour and society. We are a faculty at the heart of society and one which cooperates closely with others.

The major societal challenges of our era encompass the full breadth of our professional field and demonstrate the essential nature of the social and behavioural sciences. These challenges are comprised of issues ranging from individual and group behaviour to large-scale social problems. Current events similarly call for ongoing research and interpretation. Take, for instance, the ways in which the coronavirus pandemic has affected us as individuals and as a society: a development that, prior to 2020, we never could have expected would dominate our lives so completely. Many of the questions those in the social and behavioural sciences are seeking to answer have been incorporated into the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. SDGs such as Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education and Reduced Inequality are key priorities in much of our teaching and research. As a faculty, we want to use our teaching and research to respond to social challenges from both a fundamental and a more applied approach. We are making our societal impact tangible by sharing our knowledge and insights with those in professional practice and with the media.

At the same time, we see that society continues to evolve into a technology-driven society in which data, digitisation and automation are dominant elements. These technological developments have all kinds of consequences for humans and society. The social and behavioural sciences are vital to both studying and interpreting these effects – and therefore to the sustainable integration of technology into our society. The fact that the very power of the technological developments threatens to eclipse these behavioural and social consequences serves to emphasise the crucial role the social and behavioural sciences play in understanding that process and adjusting it where necessary.

We embrace the university-wide ambitions set out in this Strategic Plan, i.e. that students and staff will contribute to a better world and be given the scope to develop their talents. Our mission is to use our teaching and research to contribute to a better world by tackling academic challenges in those areas where human behaviour and social dynamics play an important role. Developments in those areas prompt us to conduct socially relevant research that is of a high academic quality. We link our teaching to this research. In this way, we are preparing new generations for the role they can play in addressing these societal issues.

To reinforce the relevance of our teaching and research, our faculty is aligning itself with Utrecht University's thematic and multidisciplinary approach. In doing so, we are utilising the experience with multidisciplinary that is already present within the faculty. We feel that this approach, which includes a central role for the strategic themes and research focus areas, is the best way to study complex societal issues and facilitate interaction with society. Our faculty is primarily concerned with the strategic themes of Dynamics of Youth and Institutions for Open Societies. While teaching at our university is becoming increasingly multidisciplinary in nature, strong disciplinary teaching continues to serve as the basis.

Our cooperation with regard to our teaching, research and support activities is based on equality, diversity, inclusion, openness, accessibility and mutual respect. Together, we comprise

a solid yet innovative organisation: as a faculty, within our departments and divisions and in our cooperation with other organisational units of the university.

Our teaching and research are internationally oriented, based on the belief that diversity contributes to quality. We want to be a faculty where international students and staff feel at home. At the same time, we are part of a regional ecosystem and wish to ensure that our focus on global societal issues is also reflected in our impact close to home: *we think globally, but also act locally*. We cooperate with partners in the city and region of Utrecht on numerous education and research projects, such as in academic collaborative centres and within the Health Hub Utrecht.

We endorse the principles of Open Science in our teaching and research. This means that our research is based on the standards of research integrity and that all output – including publications, data and software – is made freely available whenever possible. It also means that we embrace the social role of science and that we recognise and reward our researchers based on multiple aspects of their tasks. We also ensure that the principles of Open Science are reflected in our teaching, both by teaching our students these principles and by applying the principles in components such as the thesis research projects.

Next steps

This Strategic Plan sets out a course for the coming years and establishes a direction for future decision-making. The Plan expands on previous decisions taken in connection with the strategic themes, multidisciplinary cooperation and internationalisation. Additionally, we intend to strengthen our efforts in the coming years on behalf of diversity and inclusion, sustainability, education for professionals and reduced workloads. We also intend to take steps in relation to the theme of Open Science, particularly where new forms of recognition and reward are concerned.

ORGANISATION

The Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences strives to become a more diverse and inclusive community. This is not only because we feel that taking different perspectives into account adds value to teaching and research, but also because we find equal opportunities important. This means equal opportunities for individuals of different nationalities, ethnicities, genders, socio-economic backgrounds and ages. We intend to continue our Diversity & Inclusion programme. In recent years, our focus on equal opportunities for people with a disadvantage on the labour market has led to a growing number of new colleagues, and we plan to continue our efforts in this area.

Reduced workloads, improved recognition and rewards

We want to be a faculty in which people feel at home, are able to be themselves and experience a sense of safety and respect. Moreover, we also want to be a faculty in which students and employees are able to make the most of their potential and continually develop their talents to the utmost degree. We want to be a faculty where everyone can experience pride and enjoyment in their work. To that end, we are committed to continuing efforts to reduce the workloads and increase the well-being of our students and staff. Recognising and rewarding the talents, knowledge and expertise of every individual is a precondition for achieving this goal.

Working together in teams

Within academic practice, there is growing attention for the fact that, in many cases, teaching, research and support activities are a team effort. Not everyone needs to excel in all areas and not every member of a team will be evaluated on every single aspect. This can create a calmer atmosphere in teams. While every contribution to a team's performance is important, certain activities and individuals sometimes garner more attention, while others remain undervalued. We intend to devote greater attention to this, such as by taking the context in which performance occurs into consideration when discussing rewards, and by addressing the performance of a team as a whole in the



⤴ *Utrecht University wants to make visible contributions to an inclusive university community, to a just society and to equal rights and equal opportunities for every individual. Role models and professors John de Wit (FSBS) and Nanna Verhoeff (FH) emphasise how important it is to make diversity visible.*

Assessment and Development (A&D) interviews.

Staff and student representation

We will continue to invest in open and constructive cooperation with the representative advisory bodies for staff and students. While these forms of representation have a supervisory function, their greatest value is found in participatory critical thinking and observing and reporting on important areas for attention based on solid relationships with their respective constituencies.

Sustainability

We strive to achieve sustainability in a broad sense. We want to limit our negative impact on the environment wherever possible. We will take steps (in addition to university policy) such as installing signage in our buildings to increase awareness of various aspects of sustainable behaviour among both students and staff. Our expertise in the field of behaviour has proved useful in connection with efforts to promote ecologically responsible habits, sustainable employability and a healthy lifestyle; we frequently consult those of our academics who are knowledgeable in this area.

We also strive toward a sustainable financial future. Our financial policy will continue to focus on maintaining a healthy position, now and in the long term. As planned, the faculty will continue decreasing its reserves through spending in the coming years.

Seizing technological opportunities

In the support services, we see that technology, automation and digitisation are primarily altering or even replacing the more routine tasks. To prepare for this development, the faculty launched the Future-proof support initiative in 2019. This initiative will be continued in the coming years. In essence, it is about enabling support and administrative staff colleagues to continue their personal development; ensuring we take advantage of the opportunities offered by technological development; and creating space for new tasks and positions, while maintaining a healthy balance in the ratio of academic to non-academic staff. At the same time, we are seeing new positions emerge within the support services that call for an academic background. We intend to experiment with possibilities for structuring such new positions.

EDUCATION

Through its Education & Pedagogy, Social Sciences and Psychology departments, the faculty offers a large number of disciplinary Bachelor's and Master's programmes, now supplemented by several interdisciplinary programmes as well. We strive to provide our students with challenging, activating and personal teaching, which we align with socially relevant issues. We stress the link between our teaching and research, including opportunities for our students to take part in that research during their degree programmes. We are integrating Open Science into our teaching to show

students how to practice integrity in their academic work. Where useful, we involve professionals from the field in our teaching because we wish to train academics to be academic professionals with the ability to bridge the gap between academia and real-world practice. Open Science is a central theme of our research training as well.

In order to provide this high-quality teaching, and based on the fact that teaching and research are closely intertwined, we devote a great deal of attention to the quality and development of our teaching staff. We do so through learning pathways that are linked to educational and other forms of leadership, and through continuous appreciation for these qualities in our staff. Our Educational Development & Training division plays an important role in this professionalisation. Where our clinical programmes are concerned, we ensure there is a strong connection to clinical practice while also striving to further define the position of clinical experts within our teaching.

Multidisciplinary teaching centred on strategic themes

In addition to the faculty's existing disciplinary and interdisciplinary degree programmes, there is a growing opportunity for university-wide multidisciplinary initiatives in the form of minors and the range of electives offered in the Master's programmes. Due to the growing emphasis on strategic themes in our research, we want to develop teaching that is linked to

these themes as well. As the faculty coordinates the Dynamics of Youth theme, it is only natural that we initiate programmes in this area based on that theme. Our plans for a new multidisciplinary Master's are currently well advanced and we are considering offering a similar Bachelor's at some point in the future. Obviously, the faculty will also remain closely involved with initiatives pertaining to other strategic themes and research focus areas, such as Institutions for Open Societies, Human-centred Artificial Intelligence and Applied Data Science.

Internationalisation

We will continue working on our internationalisation programme. In keeping with the direction set out in 2015, we have made more degree programmes accessible to non-Dutch speaking students, with specific attention paid to the creation of international classrooms in which a diverse range of perspectives on issues is a key priority. We have invested in efforts to attract greater numbers of international colleagues and students, to provide a warm welcome and to integrate them into the faculty. We intend to continue these efforts, thereby linking the internationalisation programme to the Diversity & Inclusion programme.

We will need to explore whether the COVID-19 pandemic will necessitate a reorientation towards internationalisation with reduced mobility. It is possible that the coronavirus crisis offers new opportunities as well: in theory, the fact that courses are being taught remotely (wholly

or in part) makes it easier for our students to take courses at universities abroad, and for international students to take our courses.

Blended learning

In the recent period, the faculty has started developing more blended teaching methods, which offer educational advantages. Such methods involve the combination of online curricular components with teaching in the classroom, where there is space for more in-depth exploration and interaction. Due to the coronavirus crisis, we have been obliged to accelerate this development toward blended learning. We now have an opportunity to learn from our experiences during this crisis. At the same time, we are exploring the new possibilities remote teaching has to offer. Such possibilities might include cooperation with international students and greater flexibility for students and teaching staff.

Education for professionals

One relatively new territory for our faculty is providing education for professionals (lifelong learning). We intend to realise major strides in this area in the coming years. Working closely with the professional field, we will develop course offerings based on the principle of reciprocity: by giving professionals access to current academic insights, we increase our social impact, while input from professionals helps us to continually evaluate our teaching based on real-world practice. We are developing

modular courses for flexible teaching options to better serve professionals and we are strengthening our contact with alumni.

RESEARCH

The societal challenges that have emerged as a result of the coronavirus pandemic demonstrate yet again the vital nature of research in the social and behavioural sciences. As a result of the coronavirus crisis, the SDGs referred to earlier – Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education and Reduced Inequality – have come under pressure, both in the Netherlands and internationally. Our research yields both fundamental and more applied contributions with regard to these areas. In both cases, they emphatically serve the goal of addressing social challenges. In the coming period, we will continue to work on expanding our expertise and share it with our academic and social partners, as well as continue to make the added value of our research both visible and explicit.

Strategic themes

The faculty endorses Utrecht University's policy of distinguishing itself in connection with four clearly recognisable strategic research themes. While some overlap naturally exists between all four themes, the two most important of these where our faculty is concerned are Dynamics of Youth and Institutions for Open Societies, as each of our individual disciplines has long made central contributions in these areas. Through this thematic research,

we attempt to find solutions to global issues based on a multi-disciplinary approach and in cooperation with societal partners. To the greatest extent possible, we strive to ensure our research investments are aligned with the strategic themes. When filling new vacancies, and particularly when appointing new professors, we express a clear standpoint with regard to the substance of the strategic themes. Research groups are encouraged to participate explicitly in the themes and to design their research accordingly. As a matter of course, we assume that increasing cooperation and exchange will take place between the strategic themes as they attempt to tackle major societal challenges, and we intend to encourage this. In this way, it will be possible for researchers from the faculty – through their contributions to Dynamics of Youth and Institutions for Open Societies – to play a role in advancing the other two themes as well.

Research focus areas

In addition to the strategic themes, Utrecht University has defined eleven research focus areas. These research focus areas are considered to be new, 'bottom-up' initiatives that allow us to respond quickly and adequately to relevant social and academic developments. Our faculty participates in multiple research focus areas, including Applied Data Science (ADS), Higher Education Research, Human-centred Artificial Intelligence and Migration & Societal Change. These research focus areas can deliver a valuable contribution to the strategic themes, whether supplementing, expanding or connecting them or defining a specific focus. Within ADS, for example, attention is being paid to the advanced data management of large research projects within Dynamics of Youth and Institutions for Open Societies.

Partnerships with other universities

From a similarly multidisciplinary perspective, in which expertises complement one another, we see exciting opportunities in terms of cooperation with national and international partners. Utrecht University's alliance with Eindhoven University of Technology, Wageningen University & Research and University Medical Center Utrecht, for instance, offers us opportunities in which our knowledge of behaviour and society

can be an invaluable addition to the other partners and to the knowledge they possess in connection with technology, data and digitisation. We will conduct joint research at the intersection of these disciplines. At the same time, we intend to further expand the international partnerships in which our researchers participate (such as with the University of Sydney and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem) along multidisciplinary lines.

Open Science

Our faculty wishes to align itself with the university-wide ambition to be a pioneer in the area of Open Science. Whereas the university-wide programme focuses primarily on the *why* and *what*, the faculties focus on the *how*. To that end, we are forming an Open Science team within the faculty.

The four Open Science sub-themes – Open Access, FAIR data and software, Public Engagement and Recognition & Reward – will likewise be key priorities within our faculty. With regard to Open Access, we will encourage open-access publishing and making scientific output freely accessible to all. In the context of FAIR data, we will encourage the sharing of data and course material and train our staff and students, including PhD candidates, to practice responsible science. Where Public Engagement is concerned, we will link our research efforts to socially relevant questions. We see a connection between new forms of Recognition and Reward, teamwork and the reduction of workloads. Here, too, we intend to realise progress together in the coming years.



⤴ *Robin the Robot features in a campaign to remind students and employees of the coronavirus regulations. The robot was previously involved in another project, in which he helped children practice their language skills. Now, Robin's job is to warn visitors to university buildings: 'Be alert and stay 1.5 metres apart!'*

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