

HU IN 2026

Ambitions for the future





INTRODUCTION

We know that by 2026 the world will look quite different from the way it looks today. But given current extensive, rapid and often game-changing developments, there is no way of predicting exactly how things will be. Therefore, now is a time of both challenge and opportunity; a time in which we wish to acknowledge our role and responsibility as a university of applied sciences. One such responsibility is to respond to the increasing demand from the labour market for professionals who can be employed in a sustainable manner. Another responsibility is the contribution that practice-based research can make toward the innovation of professional practice. But we also have the responsibility to consider the possibilities as well as the dilemmas posed by various

digital transitions. In 'HU in 2026' we describe how we are planning to respond to these developments.

In this time of change, opportunity and uncertainty, there is a strong need for connection. HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht wishes to be a community where students and staff members know each other and can feel at home. Our goal is to create inclusive higher education where everyone feels that they are equal participants; an environment in which we all - each from their own position of responsibility - contribute to each other's professional development and thereby also to society at large.

The current document seeks to offer inspiration by presenting our vision of the future for the coming years. This document also makes clear which ambitions we aspire to achieve. However, it is not the primary focus of this document to explain in detail how we will go about this. Rather, our ambitions will reveal themselves over the coming years by way of policy plans and in the various plans of the institutes, research centres and services. This method allows for differentiation as well as flexibility in terms of different rates of development.

We are aware that we are faced with various challenges that may sometimes seem to contradict one another. For instance, we want to offer students the space to explore,

while simultaneously preventing unnecessary study delay. We always strive for the right balance in such paradoxical situations, whilst also always bearing in mind the quality of our education, research and the overall burden on the organisation.

We have laid a solid foundation on which we can build. We look back with pride on what we have achieved together over the past years and we will be tackling issues that have received insufficient attention during this period with renewed energy. In writing this document we have relied on the input of many students, lecturers, researchers, HU Services staff members and external relations. We have spoken with them about our future and the challenges that we face,

about the things that are important and the choices we have to make in order to remain successful. These discussions have been inspiring and educational and we wish to thank everyone for their valuable input. We will continue to have regular discussions in our HU community and with our partners about the progress of our plans. We hereby cordially invite you to join in these discussions.

Jan Bogerd, president
Anton Franken
Tineke Zweed



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WE ARE HU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES UTRECHT

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht has a rich history. It is a vibrant and innovative knowledge organisation, situated at the heart of the Netherlands. Each and every day, thousands of students and staff members work together and with members from professional practice.

Our objective is to contribute to the sustainable development of people and to be of lasting significance for the (regional) labour market and society at large. We consider this to be our social responsibility. Anyone who wants to study in higher education is welcome at our university of applied sciences. We care for our students, our staff members and our environment. We wish to be a community, a meeting point that creates space for talent and growth, a space in which everyone feels acknowledged and at home. Importantly, this community is not limited to our own buildings or to our own organisation. We work in co-creation with professional practice. Given that the boundaries between institutions are becoming less and less important, smooth cooperation with our partners is essential. This means that we still need to further develop into an open network organisation. We are always looking for solutions to societal problems, in which we increasingly take the lead. This is something that our partners have shown great appreciation for.

In this first section we will discuss our origins, our mission, our social responsibility, our connection to the labour market and our profile.

HOW WE STARTED

The first higher professional education programmes in the Utrecht region emerged during the twentieth century. During this time, the need for highly skilled people in the labour market increased sharply. As a consequence, the number of degree programmes of higher professional (vocational) education grew steadily. Eventually, several programmes were merged in 1995 to form Hogeschool Utrecht (HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht). The HU has since become a recognisable and versatile educational institution in service of professional practice. The HU has also been conducting practice-based research since 2002, and research groups have now become an inextricable part of our organisation.

The strong bond we established with professional practice from the start has only become stronger. This is largely due to the

fact that we take labour market demands - in addition to our sense of social responsibility - as the starting point for our education and our research. Another reason for this growth is that our collaboration with professional practice has become more frequent, more intensive, and it involves increasingly larger and more complex issues. What's more is that we do not want to miss any opportunity to understand the practical application of newly developed knowledge.

All this means that our educational programmes, our research facilities and professional practice have come to form a close-knit unity. Each element is inextricably linked with the other two. Thanks to the strength of this unity, we are able to accelerate learning processes as well as implement and manage innovative ideas.



A smiling male construction worker with a beard and glasses, wearing a blue hard hat with a yellow logo and a high-visibility yellow safety jacket over a dark blue t-shirt. He is holding a set of white blueprints. The background is a blurred construction site with yellow machinery and orange safety lights.

Our strong bond with professional practice
is only getting stronger.

OUR FOCUS IS ON QUALITY

Since 2014, much of our attention has been on delivering quality. This focus has allowed us to anticipate changes taking place on many levels (of society), and to become more flexible and agile, creating new opportunities in the process. And it also means we are able to respond to the changing demands and needs of students and the labour market. For example, we have placed a lot of emphasis on innovating our educational programmes to improve and ensure the quality of our education, both now and in the future. Teamwork and co-creation are now the foundation of our collaborative efforts.

Furthermore, the structure of our organisation has become a lot less hierarchical. This was an exciting and daring step to take, but it is one that we are very

glad we took. Flattening the structure has made interdisciplinary work more feasible, and we can now establish external and internal connections much faster, switch faster and give staff members more professional space. We have also made adjustments to our accommodation. We now have newly furnished buildings and modern facilities, such as innovation labs where we can work together with members from professional practice.

The fact that we are doing the right things - and doing them well - was confirmed in early 2019 by the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), which gave us a positive evaluation for the quality of our educational institution. We received particular praise for the way in which we implement our educational

vision and for the fact that we continuously improve ourselves. Student involvement and the inclusion of professional practice were also greatly appreciated. Of course, we do still have a lot to do. We will continue to make improvements at a pace that best suits our organisation, and we understand that we don't have to do everything at once.

Our research facilities were visited for a quality control survey in 2018 and the outcome was positive. The HU was praised for its vibrant, energetic and inquisitive research climate, and the committee was enthusiastic about our (HU) profile. The committee came to the conclusion that we are in possession of a very strong brand name. Nevertheless, there is space for us to make this brand even more visible, by utilising certain projects to enhance our image.

Together, we have revised and improved many things, and we are proud of what we have achieved. But we have also learned that things could and should be even better. We want to preserve those aspects that are working well, while also remaining an organisation that learns and develops with its changing environment. We will continue to do so with confidence.

A photograph of two men sitting at a white table in a modern office or meeting room. The man on the left is wearing a grey sweater and is looking towards the man on the right. The man on the right is wearing a grey hoodie and glasses, and is gesturing with his hands while speaking. In the background, other people are blurred, and there is a potted plant. A semi-transparent red rectangle is overlaid on the bottom half of the image, containing white text.

We are building on the results we have achieved with educational innovation, teamwork and co-creation.

OUR EDUCATION IS AIMED AT PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Vibrant and innovative: that is how our university can best be described. From day one, the 'communities' in our degree programmes work on tackling societal issues. We not only encourage and support students in their individual development in the context of professional practice, we also help them to acquire competencies that are indispensable in today's society. These competencies include interpersonal and digital skills, professional research competence, international orientation and an entrepreneurial attitude. Moreover, we encourage students to develop as individuals and we pay attention to their well-being. In other words, students not only develop into valuable professionals, but also into global citizens.

We offer students the opportunity to take control of their own learning pathway. We don't always take them by the hand. This allows them to actively search for and explore their own talents and development path. This sometimes leads to tension and uncertainty, but it also offers them the space to take responsibility for themselves and to develop an entrepreneurial attitude. We welcome this process because it brings out qualities in the students that they can use in professional practice. This is what the labour market is looking for. Of course, our students are never entirely on their own. We offer them the guidance and the (safe) learning environment that they need. This applies both to students who work in study groups and to students who map out their own learning route.

A smiling woman with brown hair, wearing red scrubs and a white ID badge, stands in a clinical setting. The background is blurred, showing shelves and medical equipment. A red semi-transparent banner is overlaid across the middle of the image.

OUR MISSION

By offering quality education and research, we work on the development of talent and the innovation and professionalisation of professional practice. In this way, we contribute to an open, fair and sustainable society.

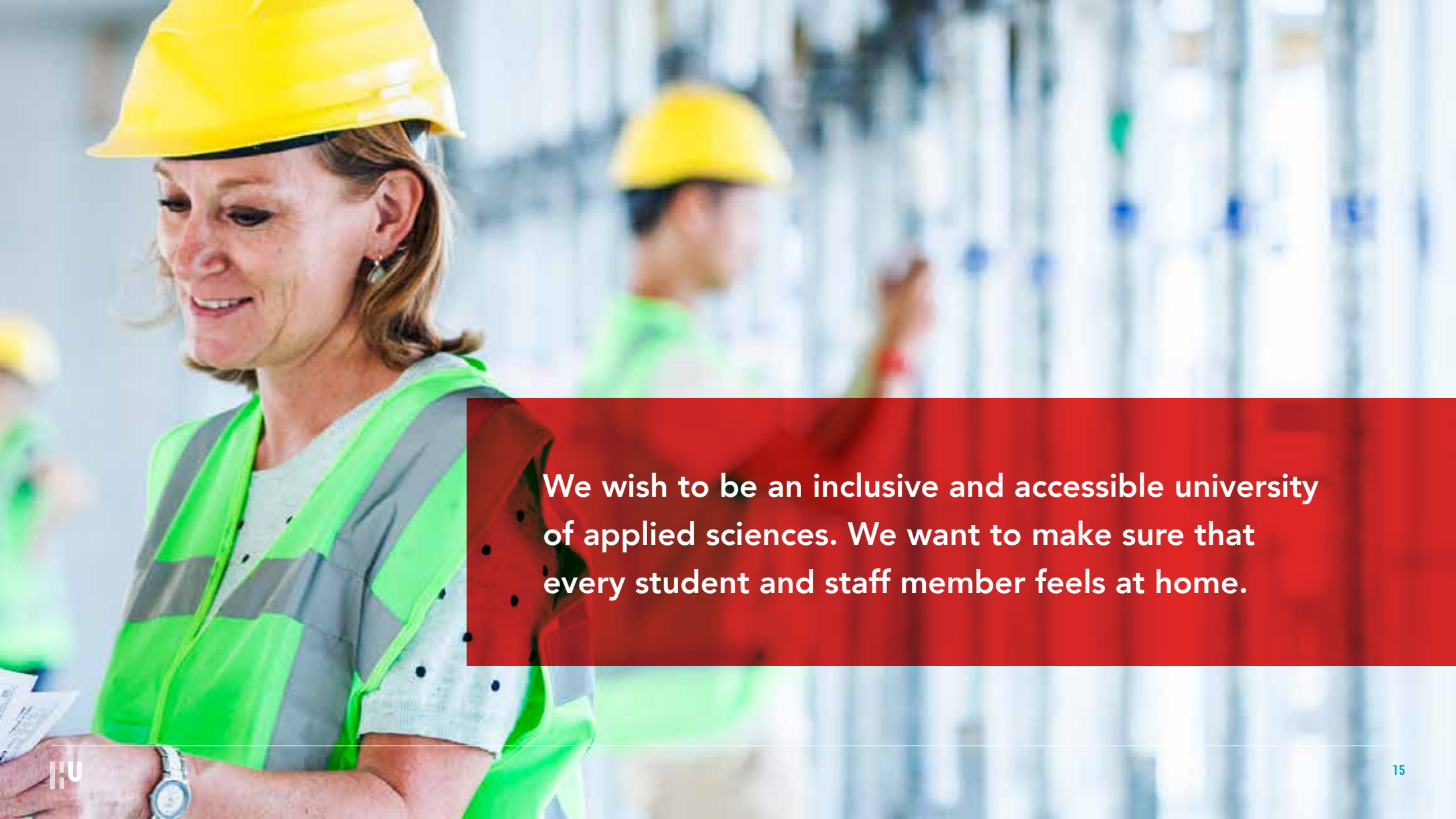
WE NURTURE ALL KINDS OF TALENT

We wish to be an inclusive and accessible university of applied sciences. We want to make sure that every student and staff member feels at home, is acknowledged and receives the same opportunities. Our door is open to anyone who can and is motivated to study in higher education. Each and every kind of talent counts!

We consider diversity to be a great asset. It brings us new ideas, exciting discussions, surprising perspectives and often also unexpected solutions. These are very welcome in today's society. After all, nobody thinks and does things in the same way.

Students can come to us for up-to-date education that is interwoven with research. We organise our education and research in such a way that students have the opportunity to fully develop their talent. The same applies to our staff members. They are also given the opportunity to further develop themselves, both as individuals and in their career.





We wish to be an inclusive and accessible university of applied sciences. We want to make sure that every student and staff member feels at home.

WE INITIATE AND CONNECT

As a university of applied sciences, we want to play a pioneering role in tackling societal challenges and we are becoming increasingly successful in realising collaborative, cross-disciplinary projects, both within the Utrecht region and beyond. We are connectors and initiators. Driven by our mission, we search for solutions together with our partners. We bring people together to co-create in large and small projects, in crossovers both within and outside of our own organisation. In this way, we contribute to the development of talent and have an impact on society. Our partners value the way in which we train professionals, the research we do and the contribution we make to important issues.

Improving and revising is an ongoing process for us. We are constantly changing to remain in step with our environment. In this way, we ensure both the relevance of our education and the professional and employment perspective of our students. In fact, as a university of applied sciences, we are increasingly becoming an integral part of professional practice and society and together with our partners we are forming a large learning network. In this light, it is not surprising that alumni are becoming more important to us and that we would like to further strengthen our bond. Alumni form a valuable link with professional practice and we also have a lot to offer them in return. This is why we invest a lot of energy in setting up and contributing to networks and communities.



A photograph of two young women with curly hair, one with blonde hair and one with red hair, sitting at a desk and studying together. The woman with red hair is smiling and looking at a notebook. The woman with blonde hair is looking down at the notebook. There are several notebooks and pens on the desk. A semi-transparent red box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing white text.

As a university of applied sciences, we are increasingly becoming an integral part of professional practice and society and are forming a large learning network together.

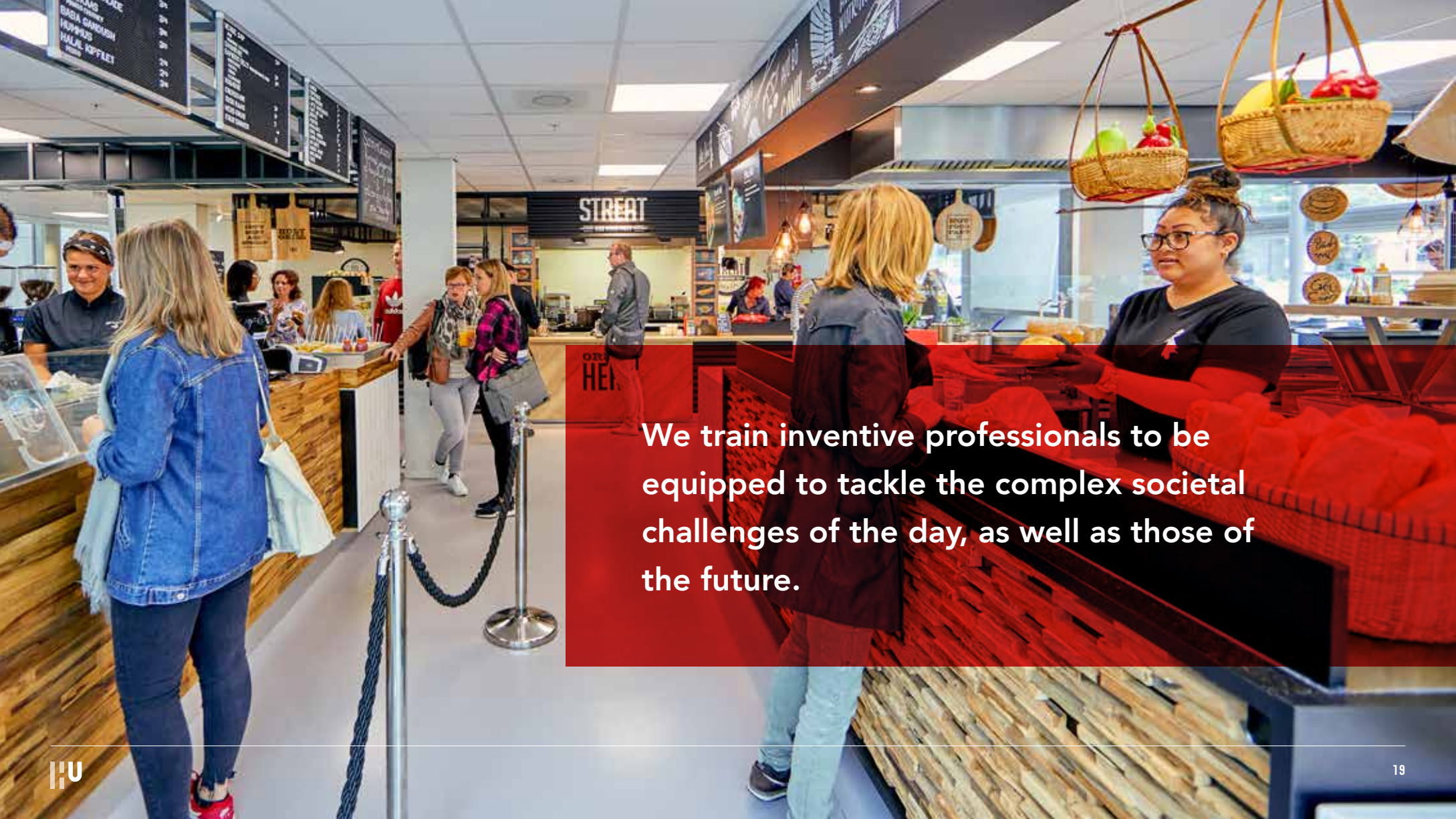
WE ARE AT THE CENTRE OF SOCIETY

The world is going through profound and rapid change. Many issues present themselves on a large, often global scale and are so complex that they can no longer be solved from a single discipline or perspective. Climate change, health, digitalisation, safety, mobility; such major issues require a smart and creative approach, with intensive collaboration between people and organisations. As a university of applied sciences, we want and are able to play a significant role in this process. But we do have to make choices, supported by our profile and national and international knowledge agendas.

Global developments are having an impact on professional practice. Organisations and companies now see new opportunities and look for ways to benefit from international

possibilities. There is always a need for self-aware, inventive professionals who follow the international developments in their field, professionals who can deal with the ever-changing interaction between people and organisations as a result of digitalisation; professionals who can work well with people from different cultures and disciplines; professionals who are flexible and manoeuvrable, who can adapt well to a rapidly changing society and who continue to develop themselves; professionals who can find the right resources to make socially responsible decisions, who are willing to learn from people who hold different views from their own, professionals who learn from developments taking place elsewhere in the world. We provide such professionals!





We train inventive professionals to be equipped to tackle the complex societal challenges of the day, as well as those of the future.

WE STRIVE TOWARDS WORKING AND LIVING TOGETHER IN THE CITY

An increasing proportion of the world's population lives and works in cities. The quality of life in cities is under pressure and society at large is facing major challenges. Because we consider it important to contribute to tackling major societal issues, we opted for 'the quality of living (together) in the urban environment' as our profile. This helps us to focus the content of our education and research and to make clear to our partners what we find important. Our profile is becoming better known in the area. Companies and organisations know about us, and they know how to find us when they want to. But we also often take the lead in establishing contact; for example, when we wish to solve certain difficult labour market issues within the region.

Our profile not only fits well with regional developments, but it also fits well with international developments as described by the United Nations, which forms the basis for their 17 Sustainable Development Goals. We endorse these goals and thus also assume our responsibility for the future of this planet. This is reflected in our choices regarding education, research, and management. We are training new generations who will be able and willing to take responsibility for a liveable world in the future.

Over the coming years, we will further develop our knowledge agenda. This agenda includes themes that we intend to pay attention to in our education and research, partly inspired by the

developments around us and by our HU profile. We will utilise the possibilities offered by digital transitions in this process.



We are preparing a knowledge
agenda for education and
research.

WE FORM A COMMUNITY

The HU wants to be an environment of learning where students and staff members feel fully included and at home. We seek to form a community that students and staff members want to be a part of. We place a lot of value in participation and community building.

Students are given the space to develop as persons, (future) professionals, and as citizens. Some students find that space right from the beginning, while others arrive at it later during the course of their studies. Fellow students stimulate, inspire and help each other in this process. At first, students often experience their chosen degree programme to be their home base, but often as their studies progress, they increasingly feel part of the HU. Staff members have their own team as their home

base from which they perform their work. At the same time, they also feel responsible for the role of the HU at large, and their own share in it. Collaboration within the team, between teams and between different parts of the HU is increasingly becoming the natural order of things.

Our goal is to work together and to jointly contribute - each from their own position of responsibility - to the quality of our education and research and the services we provide, and thus also ultimately to society at large. This way we can continue to be the vibrant, inspiring and innovative university of applied sciences that our students and employees enjoy being a part of. That is why we will be investing even more in our HU community over the coming period!





We want to be the kind of vibrant, inspiring and innovative university of applied sciences that our students and staff members enjoy being a part of.

WE ARE FOCUSED ON COLLABORATION

We value co-creation, for which students, lecturers and researchers work on societal issues together with partners from professional practice. This collaboration goes beyond our own classrooms, innovation labs and research centres, to include external companies and organisations.

We expect our students and staff members to be focused on collaboration. The demands and problems of professional practice and society require professionals who can collaborate across disciplinary boundaries. In our education and research, we search for connections between and across disciplines, because the (traditional) pillars of society and the boundaries between disciplines are disappearing. This also applies to the services we provide. Over the coming period, we will be fully stimulating and supporting this collaboration.





At HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, students, lecturers and researchers work on societal issues together with partners from professional practice.

WE SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT DIGITALISATION OFFERS

The impact of digital transitions on society is immense and will only increase as time goes on. The internet, artificial intelligence, social media, and big data reach into every aspect of life and are bringing about fundamental changes. We are aware of the impact this development is having on professional practice, on the interaction between people and organisations, on societal issues, as well as on our own organisation, in terms of the way this influences our education and research, the way we collaborate with partners, the services we provide, and so on. In fact, we have chosen to embrace this development, and to actively and consciously use digitalisation as a catalyst for innovation and improvement.

As for education, for example, the digital transition means that the content of our curricula is changing. And because each form of digital transition leads to new ways of learning, we have to adjust our didactics accordingly. Students now search for knowledge and meaning in different ways, and they also want to navigate along their chosen route of learning. This requires our lecturers to adopt a different approach. Their work has therefore become more versatile and varied. In addition to teaching, their tasks increasingly include supervision and coaching, for example. For lecturer teams, the digital transition means that they cannot just be firmly anchored in professional practice and well-established in research, but they must also be digitally skilled.

The digital transition also has consequences for professional practice, which raises new questions that we seek to answer with our research. This is a particular challenge in the field of data, which involves making large amounts of information accessible and usable. This places high demands on our research infrastructure, thus requiring flexible research tools.

We realise that, in terms of digitalisation, we can only be successful if available resources are deployed in a targeted manner, and with a clear focus on people and culture.



We are investing in digital developments, and in doing so we constantly maintain our focus on people and culture.



2

WE WORK TOGETHER ON EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The HU trains (prospective) professionals who add value to the labour market with their up-to-date knowledge and skills. Our education is closely aligned with professional practice and society. In this way we not only keep our education current, we also guarantee its quality. Of course, our research methods contribute significantly to this. We train our students for life, meaning that we are firmly committed to 'life-long development'. The range of education that we offer responds to the movements of the labour market, and we are working towards making our education even more flexible. For us, 'student success' means that our students are successful in the job market and can make a difference to society.

Improving and revising our education is an ongoing process. That is why we strive for an internal dynamic that makes it possible for us to make quicker and better changes in response to the needs of our students, professional practice and society. When we revise our education, we pay particular attention to relevant new developments

in the labour market and in society. We also take into account new entrants to the higher education market and the changing way in which higher education is being funded. And of course, we will continue to pay close attention to the changing needs of students, staff members and clients. In improving our education, we mainly look at

components that have received insufficient attention in recent years, such as community formation, interpersonal competencies and personal development. Our research not only contributes to the quality of our education, but also to the innovation of professional practice. Our research is practice-based and focused on finding solutions to societal issues. Together with partners in our vicinity, we work towards developing new knowledge, products, methods and services. Over the coming period, we plan to further expand the scope of our research and to make it even more visible.

This will be described in more detail in the second part of this document.

WE WORK TOGETHER TO IMPROVE EDUCATION

HU lecturers work together to innovate our education. The process of revision moves from the outside in, making use of developments in the labour market, the knowledge gained from research and the HU's vision on education, entitled 'Our World of Tomorrow'. This vision statement is unique to and characteristic of our university of applied sciences, also because it stipulates that students and lecturers are jointly responsible for and in charge of the education provided. This changes the relationship between student and lecturer. Students actively search for and explore their own talents and development path. The role of the lecturer is therefore always adapting. Depending on the student's learning pathway, this can involve teaching, supervision, coaching as well as intermediate and mixed forms. We give our

full attention to the supervision of students in the development of their interpersonal, job-related and general competencies (such as professional research competence).

Our vision on education contains principles for designing and (re)organising our education, covering topics such as life-long development, co-creation with professional practice, education based on practice-based research, personalised learning and didactics aimed at novice or experienced professionals. Learning and talent development are central. We consider it our task to support our students' learning needs and to motivate and guide them towards fully utilising their talents. We therefore think it is important that our education meets the individual needs of students in terms of pace, interest, learning style and level.




Students and lecturers are jointly responsible for our education; they hold the reigns together.

WE GIVE STUDENTS SPACE

What is the lived experience of our students? What are their dreams and aspirations? What inspires them? What talents and possibilities do they have and what do they want to achieve in life? We are curious about our students, which is why we are in constant conversation with them. Our purpose lies in providing the education and supervision that is required to meet the needs, wishes and expectations of our students. We want to ensure that our students are not only ready for professional practice, but that they are also equipped for life after their studies - with sufficient self-confidence, optimism and valuable experiences.

We are arranging our education in such a way that students - when they are ready to do so - can take more and more substantive responsibility for their own degree programme and thus choose their own path. This includes the ability for former students to easily find their way back to the HU.

A young man with brown hair and a beard, wearing a white t-shirt and a blue jacket, is smiling and looking upwards. Next to him, a young woman wearing a red hijab, glasses, and a dark blue top is also smiling and looking upwards. They are both looking towards the upper right. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with red and white decorations, suggesting a festival or fair.

We arrange our education in such a way that students
- when they are ready to do so - can take more and
more substantive responsibility for their own degree
programme and thus choose their own path.

WE TRAIN OUR STUDENTS FOR LIFE

The time is long gone when students could complete their studies and then rely on this one diploma for the rest of their lives. Life-long development has become a matter of course. Working professionals need and want to continue their development in order to fulfil their own ambitions and to always remain employable. They therefore need to acquire new knowledge and competencies continuously. The HU wants to be a community in which working professionals are also welcome, where they too can participate in flexible (post-initial) education that is relevant to their career. This requires an education model that is composed of 'stackable units of study', which may or may not lead to a diploma. Such a model benefits the development of individuals, as well as the overall standard of our (knowledge-based) society. At the

HU, training for life also means becoming a well-informed world citizen. We help our students to acquire competencies that are indispensable in today's society, which nowadays extends to the international context. We thus encourage them to gain international experience by studying or doing a work placement abroad. But the international context also includes paying attention to processes of 'internationalisation at home'. This means that we explicitly integrate international and intercultural aspects in our education.

At the HU, we no longer speak about 'success rate', because we find the concept of 'student success' to be more relevant. After all, a student's success doesn't so much depend on whether or not they have obtained a certain diploma within a given

period, but on their success in the labour market and in society. Of course, we must also do our best to prevent unnecessary study delay and drop-outs. Once students begin a degree programme, we do what we can to encourage them to complete their programme. We also work to prevent increasing costs and therefore seek to continue to use the funds that have been made available to us in a responsible manner.

That is why, as a university of applied sciences, we are doing everything we can to make life-long development possible. The results of this effort can be seen in the way we have organised our education, in the attention we have given to the ability to transfer between all levels of education, in the way in which our lecturers function

and provide supervision and in the digital facilities that we continue to develop.

As far as we are concerned, 'life-long development' will remain one of the spearheads of our educational innovation, because in today's fast-changing world this will continue to be a necessity.



We train our students to become reflective professionals who will be successful in the labour market and who will be able to make a difference in society. That is what we mean when we speak of 'student success'!

WE TRAIN STUDENTS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

There is a great need in the labour market for professionals who can perform non-routine tasks.

This requires flexible and versatile people:

- with an investigative and critical eye;
- who are innovative and are not afraid of making mistakes;
- who can operate in a complex environment;
- who think in terms of opportunities and possibilities and have an entrepreneurial spirit;
- who are aware of their own abilities;
- who can work well together and have interpersonal skills;
- who are digitally skilled, internationally oriented and aimed towards the future;
- who can deal with diversity and whose thoughts and actions are inclusive.

These are precisely the qualities that anyone will recognise in the students and alumni of the HU.

We really enjoy seeing our alumni return to the HU.

This can take of a multitude of forms, for example as:

- loyal partners;
- students who continue to develop throughout their lives;
- clients or employers;
- a connection to professional practice;
- (guest) lecturers or researchers;
- critical friends;
- members of the HU community.

In return, the HU offers our alumni loyal partnership, a source of knowledge and a home base.





**We really enjoy seeing our alumni return to the HU.
In return, the HU offers our alumni loyal partnership,
a source of knowledge and a home base.**

WE ADAPT TO CHANGES IN THE LABOUR MARKET


The wide range of education offered by our institutes and degree programmes is a reflection of the labour market. Just like the other higher professional education institutions, we used to primarily provide bachelor's degrees. Nowadays, our portfolio is much, much broader. Once we committed ourselves to making life-long development the bedrock of our education, more and more new target groups started coming to us for their studies. Naturally, we want to offer these groups various new forms of education, including modular education. The education we offer for new target groups therefore also consists of a growing number of associate and master's degrees.

We provide training for professions that the labour market is asking for, both now and in the future. That is also why we are constantly

assessing whether existing programmes continue to justify their existence. Are they still needed (in their current form)? Is the labour market demanding something else, something more or perhaps less? We examine our range of education and the quality of the courses against (inter)national developments in the professional field, the need for specific skills among graduates and (projected) employment opportunities.

We have designed our organisation to be agile, so that we can quickly respond to new needs and developments. If a certain demand is high, we must be able to scale up quickly and make suitable arrangements. And if the market shrinks, our response is to reduce our offer in this aspect. Making our education more flexible also fits with such changes and developments.

Degree programmes in areas that are in high demand in the labour market, are offered to students in a form that allows them to continue their studies at their own pace. If it so happens that the demand for a certain type of professional falls away altogether, then it is our aim to guide students towards another discipline.

A photograph of two men in a meeting. In the foreground, a man with brown hair and glasses, wearing a blue hoodie, looks towards a whiteboard. In the background, another man is writing on the whiteboard with a black marker. The whiteboard has handwritten text in Dutch, including 'Interviews', 'vd (E) kennisw', 'binne E-learn', and 'afwegingen'.

The range of education offered by our institutes and degree programmes is a reflection of the current and future labour market.

WE ARE MAKING OUR EDUCATION MORE FLEXIBLE

During the revision of our degree programmes, the focus in the coming period will be on developing the variety of possible student learning pathways. Students who need a well-defined educational curriculum will be provided for. And students who need more space and flexibility will also be able to find what they need with us. This kind of flexible education requires customisability and an agile educational structure that can answer to personal wishes regarding content, level and pace of study. We refer to this as personalised learning. The options we have at the moment are still somewhat limited. On the other hand, students do already have the possibility, for example, of making a detour to another course or discipline, or to follow an honours track. It is also becoming increasingly easier to allow students to determine their own pace of

study; for example, if one student would prefer to obtain their diploma as quickly as possible, while another would prefer to receive partial certificates or not even work towards a diploma at all. We have already gained the necessary experience with flexibilisation, because we were involved in a number of pilots at an early stage. Education, supervision and assessment are therefore increasingly being designed to be independent of time and place. Digitalisation helps making this possible. It is for this reason that we will (again) be investing heavily in this over the coming period. One of our fundamental principles is that we work in an evidence-based and evidence-informed manner. That is why we thoroughly investigate new digital resources before we actually start using them. The professionalism of our lecturers ensures

that all our students receive the supervision they need. The final qualifications of our examination programmes are solid. We can therefore confidently deliver the quality that society and professional practice demand from us.



**We will continue to make our
education more flexible in view of
life-long development.**

OUR RESEARCH HAS A LASTING IMPACT

HU research is practice-based and has a lasting impact, both on our education and on professional practice. Thanks to our research, the education we provide fits in well with current developments in professional practice. The content of the education is also under constant revision, so that the given subject remains of high quality. In addition, through our research, we are making more and more progress with innovations within professional practice. That is the added value of conducting proper research.

Research is aimed at developing new knowledge, products, methods and services and improving all that is currently in place. Together with us, companies, institutions and governments formulate research questions and are closely involved

in conducting the research. In this way, we have influence on the knowledge infrastructure and on economic and social developments in the region. Collaboration can be either public-public or public-private and can take all kinds of forms. Consider, for instance, Centres of expertise, innovation labs, field labs and various kinds of projects, platforms and networks. We are already involved in many wonderful open innovation initiatives in the region, and we hope to be implementing many over the coming years.

We also have a lasting impact through our degree programmes. For example, students work on practical assignments during both their bachelor's and master's degree programmes, and they also follow a work placement in professional practice. These programmes are not only relevant to

the students themselves; they also provide new insights - through co-creation - within the context of professional practice. The professional master's degree programmes are another good example of lasting impact and influence. Students usually follow these courses alongside their jobs. Because the master's degree programmes also always involve researchers and professional practice, a natural connection is created between education, research and professional practice. Students can immediately use the knowledge they have acquired in their own professional practice. In our opinion, good education cannot be without good research. In the future, we aim to offer more master's degree programmes, as well as a related increase of our research capacity.



HU research is practice-based and has a lasting influence, both on our education and on professional practice.

WE ARE DEVELOPING RESEARCH THAT IS RELEVANT NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY

Our research is focused on finding solutions to societal issues. This is in keeping with national and international agendas. Recently, we have laid a solid foundation for the further development of our research. However, our position and profile could afford to be even more prominently displayed. We want to be able to compete with peers in the fields that are relevant to us, also elsewhere in the world. In this way, we would guarantee the quality of our research. Moreover, we wish to gain more recognition for our research, both regionally and (inter)nationally. This applies to both the research that is done in the research centres and the research that lecturers and students conduct (within the associate, bachelor's and master's degree programmes).

Over the coming period, we will be strengthening our international networks, among other things, by exchanging our own researchers with researchers from abroad. An additional advantage of this is that we will be able to better compete with the acquisition of new (national and European) grants and new forms of long-term financing. These extra resources are also needed to be able to conduct more research. In fields where we excel and are unique, we also want to participate in 'third cycle' experiments to give universities of applied sciences the legal right to award doctoral degrees.


A middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a grey vest over a striped shirt, is engaged in a conversation with two people whose backs are to the camera. They are in a room with a large window in the background that looks out onto a green landscape with buildings. A semi-transparent red box is overlaid on the lower right of the image, containing white text.

**We are intensifying the internationalisation
of our practice-based research.**

WE ARE STRENGTHENING OUR RESEARCH POSITION

We consider our practice-based research to be very important and want to increase the capacity thereof. Strengthening our research capacity is needed in order to realise our plans, as well as for the (social) recognition of our research. That is why we are aiming to increase the number of PhD students and post-docs in our research centres, as well as the number of lecturers doing research and the number of researchers involved in education. This will allow us to broaden our blend of research functions and increase the career perspective for researchers.

Lecturers do not always have sufficient knowledge and skills in the field of practice-based research. That is why we will be investing in professionalisation over the coming period. In addition, we will also be focusing on a properly integrated staffing plan (institutes and research centres together) and - where necessary - on an integrated approach for the inflow, transfer and outflow of staff members with research skills. We plan to further connect the resources available for PhD and post doc research to the HU profile and our knowledge agenda.



**We are strengthening our practice-based research
and thereby our research capacity and impact.**



3

WE ALL GIVE SHAPE TO THE HU

We are a learning organisation. By this we mean that we facilitate the learning of students and staff members, and we also expect our employees to continue to learn. Healthy, mutual collaboration is a priority for this kind of organisation.

Thanks to the revision and improvement of our organisation, we have become more effective and flexible. And we will not stop improving. On the contrary, we see improvement as an ongoing and necessary process that allows us to progress and constantly adapt to our rapidly changing environment. Change is part of the HU. We possess the courage to tackle things (differently) and try them out. Of course, not everything has to change. We are aware of how change places requirements on our people and our resources.

In this section, we will pay attention to our management philosophy, to collaboration in teams, to professionalisation and to the provision of services.

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF LEADERSHIP

At the HU, we all work together on education and research. We are connected to recognisable institutions, research centres and services, but we look and work beyond the boundaries of our own fields. We also keep an eye out for each other and for our environment. We stimulate and use talent, entrepreneurship and craftsmanship. We trust in each other's qualities and we cherish everyone's professional space.

We work in teams to develop engaging initiatives between and across disciplines. By continuously improving ourselves and by creating knowledge together, we develop our talents and help innovations within professional practice. Personal responsibility, taking the initiative and creating transparency are primary characteristics of the way in which we collaborate. This requires everyone to show leadership.





We trust in each other's qualities.

WE WORK IN TEAMS AND PLACE EMPHASIS ON PROFESSIONAL SPACE

Our aim is to be a well-organised and flexible network organisation, where employees have a proactive and entrepreneurial attitude and where less formalised consultation is needed, and where efficiency is combined with investing in tasks and responsibilities in such a way that they have the most effect. Teams are central to HU's organisational structure. This is not without reason: we believe teamwork is essential for the quality of education, research and the services we provide. As long as it is well-designed and properly deployed, teamwork means more interaction, better goal realisation through the combined input of expertise, shared responsibility, more effective learning, and above all, more job satisfaction. As

a university of applied sciences that is collaborating more and more intensively and actively with its partners, we believe it is essential for teams to be able to make cross-disciplinary connections, both within and outside the university.

Over the coming years, we will continue to pay attention to and facilitate team work and team interaction. As an inclusive organisation, teams must offer space for a variety of qualities. Teams are encouraged to judge and act professionally, to have the courage to take responsibility and to work towards shared goals. Teamwork, community building and professional space all require each other.



We work in teams and place emphasis on professional space.

WE ARE CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF QUALITY

Professionalisation gives a major boost to our culture of quality; to improving our education, research and services. That is why we think it is essential that teams and individual staff members continue to develop and to remain in touch with professional practice and newly developed knowledge. We ask of our lecturers that they are, in principle, trained to at least one degree higher than the education they provide, and that our professors have completed their PhD. This also contributes to a culture of quality.

Staff members working together in a team should complement each other's qualities. Not everyone needs to have the same abilities if all the necessary roles and competencies are present in a team and the various talents of all team members

are properly utilised. Professionalisation is a shared responsibility within the team. The team makes agreements about this with their manager. We do everything in our power to promote team learning and to facilitate knowledge development and exchange. Learning is not only a matter of formal training. It also takes place through informal pathways. This involves learning from other team members and from other teams, through peer reviews, intervision, and from the input from team coaches, buddies, mentors, and so on.





Working in teams is becoming increasingly important.

WE ALL GIVE SHAPE TO THE HU

Providing service and support is not a task that is solely reserved for the HU Services staff members, for these are the values that apply to all our staff members, HU-wide. This is our shared responsibility. Everyone puts in the necessary effort to facilitate all the processes at work within our university of applied sciences. Of course, each person does this from within their own role or position of authority, as well as within the obvious constraints of set frameworks and budgetary allowances.

Nevertheless, we consider the services we provide to be a fully integrated process with one shared quality cycle. The quality of the service we provide is the cumulative sum of expertise, service-oriented attitude, ownership and teamwork.

Our portfolio of services is being developed in line with the ongoing changes within education and research. And we have already achieved some wonderful results. We will continue to improve and innovate our basic processes, including introducing and supporting new forms of education and research.





**We all contribute to our culture
of service and support.**

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