

A young man and woman are smiling together. The man is on the left, wearing a blue and white striped t-shirt with a yellow flower patch. The woman is on the right, wearing a light blue shirt and a red cardigan. A red horizontal band is overlaid across the middle of the image, containing the main text.

TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE

Education and research as a basis for
talent development and innovation



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TOGETHER FOR THE FUTURE

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FOREWORD



Education, research and professional practice need each other to exist, flourish, improve and innovate. The stronger the inspiration and cooperation between education and research, the more and better we will be able to offer our students - our talent - a learning environment in which they work on solutions to the big and small problems and contribute to the major transitions of our time. HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht aims to create an inspiring and dynamic learning environment for them, based on this HU vision.

The first part of this vision document contains the key message: we have now brought education, research and our social tasks together in Together for the Future. This is followed by design dimensions for our education and research. This new HU vision builds on the educational vision Our World of Tomorrow, which we formulated in 2015.

We have chosen to combine our knowledge and skills in the field of education and research into four areas of expertise: Healthy Together, Sustainable Together, Learning Together and Digitally Together. Through these four areas of expertise, we bring focus to our contribution to the social challenges in the city and region of Utrecht.

Many students, teachers and researchers of our university of applied sciences have contributed inspiring and useful insights to this HU vision, which have been incorporated in Together for the Future. A valuable and intensive process,



which we look back on with pride. Of course, we also look ahead: Together for the Future outlines what we want to achieve. It also gives direction to our education, research, service, policy and, above all, cooperation with each other and with professional practice.

HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht is a large community of enthusiastic students, teachers, researchers and staff, with the common task of pushing forward with talent development and innovation. Together, we achieve more inside and outside of the university; we build a future together with those around us, with this HU vision as a starting point, source of inspiration and mutual promise.

The Executive Board,
Jan Bogerd, Wilma Scholte op Reimer, Tineke Zweed



HU VISION ON
EDUCATION
AND RESEARCH

2.1 TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

The world is changing rapidly and dramatically. All kinds of (new) social issues are constantly arising, from small and simple to large and complex. HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht has a pioneering role in tackling these issues. We train students and learning professionals who, with up-to-date, relevant knowledge and skills, strengthen the labour market and contribute to the regional Human Capital Agenda. Who are able to improve or innovate their own professional practice and make the world a more liveable place. That is why, as a university of applied sciences, we explicitly focus on practice-based research and cooperation in the region. Practice-based research is necessary to achieve innovation, and regional cooperation is needed to have an impact and create learning communities. We create impact through innovations via our practice-based research, but also through the talent development of students and learning professionals.

The HU is a university of applied sciences: education, professionalisation, research and innovation are our core activities. All these activities contribute to talent development and innovation in professional practice. In order to realise talent development and innovation, we need to properly connect education, research and practice. This



Our core activities are education, professionalisation, research and innovation

connection is already very strong, but we take this one step further in the coming years. We let education, research and practice come together in one common playing field, such as a learning community or a rich learning environment.



2.2 MISSION-DRIVEN EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Our education and research are mission-driven. Together with our partners, we look for solutions and effectuate their implementation in the region. With almost 40,000 students and learning professionals and more than 4,000 employees, we have a lot to offer! Thanks to our expertise, size and capability, we can make the difference.

Education at the HU is aimed at both aspiring professionals and professionals who want to continue learning. For the sake of readability, we always refer to them as students in this document. We offer initial and post-initial education in the form of full-time, part-time and work-study programmes. We provide education that touches students, and we seek to stimulate their curiosity and eagerness to learn. We also let them work on real social issues from day one. We educate students to become critical-thinking world citizens who - as we describe in our mission - want to contribute to an open, just and sustainable society. With an eye for diversity and inclusivity, with well-developed and strong research and innovation skills, and with international and intercultural competences that are indispensable in modern society. Because we strive for student success, we pay plenty of

attention in our education not only to qualification, but also to the personal and social development of students.

Our education encompasses levels 5 through 8 of the European Qualifications Framework, namely: associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree and professional doctorate. Practical questions that fit these levels and are socially relevant form the starting point for our education and research. The complexity of the environment in which students develop their innovative skills increases per level. For example, an Associate can look critically at work processes, a Bachelor can improve one's own professional practice, a Master can apply an organisational perspective, and a holder of a professional doctorate) can intervene in complex practical situations. In many cases, a transdisciplinary approach is needed.

In both education and research, we tackle issues that are in line with our mission and areas of expertise. That is why we commit to regional and (inter)national programmes and agendas that focus on social issues. Some issues are so complex and all-encompassing that current knowledge and understanding fall short of what is required to solve them. Together with our partners, we will have to think of new ways to deal with this. Addressing these types of issues, also known as wicked problems, requires a rich array of methodologies and approaches, as well as the input of partners from different fields. Such a transdisciplinary approach allows us to contribute to the social transitions necessary.



2.3 LEARNING COMMUNITIES AND RICH LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Combining education, research and practice requires different ways of learning and working. Learning communities, (knowledge) ecosystems and various types of rich learning environments such as field labs, workshops, living labs, hubs, challenges, and project-based learning are all examples of possibilities for realising this. Rich learning communities and learning environments already exist, both inside and outside of the HU. We have set them up ourselves or are participating in them, and we want to create more. Students, teachers, researchers, and professionals from the field, often joined by policy makers, users or citizens, work in co-creation on real learning situations, real issues and real (ethical) dilemmas. This way of learning and cooperating helps students, for example, to develop critical thinking skills and to take responsibility. Moreover, the learning communities and learning environments offer opportunities to shape social involvement, meaningfulness and value creation. Everyone learns from the interaction, from the different interests and perspectives, and from discovering the coherence in this. During the (transdisciplinary)



cooperation, new knowledge also comes into being. Innovation and education therefore go hand in hand. The cross-pollination between the professional field, citizens, students, teachers and researchers happens every day and strengthens education and research, even now!

Many of the social challenges we are facing in our own Utrecht region are similar to those in other regions or countries. This is why we are also linked to (inter)national learning and knowledge communities and partnerships. Although practical issues in the region often form the starting point for our research, we can also make an impact in an international context. The knowledge we have developed together with our regional partners is also relevant elsewhere (e.g. in a metropolitan context). Conversely, of course, we also learn from other regions and countries.

2.4 COOPERATION DOESN'T JUST HAPPEN

Cooperation is necessary to achieve our mission and remain relevant in the future. Together we can better find answers and solutions to the challenges in the labour market and society. Many successful partnerships and promising initiatives already exist in the region, in which we as a university of applied sciences are involved.

Cooperation sounds simple, but it doesn't come easy. Intensifying and strengthening cooperation requires the entire university to put in effort, and it takes time. Ultimately, we want cooperation to be a matter of course for all parties concerned. For internal cooperation, this means strengthening horizontal coordination between all sections (education, research and services). We set up our organisation in such a way that cooperation is facilitated optimally. Our quality infrastructure for education and research is in order. In the coming years, we will focus more on the interdependence and coherence between the quality of services and that of education and research. We will also pay more attention to the quality dialogue. We want to discuss quality properly. Only then will quality run through every vein of the HU and will we achieve a culture of quality. We hold each other to quality standards for education, research and business operations.

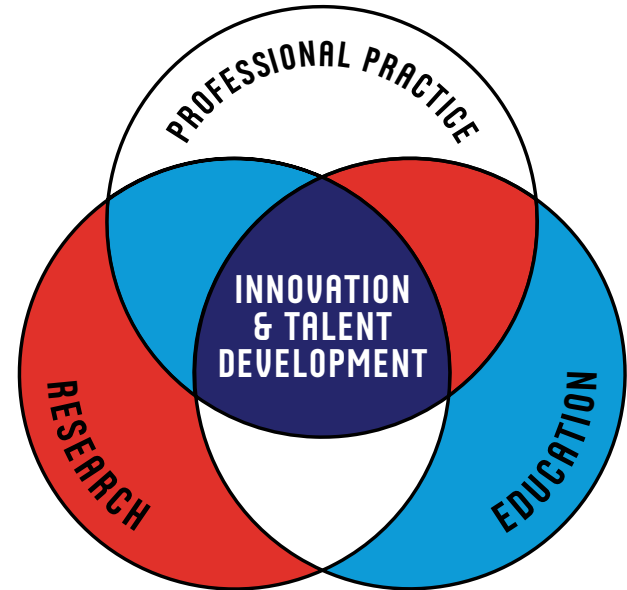


Intensifying and strengthening cooperation with external stakeholders means that we will invest even more in network development, maintaining relationships, structural interaction, and connection with the field and society. By being part of networks, we can respond better and faster to the social problems we want to solve, to the changing environment, and to developments as of yet unpredictable.

2.5 GUIDING STATEMENTS

We have summarised the essence of the HU vision on education and research in four guiding statements:

- 1 TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION
- 2 OPEN, JUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY
- 3 RICH LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES
- 4 HIGH QUALITY AND A CONSTANT FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT





TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

We train students and learning professionals who are able to improve and their own professional practice and innovate, and who will contribute to the region's Human Capital Agenda.

OPEN, JUST AND SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY

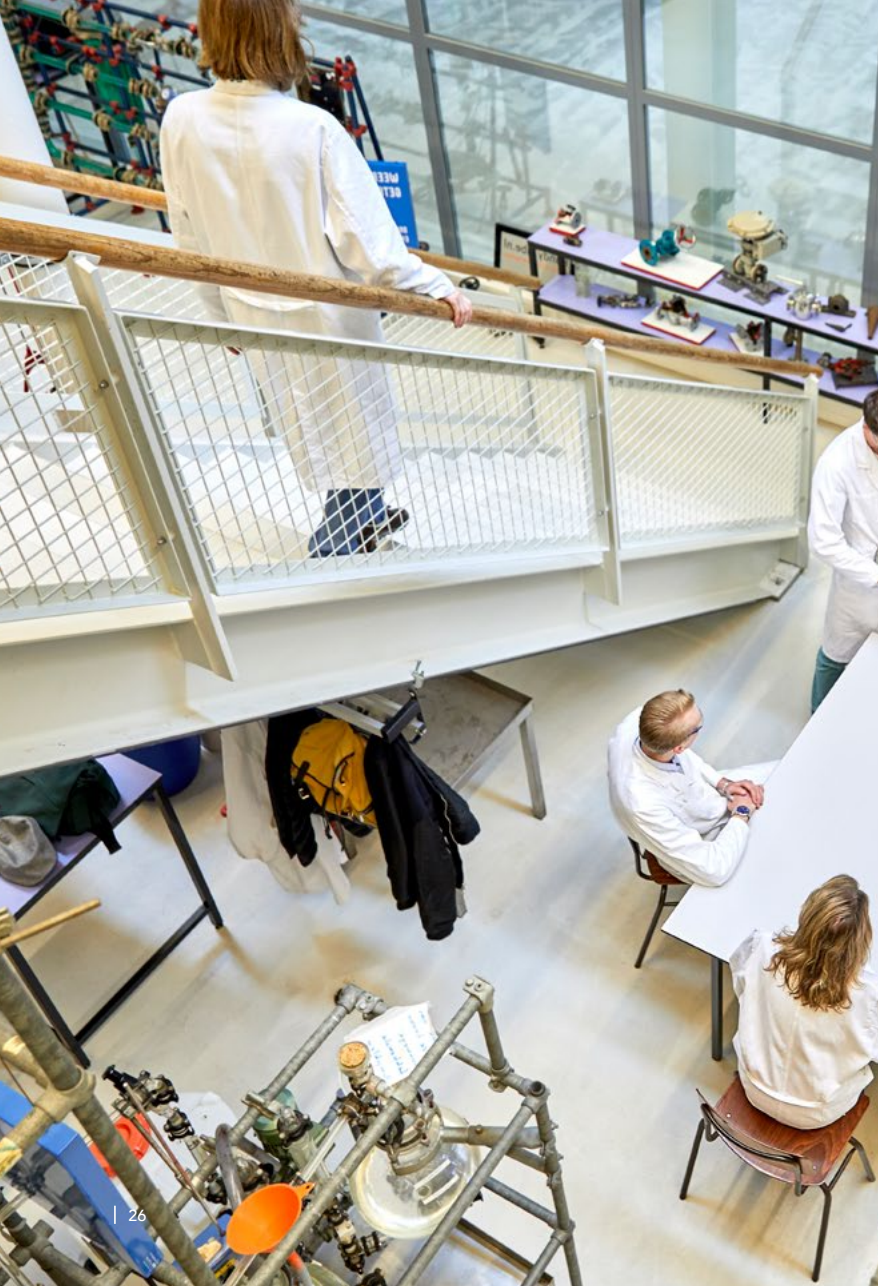
We want to be future-oriented and contribute to an open, just and sustainable society. That is why our education and research are in line with the social issues we want to help solve.

RICH LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS AND LEARNING COMMUNITIES

We create learning communities and rich learning environments. This goes beyond merely strengthening the cooperation between professional practice, research and education. We bring education, research and professional practice together. We create an environment that revolves around training, professionalising, researching and innovating together.

HIGH QUALITY AND CONSTANT FOCUS ON IMPROVEMENT

Our work is of high quality, with a constant focus on improvement. We are working to strengthen the culture of quality and want the importance of quality to be internalised, felt and propagated throughout the organisation.



HU UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES UTRECHT IN A NUTSHELL

We focus on four core activities: training, professionalisation, research and innovation. In doing so, we want to create value for our students, the labour market and society. We offer higher professional education at three levels: associate (level 5), bachelor (level 6), and master (level 7). Another level will be added soon, i.e. the professional doctorate (level 8).

OUR MISSION

By means of good education and research, we work on the development of talent and the innovation and professionalisation of professional practice. In doing so, we contribute to an open, just and sustainable society. dragen we bij aan een open, rechtvaardige en duurzame samenleving.

OUR AMBITIONS UP TO 2026



Mission-driven assignments

In tackling (social) problems, we are guided by our mission and our HU areas of expertise.



Life-long development

People want to continue to learn and develop. Society also requires this. At HU University of Applied Sciences Utrecht, students and working professionals can participate in education that is appropriate for them.



Student success

Professional and personal development of students go hand in hand. Everyone must be given the opportunity to attend and complete a study programme, but obtaining a (degree) certificate or diploma within the prescribed period of time is not an end in itself.



HU community

Together, we form an inclusive, accessible community. We value participation, cooperation and community building.



Digitisation

We invest in digital developments, paying constant attention to people and culture in doing so.

OUR AREAS OF EXPERTISE

Sustainable Together

In Sustainable Together, we are committed to reducing the ecological footprint of our region to zero. This can only be achieved if all citizens are involved. We therefore look at the economic and social aspects of sustainability.

Learning Together

In Learning Together, we invest in networks in which several generations learn, work, research and innovate together in the Utrecht-Amersfoort region. We promote equality of opportunity in an inclusive, sustainable world from an interprofessional perspective.

Healthy Together

In Healthy Together, we are striving to reduce the differences in health and well-being of people in the region. We want to increase their self-reliance and improve their lifestyle and social and physical safety.

Digitally Together

In Digitally Together, we want to give shape to digitisation and the use of data in a way that does justice to people and society. We want as many people as possible to benefit from digitisation and together arrive at solutions that are valuable and meaningful for our society.

APPENDIX 1

DESIGN DIMENSIONS FOR EDUCATION

In this appendix, we describe additional design dimensions that apply specifically to our education. We educate students to become critically thinking professionals who are able to improve their professional practice and innovate. In this way, we can contribute to an open, just and sustainable society. This calls for education that pays attention to personal and social development in addition to qualification.



1. LEARNING TEAMS

At the HU, we work with learning teams. Learning teams create bonds with other students in the study programme and the university. Students learn together, fulfil different (team) roles in relation to each other, use each other as peers and are each other's 'critical friend'. As we, for example, do not have class teaching systems at the HU and we offer opportunities for flexibility, we ensure that everyone has a safe home base in the form of learning teams. We shape the HU community through learning teams.

2. PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Education is about much more than attaining credits. It is about students gaining knowledge and skills, increasing their career opportunities, and developing personally in a professional context. We pay full attention to this, as well as to the well-being of our students.

Student success is our top priority. Teachers therefore also discuss social issues in the classroom. They do not shy away from difficult topics. They dare - on the basis of scientific knowledge - to ask critical questions that prompt reflection and expansion of knowledge. Think, for example, of conversations about the difference between real and 'fake' news. In addition, they are aware of their role in and influence on the shaping and personal development of students. Teachers have an eye and ear for students; they really want to see and understand them. They recognise that learning situations often require educational tact and a good relationship with students. They strive to create a safe, familiar situation for students and give them clear, meaningful feedback. This helps students in their further development. Apart from the teachers, it goes without saying that fellow students and other staff members also contribute to a safe environment to learn and work in. They also have an important role to play here.



Our pedagogical and didactic approach takes into account the differences between students who come from secondary school or senior secondary vocational education, and professionals who want to develop further. We also take diversity into account. This includes the cultural background, the field of work, the age, and the motivation of students. We connect our education as much as possible to their different motivations and learning needs. Ultimately, we want to enable them to grow in a way that best suits their own personal development. Through our education, we teach students to position themselves in relation to the complex world and find their way in it.

3. EDUCATIONAL ARCHITECTURE

Our education is student-centred. We enable students to attend the education that suits their preferences. Students who need a fixed curriculum are well served by us, but students who need more space and flexibility can also depend on us. We take into account the personal wishes of students in terms of content, level, and pace of study (i.e. personalised learning). We also offer them extra opportunities for expanding and extending their knowledge, for example in the form of minors and honours programmes.

Our students learn and work in learning teams. These teams regularly work on social issues that require a transdisciplinary approach. That is why the composition of learning teams themselves is often transdisciplinary. We have a common educational architecture that makes this possible. Thanks to this architecture, curricula can more easily 'move with' social questions. Moreover, it allows for better integration of different disciplines and better crossovers within and between curricula. In this way, our education remains relevant, agile and future-oriented. This is very important for everyone at the HU. Standardisation is also a precondition for strengthening the coherence between education, research and services.



Our educational architecture will increasingly consist of units of learning outcomes of 15 EC or possibly 30 EC, for example in the case of a graduation research project or work placement. We describe these according to a standardised conceptual framework and format. Our curricula are designed to be practicable, teachable and organisable. By organisable we mean, for example, that our processes and systems are capable of adequately supporting the education (as designed).

4.. FLEXIBLE TESTING

We create (rich) learning environments that are geared towards contributing to talent development and innovation. And we make personalised learning possible. This requires a different way of testing. In our testing, the emphasis is shifting from 'learning to take a test' to 'taking a test in order to learn from it'. Students receive meaningful information about their learning outcomes and test results. During the study programme, there is plenty of room for (moments of) self-reflection, evaluation and feedback. They can use that information to compile, for example, a portfolio. Students can then use such a portfolio to demonstrate that certain knowledge and competences have been developed and are present. Nationally defined exit qualifications indicate the results that must ultimately be achieved.

5.. BLENDED LEARNING

Blended learning is a combination of physical (face-to-face) education, education at the workplace, education in learning teams, and online education. In designing the curriculum, we strive for a good balance. For example, students can prepare well through online activities and then expand on their knowledge and experience during the on-site lesson. This way, face-to-face education gains more added value, also because it provides more opportunities to pay attention to the personal and professional development of students, as well as to their mutual cooperation and interaction.

6.. QUALITY

All our degree programmes are accredited on the basis of the NVAO quality framework. We keep up with national developments in the area of quality assurance and ensure that we are well prepared for possible changes. Teaching teams work intensively on improving and ensuring quality. An important aspect of this is the quality dialogue which, on the basis of data, is constantly being conducted in teams and with students.

APPENDIX 2

DESIGN DIMENSIONS FOR RESEARCH

In this appendix, we describe additional design dimensions specific to our research. Through our research, we have a (regional) impact and create an environment in which we educate students to become professionals capable of innovating their professional practice. This calls for infrastructure that strengthens the growth and quality of research. Our knowledge centres, institutes and support services work together from a common perspective. By further strengthening mutual connections, we can increase and sustainably consolidate our social impact.

1. CIRCULAR KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT

At the HU, we conduct scientific research that is known as practice-based. This, in essence, means that questions from practice are central. Our research is indispensable in the so-called knowledge chain, from fundamental findings to application, implementation and marketing. The process in that chain is often seen as linear and sequential, but we see it primarily as a circular process.

We use the results of fundamental research conducted by others and, combined with the results of our practice-based research, provide input for theory development and the adjustment of theoretical frameworks. Our practice-based research contributes to circular knowledge development and to a scientific knowledge base. By making good connections with other research institutions, we can complement each other better and create joint innovations. To have even more impact, we want to further strengthen cooperation with research institutions more focused on fundamental and applied research in the coming years.

We believe that research is of real value when it is conducted in practice, for and with practitioners, through a participatory approach. We involve stakeholders from a wide range of social groups in our research. We want them to benefit



too. That is why we work according to the principle of open science. We want our research to have a sustainable impact on education and practice, which is visible in both the short and long term. Our research is truly accessible to all stakeholders and so are the insights it provides. We are continuously working on making the results of our research visible and comprehensible. We do not limit ourselves to one form of impact, but follow various routes: from developing concrete products to influencing the behaviour of professionals and facilitating systemic change in specific sectors, such as health care or secondary education.



**The research is methodically thorough,
practically relevant and ethically sound**

2. PREREQUISITES FOR QUALITY

As far as research quality is concerned, we follow the advice of the national working group on quality, which distinguishes three pillars for research quality: the research is methodically thorough, practically relevant, and ethically sound. We have added a fourth pillar to this, namely: the research is based on theory. We can speak of qualitative practice-based research only when all four basic conditions are met.

We use the Practice-Based Research Impact Model for Evaluation, or PRIME model for short, to discuss the relevance and impact of our research. With the help of this model, we can organise and clarify the various forms in which our research has an impact (in education and professionalisation, professional practice and science).

3. INNOVATION OF OUR RESEARCH

We are constantly working on improving and modernising our practice-based research and are ourselves subjects of research and innovation. We are taking the initiative for this

ourselves and want to (further) develop the necessary expertise. This applies, for example, to methodology, to cooperation with education and practice, or to our role within the regional network of organisations focused on research and innovation. By further developing practice-based research, we can make our research of value to our students and society.

4. RESEARCH SUPPORT

Our ambitions in the field of research mean that we will also have to invest in a professional and integral research support system that supports our students and (teachers) researchers in carrying out practice-based research. We are working on robust physical and digital research infrastructure with professional support in areas such as acquisition, data-driven quality improvement, project management, methodological support, partnership building, and data science. Combining research, education and practice places demands on (the further development of) our Human Capital Agenda, systems, business operations, accommodation, integrated security and our relationship management.

¹ The HU endorses the advice of the Working Group on the Quality of Practice-Based Research and the Research Group chaired by Henk Pijlman (The Hague, 2017).

² The PRIME model was developed by Daan Andriessen et al. (2017). Also refer to: More value with Higher Professional Education | Hogeschool Utrecht (hu.nl).



**IMPACT
YOUR
FUTURE**