

Collaborating on transitions

The knowledge agenda of The Hague University of Applied Sciences summarised



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INTRODUCTION

The Hague University of Applied Sciences is developing into a knowledge institute with a recognisable profile. A knowledge institute where research, education and external stakeholders work together to create social impact. Research at The Hague University of Applied Sciences is characterised by a multidisciplinary approach. A lot is happening already. Yet an extra step will be needed to become that recognisable knowledge institute. With this knowledge agenda, we aim to increase our social impact by doing three things. We strengthen collaboration in the education, research and society triangle. We deepen internal collaboration between faculties, centres of expertise and service departments. And we make The Hague University of Applied Sciences more visible as a knowledge institute.

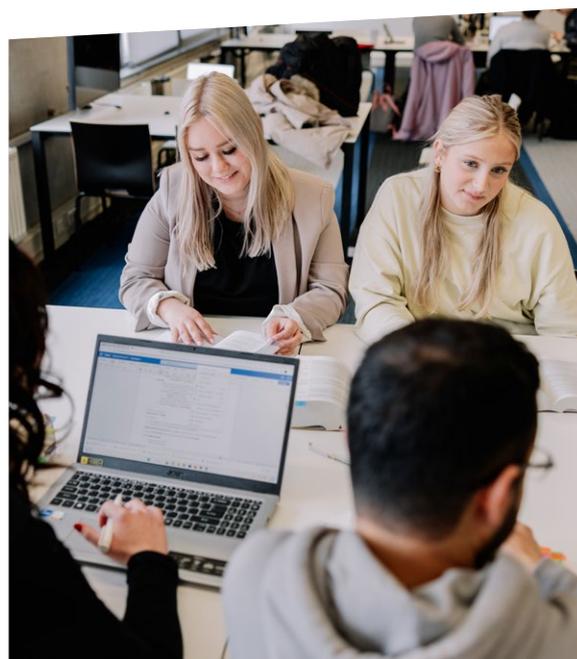
For this, we need more focus. This is why we are pooling our energies on three themes: 1) just society, 2) the transition to sustainability and 3) the digital future. In doing so, we are building on our strengths. The themes also prompt us to innovate, related to important developments in society, at local, regional, national and international level.

How will we use the themes?

By choosing these themes, we aim to release energy and creativity and create opportunities for multidisciplinary collaboration. In the coming years, the focus of The Hague University of Applied Sciences will be on these three themes. All lecturers and degree programmes will consider how they relate to these themes. Of course, there remains room for education and research not directly linked to any of the three themes, provided it can be made clear why it is important to invest in such a 'free' subject. The knowledge agenda thus becomes a living document.

TRANSITIONS AROUND THREE THEMES

How do we capitalise on the opportunities of these times and face challenges? This will require more than gradual change. The culture, structure and way of working in society and within organisations will have to change fundamentally for this to happen. Because the three chosen themes are intertwined, they require an integrated approach. In many areas - technological, economic, administrative and social - changes are needed at the same time. In our research, we look for practical interventions and appropriate solutions together with education and the professional field. As a university of applied sciences, we choose the values of equity and sustainability. And we emphatically want to harness digital technology for an economy that is virtuous. These values determine the actions of employees. We also give them to our students.



1

Just society

In the context of this theme, our practice-oriented research enhances insights into issues of justice and equity. Equal opportunities for health in our urban environment, for example. We are developing ways to give all citizens a voice in municipal policies.

Theme description

How do you create equal opportunities for all in an increasingly unequal society? The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) is already characterising the Netherlands as a class society. Addressing this inequality is a complex task. Nevertheless, as The Hague University of Applied Sciences, we want to actively contribute to successful solutions. For example, by creating a deeper understanding of metropolitan issues and conducting action research.

A broad view and a multi-layered approach are needed to increase equality of opportunity. We need to be mindful of the connection between different issues. Using a layered approach, we aim to transform systems that currently perpetuate inequality. For us, this layered approach takes shape in city labs and field labs, in learning and knowledge networks, in short in practice-oriented research in which we seek solutions to concrete problems.

Where do we stand?

In working out the theme of just society, we already do a lot of work at local level with the municipality of The Hague, with schools, welfare and health institutions and with sports organisations. By conducting participatory research, we identify where residents of The Hague encounter barriers. We also conduct research within

The Hague on migration, on the meaning of citizenship education for vulnerable young people in vulnerable neighbourhoods and on ways to achieve a just energy transition.

Regionally, we examine the state of opportunity equality for students studying at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. What are their chances in further education or the job market? Furthermore, we are building a regional agenda to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of resources.

Our research to improve the health of people in low socio-economic situations is nationally embedded. In that breadth, we are also researching early school leavers and how equitable educational opportunities can be achieved for all.

We very deliberately seek international cooperation in our research. Because injustice and inequality also occur beyond our borders. This is why we increasingly want to work together within Europe in consortia of like-minded people.

Our vision of the future

As a university of applied sciences, we want to contribute to a just society. To do so, we build on our existing external networks, which we continue to develop into partnerships. As centres of expertise, we develop in-depth knowledge and understanding of the issues underlying poverty and (health) inequality. We develop these insights together with our stakeholders and together with lecturers and students from the perspective of education. With our stakeholders, we are developing a joint research and impact agenda.

Further development

By choosing the theme of just society, we create a unifying element in the university of applied sciences across degree programmes and research groups. This theme is an important guiding principle when choosing new research groups, new degree programmes and new research. We invite external parties to work with us.



2

Transition to sustainability

A liveable and sustainable future for all. That doesn't seem too much to ask. Yet we see that the chances of this are getting smaller and smaller. This is why The Hague University of Applied Sciences is working on a systematic transition to a situation that is more balanced and also sustainable. To achieve that situation, fundamental changes are needed in the short term in the political, social, economic and technical fields. We want to contribute to that transition, aiming for a society where the use of energy, raw materials and labour is balanced and where benefits and burdens are shared fairly.

We are already contributing to that ourselves. We are sustainable in our operations, our education and research. By conducting research, we help accelerate and broaden sustainability. And we provide young professionals every year who will work on much-needed fundamental transitions.

Theme description

We need to move towards a restored balance at the system level. This requires a perspective that does not focus on the individual but looks at the sustainability of the whole system. Which raw materials do we extract from nature in a sustainable way? How do we design society so that we treat people sustainably?

We want to move towards a circular economy, keeping raw materials in a closed loop as much as possible and minimising CO₂ emissions.

When it comes to dealing with each other, we still far too often see exclusion, big differences between rich and poor and international divisions. Human rights, including children's rights, are under increasing pressure. The much-needed fundamental transitions must be inclusive. Everyone should be able to participate in them. On the way to that new situation, education and research can play an important role. In living labs, we work with stakeholders on experimental research. The influence of the environment is essential in this, because without it, it is difficult to tackle the overall problems.

Where do we stand?

To achieve that transition to sustainability, we conduct research at local, regional, national and international levels. Locally, we place particular emphasis on action research. On just doing. On working together as much as possible. Showing to as many people as possible that we are taking steps and achieving results.



Regionally, we work with stakeholders on content and in an integrated way. The multidisciplinary approach in our research projects is proving to be a success factor.

Looking at our research with a national impact, it is increasingly clear that learning communities and living labs are the ways to work on sustainable transitions from different perspectives.

On the theme of transition to sustainability, we are also active internationally. For example, we conduct research on European climate policy. To do so, students, in cooperation with community centres, interview young people from power districts in The Hague and policymakers at ministries and international institutes in The Hague.

Our vision of the future

THUAS aims to be a pioneer in a sustainable region with national and international appeal. In co-creation, we want to work towards a thriving ecological, economic, social and political-legal system that is balanced for the present and future generation. To this end, we further expand our regional and national network through strategic partnerships with companies, municipalities and other civic organisations.

Further development

As The Hague University of Applied Sciences, we continue to focus on the complex transitions needed to achieve a sustainable society in the research-education-outside world triangle. Transitions in technology, in the economy, in law and governance and in education. Participation and support are key elements in that development. For sustainability projects to succeed, combining these areas of focus is important.

3

Digital future

In the digital future, citizens and professionals are using digital technologies to shape their sustainable societies. This is a society where people can live safely, healthily and well. In which they have equal opportunities. A society also in which they can have a positive impact on the natural system of which they are a part. We want to build that future, together with the professionals we train. With them, we want to seize every opportunity to make that digital future a reality. Our focus here is on two things: 1) safety and resilience and 2) the future of work.



Theme description

What we know is that the deployment of digital technology has radically changed the way we live, work, care and produce in recent decades. We also see that justice and sustainability are under pressure in society and business. This poses major challenges to society. As a university of applied sciences, we want to offer people and organisations tools to work on those challenges.

Through our range of degree programmes on offer, we can make students digitally proficient. And by connecting technology to practice-oriented research, we can simultaneously address acute problems and train students who can do the same in their own practice in the future. To meet the challenges, the outside world demands multidisciplinary student teams. By facilitating in this, we help society. Not only that. We also help our students develop a shared language. A language they will need in their professional lives.

As a knowledge institute, it is up to us to help determine how we meet the aforementioned challenges. Waiting is not an option in this regard. We will have to actively work to help shape the digital future. In light of this, we want to empower students, citizens and organisations to make choices around the design, development and use of digital technologies. This will cover the pros and cons of digitalisation and we will focus on making the most of the benefits.

To us, digital technologies are essential in solving societal challenges. They contribute greatly to the economy. Potentially, that contribution will only grow. We are already deciding what the digital future will look like. We need to make choices on how people, organisations and technology work best together. In doing so, our research focuses on safety and resilience and the future of work.

Where do we stand?

Digitalisation goes to the heart of society. Therefore, it is not surprising that many research groups are already working on the topic of digital future. In turn, each research group works on this with students and lecturers. In many of them, we want to use digitalisation as a driving force for a sustainable and just society. Precisely because digital technology impacts all facets of society and raises practical and research questions, we see growing potential for collaboration between non-technical and technical research groups in all centres of expertise.

Our vision of the future

The Hague University of Applied Sciences wants to contribute to the development in which people can use digital technologies to shape their lives and work. If they want to harness digital technology for an economy that is virtuous, they can turn to us. In co-creation with them, we want to develop systems, techniques and business and organisational models that enable the economy that works.

With our direct cooperation partners, we will form networks of stakeholders who want to further increase their influence ten years from now. They then know they can rely on us structurally. They find it a success to work with us and they see how it changes their economic sector. Our partners then convey that The Hague University of Applied Sciences has contributed to the use of digital technology, especially when it comes to safety and resilience and the future of work. Those networks extend beyond our national borders.

Further development

The three themes within this knowledge agenda - just society, the transition to sustainability and the digital future - are binding elements between degree programmes and research groups. With the breadth of the third theme, we want to offer degree programmes and research groups the space to contribute to the three themes with their own approach and profile. We also want to strengthen mutual and external cooperation.

So the current profile is a foundation that we continue to shape together with the relevant research groups and in consultation with the degree programmes. Where we find any gaps in our research capacity, we start new research groups, where necessary. But we start with external profiling - we set up a shop window for our external parties - and with internal cooperation.

Digitalisation will also start to affect our own education and research processes. We strengthen these processes by researching that influence, by learning from other research and by learning from skills gained by students and lecturers in practical assignments. We embrace a nuanced approach to inclusive education. We ensure that the digital future is one in which everyone can participate and thrive, in a way that matches their individual values and aspirations.



INTERNATIONALLY-ORIENTED RESEARCH

In our Strategic Plan 2023-2028 'Inquiry-based Learning with Impact', we state: 'We do more than teaching and research. We are building a community that is diverse and inclusive and quite international' (p. 3). How could it be otherwise in The Hague, the international city of peace and justice? The three themes we have chosen have global relevance.

Europe stands for equality, tolerance and social justice. The European Commission implements these values as much as possible in its policies and strategy. We therefore see that the theme of just society fits well with the European Commission's current priorities. It emphasises a fair transition to a circular economy. It wants to give more attention to the social dimension in the economy to ensure a decent standard of living for everyone within the European Union. Social justice and prosperity for all come first as we build an economy that works.

As the three chosen themes have international relevance, we consider international cooperation important. Already, centres of expertise are working with international partners at various levels. We have filled strategic positions in various surveys. We are experienced in requesting and conducting international studies. We would like to join research forces internationally and learn from each other.

The Hague is well placed to create international research impact. The Hague is positioned well internationally for this, with leading knowledge institutes in the region, such as TU Delft, Leiden University and TNO, and with international and innovative organisations within the city, such as Europol, UNOCHA, the UNICRI Centre for Artificial Intelligence & Robotics and NCI Agency. We only want to expand that collaboration as we flesh out the knowledge agenda.



EMBEDDING KNOWLEDGE AGENDA IN ORGANISATION

With the knowledge agenda, we want to further focus our research on the agreed themes. Do we want to direct content on those themes and connect them? With the knowledge agenda, we aim to strengthen internal and external cooperation. In doing so, the current centres of expertise lead the way. They have to take the three themes forward by developing projects together with education and external stakeholders. In doing so, the centres of expertise build on their long-term plans for now, but gradually the three themes of the knowledge agenda become more and more guiding.

For each theme, two leading lecturers from two centres of expertise will be responsible as lead managers. They are responsible for the further development of the knowledge agenda for their theme and funding the right projects.

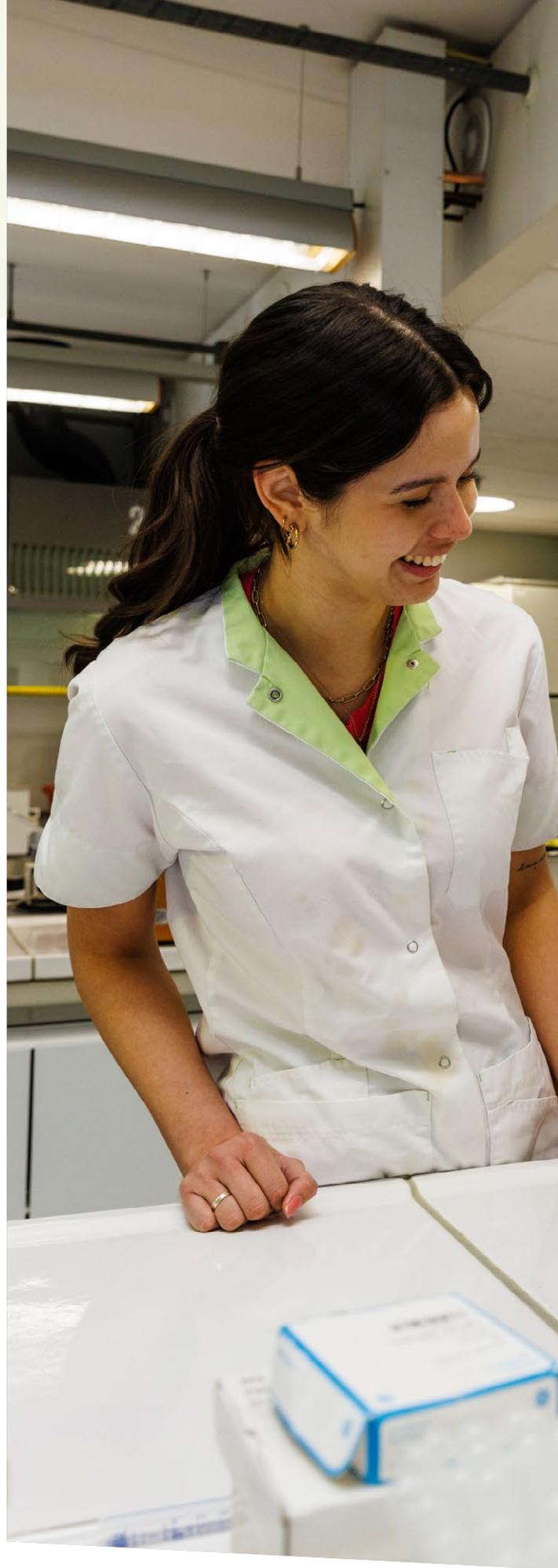
Collectively, we look three times a year at how we are making progress together on the themes. We invest about half of the additional funds made available by the central government in this knowledge agenda. With these funds, we give the centres of expertise an extra impetus to develop the agenda and implement projects together with faculties, departments and the outside world.

By 2024, we will invest an equal amount of resources per centre of expertise and per theme. On this basis, the pairs of centres of expertise develop a coherent programme of projects and activities for each theme. From 2025, we will allocate funding based on that programme.



INVITATION TO COOPERATE

With this knowledge agenda, we want to create impact in our research, education and society in the three themes we have chosen. In the further developing cooperation, new ideas will emerge in the coming months and years. Ideas that we cannot envisage right now. As such, the knowledge agenda is also an invitation for everyone inside and outside the university of applied sciences to work with us. To work from their own perspective on a just society, sustainable transitions and a digital future.





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