Innovating and Connecting

Leiden University Strategic Plan 2022-2027
Foreword .................................................................................................................. 4
Summary .................................................................................................................. 6
1 Key message: connecting on the basis of our strength ........................................ 9
2 Who we are and what inspires us ...................................................................... 13
   Our strong characteristics ............................................................................... 14
   Our promise ................................................................................................... 17
   Our core values ............................................................................................... 17
3 Our challenges .................................................................................................. 19
4 What we are aiming for .................................................................................... 23
   Our direction: strong connections for quality and impact ......................... 24
   Ambition 1: Space for innovation .................................................................. 27
   Ambition 2: Pioneering interdisciplinary research and teaching .................. 30
   Ambition 3: Future-proof development of students ...................................... 33
   Ambition 4: A healthy, engaged and learning community ............................ 36
   Ambition 5: More value through strategic collaboration .............................. 39
   Ambition 6: Ample scope for talent and development .................................. 43
5 Looking ahead: from strategy to realisation .................................................... 46
Appendix 1 – Ongoing development themes ...................................................... 48
Appendix 2 – Interdisciplinary programmes ...................................................... 50
We are proud to present this new strategic plan for our university. It is a plan by and for all of us. We are not only proud of the content, of the route charted and of the ambitions, but above all of the way in which this strategic plan has been developed: together. Many of you have shared your ideas openly and enthusiastically, inspired us and one another, and shared numerous valuable insights. Our stakeholders also showed a great affection for our university and were more than willing to share their views. We realise that this involvement has been all the more meaningful in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

We went through this process together. Reflecting and looking ahead provided energy and motivation. In doing so, we listened carefully to one another and looked closely at what we as a university have ‘under the hood’. We saw that we have so much to offer at our university in terms of teaching and research, and that this strength enables us to create many new opportunities. We also realised once again how lucky we are with our active and engaged community and with our excellent collaborative relationships with partners near and far. Of course we also recognised the urgent dilemmas that require solutions. We are convinced that the new strategy will contribute to innovating and connecting, and that together we can respond to the challenges we face.

Thanks to this joint effort, we now have a fantastic new perspective for the coming years. We would like to thank our university community and partners for all their help and look forward to working with them to make this new strategic plan a reality.

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SUMMARY
As a university we are at the heart of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society. This challenges us to innovate. It is important that we are attuned to these developments and are able to respond in a fitting and alert fashion. Guided by our core values of connecting, innovating, responsible and free, we focus in this new strategic plan (Innovating and Connecting – 2022-2027) on stronger connections. This will enable us to forge more connections between disciplines, to work with others on creating new chances and opportunities for research and teaching, to achieve greater synergy between our university and society, and to develop a strong university community. This is how we will continue to innovate and pioneer, and increase our social and scientific impact. To strengthen these connections, we will work in the years ahead on the following six strategic ambitions:

1. **Space for innovation**
   Realising change and innovation requires space. In the years ahead we will create more space to make the workload manageable and to provide more opportunities for our staff to pursue their ambitions. We will do this by improving our processes and systems (making them smart and simple), by providing better support for research and teaching, and by creating frameworks for our teaching. We will also bring more focus by differentiating in terms of goals and ambition level, and will make our quality assurance more efficient and development oriented.

2. **Pioneering interdisciplinary research and teaching**
   We will ensure that the quality of our individual disciplines remains high. This will serve as the basis for a firmer interdisciplinary focus. And our interdisciplinary research will offer space for free and fundamental research. To achieve this we will create ‘interdisciplinary hubs’ with space for experimentation and collaboration. We will continue to develop our interdisciplinary research programmes, and will add ‘Europe’ as an extra programme. We also aim to expand our range of interdisciplinary education, and will facilitate broad-based academic practice through an open-science programme.

3. **Future-proof student development**
   We aim to provide an innovative, flexible, high-quality, future-proof academic education. Our vision on teaching and learning (Learning@LeidenUniversity 2017-2023) is based on the principle of inquiry-based learning and focuses on broad student development within an enriching academic environment. In the years ahead we will invest in inquiry-based and activating learning, and will give societal issues a more prominent role in our teaching. We will also ensure that students have more opportunities to develop within an international environment, and will increase our activities in the area of personal and professional development during and after students’ initial studies, to give them the opportunity to work on their future academic self.
4. **A healthy, engaged and learning community**

We will continue to build an open and learning organisation where students and staff feel at home and can make the most of their potential. We will invest in the adaptive and relational leadership that will serve this ambition, and will continue our steps to support our staff’s well-being by reducing their workload and developing an evidence-informed vision and policy. For students we will intensify our focus on prevention, and will work on a study environment that promotes well-being in the widest sense of the word. We will also improve the opportunities for staff exchanges and will develop an inclusive language policy.

5. **More value through strategic collaboration**

Collaboration is essential to improving the quality of our teaching and research, generating societal impact, attracting funding and raising our profile. Our campuses in Leiden – in the city centre and on the Leiden Bio Science Park – and The Hague will serve as important infrastructure at the local, regional and international level. In the years ahead we will intensify our participation in regional ecosystems, expand our activities in The Hague and strengthen our network in Leiden. We will also deepen existing collaborations with partner institutions in Europe, China, Indonesia, Latin America and the Caribbean, and will build on our partnerships in and with Africa.

6. **Ample scope for talent and development**

We will improve the opportunities for the professional growth of all our staff, academic staff and organisational & policymaking staff alike. We will ensure a good balance between individual growth and team development, and will develop an integrated talent policy and increase the possibilities for professional development. This will make it easier for us to do justice to people’s different qualities and take more account of the many tasks within the University. We will pay specific attention to career options in our teaching as well as to the continued professional development of our lecturers. We will also provide greater clarity about careers, and will substantially reduce the percentage of lecturers on temporary contracts and will aim for more permanent contracts instead. Temporary contracts will be for a pre-agreed, fixed period. Furthermore, in years ahead we will take part in the discussion on redefining the term ‘excellence in academia’, both nationally and internationally.

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**How do I get a hard copy of the Strategic Plan?**

Request your copy at communicatie@leidenuniv.nl
Connecting on the basis of our strength
ith a long tradition of pioneering teaching and research, Leiden University fulfils an important role in society. We respond to scientific and societal developments, and constantly seek knowledge development – even if that search will not immediately result in demonstrable applications. We are in an excellent position to succeed in this, because almost the whole spectrum of academic disciplines is represented at a high level here. This variety offers many options for exploring new directions, guided by our core values: connecting, innovative, responsible and free. The staff of our university community are part of a rich academic tradition that enables them to break new ground, provide innovative solutions and respond to the questions and needs of the present day.

**Challenging environment and rapid changes**

As a university, we are situated at the heart of an increasingly complex and rapidly changing society. This means we are challenged to innovate. Even more than in the past, society is looking to universities for solutions to complex societal issues, such as those relating to climate change, migration and health. Finding structural solutions to these kinds of issue requires an interdisciplinary and innovative approach, and intensive collaboration with other parties. The connections needed for this create exciting opportunities for research and collaboration within and between different academic fields, which can lead to highly promising research applications with a major societal impact. At the same time, independent, fundamental research is under threat, partly because of the fewer funding options. In addition, the competition for talented academics is also increasing, which makes it harder to attract highly qualified academics. And in recent years we have seen academic freedom as a whole, but also individual academics, threatened by, among
others, attacks in both traditional and social media. The speed at which these changes are taking place calls for changes in the structure of our organisation.

**Making stronger connections**
The route charted by our previous strategic plan *Freedom to Excel* (2015-2021) has helped to create a strong basis from which we can address the current challenges. We further build on this basis in this new strategic plan *Innovating and Connecting* (2022-2027). Our aim is to intensify connections, allowing us to make even better use of the potential of our strong academic disciplines, our valuable partnerships and the talent in our university community. This will increase our impact on society and academic knowledge, and ensure that we maintain our pioneering role with research-based teaching and top-level research. It will also take us further towards achieving a better work and study environment, targeted talent development and greater organisational flexibility.

**Realising our strategy depends on future financial latitude**
The extent to which we can realise our ambitions in the years ahead depends not only on the amount of funding that the University itself can release and attract, but also on the national developments in the area of higher education funding. The higher education system is creaking, mainly under the strain of continuous growth in student numbers, combined with reduced public funding. The increased competition for research funding is an important factor too. Despite the inadequate funding, we have succeeded in maintaining the accessibility of our education and retaining high standards of research and teaching. However, we are paying a price for this: the workload of our staff has been much too high for years.

We will increase our impact on society and academic knowledge.
Our choice for the years ahead is primarily to seek space for innovation and solutions for the workload in a more efficient and effective organisation. We obviously wish to avoid all measures that could negatively impact the quality and accessibility of our research and teaching, so we will actively campaign for more funding within the framework of Universiteiten van Nederland (formerly the VSNU).

If, however, additional investments in higher education are not made, and a satisfactory solution therefore cannot be found for the high workload, we will be compelled to make different, more focused choices. These choices will inevitably affect the quality and accessibility of our research and teaching in general, and the realisation of our strategic ambitions in particular.

**From strategy to realisation**

In this strategic plan we show the route we will take in making stronger connections in the years ahead. We have defined six strategic ambitions, each of which is further developed in a number of action lines. This is the route that will give direction to the choices and decisions we make during that time. How far we can go in realising the ambitions depends on developments both within and outside our university. The ambitions and action lines also differ in terms of their starting positions and level of development. Where possible, the action lines have already been defined more specifically, but in other cases their formulation is more open and exploratory. On the one hand, this is appropriate for a strategic plan that looks many years ahead, and on the other hand it offers space to further prioritise and make adjustments in the development and implementation of the Plan. To move from a strategic framework to execution in practice, we will translate it into an implementation agenda with clearly defined actions and indicators.

We will actively campaign for more funding together with the other Dutch universities.
Who we are and what inspires us
Our strong characteristics

Together, the seven characteristics below define the identity of Leiden University.

1. Pioneering research and teaching based on a wide diversity of academic disciplines
Within our university we have a wide diversity of academic disciplines, which extend across research domains within Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH), the exact sciences and the medical sciences. Leiden University is especially careful in how we handle knowledge areas and academic collections that have a unique national or international position. We are proud of the excellent standard of our research: with a wide range of academic disciplines and a great diversity of research areas, we are world leading. Our teaching is also of a high quality, which is due in part to its strong links with our research.

2. Deep-rooted academic freedom
Our motto Praesidium Libertatis – Bastion of Freedom – expresses our conviction that our university can only function in freedom. Freedom of thought and freedom of expression are essential to good academic research and teaching. We see ourselves as a guardian of academic freedom, and guarantee an open and inclusive community that promotes, nurtures and values this motto within and outside the University. Leiden University’s scholars are our antennae in society and are prominently represented in societal debates. They feel called to ask the questions they believe should be asked, and want to help to answer these – even when this is challenging.

3. Intrinsic international orientation
Top-quality research and teaching is only possible in an open, limitless international context. Leiden is traditionally one of the most international universities in terms of orientation, subject matter
and networks, attracting many scholars and students from within and outside the Netherlands. We additionally have four institutes abroad, each with its own national remit: the Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies (KITLV-KNAW) in Indonesia, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT), the Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo (NIVC) in Egypt and the Netherlands Institute in Morocco (NIMAR). Our strong international orientation and position ensure that we always maintain our international focus, including here in the Netherlands. It is this connection between local, regional, national, European and global that makes our university a strong and uniting international player, which benefits not only our students and scholars, but also society as a whole.

4. Open, active and engaged University community
Leiden University is an open, active and engaged community. Our management model offers ample scope for participation and involvement in governing the organisation. The motivation, inspiration and enthusiasm of our staff ensure that the high quality of our research and teaching is maintained at all times. Our staff collectively create an environment where researchers, lecturers and organisational & policymaking staff can continuously develop, students can flourish and alumni have a ‘home’. We recognise the efforts of our active students, who foster our university community with their contributions to administration, co-participation and study or student associations. Many also work to promote ‘our’ cities of Leiden and The Hague. Long after completing their studies, many of our students still have a deep sense of involvement with their university. Alumni are therefore very important for our university and we therefore seek to build and maintain a good, strong relationship with them. They are ambassadors of the study programmes and the University, supply valuable feedback on how the University is developing, and support our students in preparing for the job market. Their academic and financial contributions create new opportunities for students and researchers.

5. University in two cities
Leiden University has sites in two cities: Leiden and The Hague. Since its founding in 1575, there have been close ties between the University and the city of Leiden. This is based on our shared history and is still visible in the ubiquitous presence of our students and the many impressive buildings in the city. Leiden University has also had a presence in The Hague for over 20 years, and all our faculties are now represented there. Our research and teaching are closely aligned with the societal issues of both these cities, and we are a driving force for initiatives in the city and the region. Together with the Leiden University Medical Center (LUMC), the University also has an important role in both cities as a local employer.

6. Excellent research facilities and renowned collections
We are internationally renowned for our knowledge of languages and cultures, our exceptional international collections relating to these, and our strong links with museums in Leiden and elsewhere. The combination of Leiden University with our close neighbour the LUMC and the Leiden Bio Science Park (LBSP) also ensures an
extremely high standard of research and teaching and an advanced research infra-
structure that is crucial for top-level research. Our collaboration with the LUMC in
The Hague additionally creates a rich and valuable infrastructure there, with great
potential for further development of research and teaching.

7. Strong and intricate knowledge infrastructure

Partnership and connection are the cornerstones of a successful university. We
therefore work closely with our local, regional, national and international partners.
These partners include not only knowledge and education institutions but also
companies, public authorities and NGOs. At the regional level, we have established
a strategic alliance in South Holland with Erasmus University Rotterdam and Delft
University of Technology to build a strong innovation ecosystem with economic
and societal partners: Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Universities (LDE Universities). The
teaching and research at our Faculty of Medicine make the LUMC an extremely
important strategic partner for us. Together with the LUMC, our university is a
prominent member of several strong innovation clusters and interdisciplinary pro-
grammes in the area of public-private partnership in The Hague and Leiden. The
LDE alliance and the Medical Delta partnership, for example, bring together the
(medical) academic institutions (including the LUMC) and applied science uni-
versities in South Holland to collectively generate social and societal impact with
their interdisciplinary programmes. At the European level, we are a member of the
League of European Research Universities (LERU) and various other European
university alliances. These international networks offer valuable opportunities for
European collaboration and guarantee a strong voice within the EU for agenda
setting and funding possibilities.

Partnership and connection are the cornerstones of a successful university.
Our promise

We will always be relevant, now and in the future. Our pioneering research and teaching equip new generations to make the difference in a global society. We are driven by the desire to know, understand, interpret and create. We work together to answer the questions of today, and keep an eye to the questions of tomorrow. We do so by optimally employing the diversity of our academic disciplines, through activities that both deepen and broaden our knowledge. We create knowledge and value in constant connection with one another and our environment. We see everyone – staff members and students – as an equally valuable member of our community. We cherish our diversity, are aware of what unites us, respect one another and our different roles, and work closely together. We are a reliable authority in societal and political debates.

Our core values

Our newly formulated core values are derived from our motto *Praesidium Libertatis* (Bastion of Freedom) and from our traditional Leiden academic identity and culture (open, free, respectful, fundamental and broad-based). With these new core values we apply tradition to today’s era and the needs of our university community and the world around us. All members of our university community endorse the following four core values:

- **Connecting** - Being part of a greater whole. Being successful together. Listening: to one another and to our society. Actively collaborating and contributing.
- **Innovative** - Searching for new knowledge and understanding. Improving what could be better. Extending boundaries. Curious about one another and the unknown.
- **Responsible** - For promoting an inclusive community. For integrity in academic practice. For what we say and do, and how we interact with one another.
- **Free** - Independently questioning. Offering scope for different perspectives and ideas, for open discussion, for curiosity-driven research.

These core values all have equal value and in conjunction set the direction for our conduct and actions, the choices we make and the partnerships we establish. For example, professional autonomy and academic freedom are essential for an effectively functioning university community, but if this freedom is not paired with responsibility and connectedness, all that remains is non-commitment. Innovation is essential if academic knowledge and society are to progress, but if innovation is not paired with connectedness and responsibility, we run the risk of not asking the right questions and/or insufficiently seeing possible applications of research results.
The core values are not ends in themselves, but rather govern the way we aim to achieve our goals and ambitions together. They are therefore an essential part of our permanent conversation, in which we also reflect on where our core values may need maintenance and attention. This means they are auxiliary to our strategic aim and ambitions, and the changes that these will require.
3

Our challenges
The world around us is complex and changing fast

Society is increasingly looking to universities for solutions to major societal issues relating to climate change, sustainability, migration, health, food supply, security and the protection and promotion of democracy. The digitisation of society also calls for contributions from our research, our teaching and our organisation; because alongside the opportunities that digitisation offers for innovation, the digital society also creates issues – particularly ethical issues – in the areas of Artificial Intelligence (AI), data management and privacy. Other challenges are generated by the growing complexity of our societal context. This context is changing fast and is characterised by increasing globalisation and internationalisation, a more important role for Europe, the rise of authoritarian regimes where academic freedom is not guaranteed, rapid technological developments and growing diversity among students. For society’s innovative power, it is becoming increasingly important that there is collaboration between academic disciplines, knowledge institutions, social and societal partners, public authorities and the private sector.

The question is how we, as a university, can provide an appropriate and sustained response to these developments. To achieve this, we need to optimally utilise the whole range of our academic disciplines and our partnerships. We must also ensure that our societal commitment is given greater expression in our research, our teaching and the partnerships we establish. This requires a flexible organisation with strong connections between teaching, research and operational management.
Scope for curiosity-driven research is under threat

We have a responsibility not only to respond to societal questions but also to ask the questions that society does not ask. Both curiosity-driven research and mission-driven research based on societal problem statements are therefore within the remit of our university. There can also be a tension between the desire for immediately applicable scientific knowledge and the importance of curiosity-driven research. Research funding is increasingly allocated to mission-driven research, and with grant applications for curiosity-driven research, there is a growing requirement to explicitly state the expected impact, when this is not always possible. Although thinking about this may also generate opportunities for new insights, it is most important that we constantly safeguard the scope for independent research, given that the outcomes of this independent, exploratory research can be crucial for tomorrow’s breakthroughs. As funding is shifted increasingly from curiosity-driven to mission-driven research, the likelihood is reduced that Dutch science can continue in the long term to make a strong contribution to the knowledge society with new discoveries.

We therefore see it as essential to further facilitate and encourage independent, fundamental research within our university, while also working to capitalise on opportunities for mission-driven research when they arise. The appropriate balance between these two forms of research can be different for each academic discipline, but it is essential that we can effectively recognise and utilise all opportunities for impact. An important aspect here is to create connections within disciplines and across the boundaries of disciplines and the walls of the University.

Academic knowledge, scholars and academic freedom are under threat

As a result of the Covid-19 crisis and the contributions of science to finding a solution, society has gained a greater awareness of the vital role of science in society. At the same time, however, there is a group of science sceptics who criticise it on social media and have a wide reach. Confidence in academic knowledge, and hence the value attributed to that knowledge, has also been undermined by various incidents relating to integrity. Alternative facts and unsubstantiated opinions are gaining importance in public debates. Yet a democracy cannot function without a certain degree of shared reality, which means that knowledge from reliable sources and cultivating an inquiring and critical attitude are more important than ever. It is therefore essential that scholars continue to express their views in public debates. However, scholars who take on this public role are increasingly faced with intimidation. This development must not gain further ground and we will take a strong stand against it, including within the framework of Universiteiten van Nederland.
It is a core task of universities to protect academic knowledge and open debate, and to promote the value and values of academic knowledge. The students of today are the academics of the future, at least those who will go on to a career in academia. However, most graduates will end up in various positions in society, increasingly abroad. The general academic education of students, and their future role in society, should therefore be a more prominent focus in our teaching. We must also make academic knowledge more accessible and visible to and within society.

**Increasing competition for talented academics**
The global balance of power between universities has in recent years increasingly shifted from the United States and Europe to universities in Asia. This is generating greater national and international competition for people and resources. Wealthy universities in countries that are investing heavily in academic knowledge are attracting talented academics. The development of higher education and research in Africa and South America offers Dutch universities opportunities for collaboration and exchange. They can be involved not only in the further development of local education options and research, but also in educating students from those countries in the Netherlands, and vice versa. Cross-border pooling of academic efforts is therefore increasingly important. Crucial conditions for attracting and retaining talented national and international academics include a pleasant and inspiring work and study environment and an excellent research infrastructure at Leiden University.
What we are aiming for
Our direction: strong connections for quality and impact

Our university is well equipped to help solve the aforesaid challenges: a great diversity of academic disciplines, high-quality research and teaching, talented and motivated staff and students, attractive campuses, excellent research infrastructure, a long tradition of academic values and membership of numerous partnerships and networks at many different levels. We worked hard to develop these on the basis of our previous strategic plan *Freedom to Excel* (2015-2021). That plan focused on creating an environment for excellent research, activating talent, innovation in teaching and learning, increasing our impact, further internationalisation and expanding our campus in The Hague. We have taken major steps towards realising all those ambitions and are now reaping the rewards.

We will continue in the same direction in this new strategic plan, *Innovating and Connecting* (2022-2027), with the addition of some new emphases. Our primary focus will be on making stronger connections, which will enable us to establish more valuable links within and between disciplines, work with others on creating new opportunities for research and teaching, more effectively design the interchange between our university and our society, and develop a strong university community. We will therefore work on innovation, retain our pioneering role and increase our societal and academic impact. In the years ahead, we will emphasise the following three connections:

1) between academic disciplines,
2) between our university and society and
3) within our university community.
What we mean by impact

We have a broad definition of impact: all the contributions made by the University, arising from our research, teaching and university community, which are of societal and/or scientific interest, in both the short and long(er) term. Impact is thus aligned with our core tasks and our role in society. A difference from our previous strategic plan is that we no longer see impact as a separate task, but rather as an intrinsic aspect of our work. Generating impact therefore takes many different forms.

1. Connections between academic disciplines

The environment of a broad-based research university offers highly fertile ground for all kinds of new combinations of scholarship and new interdisciplinary forms of research. A solid disciplinary basis makes strong interdisciplinary development possible. From our strong disciplinary base, we therefore wish to achieve greater synergy between those disciplines. Making connections between different disciplines clearly takes more effort, so we aim to encourage bottom-up interdisciplinary collaboration. This will allow us to align with exciting and promising scientific developments, contribute more effectively to societal issues, and offer our students more opportunities to develop in new domains and interesting combinations of disciplines.

2. Connections between University and society

Increasing our impact in society requires more interaction and collaboration between the University and the world around us, based on the issues that are relevant to that world. We will thus become an even more significant part of the partnerships in which knowledge circulates and can be used. All our academic disciplines have a valuable role in this. We will also be able to offer our students more opportunities to gain experience with research and teaching with a central focus on societal challenges. We can additionally increase our share in societal debates, which will further enhance our integration within society. Our various collaborative activities need to be better connected and coordinated at the different levels, so that they can reinforce and enrich one another.

3. Connections within our University community

Our performance gains shape in part through our teamwork together. A good balance between the effort of the individual and the team is therefore important, both between different scholars and between scholars and organisational & policy-making staff. Now teamwork is becoming exceptionally important, and creating an inclusive and inspiring work and study environment is high on the agenda, a transition is required from a ‘me culture’ to a ‘we culture’, which is more aware of connection, of pursuing goals together, of inspiring one another, of the human dimension and of the variation in tasks within our organisation.
Six strategic ambitions

Based on these three forms of connection, we have formulated six strategic ambitions and their related action lines. The ambitions and action lines are interrelated in terms of their content, and are designed to strengthen one another. They provide guidelines for the years ahead and serve as a substantive framework for the choices that we make and the activities that we initiate. We will look in further detail at the path from strategy to realisation in chapter 5.

Ambitions of Leiden University for the period 2022-2027:
1. Space for innovation
2. Pioneering interdisciplinary research and teaching
3. Future-proof development of students
4. A healthy, engaged and learning community
5. More value through strategic collaboration
6. Ample scope for talent and development
Ambition 1: Space for innovation

Explanation of ambition
Realising change and innovation requires space. This space is scarce, however, because of the abovementioned insufficient funding and the associated efforts to maintain our high standards and high level of accessibility. In the years ahead, we will expressly create more space to make the workload manageable and to offer more opportunities for our staff to pursue their ambitions. We will do this by better organising processes and systems (making them smarter and simpler), and by providing better support. We will also create a sharper focus by differentiating in terms of goals and ambition level, and by eliminating tasks that are disproportionately time-consuming and, on closer inspection, are found to yield very little. Additionally, within management and decision-making, we will be clearer in the choices about the content of research and teaching (the responsibility for which lies with lecturers and researchers) and the choices about the design of the organisation and processes based on collective, University-wide themes (which are more suited to integral management).

Action lines

1. Well-organised basis: smart processes, systems and organisation
To reduce the workload and to act more decisively in a changing environment, we need to redesign our systems and processes. We will make use of innovative operational management applications, which will create stronger links between our teaching, research and operational management, so that they become part of a network. The basic principles for redesigning the processes and systems will be harmonisation, standardisation and modernisation. This will ultimately create more space in terms of time, capacity and finances, and internal exchange of knowledge and experience will become easier, avoiding the need to reinvent the wheel in so many places. We will also chart the available support capacity, so that we can targeting that support more effectively. Further, we will reconsider the way in which funds are allocated and financial incentives are used, on the basis of the strategic direction, so that they too help create space for innovation. We will additionally eliminate instances of unnecessary bureaucracy where possible.

2. Effective support of educational development
We aim to offer teaching staff better support in organising and developing their teaching. We will do this by, for example, improving logistic processes (see action line 1). For this purpose, we have already introduced the Harmonisation of Educational Logistics programme. We will also further develop support for teaching staff who work on educational innovation. We will organise this support more on the basis of an integrated approach: it will combine didactics, digitisation and knowledge exchange, and we will target this support not only towards individual
teachers, but also towards teams of teachers. To achieve this, we will provide a good combination of activities within the existing Teacher Support Desks in the faculties and University-wide support, advice and knowledge exchange.

3. Reducing application pressure of research proposals
Applying for research funding takes a great deal of time and energy, which cannot be used for research, teaching or knowledge utilisation. Taking a different approach to ‘recognition and rewards’, redefining good scholarship (see action lines of ambition 6) and reviewing our funding model (see action line 1) will help to reduce this application workload and pressure. In addition, we will intensify our Leiden Research Support (LRS), aiming for better coordination, organisation and support in preparing research proposals and thus contributing to higher quality of research proposals and reduction of overlap and mutual competition. Our efforts will also be aligned with the action plan of Universiteiten van Nederland and NWO (‘Integral plan to reduce pressure on the system’).

4. More targeted encouragement and facilitation of knowledge utilisation
We aim to more explicitly encourage researchers to generate impact, and to support them more effectively in this. We will do this not only by helping them to explore funding options and to apply for funding (see action line 3) but also by ensuring that inspiring examples of impact, arising from both curiosity-driven and mission-driven research, are widely available. Researchers tend to underestimate the impact of their research. We will additionally explore how we can improve our support in relation to collaboration with public-private partners and entrepreneurship, so that researchers can engage in these more effectively. Our Knowledge Exchange Office (Luris) is an important link in this process.

5. Creating frameworks for teaching
Clear frameworks for organising our teaching will help in making choices about the use of time and resources. In the years ahead we will therefore work on curriculum norms and guidelines, on norms for faculties in terms of teaching load and on reducing the number of elective courses, and will investigate whether it is possible to limit non-government-funded teaching. We will also look at the possibilities for redesigning our academic teaching year calendar, including the number of examination and resit occasions.

6. Differentiation by prioritising content
Not expecting the maximum from every individual and from every study programme, institute and organisational unit will create space for setting priorities. This will lead to better choices and more effective team collaboration. In addition to a different system of ‘recognition and rewards’ (see ambition 6), content profiling of research themes can set the direction for differentiation of this kind. In the years ahead, we will therefore work on developing an overall vision of our University-wide content profiling.
7. More efficient and development-oriented quality assurance
The accountability process for teaching quality is based on confidence in the professionalism of our teaching staff. We aim to structure that accountability more efficiently than is currently experienced by teaching staff. We will therefore adjust the evaluations to make them not only less time-intensive, but also more meaningful for educational development. Additionally, we will work on a better balance between the use of quantitative and qualitative information. This will serve as preparation for the expected changes from 2024 in the new cycle of the Institutional Audit of Quality Assurance, which will become more development oriented.
Ambition 2: Pioneering interdisciplinary research and teaching

Explanation of ambition

Further strengthening our research and teaching is another priority in the years ahead. To remain pioneering and innovative, we need to have strong academic disciplines. We therefore aim to maintain the high standard of our existing disciplinary research, using this as the basis for a more intensive interdisciplinary focus across the entire breadth of our disciplines. Many of our scholars have already established very successful connections between different research domains and faculties. At the same time, however, these connections concentrate on specific fields, interactions among scholars do not happen automatically, and there are organisational obstacles that hamper interdisciplinary collaboration. To achieve more synergy between disciplines and more interdisciplinary collaboration, our organisation therefore needs to be better aligned to this aim.

Curiosity-driven research may rarely lead to immediately visible benefits for society, but in the longer term it can lead to very important breakthroughs that are beneficial for humankind as a whole. We will therefore continue to safeguard and actively organise the space required for independent, fundamental research not only in the area of disciplinary research but also interdisciplinary research. Our aim is to promote innovation in this area too, based particularly on our practice of research and teaching. Independent, fundamental research is, moreover, one of our strongest points, and it gives us added value in collaborative networks. We will also look for interdisciplinary innovation in our teaching, linking this with existing or new interdisciplinary research.

Action lines

1. Creating havens for interdisciplinary collaboration

We will create ‘interdisciplinary hubs’: places for (in-person or virtual) collaboration and free experimentation where researchers can set to work on innovative research questions from an interdisciplinary perspective. We especially aim to give young, talented scholars the space to gain experience. The hubs will also offer new opportunities to structure the interconnections between research and teaching. Our intention is that the hubs will be established by researchers and educators themselves. More details about the procedures, organisational form and funding, such as the provision of ‘seed money’, will be further developed on the basis of inspiring examples from other universities.
2. Further development of our interdisciplinary research programmes
In 2020 we began eight interdisciplinary research programmes (stimuleringsprogramma’s) aimed at increasing interdisciplinary collaboration. These University-wide programmes are based on strategically chosen interdisciplinary research themes with a clear focus on societal impact. By gradually moving towards the structural funding of these, making stronger connections in these programmes with our teaching, further expanding strategic collaborations and combining infrastructure (as done, for example, in the shared SSH labs), we can use these interdisciplinary programmes more strategically; for example, for attracting more targeted research funding and for participation in national and international research and educational collaboration. We will also add ‘Europe’ as another interdisciplinary research area.

3. Increasing the range of interdisciplinary teaching
We aim to expand the range of interdisciplinary teaching, both within the University and in collaboration with national and international partners. This shows recognition of students’ interests, ensures that they gain more benefits from our broad and globally oriented profile, and makes them better equipped for an interdisciplinary work environment. A further advantage is that interdisciplinary teaching results in a more heterogeneous student community and thus helps them to acquire a critical and independent mindset. This range of interdisciplinary teaching can be developed (or further developed) in different ways. Without compromising the importance of strong disciplines, we will explore, for example, the possibilities for integrating interdisciplinarity more closely within existing study programmes. We will also look at the possibilities for a larger number of interdisciplinary master’s programmes and minors, especially those offered by LDE.

4. Integrating an interdisciplinary focus within the organisation
With a view to further integrating interdisciplinarity within our organisation, we will explore the possibilities for academic staff to work in multiple institutes or faculties. We will also look for ways to take a more strategic approach to filling vacant professorial positions to encourage further innovation. One possibility is to create professorial chairs with a more interdisciplinary remit. To allow us to better anticipate promising developments, we aim to experiment with a ‘research foresight think tank’. With members from within and outside the University, this think tank will monitor global long-term developments in the area of science and society, and provide advice in the area of research opportunities.

5. Integrating conditions for broad-based academic practice
We as a university stand for transparency and integrity in academic practice and embrace open science. Making research information and data accessible to scholars and a wider public enhances the quality of research results and promotes opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration. We will therefore make the knowledge we develop more suitable and available for utilisation, and we will also encourage
non-academics, such as citizens and policymakers, to be involved in research, for instance through ‘citizen science’. To achieve this, we will integrate the conditions for broad-based academic practice within our organisation by means of an open-science programme, and within the further development of LRS.
Ambition 3: Future-proof development of students

Explanation of ambition
A tremendous amount of our impact as a university is generated by educating our students; not only through our initial study programmes, but also when professionals come back to study during their working life in the context of lifelong development. We aim to provide high-quality, innovative, flexible and future-proof teaching. Our vision on teaching and learning (Learning@LeidenUniversity 2017-2023) sets the direction for this. The basic principle at the core of our university education is inquiry-based learning, and we focus on broad development of our students within a rich study environment. We believe it to be incredibly important that our students develop into independent members of the academic community, who are responsible for their own development – now and in the future – and are able to make their own choices here. As a result, students here acquire not only knowledge and specific skills, but are also challenged to engage in reflection and self-reflection and to participate in extra-curricular activities. With our core values we directly help them to become academic professionals and engaged citizens. They can also make use of ample opportunities to increase the depth or breadth of their curriculum. They are therefore equipped and encouraged to generate an impact during and after their studies and to help solve the challenges facing our society.

We will continue this innovation in our teaching in the years ahead by further integrating it within our study programmes. The digitalisation strategy in which we focus on the options of blended learning is part of this innovation. We will thus work towards a more accessible and inclusive teaching system in which research and teaching are more closely linked, where it is easier to provide individual approaches for different groups of students. Additionally, digital forms of teaching and learning offer more opportunities to structure our collaboration in European university networks.

Action lines

1. Investing in inquiry-based and activating learning
The relationship between the research at our university and our students’ education could be more visible. We will therefore more actively link knowledge transfer to research, (academic) skills and personal development. We will continue to develop inquiry-based and activating forms of learning. Students will therefore acquire research skills, learn to collaborate and feel more involved in their education and research. Where digital applications offer added value, we will use them in a stimulating and targeted way. In addition, we will give more attention to the development of an academic attitude and academic development in the study programmes. We
will produce a shared substantive framework to specify precisely how this can be implemented in practice. To effectively accommodate activating forms of learning, we will create (teaching) rooms with a more flexible layout, which makes it easy to switch between learning methods with and without digital components. We will additionally develop a virtual student workspace where students have everything they need for their education and research in one place, available at all times and in all places.

2. Explicit role for societal issues in our teaching
We educate our students to have the knowledge and skills required to contribute to today's major challenges, such as the sustainability transition; students are keenly aware of their future societal role and responsibility. It is therefore important that all our students have the opportunity to become acquainted with societal issues, either within or outside the curriculum. For this purpose, we will increase the range of courses that cover societal themes and issues, and make them more accessible. This will be achieved by, for example, utilising local collaborative initiatives in The Hague and Leiden with applied science universities, local authorities and social-cultural partners. We will also aim for a stronger connection of these themes with the study programmes, including the excellent opportunities offered by the minors of Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Universities.

3. Every student will have international and intercultural competences
Students have to be able to become global citizens during their studies. We will therefore aim to ensure that all students can develop in an international environment here, and can gain international experience and intercultural skills. The ‘global classroom’ provides students with the opportunity for this. This is a form of teaching and learning where diversity and international characteristics of the student population serve as the starting point for education, and where knowledge, orientation and skills are developed that enable students to be inspired by and contribute to our global society. We will further develop the concept of the ‘global classroom’ by means of a shared vision. We will also extend the opportunities for ‘internationalisation at home’ (where international and intercultural dimensions are integrated in the formal and informal curriculum). Additionally, we will look at ways to make international mobility and exchange as accessible as possible for students, exploring alternative forms from which students can choose to gain international experience for longer or shorter periods, in-person or online.

4. Facilitating lifelong development and reflection
People's personal and professional development take place both during and after their studies. Self-reflection is essential if they wish to make good choices. We will therefore give explicit attention to students' reflection (and related broader) skills during their initial study programme. We will encourage them to link their personal development and values to current choices within their studies – also with a view to good career preparation. Self-reflection can be supported in a guidance structure, such as a tutorial or mentorship, with support from academic career advisers or using digital or other modules. Students will thus work specifically on
their ‘future academic self’. We also want to encourage students to develop outside the curriculum by providing better information about the options for committee and representative roles and the options within study and student associations or of a foreign exchange or an internship. We will also investigate whether the financial support for committee activities is sufficient or needs to be reviewed. Professionals – including our own alumni – also have a great need to acquire new skills, to update their previously learned knowledge or to start a completely new career path. We will establish an Academy for Professionals to further expand our existing activities in this area. We will also create stronger links between the content of our courses for professionals and our regular teaching, starting in Campus The Hague.
Ambition 4:
A healthy, engaged and learning community

Explanation of ambition
Our community forms the heart of our university. A strong community is mentally and physically healthy, is engaged and has a learning culture. The way we interact with one another in everyday practice determines our job satisfaction, our sense of safety and the extent to which we can be a learning organisation, and hence the performance we can all achieve.

We will therefore make every effort to further build an open and learning organisation where students and staff feel at home and can make the most of their potential. This will also help to create a more flexible organisation, where innovation and existing practices can be more effectively combined. A culture of continuous improvement is an essential factor here. Our emphatic aim is thus to create a community where everyone, student and staff alike, knows that they are an equally valuable member. An important basis for this is the open exchange of ideas and views, and appreciation of differences, including differences in etiquette and expectations. We will listen to one another’s experiences, arguments and opinions – even if we do not agree with one another. The way we interact is not determined by hierarchy and power. Views, actions and utterances that lead to exclusion are not a matter of opinion: freedom is always associated with responsibility. In academic debates, it is only arguments that make the difference, and never personal background. At Leiden University this is an ancient and hard-fought principle, and we will call one another to account.

Action lines

1. Developing adaptive and relational leadership
Good leadership is essential to our further development as an open and learning organisation and for the development of a strong community. We will therefore invest in developing adaptive and relational leadership. This leadership serves our core values and takes responsibility for and actively conveys these values. The form that this leadership takes will be elaborated in terms of specific leadership behaviour and competences. We will also incorporate this preferred leadership style within scouting and selection, induction procedures, performance & development interviews, follow-up planning and the continuous professional development of managers. In addition to leadership in specific roles, we will strengthen the personal leadership of all our staff members. We will equip them with self-knowledge and resilience, so that they can contribute to social safety, and with the skills required to discuss any problems that may arise.
2. University-wide dialogue about our culture
To reduce the staff workload and increase social safety, simply adapting our processes and systems is not enough. Awareness-raising and behaviour change are essential. Since our culture arises – and also changes – in the daily interactions between people, in the years ahead we will organise a University-wide dialogue about that culture, at all levels of the organisation, in which academic freedom will be one of the topics. Our core values will form the basic principles for discussion. Thus we will develop a shared language and normative framework in which we make agreements about how we interact with one another and in which we call one another to account for behaviour, if necessary. We will specifically use internal communications to support the process of awareness-raising and behaviour change.

3. Integrated focus on well-being
We have focused attention on well-being for quite some time, and intensified our efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic, which has been a difficult time for many staff and students. Through a wide range of initiatives at University, faculty and institute level we support the well-being of our students and staff, and are aware of the different needs. In the years ahead, we aim to take further steps by reducing the staff workload (see ambition 1) and by immediately translating the knowledge from research on well-being into ‘evidence-informed’ vision & policy development. We will do this both within our university and within our university partnerships that focus on well-being. For the well-being of our students, we will focus more specifically on prevention, and will develop a clear vision on student well-being. We will also continue to work on a study environment that promotes well-being. We will identify stressors that the University itself can influence and make the infrastructure for requesting help even more efficient, while also creating a better system for supplying information on this to students and staff.

4. Facilitating exchanges
We will make better use of the broad expertise and brainpower within the University to learn more from one another, promptly identify opportunities and evaluate new plans. This will involve all our staff: researchers, lecturers and organisational & policymaking staff. We will also promote stronger interconnection and exchange between staff of different faculties, study programmes and organisational units. For this purpose, we will develop knowledge networks around University-wide themes, experiment with new, informal kinds of participation and consultation, and create a network to intensify the connection between academic expertise and vision & policy development.

5. Inclusive language policy
Good communication is essential to a strong community. We aim to ensure an inclusive language policy, so that both our Dutch and international staff and students can be more involved with our university. Aspects on which we will focus include multilingual meetings based on ‘intercomprehension’ (a type of
multilingualism where Dutch participants speak Dutch and international participants speak English), translation of relevant policy documents (in full or in part), improving the accessibility of English and Dutch language courses and raising awareness of language use in the context of diversity and inclusion.
Ambition 5: More value through strategic collaboration

Explanation of ambition

Collaboration is essential for improving the quality of research and teaching, generating meaningful societal impact and attracting funding. Raising the profile of our university also depends on good collaboration. It also offers opportunities to exert an influence on societal and political decision-making and agenda setting. We can utilise our existing collaborations even more effectively in this respect. More intensive knowledge collaboration will ensure that our scholars can work with the best people and have access to large-scale research facilities, and educational and academic collaboration will contribute to solutions to national, international and global problems challenges.

We will focus on explicitly clarifying the potential within our existing partnerships. We will do this more intensively than in the past with our own resources, and taking greater account of broader issues and our partners’ needs. This will require a clearer picture of where our expertise gives added value and how a collaboration contributes to the direction we wish to take and to our strategic ambitions for our teaching and research. Our academic profile will serve as a guideline here. The partners in our collaborations will therefore preferably be strong in expertise that is complementary to our own, and we will naturally keep our Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Universities partners prominently in mind. We will also explore possibilities for increasing our visibility and influence in Brussels.

Our campuses in the centres of The Hague and Leiden and the campus at the LBSP, will serve as extremely important infrastructures for high-value impact in our strategic collaborations. We see our campuses as part of an ecosystem that has an open connection with the immediate surroundings: the city, citizens, companies and societal partners. Making better connections among our attractive campuses, (historic) city centre locations and modern research infrastructure will enable us to facilitate teaching and research activities, collaboration and economic activity even more effectively. This will create more opportunities for students to work on societal issues in their teaching and research. In this respect we will also work to further improve the accessibility of the services in our front offices – not only for students and staff but also for alumni and external parties.

We will work with the LUMC on further intensifying our activities in the area of research and teaching in both cities, making ‘healthcare’ an even more important theme for our university in the future. We will emphatically seek to connect our disciplines in the exact sciences and the SSH domains, so that this powerful combination will strengthen collaboration in the area of Life Sciences & Health.
Action lines

1. Expanding our activities in The Hague
With its location in the international city of The Hague – the heart of national politics, justice and socially engaged organisations – our The Hague campus offers many new opportunities for our interdisciplinary research and teaching, and significant possibilities for generating impact in the city and the Hague region. The strong international profile of our disciplines in The Hague also offers opportunities to strengthen economic and societal connections within and outside Europe. We aim to further expand our activities in the city of The Hague. The actual growth depends on quality assurance and the facilities available for students and staff (see also Strategy for Leiden University Campus The Hague 2020-2030). In addition, we will integrate the campus more firmly within the city and further extend our ecosystem: our ‘living network’ of collaborative partners. We will focus particularly on the local Hague community. As a university, we aim to be more visible, better known and highly valued here, so that the people of The Hague will choose more readily and consciously to study at one of our locations. Together with the LUMC, we will continue to work within current regional collaborative projects on this development and on strengthening of our interdisciplinary focus on prevention, health and care.

2. Further development of our Leiden campuses
In Leiden city centre we will intensify our collaboration with societal partners and the city. We will develop a network with the faculties located there, in close connection with our faculties outside the city centre. Important building blocks for this are the new Humanities Campus and Leiden Law Park (which focuses, among others, on the theme of ‘law, ethics and security’), and also the museums, our library and collections, and the Hortus Botanicus. This will enable us to consolidate our activities within the SSH domain and better utilise existing connections for outreach of Leiden knowledge. We will also develop concepts that create closer links between our campus and Leiden as a knowledge city. New academic quarters will have public spaces that are open to all, giving practical expression to the University’s sustainability goals, such as biodiversity and climate adaptation. Additionally, we aim to develop the LBSP into a dynamic innovation district. This will make the LBSP an even more important ‘hotspot’ for Life Sciences & Health, where talented researchers and professionals, innovative companies and investors from the Netherlands, Europe and the rest of the world will meet and collaborate.

3. Intensifying participation in regional ecosystems
We will intensify strategic collaborations with our public and private partners in our regional ecosystems. Contributing to research and innovation ecosystems will help us to address societal challenges. It will also help to strengthen the international position of the Netherlands and of our region as a knowledge area, which in turn can lead to increasing research and innovation impetus. In this context, we will
work on talent development and the connection with worldwide ecosystems with similar social and societal agendas, in order to stimulate innovation in a stronger and more targeted way. We also aim to make our regional networks more accessible to young members of staff, so that it is easier for them to come into contact with their colleagues at other knowledge institutions and collaborative partners. This may give rise to additional partnerships, and the long-term continuity of collaboration will be secured.

4. Further strengthening our international collaborations
In recent years the University has developed intensive strategic collaborations with various partner institutions within Europe, and in China, Indonesia, Latin America and the Caribbean islands, based on existing faculty relationships. Given our ambition to achieve targeted societal impact and to consolidate our international position, we will raise this approach to a higher level. Within Europe, we will intensify our collaborations and align them more closely, to prevent fragmentation and create greater synergy. Outside Europe, we will combine our interdisciplinary expertise on the aforesaid geographic areas as an aspect of more far-reaching international collaboration, focusing particularly on countries in areas where several of our faculties and strategic partners already operate. In our partnerships we will be explicitly guided by our core values. We will additionally further build on strategic partnerships in and with Africa, based on our existing expertise in the African Studies Centre Leiden. We can also make excellent use of our knowledge and education institutes NIMAR in Morocco and NVIC in Egypt to further explore the possibilities for research and teaching.

5. Targeted and structural involvement of our alumni
After leaving the University, students and PhD candidates often find positions where they can make a difference. They are of great value to us, not only in the Netherlands but also abroad, among others for extending and strengthening our networks. If we develop, maintain and utilise our alumni network in a more structural and targeted way, this will enrich and strengthen our social and societal network and increase the opportunities for collaboration in the areas of research and teaching.
Ambition 6: Ample scope for talent and development

Explanation of ambition

Our staff possess a vast amount of talent, knowledge and experience. These qualities are used throughout the University: on the academic side for research and teaching or on the policymaking, supporting and organisational side. The University’s good reputation and results are due to the efforts and qualities of our staff. They are the driving force of our university. We therefore aim to better facilitate and encourage the possibilities for professional growth of all our staff in the years ahead.

We will do this by developing more diverse career paths. This will do more justice to people’s different qualities and the multiplicity of tasks within the University. Specific attention will be focused on career paths in teaching and the diversity of teaching roles, on the opportunities for organisational & policymaking staff to continue their development within our university and on the impact that academics have as members of the university community. This impact relates to activities that help to safeguard and improve the quality and efficiency of the academic world in general and of our university in particular. They achieve this in various ways, including employee participation and membership of study programme committees, University work groups, academic networks and selection committees. This ‘academic citizenship’ is essential for making the University a place where people are happy to work and study.

Our university’s development, results and performance are achieved through the efforts and teamwork of all our staff. We therefore always ensure that our academic community has a good balance between individual growth and team development. We expect all our staff to invest both in themselves and in their colleagues and the team, to represent our core values and to actively help in achieving our mission.

Action lines

1. New approach to recognition and rewards

With the Academia in Motion: Recognition & Rewards programme, we are taking steps to reward a wider range of performance in the fields of teaching, leadership and impact within and outside the University community, giving specific attention to career paths within teaching. In addition, we will extend this programme to our organisational & policymaking staff. In the years ahead, we will coordinate our programme with a new national framework for evaluation and promotion being developed by Universiteiten van Nederland, universities and research institutes. This will incorporate the various career paths that are described in the university job classification system (UFO). We will also work on the possibility of
differentiation and deferment in people's own career choices: not everyone needs to do everything (at the same time). This will create more time for the collective and thus contribute to a better work-life balance.

2. More clarity about careers and temporary contracts
We will provide academic staff and organisational & policymaking staff with more clarity about career paths, employment relationships, remuneration, PhD opportunities and promotions. We will substantially reduce the percentage of lecturers with temporary contracts and will aim for more permanent contracts. In addition, we will ensure temporary contracts will be valid for a pre-agreed, fixed period and will be combined with support in further professional development. More clarity also eliminates uncertainty, and this is expected to have a favourable effect on work stress. We will discuss the options for a meaningful and successful career outside the academic world sooner and in a more satisfactory fashion.

3. Developing an integrated talent policy
We can only maintain our position as a leading international university if we continue to invest optimally in talent. We will therefore elaborate an integrated talent policy, based on a variety of career paths and with a focus on attracting, developing and retaining talented academic, teaching and organisational & policymaking staff in the years ahead. In this context, we will look more closely at the development of young staff members and the support they need to take the next step in their career. We will also consider whether the policy for PhD candidates should be revised, and will work on the basis of strategic HR planning for a more future-oriented approach. For external talent, both national and international, we need to present a clearer picture of what we have to offer as a university. Hence, we will focus further on talent development and talent retention in conjunction with external partners, and will pay attention to loyalty, inclusion and staff turnover.

4. Expanding possibilities for professional development
We have sufficient options to enable teaching staff to obtain their University Teaching Qualification (BKO), and PhD candidates will also have the opportunity to acquire a partial BKO certificate. We will additionally facilitate the continuous professional development of our teaching staff in the years ahead, so that those with the BKO can obtain the Senior Teaching Qualification (SKO) and can continue to develop after obtaining this. For this purpose, we will especially increase the range of courses relating to design and organisation of teaching, research and innovation. ‘Learning on the job’ and team learning will be significant aspects of this and will result in a common language and vision, and shared experiential knowledge. It is important that our organisational & policymaking staff keep up-to-date with the developments in their profession and that we expand the scope for development and progression opportunities within and outside the University. Increasing the mobility of our staff members between faculties, other organisational units and external partners is of crucial importance here.
5. Reviewing excellence in academic performance

‘Excellence’ is used as a key concept for defining and evaluating academic performance and value. This term has been under discussion in recent years, mainly because of the narrow interpretation of the concept ‘excellence’ in relation to rewarding and identifying academic results and the role of individuals and teams. We will therefore actively contribute to the discussion and redefinition of this concept in the years ahead, both within our own university community and at the national and international level. In doing this, we will look for ways to make a practical connection with the new approach to recognition and rewards, so that the new definition of excellence in academia can serve as a basis for different career paths.

We can only maintain our position as a leading international university if we continue to invest in talent.
Looking ahead: from strategy to realisation
This new strategic plan marks the starting point for realising our ambitions. We will use this plan in the years ahead as the guideline for the choices and decisions that we make. To move from this strategic plan to its implementation, we will translate it into an implementation agenda. This will include more detailed specifications, focusing on further definition of the actions, the (estimated) time schedule of the action lines, and quantitative and qualitative indicators that give insight into the progress and realisation. Together with the faculties, we will make a logical connection between the faculties’ strategic plans and the University strategy.

We are very aware of the tension between realising the aforesaid ambitions and the considerable workload. The staff workload is a major point of concern for our university. We will therefore take account of the feasibility of the ambitions, and the speed with which they can be achieved, in relation to people’s workload, when determining the phases and priorities within the implementation agenda. The implementation will move with developments in the years ahead. As mentioned above, we will also closely follow the national developments in funding of higher education. We will conduct regular interim evaluations of whether we are still on course or whether adjustments are needed. In that case too, we will always keep sight of the effect on the staff workload.

In implementing this strategic plan, we will also aim for a good and workable balance between further development and innovation. We will therefore use the following general distinctions when deciding on phases and priorities:
- Action lines that to a certain extent involve preconditions for effective realisation of the ambitions, namely action lines relating to: space for innovation, a strong community and talent development.
- Action lines that mainly involve a continuation of existing programmes, such as action lines relating to: the interdisciplinary research programmes, the vision on teaching and learning, and campus development.
- Action lines on which we are already working but for which have chosen a slightly different direction; for example, action lines relating to: lifelong development, strengthening leadership, promoting well-being, inclusive language policy, and national and international collaboration.
- Action lines that will be newly initiated, such as the interdisciplinary hubs, an interdisciplinary research programme on ‘Europe’ and the University-wide and thematic knowledge networks.

During the implementation, we will also look for new ways to approach the realisation of the action lines using smarter and more effective processes; for example, by aligning with current developments and initiatives as much as possible, by aiming for shorter completion times and by using (project) teams with variable membership more often.

The execution strength within our organisation is an important consideration here. However, we cannot make the strategy a success with processes and systems alone. Our behaviour, our culture and the way we give shape to our leadership are also very important factors. The aforesaid core values of our university will set the direction for these, and will therefore play a visible role in the implementation in the years ahead.
Appendix 1
Ongoing development themes

The ambitions and priorities set out in this strategic plan will be the focus of our attention in the years ahead, but the strategic developments initiated at our university in the recent past will continue to be of important. These ongoing development themes are so fundamental to our strategic ambitions for our teaching, research and organisation that they transcend the periods covered by strategic plans. We distinguish five ongoing development themes: digitisation, sustainability, diversity and inclusion, internationalisation and campus of the future.

Digitisation
Partly in consequence of the Covid-19 crisis, digital applications are no longer mainly auxiliary but have become an integral part of the research and teaching process and the new ways of working. We see digitisation as a way to achieve our ambitions. Based on our Digital Education Strategy and its implementation agenda, we will give further shape to a ‘blended university’ – where face-to-face interaction continues to be at the heart of our research and teaching.

Sustainability
The theme of sustainability is high on our agenda. Our Sustainability Vision 2030 is the starting point for a new implementation programme with goals and activities for the period 2022-2026. The core of this vision is to work on creating a more sustainable study and work environment that inspires and mobilises people both within and outside the University community to (further) achieve a positive societal impact. With this in mind, we will further develop our existing sustainability initiatives to produce an integrated approach that has visible effects in our teaching, research and organisation.

Diversity and inclusion
Leiden University stands for diversity and inclusion. We want to be an open community where everyone who wants to contribute to our ambitions and to all that the University stands for will feel at home and have equal opportunities. An inclusive university community contributes to an innovative and progressive academic education and research. Creating an inclusive community requires an integrated approach that leads to cultural change in our teaching, research, administration and leadership. Diversity and inclusion will thus become an automatic part of our everyday (work and study) practice, with our Diversity & Inclusion Work Plan providing guidance for the University’s D&I policy.
**Internationalisation**

Academic knowledge does not stop at national borders. With our Internationalisation Agenda we intend to further develop our international position in the areas of teaching, research and organisation. Our university functions as a ‘local hub for global challenges’. We educate both Dutch and international students to become global citizens, and focus on (societal) issues close to home and far away. We gratefully use the knowledge and understanding that arise from combining national and international perspectives in our research and teaching.

**Campus of the future**

Combining face-to-face and online teaching and learning offers opportunities for innovative education and creates a lot of flexibility. This makes it important to take account of user needs when designing work and study rooms. The synergy of interdisciplinary and interfaculty collaboration, such as the SSH labs and optimised video recording rooms (MOOCs), in combination with shared facilities for non-desk research, encourages collaboration, interaction and connections between research and teaching. Our Campus of the Future programme brings together the accommodation, new ways of working, blended learning and shared facilities for research.
Appendix 2

Interdisciplinary programmes

We launched eight interdisciplinary programmes for the whole University in 2020, which aim to increase interdisciplinary collaboration. These programmes correspond with topical issues and agendas in society, such as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

1. Museums, Collections and Society
In this programme, researchers and various partners are researching the dynamics and implications of collecting in all its different facets. Collecting is not just an individual affair, but also a social and political phenomenon that plays an important part in the development of history, culture and identity. As a consequence, museums and other public collections are subject to complex political discussions such as whether exhibits are in their rightful place and whose culture and history is actually being displayed.

2. Social Resilience and Security
In the past 20 years, knowledge about transgressive behaviours that threaten our security has greatly increased. As transgressive behaviours transect disciplinary boundaries, multi- and interdisciplinary approaches are needed to fully understand the aetiology of transgressive behaviours. This programme brings together experts from our Faculties of Archaeology, Law, Social & Behavioural Sciences, Humanities and Governance & Global Affairs.

3. Citizenship and Global Transformations
The European Union faces various issues, from globalisation to migration and from technological innovation to climate change. These put pressure on international solidarity among the member states. These urgent yet complex issues are best explored by interdisciplinary teams of researchers with a background in economics, international relations, law, history, public administration and more. That is why the faculties are working together on this programme.

4. Drug Discovery and Development
The research on this programme focuses on new clues, molecules and concepts that could lead to the development of innovative drugs and diagnostic tests. The interdisciplinary approach together with the availability of biobanks, patient databases and drug production facilities are essential to the discovery of new disease mechanisms and drug targets and the development of high-quality drugs.
5. Regenerative Medicine
Regenerative medicine holds the promise of the functional recovery of diseased organs, tissue and cells. The manipulation of (stem) cells is therefore combined with knowledge of cell biology, genetics, biomaterials, nanotechnology, production of therapeutics under Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) conditions and advanced imaging modalities. Interdisciplinary expertise from the LUMC and the Faculty of Science will synergise in Leiden to bring regenerative solutions.

6. Population Health
At the Population Health Living Lab on Campus The Hague, use is made of data from the medical and social domains. Researchers from various disciplines work with technologies and analysis methods from data science, epidemiology, biostatistics and social sciences to help promote population health management and help make a sustainable and future-proof healthcare system.

7. SAILS
From fundamental computer science to humanities and psychology, Leiden University possesses the expertise needed to study all aspects of AI. SAILS aims to forge links between all these different disciplines and to initiate new academic partnerships. It is also the ambition of SAILS to be able in future to offer an AI component in all of the University’s degree programmes.

8. Liveable Planet
In this programme, researchers from Leiden University will work towards a society that uses energy and raw materials in such a way to preserve our natural capital and minimise the impact on our health. They are looking at how natural and economic ecosystems function and what impact they have on our health and natural capital. They will also research how social stimuli influence the human ecosystem. This will enable them to consider new forms of government policy and transition management that will help create a more sustainable society.
With this strategic plan which centres on innovating and connecting, Leiden University wants to help resolve the challenges facing society. For more information, see the website: strategicplan.universiteitleiden.nl
Innovating and Connecting

Leiden University Strategic Plan 2022-2027