

We Care, We Dare, We Share

Strategic Plan of Windesheim University of Applied Sciences 2017-2022

In the next few years, we will be working at Windesheim to gradually realize the future perspective of enabling a personal learning pathway for each individual student. Our ideal is that no student fails unnecessarily. Each student will be given the opportunity to find out, with expert counselling, which curriculum fits best for him or her, as part of lifelong learning. In this way, our students will be –and continue to be– attractive on the labour market. In the coming years we will be working together to realize this ideal step by step.

WE CARE: A MISSION AND A SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Our university's mission is to make an active contribution to an inclusive and sustainable society. We strive to do so by educating valuable and principled professionals and by conducting practice-oriented research.

An inclusive society is one in which each individual has equal rights and opportunities to make an active contribution. A society based on values such as equality, solidarity, human dignity and embracing diversity. Those values play an important role in our education and set the course for our research. Inclusiveness to our university means that we regard each student as a unique person with his/her own strengths as well as limitations. This is why we support every student (young adults, professionals, newcomers and alumni alike) as best we can in finding and developing his/her own talents. Each student is given the opportunity, with personalized counselling, to outline a personal and challenging learning pathway, with due consideration of current and future requirements in the professional field.

A sustainable society is about making balanced and sustainable use of our planet, its natural resources and inhabitants (i.e. people, planet, profit). This is another theme that plays an important role in how we design our education and direct our research.

Our students begin or continue their development at our university to become competent professionals as well as self-confident, responsible (world) citizens. This makes us a value-driven community of students, lecturers, researchers and other employees. Together with regional businesses and organizations, from both the Zwolle area and from Flevoland, we form a learning and research environment that is innovative as well as inspiring.

Higher professional education has an important emancipatory role to play. This is why we consider it our social responsibility to enable everyone with enough talent to pursue higher education at our university. Regardless of their origin, prior education, background or age. Every student with talent deserves the opportunity to develop his/her full potential. In addition, in the coming years we will be focusing particularly on student intake from and alignment with Senior Secondary Vocational Education (MBO), as these students have so far been dropping out more frequently than other students.

WE DARE: OUR THREE AMBITIONS FOR 2017-2022

Our mission and social responsibility translate into the following three ambitions for the next few years:

1. Each student has his/her own learning pathway that is personal, challenging and flexible.
2. The research at our university focuses on an inclusive and sustainable society.
3. We improve the transfer of students through the education chain.

These three ambitions determine Windesheim's Strategic Plan for the upcoming years. Meanwhile, we continue to work every day on the quality of our education, our research and our services. We will achieve the stated ambitions step by step, and in consultation with students, staff, professional field and other external stakeholders.

SPECIFICATION OF AMBITION 1

Each student has his/her own learning pathway that is personal, challenging and flexible

We have specified our ideal of a personal learning pathway for each student in terms of a future perspective, consisting of several elements that we will be working on together in the next few years:

- We challenge each student, young adult and professional to outline his/her personal learning pathway. This learning pathway is the result of the best possible match between the student's personal talent and the needs and requirements of the (future) professional field, job or job mix the student wishes to connect to.
- To start making — or learning how to make — these connections, each student starts with an intake or assessment and is supported on his/her pathway by a suitable personal student counsellor.
- During their studies, students are challenged to realize their full potential and to expand their social as well as their mental world. Gradually they start taking the design of their learning pathway and learning process into their own hands. The details of a curriculum, teaching methods and educational (and assessment) format(s) are tailored to the individual student.
- Students learn together as well as individually, online as well as offline, on campus as well as in the workplace, at home as well as abroad. The focus on campus is on activating and social teaching methods, aimed in particular at placing knowledge gained (elsewhere) into perspective to demonstrate its meaning.

- During their studies, students are part of small-scale communities. These are preferably composed of students from various backgrounds and disciplines. This is where they develop into valuable and principled professionals. We support the development of a moral compass that allows room for the values of our democratic society, sustainability, respect for fellow human beings, solidarity and dealing with (cultural) diversity.
- No student at our university drops out unnecessarily. Each student deserves a suitable diploma (AD, Bachelor's or Master's degree) or certificate. Both our diplomas and our certificates are strictly in line with HBO standards and represent high quality. Where necessary, we assist students in making alternative study choices or in their transition to work and Lifelong Learning. Besides diploma-oriented programmes, our university also offers separate modules, in line with the regional area's human capital agenda.
- Teams of lecturers are composed in such a way that as a group they can be widely and flexibly deployed to optimally facilitate students' personal learning pathways. They are like spiders in a learning network. The teams of lecturers explain how theory, practice and professional field are interconnected. Interdisciplinary thinking and acting are self-evident, besides specialist knowledge of a particular field.
- The degree programme's structure and organization is such that each student can complete his/her programme with the greatest possible success. The path that students follow and the counselling they receive during this process are key to the way we organize the programme and design the digital environment.

SPECIFICATION OF AMBITION 2

The research at our university focuses on an inclusive and sustainable society

Professorships, with their ambitions and research projects, reflect Windesheim's overall mission. On this basis we focus our research on a limited number of themes that are in line with the strength and ambition of the regional area. The major social issues call for an interdisciplinary approach in which students, researchers, teaching staff and the professional field collaborate in projects. Our ambition is to excel in this method of working. We ensure that this has demonstrable impact within the regional area and beyond. In addition, we opt for a greater emphasis on technology in general and information technology, taking into account the rapid technological developments in all fields and the demand from the regional area. We focus on the following points during the period of this strategic plan.

- Professors and researchers are challenged in their own way to conduct research that contributes to an inclusive and sustainable society.
- The connection between research and education becomes more intensive. Professors and researchers are actively involved in education; the minimum research appointment of lecturer-researchers in professorships is to be increased.
- Research is conducted within communities (field labs, living labs, knowledge workshops) in which students, lecturers, professors, researchers and the professional field representatives participate and work on issues from practice. In addition, it is our ambition to increase our expertise on the subject of inclusivity. We can build on the knowledge already available on this subject at other knowledge institutions in the Netherlands.

- In order to take the development of personalized learning in education to the next level and to achieve excellence therein, we will step up our research efforts on this subject so that more evidence-based / informed use can be made of interventions.
- We develop targets on indicators reflecting the impact of our research in practice. This impact is backed up by an integrated publication and communication policy.
- Focusing on a limited number of professorships and themes results in more critical mass and expertise being created in each professorship. Working on multidisciplinary themes means researchers are challenged to work more in interdisciplinary teams. This clout this creates is then used to generate more external funding for the research. The starting-point in this is always the (social) substantive question. In addition, we are gaining more experience with European programmes on a limited number of subjects.

SPECIFICATION OF AMBITION 3

We improve the transfer of students through the education chain

To enable optimal personal learning pathways of all students at our university, we want to remove obstacles in the education chain (VO¹-HBO², MBO³-HBO, HBO-WO⁴) and, in collaboration with other educational institutions, seek new ways to improve student transfer. In the short term, we are working mostly on improving the connection between MBO and HBO. In view of our social mission, we want to encourage more MBO students to continue their learning pathway at HBO level, thereby preventing unnecessary drop-outs. We do this in close collaboration with the Regional Training Centres (ROCs) in the Zwolle and Flevoland area, observing best practices in our current study programmes.

Our current efforts include the following:

- Lecturers from related ROCs and from our university are analysing to what extent students feel a need for better transfer and what we could do to make it more attractive for them to continue their studies in higher professional education (HBO). Our goal here is to realize a focused specialization in MBO-4 and a "welcome culture" in the propaedeutic year of HBO.
- Senior students from our university act as peer mentors for MBO-4 students in their transfer to HBO by helping them decide whether to continue their studies and –if so– choose their preferred learning pathway.
- Together with other universities of applied sciences and ROCs we are developing a 'Pre-Pabo' course to prepare MBO students for the Education in Primary Schools programme and increase our lagging intake of MBO students in this programme.
- We are increasing the options for students to achieve the AD level to give them more choices, both for MBO-4 students and for professionals wishing to continue their studies at HBO level.

¹ Secondary Education

² Higher Professional Education

³ Senior Secondary Vocational Education

⁴ University Education

- Following existing initiatives, we are enhancing collaboration with ROCs, from joint projects in the professional field to joint research of professorships and MBO centres of expertise.
- We are working on improving transfer elsewhere in the education chain, e.g. from HBO to WO, in collaboration with the institutions involved,.

WE SHARE: FROM BULWARK TO NETWORK

Our bold ambitions can only be achieved if we work together and are in constant contact with the world around us (regional area, professional field, educational institutions). The same also applies to our internal organization, as students and employees of Windesheim. We want to transform ourselves from an institutional and segmented bulwark into a professional and learning network. This requires a management model based on joint professional responsibility and fading traditional boundaries between study departments, divisions and services. Using each other's talents and professional skills, sharing knowledge and working together are the most important conditions to provide students with optimum counselling in outlining their personal learning pathway.

We care, we dare, we share

We look out for each other and are committed to society.

We have the courage to innovate, question the status quo and are curious in looking for ways to improve.

We share our knowledge and focus on collaboration.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: TRENDS IN SOCIETY

In the scenario planning *On Our Way to 2025* (Jester), Windesheim University of Applied Sciences had an analysis made of trends in the labour market and technological trends, as well as the consequences for education and research. Four scenarios have outlined changes that will have their impact on the university. This scenario planning has been the starting point for identifying the following trends in society:

Society is changing rapidly: change is the only constant factor. Windesheim distinguishes a number of *trends in society*:

1. Disruptive technological trends and toppling institutions.
2. Flexible labour market, new and declining professions.
3. Growing divide between higher-education graduates and others, etc.
4. Social agendas are determined by sustainability, diversity and globalization.

Besides these trends in society, the university also recognizes the following *regional trends*:

1. Higher demand from regional human capital agenda for more higher-education graduates, improved transfer from MBO to HBO and Lifelong Learning.
2. Interaction between regional businesses and education intensifying e.g. due to learning in the workplace.
3. Regional top sectors and businesses are seeking collaboration on research.

Windesheim also distinguishes the following *educational trends*:

1. Personal development and digital skills are becoming more important.
2. Personalized learning pathways are created, with teams of lecturers to provide counselling.
3. Physical and virtual learning environments are blending.
4. Higher education is becoming increasingly international.

This paradigm shift from collective programmes to (more) personalized offerings for a large variety of users is a trend observed not only in higher education. It is also reflected for example in trends in health care, media and secondary education ("right to customization" pilot) (We see a trend here of financial flows shifting from the provider to 'users'. The first signs of this trend are also noticeable in the higher-education sector (Sap Committee report for MBO, *Continued Education Works, Investing Together in New Security*⁵, SER recommendation *Learning and Development During Career*⁶, as well as the higher-education experiments 'Flexible Study' and 'Demand-driven Funding').

With the proposed strategy in our institutional plan, we intend to move forward in line with these trends.

⁵ Dutch report title: *Doorleren werkt. Samen investeren in nieuwe zekerheid*.

⁶ Dutch title of SER publication: *Leren en ontwikkelen tijdens de loopbaan*.

APPENDIX 2: CONNECTION TO THE REGIONAL AREAS

Windesheim is connected to the regional areas of Zwolle and Flevoland, through student internships and graduation projects as well as through communities of practice and the Centres of Expertise in which we participate.

The Zwolle area is characterized as an economic top area with a great variety of economic activities. There is a firm link between government, entrepreneurs, education and research. There are several partnerships in which these four parties work together intensively, such as: Zwolle Area Economic Board, Kennispoort (Knowledge Gateway), Polymer Science Park, Health Innovation Park.

In the catchment area of our Zwolle campus, the population of young adults will decrease from 2020. Windesheim Almere, however, is expected to see a rise in the population of young adults in its catchment area.

The Flevoland area is characterized as a young growth area and, like the Zwolle area, it has many small and medium-sized companies. Almere is part of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. Interestingly, the Flevoland area is increasing its connections with the Zwolle area, due to the effect of the Hanzelijn, etc. The new Lelystad Airport may strengthen these connections even further.

Windesheim Flevoland maintains close contact with partners of government and from the professional field in, for instance, the Higher Education Development Board.

The study 'The Power of East' (research on the economy of the provinces of Overijssel and Gelderland) clearly shows that there is great potential for improvement in Human Capital. A large proportion of the HBO-graduated professionals leave the area for the Randstad without being replaced by other HBO graduates. These HBO-graduated professionals are badly needed to maintain our top ranking as an economic area in relation to other Dutch regional areas. 'The Power of East' also demonstrates that the area can be characterized as a strong HBO area and that there is room particularly for improved alignment between MBO and HBO (more Associate Degrees, more lifelong-learning courses).

In addition to the (results of) 'The Power of East' study, the (results of the) study carried out by CHEPS (UT) and Windesheim called 'Future exploration of regional population and labour market developments and policy perspectives' has also been used in writing this institutional plan. An important recommendation being made is to employ (representatives of) regional employers in a more structured way to optimize the connection with the labour market.

APPENDIX 3 : HORIZONTAL DIALOGUE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

This institutional plan was composed in consultation with Windesheim staff and students. External stakeholders have also provided valuable input. Not only regional authorities (Overijssel and Flevoland Provinces, Zwolle Area, Zwolle municipality, Almere and Lelystad) but also entrepreneurs (industry representatives, SMEs and large companies from the Zwolle and Almere areas) and other (supplying) educational and research institutions have been actively involved in the preparation of this plan.

The internal and external consultation sessions have provided the following insights:

1. Windesheim should be able to respond faster to changing demand from the professional field of future employers of their students.
2. Windesheim could be more responsive in addressing the lifelong learning concept.
3. The Zwolle and Flevoland areas are true MBO / HBO areas. Windesheim can offer MBO students an opportunity to continue their studies at HBO level (AD programmes / training courses); the areas have a need for such skilled professionals.
4. Windesheim can make the difference by offering blended-learning programmes of various types.

In the period ahead of us, we will continue our consultations, working together to realize the ambitions of our university of applied sciences.

We shall account in the usual manner for the activities undertaken, by way of our management report and the annual accounts, as well as through the KPI-dashboard-generated data we provide. We shall also share this information with our regional stakeholders.