

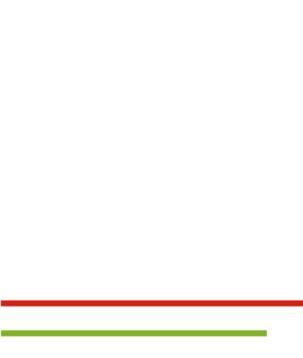
VSNU

vereniging van universiteiten
association of universities
THE NETHERLANDS

Goodmorning Professor!

Vision for studying in a new era





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In 2025...

It's 2025. Imagine you're eighteen years old. You've got your pre-university (VWO) diploma and you're off to study. How will you choose your programme? Will you opt for one of the highly regarded and long-established Dutch research universities or will you study abroad? Will the pre-university diploma still grant you automatic access to the programme of your choice or will selection come into play? Will you opt for a full study programme or a VWO track at a university of applied sciences, or will you choose a number of different subjects at different institutions? What kind of study environment will you end up in? Will there still be campuses or can you only study for a degree online? Or will you give university a miss and opt for training-on-the-job? And what will universities offer you if you want to add to your existing qualifications or retrain in a different field ten years later?

It's 2025. Imagine you're a university lecturer. What will be expected of you? How will you ensure that your teaching programme transfers the knowledge that the rapidly changing labour market requires? Will Dutch universities offer you enough scope or will you look for a job abroad? Where would you like to be based? Do you manage to incorporate the results of your research sufficiently into your teaching? What do you do with all the new technology? And how do you strike a balance between the expectations in terms of teaching, research and valorisation?

Back to 2015: a vision for the next ten years

It's 2015. The Dutch research universities are considering their strategic choices for the future. They are formulating a shared vision for the next ten years, so that the students and lecturers of 2025 find themselves in an academic environment that moves with the times.

This vision is a reflection of the discussions concerning future strategy which the research universities have recently been having with students, staff and other stakeholders. This joint university agenda looks specifically at the future of university education in the Netherlands. That future is not the same for all research universities: they are too different in terms of study programmes, disciplines and ambitions. For this reason, the universities also have their own institution-specific agenda. The vision described here is based on the pamphlet entitled [Working together for academic education](#), which was written to inform the current discussions.

At the heart of this vision is the research universities' shared mission: to offer academic education and research. Universities

generate new knowledge along an objective measure. The university's values are consistent: reasoned scepticism and critical reflection in an independent environment. On this basis, the research universities educate students to be painstaking academics who make a valuable contribution to society. The universities research the issues of today and tomorrow and ensure that the knowledge they acquire is used to benefit society.

The value of an academic education

Academic education is of crucial importance to our society.¹ An ever increasing number of young people are choosing to go to university. Universities are responsible for the crucial task of educating young people who are seeking to develop their talents to the full. In times of stagnating economic growth, not only does our country need a university-educated labour force, it also needs socially aware citizens who make a significant contribution to the world around them. The Dutch knowledge society and powerful research universities go hand in hand.

What do we see around us?

When defining a vision it's a good idea to consider the developments that are likely to affect us over the next few years. We have already identified six major developments which will affect the future of the research universities: changing demographics, increasing diversity, a more complex society, changing labour markets, new forms of learning and new market players.

1) Changing demographics

If we consider the Netherlands alone, there will be fewer students in the future due to the ageing population. But, around the world, the number of students is actually increasing. By 2060, the world population will have grown by three billion people.² Demand for higher education is increasing substantially, particularly in Asia and Africa. This brings with it opportunities for the Netherlands. Currently, thirteen per cent of students are of non-Dutch origin³. We want to see an increase in this percentage. Selecting talent from abroad will make the Dutch education system more international and higher in quality. Moreover, the work ethic of international students also has a positive effect on the time it takes the average Dutch student to obtain their degree. The "international classroom" prepares not only international students but also their Dutch peers for the international labour market.

¹ See for example: "Publieke kennisinvesteringen en de waarde van de wetenschap" (Public investments in knowledge and the value of learning), KNAW (Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), 2013. Or: "Naar een lerende economie" (Towards a learning economy), Scientific Council for Government Policy, 2013.

² United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. World Population Prospects, 2012.

³ VSNU based on "1 cijfer HO", 2013.



2) Increasing diversity of student population

The significant growth in the numbers of students and increased internationalisation have made the student population of universities more diverse than ever. It is anticipated that this diversity will only increase, both nationally and internationally. The aim within the secondary education system is that, in the long term, students will work towards a 'tailor-made diploma' which will allow them to study subjects to different levels and over different periods of time. A document known as the 'plus document' is also being developed. This will be attached to the qualifications of secondary school students and will specify the extracurricular activities the student has been involved in during their time at school: drama, the school magazine, voluntary work etc., providing universities with more information about the abilities and interests of prospective students. At the same time, it will increase the need for more selection tools to match students and programmes. Since last year, new educational guidance activities have been mandatory. Universities have noticed that some students who are given a negative recommendation ('this programme is not a good match for you') tend to ignore it. We will monitor the effectiveness of these matching activities.

Management trilemma: University level-qualifications for the knowledge society

The Netherlands has already reached the European target of forty per cent of young people holding university-level qualifications.⁴ With a student population of 253,482, more students than ever are currently studying at university. Back in 2010, the Veerman commission warned that such large numbers of students would jeopardise the quality of the education provided. The government has stipulated that the research universities must admit anyone with a pre-university (VWO) diploma, improve the quality of their teaching and ensure that students graduate on time. Everyone agrees that we can't skimp on quality. The current level of investment for some programmes is not sufficient to resolve this management programmes (more students, better teaching, greater academic success). Over the past decade the price per student has been constantly decreasing, resulting in the number of lecturers not being able to increase in line with the ever-growing numbers of students. Consequently, on some programmes the gap between students and lecturers has become too large.

3) In partnership with an ever more complex society

Society is dynamic and constantly developing. Major social problems can only be resolved by working together beyond the confines of disciplines, institutions and countries. They require global, transdisciplinary answers. This also requires an interdisciplinary educational offering which itself is constantly updated. There will be more university colleges, multidisciplinary bachelor's degrees and interdisciplinary forms of teaching. Universities will make choices according to their own institutional profile. Programmes will focus increasingly on ICT. The ever-growing volumes of data will make computational sciences crucial

⁴ Trends in beeld, Ministerie van OCW, 2013.

to virtually all academic disciplines. Research universities will also collaborate more with research institutions, universities of applied sciences, businesses and social organisations at national, regional and international level. This will give students an education which relates directly to the issues that inspire them and to the questions being asked by society.

4) Changing labour markets

So far, a university-level education has offered graduates a reasonable guarantee of finding a high-level job.⁵ Will this guarantee of a good job still hold true in the future? We will increasingly see that professional practice innovates more quickly than the academic world is able to respond. Economists Frey and Osborne⁶ believe that over the next two decades 47 per cent of jobs in the US could well change dramatically or disappear. The expression 'T-shaped professional' is currently much used. The T symbolises a graduate with broad basic skills and a specialism. A changing labour market means that people constantly have to update their qualifications. So far, universities of applied sciences and commercial training institutions have been market leaders in the field of refresher training and retraining. With an annual intake of around 850 students, the part-time programmes offered by the research universities are insignificant.⁷ The postgraduate programmes offered by research universities focus on specific subjects such as accountancy, law and business economics, medicine and pharmacy.

5) New forms of learning

Online methods of learning are already an integral part of university education. Over the next few years the use of digital resources will only increase and will enrich and enhance campus learning. Campus sites will still have the highest priority, however. Massive open online courses (MOOCs) and small private online courses (SPOCs) will exist alongside the small-scale intensive teaching of the university colleges, for example. Online education also offers opportunities for taking a more individual approach to students, for tailor-made modules and for targeted support based on up-to-date online information on students' performance. Flipped classrooms are on their way in: students acquire knowledge online and discuss it and develop it on campus with their lecturers and peers. This personal contact remains at the heart of our educational concept. As a result, the students will, even more than they are now, be the owners of their own learning.

⁵ Education at a glance, OECD, 2014.

⁶ Carl Benedikt Frey and Michael A. Osborne. "The Future Of Employment: How Susceptible Are Jobs To Computerisation?", 2013.

⁷ VSNU based on "1 cijfer HO" 2013 (main enrolments, excluding Open University).

6) New market players

Über, catch-up TV provider Uitzendinggemist and Spotify are all forms of competition and organisation which have led to new earnings models and a shake-up of production chains and the provision of services. New providers may also enter the education market. For example, in other countries we are already seeing private providers offering tailor-made programmes which include accreditation (*Open Badges*). And in the US there are the so-called Minerva Schools which offer a new education concept at half the price. These schools employ top-class academics to teach their students and make use of the existing public research infrastructure without having to invest in it themselves. In the US education context of high college fees for the best universities, this represents a serious alternative. We still believe in the competitive added value of the strong link between teaching and research in an open campus model.

We are, however, concerned by the upcoming competition from Asian nations, where substantial investments in research infrastructure are proving very attractive to top-class academics. Internationally, the Dutch research universities score well for their teaching, but their top position in the world rankings is due primarily to their research performance. All the major advisory committees in recent years (including the Veerman commission and the Interministerial Policy Review on Academic Research (*IBO Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek*)) have agreed that even better performance with the same budgets is an unrealistic expectation. Substantial investments are essential if the research universities are to be able to maintain and improve their position among the international competition. The funds generated by the introduction of student loans are a much-needed investment in education and a first step in restoring the balance between the tasks and the financial resources of the research universities.

Funding paradox

Research universities are expected to perform well on relatively modest budgets. This is no mean feat. Over the course of fourteen years, the funding the research universities receive from the government for each student has fallen by 27%: in the year 2000 the government grant per student was € 19,600⁸, while in 2014 it was only € 14,300. Since 1995 the research universities have been responsible for their own accommodation and infrastructure, but do not receive sufficient funding for this purpose. In addition, research universities increasingly have to compete for research funding with low chances of success, and successful grant applications have to be matched with significant funds from the university's own budget. Funding based on numbers of students and degrees and doctorates conferred gives the impression that universities must compete with each other on these indicators, despite the fact that there is no corresponding increase in the funds available from the government. This remains a major threat to the quality of the education provided.

⁸ Based on 2014 prices.



What are our ambitions?

Research universities are ambitious. We educate academics who use their cognitive skills to benefit society, including the leaders, thinkers and creative minds of tomorrow. We want to continue teaching students and conducting research at the same high level, as leading institutions. The research universities' ambitions can be summarised as follows: research universities guarantee the quality and relevance of their education, offer education in which students are valued and acknowledged in a stimulating and innovative learning environment, focus on campus education, together take responsibility for the range of programmes on offer, believe in the binary system but also in consecutive degrees and collaboration, offer part-time students modular programmes, invest in quality across the entire education chain and understand the position of students and staff.

Academic education: link between education and research

The education provided by research universities is rooted in academic research. An academic education is about more than simply transferring knowledge. An academic education is formative. It produces critical individuals who are capable of devising solutions to issues of which we are not yet aware. An academic education teaches students to think analytically in an environment in which assumptions and outcomes are critically tested, in which students actively participate and in which there is dialogue and the sharing of ideas. In this community, lecturers are curators of knowledge and facilitators of the learning process. As well as knowledge, they convey in particular an academic ethos in which a link to research is always present.

1) Research universities guarantee the quality and relevance of their teaching

The research universities are convinced that in the future they will continue to be responsible primarily for the education of young people between the ages of 18 and 25. The core of the research universities' offering will continue to be academic education with a focus on academic skills and enrichment. Research is an essential and necessary requirement for the development of curiosity and creativity. Students studying at the Dutch research universities therefore follow research-led study programmes. The research universities give students the knowledge and skills they need to enable them to cope in an ever-changing world. Studying has intrinsic value. For many students, their time at university is one of the most formative times of their lives. While at university, students must be given sufficient time and space to obtain a broad academic education: self-fulfilment, both in the lecture theatre and beyond. Research universities promote citizenship as part of the curriculum. This not only contributes to students' personal

development but also gives them the skills they need to operate as professionals in an exacting labour market on completion of their studies. Consequently, we accept that this means some of our students will take longer than three years to obtain a bachelor's degree. By being responsive and open, research universities will offer their students a future with prospects. Consequently, a degree from a research university will retain its value on the labour market, also in the future.

2) Teaching in which students are valued and acknowledged

The quality of the education provided will in large measure be determined by the dedication and input of the students themselves. This is why research universities need to be able to impose admission and progress requirements. In addition, with the resources made available through the student loan system, research universities want to create a smaller-scale teaching environment and to give lecturers more time for individual contact with students. We aim to ensure that students feel valued and acknowledged by their lecturers on all programmes, even those with large numbers of students. In the academic community, students and lecturers are jointly responsible for the quality of the teaching and the study ethos. Universities are not learning factories that churn out the workforce from a conveyor belt, but rather institutions in which young people receive a broad education. In return, the universities expect students to challenge themselves, each other and their lecturers to strive to achieve their full potential. Dutch pupils and students must be at least as motivated and keen to learn as their international peers⁹.

3) A responsive, innovative and international learning environment

The learning environment must be tailored to the greater diversity of the student population. This means that the cultural and educational backgrounds of various groups of students will have to be taken into account. An increase in the number of students is not a target. Research universities will work together to create a differentiated teaching landscape. The Dutch research universities are also making full use of digital teaching methods and are experimenting with innovative learning environments. The cultural context and diversity must be used to make teaching truly international. In other words, it's not just a matter of teaching programmes in English. A truly international environment requires universities to think carefully about the focus of their teaching and the make-up of the students in an international classroom. Clearly, this also has an impact on HR policy, where the international recruitment of talent and the promotion of international work experience are now commonplace. 'Truly international' also requires universities to identify the added value of the Dutch education system in an international context. What does studying in the Netherlands offer students that they won't find elsewhere?

⁹ In its annual report last year, the Dutch Inspectorate of Education noted that Dutch pupils and students were the least motivated and keen to learn of any in the OECD population.

Our answer: an academic education, a broad range of programmes in taught in English, a non-hierarchical environment where students accept responsibility for themselves and collaborate in an open community whose infrastructure facilitates collaboration between institutions and with industry. These are unique selling points which the Dutch research universities use to define themselves internationally.

4) Strengthening the academic community through campus education

Although education will change dramatically as a result of online lectures, MOOCs, flipped classroom and blended learning, the universities¹⁰ maintain the stance that this formative function will largely take place on their campus. After all, the campus is the ideal place for lecturers and students to meet. Students and lecturers underscore the value of these face-to-face meetings. Being part of a university community and actively participating in it can significantly contribute to academic development. What's more, the campus is the ideal location for other formative activities, such as culture and social activities. It can also serve as a breeding ground for start-ups. Therefore, in spite of the online massification of education and the offering of education modules to enormous numbers of students, the university of the future will set itself apart with the highly developed solidarity of its community and a conveniently arranged, attractive, accessible and lively university campus. The campus will become even more of a hotbed of innovation and creativity and will also serve as an attractive place to establish business for knowledge-intensive companies from the Netherlands and abroad.

5) Focusing attention on the professional autonomy of the staff

Students *and* the academic staff are the heart of a university. The professors and other academic staff are the guarantors of the quality of both education and research. The recognition of the expertise of these pivotal players in both conveying and generating knowledge must be a focus in quality assurance. Just as important for raising the quality of education is the continued professional autonomy of lecturers. Lecturers must once again be joint owners of their disciplines and programmes. Visitations and accreditations have created a huge administrative burden and a culture of distrust. External accountability obligations have sometimes been translated – as a precaution – into burdensome monitoring mechanisms in their own organisations. We want to rectify this. Dialogue and debate are integral aspects of an academic community. We must remain fully committed to involving staff and students in deliberations within the formal frameworks of councils and committees. In addition to the formal and already existing frameworks, it is also important that there is an informal culture of participation.

¹⁰ Exclusief de Open Universiteit die zich van nature specifiek richt op afstandsonderwijs.

6) Competitive terms of employment

Universities want to be attractive employers for the best lecturers who provide challenging education that is closely intertwined with research. For too long, teaching has been a systematically underappreciated component of an academic career. Universities have promised to take a critical look at the current career path incentives for academics. Where necessary, teaching responsibilities will be brought more into balance with other staff responsibilities. We offer attractive terms of employment (also by international standards) and an open and transparent prospect of a university career. We also work towards the long-term employability of our staff. Temporary employment contracts are meant to be for tasks that are genuinely limited in duration. For employees, it must be clear what job prospects the university can offer. If these prospects are long-term, the contract should not be temporary. In the collective labour agreement signed at the end of 2014, agreements were made to reduce the number of temporary contracts. Last but not least, universities will continue to devote attention to and, where necessary, boost career prospects for female academics.

7) Joint responsibility for the range of programmes offered

Universities are taking joint responsibility for the range of programmes they offer. We consider where smaller programmes are offered and, if small independent programmes are at risk of being dropped, we will explore the possibility of incorporating these into a programme offering elsewhere in the Netherlands. We collaborate on joint programmes, ensure that programmes are compatible and recognise each other's credits. This provides students with an even better opportunity to get a multidisciplinary education.

Faith in the power of the binary system

We want to maintain the binary system of universities of applied sciences (HBO) and research universities (WO). This system is internationally accepted and recognisable¹¹ and offers students a clear distinction between education that is more vocationally oriented and education that is more academically oriented. This distinction is not absolute, by the way, as universities also prepare students for professions – albeit at an academic level. What's more, this distinction is also greatly appreciated by the professional field that receives the students. One point where the Dutch model can be improved, however, is flexibility. In deciding whether to go to senior general secondary education (HAVO) or university preparatory education (VWO), children essentially make a choice between HBO and WO in their early teens. After this, there are relatively few options for transferring/promotion and these options have also decreased in recent years.

8) Intake, accumulation and advancement

The universities benefit from good primary and secondary schools – after all, their pupils are our future students. That is why we, together with other sector councils, are committed to the national

¹¹ Other countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany and Switzerland also have a binary system.



and university teaching agenda. By means of online learning materials and sample lectures, secondary school pupils have the opportunity to familiarise themselves with and prepare themselves for university studies. We ask that secondary schools make optimum use of these resources. Qualified HBO students should also have the opportunity to study at a research university. There needs to be a better connection between HBO and WO, both for HBO students who want to transfer to research universities and WO students who want to transfer to universities for applied sciences. It must continue to be possible to accumulate diplomas and advance to a higher level of education. This requires close cooperation between research universities and universities of applied sciences with respect to accumulation programmes, transfer minors and academic routes within HBO bachelor's programmes, among other things. It also requires public investment. To us, it is incomprehensible that the government does not fund accumulation programmes and yet maximises tuition fees for these programmes. We are asking the minister to enter into talks with us about this, based on the shared interest of facilitating transferring/promotion in higher education.

9) Modular education for part-time students in the private domain

While young people remain our primary target group, the universities realise students must continue to update their knowledge once they have joined the job market. We therefore offer post-initial modular education in the private domain. Thanks in part to online education possibilities, more and more opportunities have become available for us to serve working people. The Open University offers them the possibility of earning a bachelor's or master's degree through part-time study. The other universities are seeing a decrease in the demand for part-time study programmes and are focusing on flexible part-time modular education that awards certifications. This requires a different approach to and perspective on education that they will be developing together with the market.

Control and participation

Dialogue and debate, both formal and informal, are an integral aspect of an academic community. Councils and committees have been established at all levels of the universities, with representatives from every branch. In principle, control and participation have been well defined, but there is room for improvement with respect to how these are put into practice. No everyone places equal importance on filling these positions, and not every staff member or student feels that he or she is sufficiently heard with respect to important university affairs. It is important that staff and students are involved in deliberations within the formal frameworks of councils and committees. After all, support for decisions and strategic courses is essential for a university board, faculty board or other board. In addition to the formal and already existing frameworks, it is also important that there is an informal culture of participation. The centuries-old culture of debate and transparency in research can serve as an example for the focus areas of education and administration.

What is needed?

In the period ahead, we will be debating these matters in the university community: what do we need to continue to offer the academic education we all believe in? How can we put these ambitions into practice? The universities can achieve most of the ambitions within the framework of current laws and legislation. For some ambitions, government action is required. In short, this entails recognising the intrinsic value of university education and research, a higher lecturer-to-student ratio, less bureaucracy, introducing institutional accreditation, abolishing macro-efficiency, allowing substantiated selection of students, making decisions by means of dialogue and investing in academic research.

1) Recognise the intrinsic value of university education and research

Universities are being asked to do more and more. Increasingly more parties are discovering the value of university knowledge and skills, as well as the yields of university research. As a result, universities are changing in character and becoming more multifaceted. However, this certainly does not mean that the classic values of a university will be cast aside – there must be no tampering with the values of independence, critical reflection and reasoned scepticism. The universities will be initiating the debate regarding their place in society with their academic communities and other stakeholders.

2) A higher lecturer-to-student ratio

The current workload for university lecturers is simply too heavy. The number of lecturers must be increased in order to achieve the above ambitions. The universities therefore welcome the funds they will be receiving in increments from the student loan system starting in 2018, as these funds will be used for hiring more lecturers, among other things. Over the next three years, the universities will draw on their reserves to already invest 200 million euros in education to ensure that all students can benefit from improved quality starting now. These investment goals will be determined in consultation with employee participation groups and included in the annual reports.

3) Reverse the trend of bureaucratisation

For the envisaged changes to be realised, the administrative burden will have to be reduced significantly. Despite the government's plans to that effect, universities are experiencing more and more regulatory pressure. This is the case with respect to both Dutch and European legislation and the universities' own regulations. The increased work pressure and regulatory pressure serve to distract lecturers and researchers from their core tasks of teaching and research; what's more, this pressure also makes

institutions less flexible. And it is precisely because the future is uncertain that institutions have to have enough flexibility to respond to changes. Laws and regulations must fulfil a facilitating role in this respect. In order to reverse the trend of bureaucratisation, we need to move towards a culture of trust. This trust goes hand-in-hand with a balanced form of accountability towards students, staff and society.

4) Trust requires institutional accreditation

By virtue of its institutional audits and programme accreditation, the Netherlands has one of the strictest assessment systems in the world. However, our quality assurance system has led to a culture of routine and detachment in which an open dialogue regarding points of improvement has been relegated to the background. Although the original goal was good, no one has taken sufficient ownership of the accreditation system. At the request of the minister, a recommendation was recently made regarding the further development of the current system. The core of this recommendation involves improving the current accreditation system while simultaneously launching an institutional accreditation pilot project.

5) Abolish macro-efficiency and new programme assessment

As the government continues to withdraw from education, the sector promises to assume control of the range of programmes offered, devote further efforts to promotion and diversity and work together to ensure a national selection of programmes and research. In exchange, the field will join forces to take responsibility for efficiency issues with respect to both starting programmes and discontinuing programmes. It should be made easier to set up new programmes. This would make it possible to respond more quickly to job market developments and demands.

6) Allow the substantiated selection of students

We guarantee accessibility at the system level, but we want to be able to set additional requirements regarding access to specific programmes. During the bachelor's phase, only university colleges and programmes with an enrolment quota can make a selection. However, the quota is not meant to be a selection instrument. Based on its promise that all qualified students will be admitted to a university programme, the government should allow universities to make a substantiated selection of students. This is in the interests of the students themselves and it promotes a smaller scale and more differentiation in the system.

7) Make decisions based on dialogue instead of performance agreements

The experience with the current performance agreements has revealed that too much of the decision-making is based on details. The agreements are also not sustainable over time. Furthermore, the agreements are not flexible enough to respond to new



developments. There is also a growing dissatisfaction among university staff regarding the bureaucratic burden imposed by the government through successive measures. In order to strengthen the internal dialogue with students and staff on the institutional policy and to render account towards society regarding prioritisation and responsibility, we propose making the institutional plans (once again) the main focus of our dialogue with the government. Institutions render account by means of annual reports. The institutional plans can then serve as input for the Strategic Agenda of the Minister of Education, Culture and Science.

8) Remain realistically optimistic and invest in research

While the universities welcome the funds from the student loan system, they also remain realistic – some of the cuts made by the second cabinet under Prime Minister Rutte have not yet been implemented, which means that universities will not have a positive balance until 2023. The funds from the student loan system will be made available in increments and will not peak until almost a decade has passed. This does not stymie our ambitions, but it does warn us not to be overly optimistic regarding, for instance, the rate at which we can achieve the substantial increase in lecturers everybody wants. We will also therefore have to continue campaigning for additional funding for education and research. After all, in order to ensure the academic character of universities, the direct government funding for research budgets should increase in proportion to the growing number of students and the success rate of competitive research applications should be no less than 25 per cent.

In 2025...

It is 2025. An international group of students follows courses around the world, online and on campus. Universities make use of each other's course offerings. Students are seen and recognised by their lecturers. With a "Good morning, Professor", they log in to their personal online learning environment for a live session with their lecturer. Together, the students and lecturers are responsible for the quality of the education and the study culture. The students are prepared for either an academic career or (more often than not) a professional career. The universities work with companies, government agencies and social organisations at the regional, national and international level.

It is 2025. The oldest university in the Netherlands – Leiden University – is celebrating its 450th year. The world has changed, but the Dutch universities are still alive and kicking. They are bastions of reflection and consideration, with professors as the linchpins and knowledge bearers. The campus is still the central meeting place for students and lecturers, but now, even more than

in 2015, it is a place for exchanging knowledge and reflecting on this knowledge.

It is 2025. Thanks to the Dutch universities having formulated a joint vision and considered strategic choices ten years prior, in 2015, students and lecturers find themselves in an academic environment in 2025 that has kept pace with time.

VSNU, 11 June 2015

Colophon

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