UNIVERSITEIT VAN AMSTERDAM

Working document

Strategic Plan

2021 - 2026

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University of Amsterdam

Contents

1. Outline: our challenges and drivers for the coming years

The main direction of the UvA in the coming years is based on the challenges we face and our driving forces. We had already identified the challenges before the corona crisis. The need to tackle them has only increased.

Our core values
The UvA engages in science that wants to understand and serve the world, without binding itself to political, religious or other interests. We are an ambitious, creative and public university in Amsterdam. We are both independent and involved. We work towards a sustainable, prosperous future and stand for justice and equal opportunities. We listen and offer the freedom to freely ask questions, be curious and debate. We do this with respect for everyone's input, background and conviction, and in an environment that is socially and intellectually safe. We will defend these values at all times.

Our challenges in the next decade
As a university we are working on broadening the scientific knowledge horizon of our society. In addition, we train people to tackle the issues of the world. These tasks form the raison d'être of our research-intensive education, our PhD training and our scientific research. In the 20s, we expect major changes in the (international) playing field of higher education and research.

What is certain is that digitisation is a major challenge - even more so than we had imagined before the corona crisis. In research, smart use of digitisation transforms or enriches the methods of all disciplines. By combining and analysing data, all kinds of processes can be studied in innovative ways, for example as input for complex models that help us in gaining grip on social issues. The use of research methods based on data science requires investment in new expertise, teamwork and a state-of-the-art infrastructure.
ICT is a frequently used tool in education and testing. Even before the corona crisis, it was clear that digitisation would lead to further innovation in the content and form of the study programmes. There is a need for a strategic framework for the digitisation of education: what is the best combination of online and face-to-face? The better we are able to utilise the increased digitisation - and also new possibilities such as adaptive learning systems and learning analytics - the better our future position as a provider of higher education will be.

We also see other challenges. One of them is the increasing competition in attracting, binding and training talents. In this respect, it is very important that we bring staff and students with different talents and backgrounds into our organisation, i.e. that we actively promote diversity. Another challenge is open science, with the associated issues of intellectual property law. Then there is the task of strengthening social trust in the academy, as this is no longer self-evident. Finally, wealthy and knowledge-intensive players in the research market put the position of the university

under pressure (e.g. in the data and pharmaceutical markets).

The university must redefine itself and continue to innovate. On the basis of our core values and public position, we determine how we can work together with the right coalition partners - knowledge institutes, companies and social institutions.

Our strength
The UvA is a vanguard player in the academic world. Uniquely, we have almost the entire breadth of alpha, gamma and beta-medical sciences at an international top level. Our scientists work with the best in the world on innovative and fundamental research. Our research and education are closely linked and inspire each other. The range of education on offer is broad and activating, and stimulates student engagement. Naturally, we want to retain strength in the individual disciplines and study programmes. We can make better use of the quality we have across the board.

Our ambitions
In order to remain a vanguard player, scientific innovation is essential. Innovation comes from the disciplines themselves, but we can also make better use of the variety within the UvA. We want more intensive cooperation between disciplines, so that this contributes to innovation in each individual discipline. In addition, cooperation is needed to build up knowledge for (worldwide) complex issues that do not respect disciplinary boundaries. Think of the sustainable development goals, pandemics, the consequences of advancing communication and medical techniques, artificial intelligence or genetic modification, increasing populism, nationalism and migration. With our (interdisciplinary) knowledge we are able to respond adequately to these and future issues.

Innovation and agility in research are also reflected in our educational offering. We train students for tomorrow's society; they will take over the helm from the current generation, both in science and in other sectors. For this they need interdisciplinary knowledge, but also skills that transcend the study programme (such as working together, independent learning and using ICT in learning and working) and knowledge of data techniques. The corona crisis is speeding up the reflection on the working methods and digital methods we use in the programmes. In education, as in our research, we want to be among the best. Broad accessibility and equal opportunities remain important in this respect.

We can only realise these ambitions if our organisation as a whole becomes more agile. Processes and systems must support staff and students who (wish to) work across the boundaries of their discipline. The organisation must not hinder, but often does. Anyone who now has to deal with several faculties in his work or study must adapt to (too) many different procedures and habits.

In the following chapters, the strategic plan sets out what is needed to be innovative in research and education, and in their support.

2. Education & Research: we continue to deliver top quality across the board
3. Students: we invest in excellent and inspiring education
4. Partners: we further enhance our work through external cooperation
5. Responsibility: we put our public values into practice
6. Staff: we are a magnet for talent
7. Organisation: we are agile thanks to our process and government design

Ambitions en agenda items

Each of the following chapters contains ambitions with some agenda items for implementation. In this working version of the institution's plan, not all agenda items have been elaborated to the same extent. In part, this is fitting for a plan that looks six years ahead. In addition, when discussing this work version, there is room to look specifically at elaborations and priorities and to adjust them where necessary. For example, the effects of the corona measures on the government grant and the enrolment of new students.

2. Education & Research: we continue to deliver top quality across the board

Virtually all UvA research domains occupy a prominent place internationally. In a rapidly changing world, however, what is good today may not be good enough tomorrow. That is why we continue to invest in our strong base of fundamental research in the disciplines. From there, we stimulate innovation in research and education with extra resources. Finally, we put digitisation high on the agenda.

If we want to continue to act at a high level with our broad range of research and education, a number of strategic choices are needed.

In research, we are sharpening our investment choices in existing programming. We are doing this on the basis of two analyses: what distinguishes UvA research and which social challenges do we draw inspiration from? In addition, we innovate our research through collaboration at the intersections of disciplines. To this end, we are investing extra resources in four themes (still to be focused). Each discipline can draw inspiration from the themes and enrich itself with insights and methods from other fields of science. Our strengths in the field of artificial intelligence and data science are particularly helpful in this respect. This creates a combination of depth and breadth with which we can increase our competitive advantage, build up scientific knowledge about social issues and attract new talent.

The excellence we have built up must be reflected in our education. This will be an important criterion in the distribution of additional resources for the themes. Our education is research-intensive; as the disciplines renew themselves, the content of the training programmes changes along with it. Innovations that are relevant to each programme come from data science. We want every UvA student to (at least) become acquainted with the use and power of data techniques.

In all this, we are going to make more powerful use of digitisation. For education, the corona crisis has accelerated the use of online working methods, but has also shown how valuable face-to-face exchanges are. We can do earlier and more thoroughly what we were already planning to do, namely further innovate education with a smart combination of online and face-to-face working methods. We will go one step further and explore alternatives to the current system of lectures and seminars, with the aim of intensifying contacts between instructors and students.

In the coming period we will focus on:
1. choosing more strategically in our research programming
2. encouraging closer cooperation between disciplines
3. updating the link between our education and research and society
4. renewing research and education through powerful digitisation

2.1 Focusing more strategically in research programming

The desire to be as good tomorrow as we are today - i.e. to be a broad vanguard internationally - determines the deployment of the available research resources. In the Strategic Framework for Research from 2019, it was agreed to make sharper choices in this respect. To this end, two analyses are important. The first is: in what way can UvA research continue to be distinctive? The second is: how can we link up with societal challenges for which funds are available from NWO and the EU (the second flow of funds) and from other public and private, national and international sources (the third flow of funds)? We therefore base our research strategy on a well-developed picture of the UvA's strengths in all (sub)disciplines. We all know what the intellectual footprint is and what our competitive advantage is.

So we start from the existing strengths. On top of that, we want to innovate; that concerns both (professional) content and research methods. One of the sources of innovation is, as mentioned above, interdisciplinary cooperation. Section 2.2 discusses this in more detail.

The Strategic Framework for Research mentions a number of other conditions for maintaining and strengthening our leading international research position. These are addressed elsewhere in this institutional plan:
- working together in teams
- cooperation in (European) consortia
- strategic cooperation with civil society partners on the basis of reciprocity
- good research facilities and a good digital infrastructure
- open science

It goes without saying that we strive for the highest degree of scientific integrity and independence in our work, in line with the unabated relevant advice of the 2017 Scientific Integrity Working Group.

Agenda items
- Make explicit the strategic position and choices of all research institutes for the coming years (based on intellectual footprint and competitive advantage and in terms of societal significance and inspiration).
- Maintain an open internal dialogue on the independence and integrity of scientific research.

2.2 Encouraging closer collaboration between disciplines

In addition to the sharper choices in research programming, there will be a stimulus for collaboration between disciplines. To this end, we make use of the available space in the budget and the financial reserve position, including those of the faculties.

With the extra money, we invite scientists to formulate new, sometimes unexpected research questions at the interface of disciplines - and to incorporate these into education. Scientists can be inspired by four societal themes for which the UvA has a good basis. These are the following four, yet to be sharpened:
*   healthy future
    (mental and physical health, social fabric, behaviour, ...)
*   resilient, just societies
    (inclusiveness, cultures, social adjustments, prosperity, ...)
*   responsible systems
    (digital transformation, AI, organisation of markets, self-sufficiency and dependency, ...)
*   sustainable prosperity
    (energy, climate, ecological footprint, materials technology and resources, ...)

With the innovation impulse through these themes, we also want to achieve a leverage effect:
*   research collaboration should attract other revenues, preferably resulting from multi-annual partnerships with internal and external researchers and stakeholders. The other resources come, for example, from the EU, NWO, or the region;
*   the innovation effects the range of education on offer (initial and post-initial), so that we attract new students with content that matches the new research questions. In this way we will continue to profile the UvA as a renowned research-intensive university;
*   the research collaboration allows us to attract talent from the Netherlands and abroad with an interfaculty perspective.

The financial impulse comes in addition to the existing provision for Research Priority Areas (RPAs). For each of the four themes, in principle a quarter of the extra funds will be available. We support the development of project-based research lines over a period of five to ten years. After that, the research lines take care of their own funding (from the second and third flow of funds and via the education and research parameters of the allocation model). The Rector consults with the deans of the faculties concerned on the allocation of the additional resources.

Agenda items
*   Investing additional resources in fundamental renewal of research and education in consultation with the faculties.
*   Binding new, young and mid-career talent to the UvA and deploying interfaculty appointment advisory committees to recruit them.

2.3 Reviewing the connection of our education to research and societal questions

In conjunction with the research, we evaluate our education in order to update it where necessary. Connecting our offer to the themes from 2.2 is an important test, but not the only one.

We want our portfolio to remain forward-looking and distinctive and its breadth to remain affordable. We have noted that it is easier to add programmes and modules than to remove them. Before the end of 2021, each faculty (college/school) will make an analysis of its own educational offering and its own 'market share. This portfolio analysis should show how the current offerings match our research priorities, questions from society and our values. For example, we see that the demand for interdisciplinary study programmes is increasing, as is the demand for electives to be converted into fixed components (mainstreaming, for example of sustainability, social justice, non-Western perspectives or artificial intelligence). In the range of minors in particular, it should be visible that the UvA is a broad university. We want to make the minors more accessible and attractive to students from within and outside the UvA (national and international). We will take this into account in our scheduling. We are exploring whether we want to profile (parts of) our education internationally through unbundling. This is the trend to regroup course units in order to offer them digitally again or in combination with other (international) instructors. In particular, subjects and modules that are closely related to our own research can lend themselves to this.

We also deploy the best UvA scientists as lecturers in our bachelor's programmes; after all, our bachelors are academic and research-intensive. As to the forms in which we offer our education, we look for the human dimension, evidently within the available resources (Chapter 3 discusses this in more detail).
In the master's phase, we want to establish a better link between education and our research priorities (including the RPAs). The innovation impulse described in 2.2 contributes to this. The alignment of the master's programmes with the influx of students from interdisciplinary bachelors can also be improved. Furthermore, according to some faculties, a one-year master's degree is too short for specialization in a number of situations. Together with them, we are investigating possibilities to extend the duration of such degrees.

Agenda items
- Specify the strategic choices behind all programmes (goal, target group and labour market connection, diversity, working language, connection to UvA research, accessibility and studyability, honours offer) and indicating coherence with future digitisation.
- Examine the minors on offer (points for attention: scope of freedom of choice, international profiling).
- Help faculties to experiment with extending several one-year master's programmes.

2.4 Renewing research and education through advanced digitisation

During the corona crisis we have seen to what extent (and how much more than five or ten years ago) numerous processes can take place digitally and remotely. Since the previous planning period, the technical possibilities of computers and information technology have again increased enormously. As UvA, we generate knowledge that resounds with the digitisation of many domains in society. We do this, for example, with QuSoft, the research centre that focuses specifically on quantum software (a joint initiative of the UvA and the VU) and with ASML in the ARCnl project. We have made new and scientific questions raised by technical possibilities an important spearhead. For example, in 2022 we shall open the ICAI building in the Amsterdam Science Park, where we will house science, education and business applications in the AI field. We previously appointed four university professors at the intersections of AI and various other disciplines. However, that doesn't mean we can sit back. For all disciplines, data and methods will become available that will bring about far-reaching innovations in research. We are setting up a 'data-science function' to help researchers make this their own, even if they have not grown up with it.

We also recognize how great the impact of digitisation is on freedom and privacy, and how important it is to handle these with care. The students we train now cannot do without (basic) knowledge of and insight into digital techniques, and must be initiated into the use of data, images and algorithms, and into the inherent ethical questions.

For the form in which we offer education, digitisation is at the top of the agenda. The report 'Blend it & share it', published in 2015, invited UvA teachers to experiment with the concept of flipping the classroom; by now it is impossible to imagine online forms of work (worldwide) without them. The new Teaching & Learning Centres have a key position in their development for the UvA. We do not so much want to simply convert taught classes into online forms, but really use digitisation for innovative, different modes of education. We are going to consider more carefully what the optimal mix of online and face-to-face offerings is. Thinking about alternatives to the current predominance of taught classes opens up opportunities to organise education on a smaller scale and to increase student involvement. Chapter 3 discusses this in more detail.

Agenda items
- Set up a 'data-science function' to help researchers safely carry out data-driven research.
- Include an introduction to digital methods or data science in every bachelor's programme by offering all students subjects or a minor in data science.
- Continue the use of ICT resources for activating learning (knowledge clips, feedback, support for self-study), for digital forms of testing, for eliminating deficiencies and disadvantages and for new forms of education (both distance and face-to-face).

3. Students: we invest in excellent and inspiring education

With the extra resources, portfolio analysis and powerful digitisation (see chapter 2), we keep our education up to date and relevant. In addition, there is an impulse for innovation from the demand side, i.e. from students and society. The backgrounds of students differ more and more. We want to tailor education better to them and to the environment. We give graduates of all disciplines the opportunity to continue learning.

Our education has greatly improved in recent years: study success has increased, there are fewer dropouts, the international classroom has been introduced and the range of interdisciplinary education and minors has been expanded. This is a good starting point for taking the next step towards excellent education with an ambitious study culture (as postulated in our Vision on Teaching & Learning) and with a rich learning environment that includes intercultural perspectives.

Excellent education requires good interaction between curricula, instructors and students. First of all, interaction between instructors and students, and between students themselves, is indispensable. We achieve more intensive contact by thoroughly thinking about forms of education: what is possible at a distance and what is not, what are face-to-face contacts necessary for? Secondly, we must and want to take more account of differences between students. Working actively on diversity means that we no longer assume one size fits all. Students differ from each other in their experiences, background characteristics, level of language proficiency (Dutch, English, other languages) and cultural knowledge and interest. The majority of them also learn and process information in other ways than students did ten or fifteen years ago. We adapt our didactics accordingly and include this point in our thinking about working methods. In addition, we include important academic skills in education that can no longer be taken for granted in all participants, such as multilingualism or algorithmic thinking. At the other end of the spectrum, for students who want to distinguish themselves, we have a range of honour programs and various extracurricular activities.

From the students we expect more commitment to their education, to the academy and to their environment - near and far. Involvement boosts the chance of student success, i.e. the successful completion of the study programme with rich and meaningful learning outcomes (see also Study Success 2.0 from 2017).

In the coming years we will be working in line with the educational vision:
1. more intensive and small-scale education for enhanced interaction
2. the involvement (commitment) and proactive participation of students
3. enriching the learning environment with internationalisation
4. linking a professional life-long learning offer to research

3.1 Organising more intensive and small scale education

More intensive and small-scale education makes effective contacts between students and instructors possible. A student who feels seen and heard, builds self-confidence and commits to the study programme. This becomes more important now that the differences between students are greater and now that more and more distance education is provided. More effective contact can also prevent study delay or abandonment. UvA Matching and 'proefstuderen' have only partially ensured a better match between student and study programme. Especially in large programmes with a high drop-out rate or study delay, small scale can help to increase the match.

Small-scale therefore improves the quality of the learning processes. It is one of the three themes in the agreements UvA has entered into with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (in the Quality Agreements 2019-2024). We shall receive extra resources for these. For the most part, the UvA has added these resources to the allocation model, i.e. agreements have been made with each student council on their deployment per faculty. After all, not every student goes through the same learning process; it is up to the faculties and study programmes to determine how they organise their education on a smaller scale.

In spite of these extra educational resources the budget is limited. Within the total budget (of approximately one teaching hour per ECTS achieved), we must look for more interaction between lecturers and students. Perhaps the current ratio between the contact time and the total teaching time may be increased. More than half of the teaching time is now spent on preparation, correction and professional development, not on contact with students (although there are considerable differences between study programmes and faculties). Smart use of digitisation, which has been accelerated this year, and a rethink of the current system of lectures and seminars can help in this respect. For example, time can be saved by allowing part of the knowledge transfer to take place online, by making more use of digital learning materials (open educational resources) and digital methods for testing, and by offering general, cross-domain skills digitally (such as language skills, entrepreneurship or academic writing). The time that is freed up can be used to support collaborative, activating forms of learning in small groups. It is important that the contact time is filled with educational activities and with activities to stimulate student community building and student involvement in the programme, especially in the bachelor's phase. Equally important is that instructors receive good educational support in redesigning their teaching.

Agenda items
- More effective balance between contact time and total teaching time.
- Explore alternatives to the current system of hearing and working classes.
- More differentiation in education for a better match between student and programme.

3.2 Encouraging an engaged and proactive attitude in our students

Excellence in education goes hand in hand with involvement and commitment: it invites students to feel co-responsible for the content of their education and to commit themselves to their own study success. In the Vision on Teaching & Learning, we expect students to also invest in their education as individuals and as academics. Their involvement can be greater with respect to:

- improvements in the curriculum
- the study associations and the academic community
- the participation and management of the university or faculty
- our wider environment, e.g. through community service learning

The initiative to get more out of the learning than the substantive knowledge needed for the degree now lies mainly with the student. We will see how we can give all students more opportunities to acquire extra (cognitive and social) competences in or next to their study programme. After all, we train them to take over the helm in science and society. Students are under financial pressure due to study debt; they often have a secondary job or continue to live at home. We notice that this hinders participation in non-mandatory curriculum components for many students, especially if there is no immediate value in return (in credits or in money).

The bond between student and academic community can also be improved. Some ten percent of students feel involved with the university as a whole (that was the turnout rate in the 2019 Central Student Council election). A slightly larger proportion feel involved with the programme or faculty and are, for example, active in a study association. For the programme committee, which advises on the improvement of the curriculum, there are often not enough candidates to hold an election. More involvement of students in the UvA should also result in them remaining actively associated with the university and (especially) with their study programme after their studies. The UvA alumnus must be able to keep abreast of the latest developments in research and - conversely - be able to make a valuable contribution to both research and education, from his or her (professional) practice or as a benefactor.

Finally, it is good if students live in the city or close to Amsterdam. After all, this is where academic life takes place. That is why student housing remains high on the agenda of our discussions with the region in the 20s.

Agenda items
- Through the curriculum, students are encouraged to participate in academic life and research.
- Include ancillary activities as electives, such as entrepreneurial activities or curricular social activities with a learning component (community service learning).
- Promote the participation of students from all backgrounds in extra-curricular activities.
- Increased interaction with alumni (for example, via a 'subscription' to the latest insights and partnerships in the field, and via opportunities for participation).

3.3 Further enriching our teaching environment through internationalisation

In 2019, the proportion of foreign students at the UvA was 25 percent. Of these, 30 percent came from outside the European Economic Area (EEA). Of course, it remains to be seen what the (lasting) effects of the corona measures will be on these percentages. For the time being, the objectives set out in our 2017 Strategic Framework on Internationalisation apply in full. This states that we want to increase the quality of education via the international classroom:

- prepare students for an increasingly international environment
- bringing non-Dutch cultures, backgrounds and perspectives to education
- promote mutual understanding of differences in values and social views

For all these purposes it is necessary that Dutch and international students mix well with each other in daily practice, not only in the classroom, but also outside it.

Our student population has rapidly become more international since the opening of English-language bachelor's programmes and tracks. Compared to five years ago, there are now almost five times more international students in multi-year studies. So they stay in Amsterdam for quite some time. This is good for the international classroom and for the Dutch labour market. The international students also provide us with an international network of alumni and 'UvA ambassadors'. All this will only happen if we give these students the opportunity to have positive experiences and get in touch with Dutch students. A warm welcome upon arrival is not enough. Courses have to clearly show which goals they are pursuing with internationalisation and how these are reflected in the final attainment levels. Whether or not a programme is internationalized is an explicit part of the portfolio analysis mentioned in section 2.3. Student associations play an important role in activities that bring Dutch and foreign students into close contact with each other.

Incidentally, our internationalisation policy does not primarily aim to attract more students. We want to provide a good context for the students who choose our university in a global, digital educational world.

The UvA is bilingual (Dutch-English). We expect staff and students to have passive knowledge of both languages (at the internationally established B2 level) and active knowledge of one of them (at the C1 level). For programmes with only Dutch or only English as the working language, the language requirement of the other language is not compulsory, but it is conducive to participation in academic life.

Agenda items
- Work with the study associations to improve the mix between Dutch and international students, also during the academic year.
- Offer a summer course in Dutch to new international students.

3.4 Connecting a professional offering in Life Long Learning to our research

Knowledge acquisition does not stop after obtaining a master's degree. The policy boundary between initial (master's) education and lifelong learning will become blurred. Students should be able to postpone their master's degree if they want to gain work experience first. And in practice, graduates need refresher or further training, or knowledge about the latest developments in their field. The knowledge gained during their studies will no longer last a lifetime.

Just like our regular education, we want our lifelong learning offer to be permanently intertwined with our research. In this way we strengthen the research-intensive character of degree and non-degree programmes. Moreover, it promotes the dissemination of current research results from all faculties via our graduates or via alumni from other universities. In this way, we contribute to Amsterdam as a hub of academic knowledge and intellectual exchange.

For the UvA, the benefits of offering life-long learning are:
- we contribute (as part of our public task) to the continued employability of academics on the labour market, because major transitions take place every so often
- we promote the connection between science on the one hand and practice and the professional field on the other hand
- it reinforces the societal relevance of our education and research
- it can lead to closer cooperation with companies and research and graduation institutions
- it provides the faculties with additional income to support the breadth of the range of courses on offer

Agenda items
- Including life-long learning in the strategic choices of each faculty's educational offering.
- Further professionalisation of the support with the development of the UvA Academy platform and with a dedicated building on the Roeterseiland campus (catering, lecture halls).

4. Partners: we further enhance our work through external cooperation

In order to continuously renew our scientific work, we do not just want to stimulate cooperation internally. We are also going to strengthen and expand our external partnerships: internationally, nationally and locally. At the latter level - that of the city and the region - we can contribute more to improving the living environment

More exchange with companies and social institutions at home and abroad will help us to realise the ambitions formulated in Chapter 1 (of which scientific innovation is the core). We are also putting our values into practice; it is a means of working towards a sustainable, prosperous future for everyone. External cooperation helps because it:
- stimulates fundamental research, for example through private investment
- feeds our research and education with insights, data and practical issues
- helps us disseminate and exploit knowledge
- provides recognition for the quality of our work and enhances our profile

We already have a range of branches and networks in society - international, national and local - that we can make better use of and/or expand. For example, we collaborate with leading foreign universities, including the League of European Research Universities (LERU). Every year, thousands of alumni set to work or start new businesses. Scientists launch spin-offs (commercial applications) or sit on boards and committees. We want to better support researchers and employees looking for external cooperation.

In this context, we also want to pay more attention to the link with our immediate environment: the city and the region. As a public institution, we are part of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area, to which we contribute through knowledge transfer and the training of a well-qualified, assertive workforce. Conversely, the region offers us a breeding ground for education (real life projects, internships, community service learning) and for scientific research (inspiring ideas, living data, living labs). Furthermore, we contribute to the sustainability of the region by promoting, together with partners, the transition from a linear to a circular society. We want to make more visible what we (can) do for the city and the wider surroundings, strengthen our urban relationships and take advantage of the opportunities offered by the proximity of other Amsterdam knowledge institutes.

In the next few years we are going to do three things:
1. make a quantum leap in partnerships for research and education
2. improve support for valorisation
3. strengthen links with the city and the region

4.1 Scaling up research and education partnerships

Impact and cooperation are increasingly important parameters in quality assessment (SEP) and funding of science. They apply not only to applied research, but also to the renewal of fundamental research and research methods linked to societal challenges and issues. As University of Amsterdam, we can take better advantage of our location and our good research and educational reputation to make a quantum leap in collaborations and partnerships. This is possible if we invest (more) in external relations and in our role in the European scientific system. Valorisation is one of our core tasks. What's more, if we spend some of our time on positioning and visibility in science and (regional) society, it pays off in the long term.

Many UvA collaborations take place on the basis of concrete projects. Our ambitions for the 20s require us to invest in more long-term substantive partnerships. Such commitments have previously led to the establishment of ARCnl, the ICAI, Sarphati Amsterdam (for research) and Amsterdam University College (for education). We will participate in the Inequality in the City Knowledge Centre (see 4.3). In addition, our scientists can play a stronger role in administrative partnerships in the scientific landscape, for example in the Knowledge Coalition of the umbrella organisations in science and industry. This will enable us to play a better role in political decision-making in the Netherlands and Europe.

Furthermore, in the 20s we will devote more resources to showing prospective students, alumni, government and society how we are inspired by societal challenges and needs. To this end, we will use both existing channels (such as the dual programmes and OPeRA, the outreach programme to schools) and new forms.

An active, outward-looking attitude is also needed in fundraising or in political and policy circles. The more visible our work, the better we are able to acquire income from philanthropic circles as well.

Agenda items
- Achieving a quantum leap in partnerships, partly by means of our strong (scientific) communication.
- Valuing participation in external committees and lobby groups as an integral part of the university's task.
- Drawing up a policy plan for fundraising and philanthropy with elaboration in each faculty.

4.2 Improving the support for valorisation activities

Many scientists have a keen eye for the impact and social value of their research. The UvA has built up various successful spin-offs that may or may not have flown out. In the 20s, we want to lay a more structural foundation for this. We compare successful models for support from fellow institutions with our current support structures IXA, UvA Ventures Holding, Matrix IC, ACE and Science & Business Amsterdam Science Park. There are undoubtedly more opportunities for successful spin-offs in our research and education than we currently identify.

So far, the UvA has spent a modest budget and instruments on the third task entrusted to us, i.e. valorisation of research. In recent years, that budget has amounted to approximately 3 million euros (just over 1% of the research budget), using direct income and external subsidies, including the IXA Next programme, which expires in 2021. These 3 million euros meet the increased demand from UvA scientists for advice on grant applications and legal issues, and for assistance in setting up a business. It is not enough for the intended quantum leap in valorisation. We do not want to wait until researchers themselves see opportunities to turn their research into a business model. As a university, we also want to look at our work from the outside and determine the social value of our research.

In addition to money, valorisation is served with convenience and with the availability of housing, (other) facilities and start-up capital for new companies (such as ASIF and the Proof of Concept Fund). We are intensifying investments in a fertile climate for research and innovation at the Amsterdam Science Park. The Humanities Lab AVS and the Amsterdam Law Hub are examples of this. UvA Ventures Holding focuses on innovation and spin-offs.

Agenda items
- Substantially increasing our effort for valorisation using the central budget, the former SEO scheme, contributions from faculties as clients and from UvA Ventures Holding.
- Tighter organisation of models for support through coordination between UvA Ventures Holding, Science & Business ASP and other group companies.

4.3 Strengthening links with the city and the region

Higher education and science together form one of the strengths of the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. There is no other city in the Netherlands where this sector has such a strong presence, with more than 10,000 scientists and 100,000 students spread across the UvA, the VU, the HvA and other colleges of higher education, institutes of NWO and KNAW, Surfsara, institutions such as Sanquin and NKI-AvL, and the recently established AMS. We are going to make more use of this than we already do.

In the city centre we want to complete the University Quarter as the focal point of the Faculty of Humanities. The aim remains to accommodate the relevant KNAW institutes as closely as possible. In this way, Amsterdam will remain one of the leading European hubs for the humanities. In the Amsterdam Science Park we are investing in an innovative space in the field of sustainability (Sustainalab). We are also collaborating with the Faculty of Technology of the HvA. We are building LAB42 for information sciences and ICAI. We continue to invest in the Amsterdam coalition *AI Technology for People*, an initiative that investigates opportunities and threats to artificial intelligence for the population. It came about in an Amsterdam coalition of knowledge institutes and the municipality, but has a global scope. As UvA, we want to be a defining AI hub. We are intensifying cooperation with companies and institutions in the domains of AI for Health, AI for Business and AI for Citizens and are raising national and European funds for this purpose. In the field of quantum software, we are also collaborating in an Amsterdam initiative (with the VU) that belongs to the global top in the field: the QuSoft research centre.

We continue to participate in initiatives for close cooperation between science, business and society. One example is the Inequality in the City Knowledge Centre, which brings together data from and about the region with scientists from various disciplines to strengthen the basis of municipal policy. Another example is the Werkplaats Onderwijsonderzoek Amsterdam (WOA), which unites practitioners, policy makers and scientists in the field of education.

In education, too, we put the city and the region high on the agenda. In this way we offer students opportunities for real-life projects, internships and forms of community service learning. We stimulate the desired involved and proactive attitude of students (see 3.3).

The region must be able to find us. Innovation Exchange Amsterdam (IXA) is now the joint front door of UvA, VU, HvA and Amsterdam UMC for companies looking to collaborate with researchers. At policy and staff level there is as yet no such gateway between the UvA and the region.

Agenda items
- Making a success of existing initiatives (University Quarter, Amsterdam Science Park, Inequality in the City Knowledge Centre) and expanding them.
- Develop collaboration around AI Technology for People and a start-up system with Amsterdam knowledge institutions, the Amsterdam Economic Board and the City of Amsterdam.
- Increasing the accessibility of the UvA for the city and the region.

5. Responsibility: we put our public values into practice

The UvA trains people who tackle societal questions and gathers the knowledge with which they can do so. This is how we actively shape tomorrow's world. It is not without meaning that we call this our raison d'être. Part of that is that we put the public values we hold dear into practice ourselves.

Our position in science and our capital city location make what the UvA does very visible to everyone. We want to translate insights from our research and values that we uphold into our own behaviour. In doing so, we take responsibility for a liveable, safe and sustainable environment - both close to home and further afield. And we not only teach this to our students, but we live and act accordingly. We highlight the following values (in random order).

The first is independence of science in relation to (among other things) the interests of governments and companies. This value is under pressure in today's data society. Digitisation offers opportunities, but also threats. We are building up knowledge about this and, together with partners, we are conducting the public debate. For example, about too much dependence of science on commercial ICT providers or about the impact of digital technologies on our privacy (see also section 2.4).

A second value is sustainability. As a vanguard player, the UvA has an essential responsibility for the transition to a sustainable society. This is reflected in our research and education, and also in our efforts to reduce our own ecological footprint to a sustainable level.

The third value we stand for is inclusiveness. We play an active role in the development of a more diverse and inclusive society. Within our own organization this means that we give students equal opportunities, regardless of their background (see chapter 3). For the staff, a mix of backgrounds is important, both in attracting new employees and in putting teams together. It increases the quality of our work.

Last but not least, we have the responsibility for a healthy, safe and stimulating work and study environment. Reducing work pressure and increasing social safety are important points.

In short, for the coming years, this means:
1. building safeguards for the independence of science
2. increasing our sustainability knowledge and applying it ourselves
3. increasing inclusiveness and equal opportunities within the UvA
4. ensuring a healthy, safe and stimulating working environment

5.1. Guaranteeing the independence of research

Independence is one of the core values of science. This may come under pressure due to the rapid digitisation taking place in international higher education and research.

In education, for example, we are seeing the emergence of digital learning environments, plagiarism detection tools, online bibliographic databases, intensive use of tablets and laptops, social networks for scientists and digital education platforms. These are largely commercial services that put pressure on the public values on which higher education is built. In addition, our near-monopoly on awarding academic degrees could be jeopardised if large, wealthy market players enter the education market. The UvA considers it a responsibility to conduct political and social discussions on these subjects, to identify risks and to outline possible solutions.

Responsible digitisation in education means that educators retain ownership of their work if they collaborate with platform and data storage companies. Their independence should always be central. Moreover, we want to carefully examine how we can avoid malicious lock-in situations. After all, such situations herald a far-reaching dependence on the commercial party offering the services or equipment. In order to guarantee the independence of our education while working in digital systems of dominant (private) players, we need agreements and rules.

The same applies to our research. Our independence must also be at the heart of further digitisation. In our public role, we help shape open science and open educational resources. This is based on the conviction that scientific research and education are publicly funded and that the results should therefore not be monopolised. We see both opportunities and threats in open science. Here, too, we need to pay particular attention to the relationship with large data-processing companies and to the uncertainty about the ownership of research data. That is why we are working closely with other universities in the Netherlands (VSNU) and in Europe (LERU) on the rollout of Plan S, the plan to make it compulsory for publications and research data to be open to publicly funded research (open access).

Agenda items
- Put the public values of academic education and research on the agenda and safeguard them when purchasing platform services and in cooperation with third parties, including publishers and data technology companies.
- Act according to the FAIR (findable, accessible, interoperable & reusable) principles when storing data.

5.2 Increasing our sustainability knowledge and living up to it ourselves

We make sustainability an integral part of our education and research. Every student can choose from the range of courses offered by the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies (which includes sustainability). Sustainability is also a factor in the portfolio analysis of the study programmes (see section 2.3). In research, sustainability is stimulated through the four themes (see section 2.2).

The UvA has an essential responsibility to accelerate sustainable change in society. We are therefore also striving for greening and reducing our own ecological footprint. As a rule of thumb, the current impact of our footprint should be reduced by two-thirds; this rule is derived from observations by the World Footprint Network about the Netherlands. We need more time to accomplish this reduction than the next six years. We are going to adjust our business processes and our decision-making behaviour by ensuring the desired choices are attractive. Processes include reducing the consumption of (non-recycled) raw materials such as paper, packaging or disposable items, and extending the useful life of IT equipment. Behaviour involves, for example, making conscious choices in matters such as catering or travel. A white paper on sustainability (which also deals with education and research) contains measures to reduce our own footprint in the coming years. For each environmental aspect, we choose what is an ambitious but achievable pace.

According to the 'Paris' climate target, our energy consumption must not exceed 70 kWh/m2 per year by 2050 at the latest (compared to almost 200 kWh/m2 today). We are investigating whether 2040 is feasible for us. We are 'Paris proof' if our actual energy consumption - of all the equipment in the buildings - meets the target. This means that all users can and must help in achieving it. Financial incentives should make energy saving worthwhile. In addition, we accept a limited increase in our accommodation costs per square meter because of the investments needed to make our buildings more sustainable (an increase of 2 percent according to the UvA Plan for a Sustainable Built Environment from 2020).

Agenda items
- Implement measures from the white paper (for research, education and business operations).
- Reduce energy consumption in kWh/m2 by 20 percent during the plan period.
- Make our work on a sustainable UvA visible on all campuses, for example by building the Sustainalab and strengthening the UvA Green Office.

5.3 Increasing inclusivity and equal opportunities within the UvA

Diversity stands for differences between people. Our diversity policy enriches our academic environment with a broad spectrum of perspectives (including non-Western ones). At the same time, in line with our values, it reduces inequality of opportunity and sharp social and economic divisions.

The Diversity Policy Document (2019) emphasizes the importance of inclusiveness: "If we wish to optimise students' academic development and further the course of science as a whole, we believe it is vital to facilitate communication and knowledge sharing within an inclusive environment that is geared towards everybody's welfare and embraces interpersonal differences instead of avoiding them. It is the university's job to prepare our students to play leading roles in the dynamic and ever-changing society of the future and to blaze a trail at the forefront of this change. This requires a more pro-active strategy than simply addressing how to manage the increasing levels of diversity among our student body and staff." Following up on this, we want to attract (or retain) more employees from different backgrounds. The appointment of more female professors is a prominent goal, as is the recruitment of more employees from different cultural backgrounds or with physical disabilities.

We consciously and actively work on diversity and inclusiveness, but these are not matters that are merely arranged in policy documents or by managers. In order for staff and students from different backgrounds to feel at home and flourish, a change in culture and the corresponding mechanisms within the UvA is also necessary. Inclusiveness is more than an individual and moral issue. We need the conviction, commitment and sensitivity of everyone in our university community to prepare ourselves and our students for participation in a diverse world.

Openness to different points of view and differences between people contributes to our scientific quality and objectivity. It does, however, require a solid, safe base from which everyone within the UvA can and should be able to debate at the cutting edge. The university is pre-eminently the place for confrontation with facts and opinions that are challenging or potentially even offensive. In a university community, this open dialogue must take place on the basis of the quality of arguments and on an equal footing. That is why the diversity policy is closely linked to the policy of maintaining and increasing social security and resilience (see section 5.4).

Agenda items
- Increasing the diversity of the staff and giving them a place in the strategic personnel plans.
- Giving a broad spectrum of perspectives a place in education and research, including in minors and in the curriculum of programmes in which this is meaningful.
- Using the ombuds office for the elaboration of our values in daily life, with the aim of creating an intellectually resilient, socially inclusive and safe internal culture.

5.4 Ensuring a healthy, safe and stimulating work environment

The health of our staff and students is always a primary concern, certainly in corona times. We don't know how long social distancing guidelines will dominate our daily lives. However, the duration of the measures has a strong influence on the types of group and classroom education that are indispensable to academic education. It is uncertain what this will look like in the coming period and what it means for the layout of our buildings.

Apart from the corona crisis, the psychosocial burden on employees is a persistent concern. The work pressure in the UvA (and throughout education) has been increasing for years. Causes include:
- the steady reduction in the average income per taught subject
- the increased differences in background, knowledge and skills among students
- the growth of substantive and administrative obligations posed by the law and the NVAO
- the pressure surrounding the application for external research grants
- our own (sometimes overstepped) administrative procedures, consultation culture and the pressure of constant accessibility

Extensive analyses have been made in the programme *Grip op werkdruk* (Grip on work pressure). These show that work pressure is complex and requires a combination of measures; more money is not always a solution. Moreover, the accents differ per faculty or service, and also within faculties and services. Work pressure is partly caused by choices made internally. For example, more appreciation for research output than for education can cause stress among hardworking lecturers. Work pressure is also caused by factors that are not the result of a choice. For example, the nature of a programme (linguistic or exact) may matter. Among support staff, work pressure is caused by, among other things, an increase in external regulatory pressure and accountability obligations.

Work pressure is not the only determinant of the health of the working environment. Everyone must feel physically and socially safe within the naturally competitive environment that is science. If not, we need to be able to address this. If it appears that situations, or behaviour of employees or students, do not comply with the UvA values and rules of conduct and someone feels unsafe as a result, appropriate measures must be taken. Where there is structural insecurity, structural change is necessary. Finally, it is important that everyone can find and understand the values and rules of conduct, the system of procedures and the confidential advisers.

Agenda items
- Include concrete, direct measures against work pressure in the faculties' strategic plans and monitor their implementation.
- When new policies are adopted, increase our confidence in the implementers and thus reduce the internal regulatory burden.
- Ensure the 'house of social safety' (code of conduct, extension of the complaints procedure, system of confidential advisors). Make use of the recommendations of the Social Safety task force.

6. Staff: we are a magnet for talent

The UvA's capital consists of the knowledge, talents and motivation of its scientific and support staff. To remain a comprehensive top university, we need to develop, retain and attract talent. This requires an attractive working and learning environment that invites people with diverse backgrounds and perspectives to choose to work with us.

In an attractive work and learning environment there is a good balance between autonomy for and responsibility of the employee. Being a good employer also means that we meet the need for meaningful work, that we create a pleasant, safe and challenging working environment, and that we have an eye for a good work-life balance. Inclusiveness contributes to an attractive work environment: it gives people from different backgrounds equal opportunities and increases our collective quality through the contribution of various perspectives. We consciously work on diversity and inclusiveness, among other things by appointing more female professors and hiring employees with different cultural backgrounds or physical disabilities (see section 5.3). Furthermore, being a good employer requires a balanced appreciation of the different tasks that contribute to education and research, including good support services. As an employer, the UvA explicitly strives to manage the workload and administrative burden.

A career at the UvA has many attractive aspects. Research groups and study programmes have a relatively large degree of autonomy. All employees have work that is of societal value and is constantly evolving. Conversely, this means that student numbers and project subsidies can fluctuate and that, as a result, the range of tasks of UvA staff can be subject to change. We expect employees (scientists and support staff) to be flexible and open to shifts in their tasks. With this in mind, the UvA will continue to work on the career prospects for temporary employees - as previously agreed with the trade unions and the Central Works Council. We aim for an appropriate ratio between permanent and temporary employment.

We implement the established HR agenda and invest in scientific and support staff:
1. pursuing our goals and creating an attractive working climate through leadership
2. recognising and valuing diversity of talents and tasks

6.1 Pursuing our goals and creating attractive work environments through leadership

Managers have key functions in pursuing and realising the core tasks and goals of the UvA. That is why we continue to invest in coaching and connecting leadership. It is also a lever for talent development and attractive employment. A good leader makes use of entrepreneurship, diversity and collegial cooperation in teams. S/he gives employees autonomy and ownership to achieve goals, to get a grip on work pressure and personal and collective ambitions. We know that the approach to work pressure is difficult and that the problems vary per faculty and department. We expect managers to recognise the importance of an effective organisation of work processes. We think it is important that each of them has taken a relevant leadership course and has held relevant managerial or employee representative positions.

At the same time, we know that academics often work as managers for a limited number of years, generally during part of their working hours. Among the support staff, too, managers usually have a position as working fore(wo)man. Most UvA managers are primarily motivated by their subject matter. That is a great asset. It is therefore important to provide them with the best possible support for their management tasks. Managers may be responsible for substantive, financial, business and personnel decisions ('integral management'), but they do receive high-quality support from secretariats, HR consultants, business managers and other officials. Digital applications can also help to relieve managers of their worries and realise our ambitions in the field of talent management, learning and career policy. In the coming years, the UvA will therefore develop digital modules for recruitment and selection, annual interviews and learning & development.

It remains a challenge to make a leadership role so attractive (in both appreciation and support) that it can be professionally fulfilled.

Agenda items
- Integrating leadership development into strategic personnel planning.
- Structuring the support of managers, among other things by offering support for employee career mobility.
- Drawing up and disseminating UvA principles of leadership.

6.2 Recognizing and rewarding diversity in talents and tasks

In academic culture, scientists are valued primarily on the basis of the output of their research work. We want to change that. Within the UvA, we want to recognise and reward work in other areas - education, societal impact, acquisition and contributions to team and organisation - just as much as we do research. With us, a career in the 'u-line' (university lecturer, associate professor, professor) is in principle only possible if the employee has, currently or previously, both research and teaching tasks. The relationship between these is not cast in stone, it may differ per career stage and is weighed in consultation. In other positions as well, both scientific and supportive, consultation between the employee and the organisation on career development and sustainable employability is necessary. For example, it can be beneficial for cooperation within the UvA if employees in key positions change places from time to time.

In view of the breadth and agility that we strive for in the UvA, we use an Appointments Advisory Committee (BAC) with wider representation from scale 11, the level of university lecturer, when recruiting staff. Certainly when it comes to a managerial position. One or more colleagues from other disciplines may sit on the BAC, or, in the case of support staff, colleagues from another faculty or department. An additional advantage is that career decisions are no longer entirely internal matters and become more objective.

Our positioning of the UvA as an attractive employer is important. To attract new talent, we develop our employee value proposition (EVP). In other words: we actively seek out talents and make them a serious offer. The quality of the UvA as a leading university comes first, but other elements also play a role. Think of the personal development space we offer and of Amsterdam as a liveable area. We can make better use of the possibilities to extend customised packages or job offers than we do now, to meet the wishes of new employees. The current scarcity of talent in the field of computer science, data science and artificial intelligence is a particular concern in this respect.

Agenda items
- Establish criteria for the equivalent rewards and recognition of work for all parts of the scientific institution: education, research, social impact, valorisation, management tasks, teamwork and the organisation.
- Where possible, have someone from another discipline or faculty/service sit on the BAC or application committee for appointments and changes to job profiles from scale 11 upwards (academic and support staff).
- Make the employee value proposition more competitive.

7. Organisation: we are agile thanks to our process and governance design

In order to achieve our ambitions, we must be able to adapt our broad palette of research and education quickly and continuously. As an academic environment, the UvA must challenge staff and students to get the best out of themselves and to look beyond the boundaries of their own discipline. This is only possible if our organisation is flexible in processes of change and agile in day-to-day matters.

This requires a degree of flexibility and team spirit that is often found in each of us, but is not easily achieved by the complex and pyramid-shaped professional organization that is the UvA as a whole. In the coming years, we want to stimulate teamwork and entrepreneurship within the UvA.

Professional support processes aim to make collaboration and entrepreneurship easier for end users (students, lecturers, researchers, partners, directors). These processes, in turn, rely on standards and streamlined chains, which of course must not stand in the way of creativity and flexibility in the primary process. The trick is to use standards that allow research groups and study programmes to retain their autonomy, while allowing them to carry out their activities anywhere within the UvA. Staff and students should not be hindered by faculty-specific procedures and habits for which there are no good reasons.

Job rotation, as an element of strategic staff planning for support staff, helps to build and set up standardised processes. Employees who change positions within the UvA are particular observants of differences in procedures and habits; they can help to identify and address bottlenecks. Together with the new Social Charter (which applies up to and including 2024), job rotation contributes to the organisation's agility and also prevents formal reorganisations where possible.

The ambitious, agile academic system requires a balance between the two:
1. harnessing creativity through teams and entrepreneurship
2. use of standards for supporting processes
3. strengthening joint and faculty support for science

7.1 Harnessing creativity through teams and entrepreneurship

Individual employees have a lot of creativity that helps us to see and seize opportunities in education and research. Room for creativity is therefore very important. At the same time, we want to achieve common goals. For a good balance between these two, we want to move towards more programmatic and 'fluid' forms of work in teams. We focus on what needs to be achieved, less on how that needs to be done. This requires an entrepreneurial spirit and also clarity, namely about what is fixed (legislation and regulations, finances, quality system) and about how much room there is for professional autonomy. Clarity on these points can help to reduce the regulatory burden and allow employees to become part owner of the primary process.

Additionally, it helps to improve our organisation when we acknowledge that not everyone needs to be good at everything. We work in teams that are more than the sum of their parts. It helps if we are proud of both our own performance and that of others. When we realise that science cannot flourish without good support. When not only our work structures are fluid, but we also enable periodic changes in individual roles within and outside teams. We are jointly and not individually responsible for the training courses offered, the research contracts and programmes entered into, and the care for our patients and clients. Investing in teams requires a lot from managers. They must be able to inspire, guide and motivate a group of people. Managers must give confidence, enable team members to use their different talents and jointly evaluate collective performance. This way of working requires team members to choose a position and put themselves forward, based on a collective responsibility for their work and the trust placed in them.

We will become a better, more agile organisation if we embrace a culture that values entrepreneurship and experimentation. Mistakes are allowed because we can learn from them. Entrepreneurship is an outside in principle. Employees are given the space to respond to a perceived need or opportunity in the outside world and account for the result. This is not the same as carrying out an assignment handed down from 'above' and being accountable for the process. As an organisation we work towards an open climate in which this can be done safely, and under clear conditions.

Agenda items
- Investing in tools for project-based work (for both managers and employees) and in familiarity with flexible forms of work.
- Promoting internal entrepreneurship and valuing teamwork by including it in the HR policy and instruments.

7.2 Using standards for support processes

We can only make use of the variety within the UvA and work well together across the borders of units (and even across the borders of Amsterdam institutions) if 'systems' are designed so flexibly that they support people, rather than hinder them. Digital examinations are an example of this, or the way in which costs are settled by lecturers in interdisciplinary education. The needs of education and research are the starting point. The importance of breaking down barriers to collaboration in management models and administrations is evident in educational collaborations within the UvA, but also, for example, in joint degrees with the VU and in the merger of AMC and VUmc to form Amsterdam UMC. In the coming years, we must continue to establish effective standards for our process chains, and to build cooperation between departments and between the departments and faculties. Not everyone needs to work in exactly the same way, but we do take away differences in our support that have grown historically between faculties and study programmes, when these get in the way of our agility and decisiveness. We do this, for example, in the Educational Logistics programme.

In addition, a reflection on our mindset is needed. In formal organisations, new initiatives often end up at the back of the queue for facilities and housing, when we would really like to embrace them and pull them forward. If we want to promote internal entrepreneurship, we will have to pay attention to this.

Furthermore, we complement the UvA management model with a mechanism to determine which standards should be respected in any case when apparent differences exist between practices. We will also monitor the coherence between all choices. The BVO (consisting of the directors of faculties and services) now has an important role as a 'cooperative' of client principals in the design of supporting processes. This will continue to be the case, but we want to strengthen the role of the BVO.

Agenda items
- Establish standards for UvA support. In doing so, be wary of allowing differences simply because we think 'that's the way it is at the UvA'.
- Strengthen the role of the BVO as a collaborative body in the governance model.
- Establish a UvA Standards Board (USB) to provide authoritative advice on (administrative) standards in the supporting functions.

7.3 Strengthening the support for research and education at the central and faculty level

Top-quality science not only needs the flexible business processes described above, but also professional service providers who develop, manage and innovate the processes. This concerns both people working in education and research (such as student advisors, laboratory staff, library staff or business developers) and those working in general services (such as for ICT, administration, secretariats, facilities matters). They, too, take the interests of end users as a starting point. The ambition is that we are all sincerely proud of their work ('at the UvA things are well organised'). If all is well, the support staff even take double pride, namely in the professional quality of their own work and in the scientific quality and reputation of the UvA as a whole. To this end, we pursue two goals: more standards and quality in the process chains (as described in Section 7.2) and at the same time a shorter distance between the support and the primary process. The latter can be achieved by, among other things, improving the connection between the work of the shared service units and the faculty support units and vice versa.

An implementation plan was drawn up in 2017 for each of the four shared services working jointly for UvA and HvA, when the administrative merger between the two institutions came to an end, in order to maintain the cooperation in support and reap economies of scale. These include, for example, higher quality, sustainability and/or lower costs. After realisation of these plans, we will continue to work on successful joint services.

Demand for and supply of the 'products' of the services come together in the service level agreements (SLAs) that the faculties and services negotiate periodically. The service units generally have very good insight into the quality and cost of the product and also a professional judgement on possible improvements or savings. However, it is important to better organize the demand side (in the faculties). This will give a better picture of the expertise and the wishes of the users in both the improvement of supporting processes and the improvement of products.

Agenda items
- Develop a vision on the value of support for end-users and the primary process, and on the division of tasks between central services and faculty support.
- Draw up a new implementation plan for the joint services UvA-HvA (after the relocation of 2021) for the remainder of the plan period.
- Finalise the renewal and professionalisation of the SLA cycle in 2022.