



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM



*Amsterdam's Global University*

# Strategic Framework for Internationalisation

[uva.nl/en](https://uva.nl/en)

# Executive summary

As an international university, the University of Amsterdam (UvA) is home to students and researchers from a wide variety of cultural and social backgrounds. The UvA is firmly rooted in Amsterdam, a multicultural European capital with a strongly innovative, entrepreneurial vibe. Over the past 10 years, the UvA has become increasingly international, as evidenced by the composition of its student population, its international research projects and publications and its international orientation within the academic community.

Internationalisation within the UvA is primarily intended to enhance the *quality of teaching & learning and research* and to *promote a sense of community among students and staff*. In the field of teaching, the UvA offers relevant curricula in all degree programmes which challenge students to get the best out of themselves by acquiring international insights, knowledge and intercultural skills. Attracting talented international students and researchers will enhance the quality of the degree programmes and research groups. The UvA is a key player in the university networks LERU and U21, which will raise its profile internationally. As a leading international university in a multicultural European capital, the UvA plays a pioneering role in developing an international study and work culture in which the diversity of the academic community is regarded as an asset.

The UvA has had a Strategic Framework for Internationalisation since 2012. The last strategy period was characterised by the speed and impact of developments in internationalisation, both in a global context and within the UvA itself. As a result, we are updating the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation to increase the focus on quality. Moreover, the updated strategy and the elaboration of initiatives will also take into account the impact of internationalisation on Dutch students and staff. The primary objectives have therefore been formulated and amended as follows:

## Objectives

1. To prepare each student in the best possible way for a successful career in a dynamic, changing global society and labour market.
2. To attract talented students with a view to enhancing the quality and diversity of the student population and our teaching.
3. To strengthen the UvA's profile in the European and international research domains.
4. To strengthen the UvA's international identity, actively facilitate social integration and inclusivity within its academic community and position it as an international employer.

In light of this strategy, the existing UvA-wide tools, such as the scholarship programmes and the UvA Summer School, will be used increasingly to realise our internationalisation objectives and will undergo further development.

# Vision

The University of Amsterdam is an international university which provides tuition and training to its students and researchers within an open and inclusive academic community and equips them with high-value knowledge and skills to allow them to make a meaningful contribution to global society and scientific progress. It does so in close collaboration with its community on and around its various campuses in Amsterdam and its strategic partners and networks across the globe.

## Introduction: where does the UvA stand?

With more than a hundred different nationalities amongst its students and staff, the UvA can confidently call itself an international university. However, as further strategic development of the internationalisation of teaching & learning, research and organisational culture cannot be taken for granted, this has been made one of the key priorities of the Strategic Plan, 'Boundless Curiosity', which outlines a number of specific aims and objectives with regard to internationalisation.

In 2017, the UvA has focused on updating its Vision on Teaching and Learning (*Onderwijsvisie*) in parallel to the innovation of the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation. A number of substantive points of reference and resonating themes have come to the fore. For instance, the Vision on Teaching and Learning devotes ample attention to the international characteristics of teaching at the UvA, while at the same time stressing the importance of retaining Dutch as the language of instruction in the range of courses on offer and guaranteeing the accessibility of the UvA's courses for students from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. Therefore, the policy proposals contained in the two documents will be elaborated during the implementation phase into a range of initiatives, using joint lines of action.

The UvA has had a Strategic Framework for Internationalisation since 2012. This framework comprises four primary objectives and a set of associated lines of action. The majority of these objectives and initiatives have been comfortably realised in 2017. By consequence, the time has come to update the strategic

framework. This project launch document, which has been drafted in preparation, includes an overview of where the UvA currently stands in terms of internationalisation and what is needed to enable these revised aims to be achieved over the forthcoming period. The overview, context analysis and framework for the revised aims and objectives were discussed in autumn 2016 in a UvA-wide consultation process and were expressly intended to facilitate an open debate with all stakeholders. The results of this consultation process have been incorporated into this new draft of the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation. The new strategic framework revises the ambitions and intended initiatives, taking into account the changed global research and teaching context and the UvA's revised basic position.

### Context analysis

At global level, in recent decades there has been a dramatic increase in the number of students who go abroad to study: between 1990 and 2014, this number more than trebled from 1.3 million to 4.5 million students<sup>1</sup>. The growth in the number of students globally undertaking a programme of study at degree level looks set to continue steadily over the next few years. The number of internationally mobile students going abroad for (part of) their studies will increase even more rapidly<sup>3</sup>. In recent years, more than half (53%) of all international students came from Asia, with China being the biggest supplier of outgoing students, followed by India and South Korea<sup>4</sup>. The USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, France, Germany and Japan together receive more than 50% of the total number of incoming international students<sup>5</sup>. Developments in Asia will have a major impact on international student mobility in future years. Recent figures indicate that China itself is increasingly successful in attracting international students: their numbers are growing so quickly that by 2020 China may overtake the UK in terms of its ability to attract international students<sup>6</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> OECD, 'Education at a Glance', 2015, p. 352

<sup>2</sup> The term 'internationally mobile students' refers to both degree-seeking students who study for a full qualification and exchange students who study abroad temporarily.

<sup>3</sup> OECD, 'Education at a Glance', 2016, pp. 328-330

<sup>4</sup> OECD (2016), p. 332

<sup>5</sup> OECD (2016), p. 332

<sup>6</sup> See e.g. *China Daily*, 28 October 2016 [http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-09/17/content\\_26811371.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2016-09/17/content_26811371.htm)

The leading Chinese universities have not only embarked on a remarkable climb up the global university rankings, but have also provided a proportionate boost to internationalisation: the intake of international students increased by 15% between 2012 and 2014 and China hopes to welcome 500,000 international students in 2020.

The Netherlands has also seen a large increase in the number of Dutch students in higher education. However, this will change in the short term due to the reverse effect that the demographic developments of the past few decades will have on the student intake from 2020. As a consequence of population shrinkage, the number of Dutch students entering higher education after 2020 is expected to dwindle<sup>7</sup>. One way or another, therefore, there will be both an absolute and a relative increase in the number of international students, including at the UvA.

In addition to the increase in the quantity of international students, there has been an unprecedented qualitative expansion of the higher education systems in a number of emerging knowledge economies. An illustration of this is provided by the remarkable climb up the global university rankings of Chinese universities: Tsinghua University and Peking University were ranked 25th and 38th in the QS World University Ranking 2018, respectively<sup>8</sup> (whereas the UvA ranked 58th) and the top 100 includes six universities from China, compared to two from the Netherlands. Tsinghua University and Peking University made a similar jump in the Academic Ranking of World Universities (ARWU, also known as the Shanghai ranking), entering the top 100 (58th and 71st, respectively). Another Asian university, the National University of Singapore, ranked 83rd.

In 2000, the European Union started the process of creating the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)<sup>9</sup>, whose best-known instrument is the Erasmus+ exchange programme. The Lisbon Treaty, which was ratified by the Netherlands in 2008, will have an even greater impact because it includes agreements around

---

<sup>7</sup> CBS population forecast 2017-2060: <http://statline.cbs.nl/Statweb/publication/?DM=SLNL&PA=83597NED>

<sup>8</sup> QS World University Ranking 2018 <https://www.topuniversities.com/university-rankings/world-university-rankings/2018>

<sup>9</sup> The Bologna declaration was signed in 2000. It provides for an equivalent education structure in participating countries and has led to the implementation of a uniform Bachelor's/Master's/PhD structure in higher education.

the recognition of higher education diplomas by all the parties to the Treaty. As a consequence, students from participating countries who have a diploma are granted virtually automatic access to higher education in the other countries, which facilitates free movement of students to the maximum. Moreover, in 2011, the European Union made the promotion of outgoing student exchange mobility a key priority and adopted a target of 20% of the total number of higher education graduates having studied abroad by 2020<sup>10</sup>. The EU is increasingly endeavouring to facilitate collaboration within higher education also at the regional level. For example, in October 2016 a ministerial agreement was concluded with China over the building of an ‘Education Silk Road towards the future’<sup>11</sup>. This involved the signing of agreements around the mutual recognition of degrees.

The internationalisation of higher education is also a policy priority at national level. Two of the latest policy documents submitted by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) to the House of Representatives on education policy<sup>12</sup> are devoted entirely to the importance of internationalisation. The data provide a clear picture of developments in the Netherlands: a record number of 81,392 international degree students studied at Dutch higher education institutions in the 2016-2017 academic year, which represented an increase of 6,163 students (8.2%) compared to the year before.<sup>13</sup>

Internationalisation and mobility are increasing dramatically within higher education at global level, and this trend is also being directly encouraged through government-level bilateral and multilateral agreements, in an EU context, for example. An internationally oriented, research-intensive university like the UvA must therefore position itself carefully within this rapidly changing arena. It is crucial that the UvA is in a position to attract talented international students who confidently opt to study at the UvA. Competition over this target group in

---

<sup>10</sup> Council of the European Union, 2011

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/china-and-eu-aim-create-education-silk-road-future>

<sup>12</sup> The Strategic Agenda for education 2015-2025, ‘De Wereld In: Visiebrief internationaliseren’ (Round the world: vision for internationalisation), and ‘De waarde(n) van de wereld – Voortgangsbrief over de internationale dimensie van HO en MBO’ (The value(s) of the world - progress made around the international dimension of higher education and intermediate vocational training).

<sup>13</sup> Nuffic, ‘Update: Incoming student mobility in the Netherlands 2016-2017’, 2017, p. 3

a shifting global landscape is becoming increasingly fierce. This calls for clear choices and the targeted deployment of resources, such as scholarship programmes, and the optimisation of prerequisites, such as transparent admissions procedures. Internationalisation is a process which affects Dutch students and researchers as much as it does international students and researchers. For this reason, the UvA wants Dutch students and researchers to benefit from the presence of international students and colleagues and will devote specific attention to this in the elaboration of its internationalisation objectives.

### **The UvA: stages of internationalisation**

Against the backdrop of a fast-changing global context, the UvA has undergone rapid internationalisation in the past decade. For example, the number of international degree students increased from 1,040 in the academic year 2005-2006 to 4,616 in 2016-2017.

As for the PhD student population at the UvA, the number of international PhD students has been hovering around the 40-45% mark for a number of years. The number of international researchers and staff members has also increased steadily. At the moment, they account for 17% of the total number of staff.

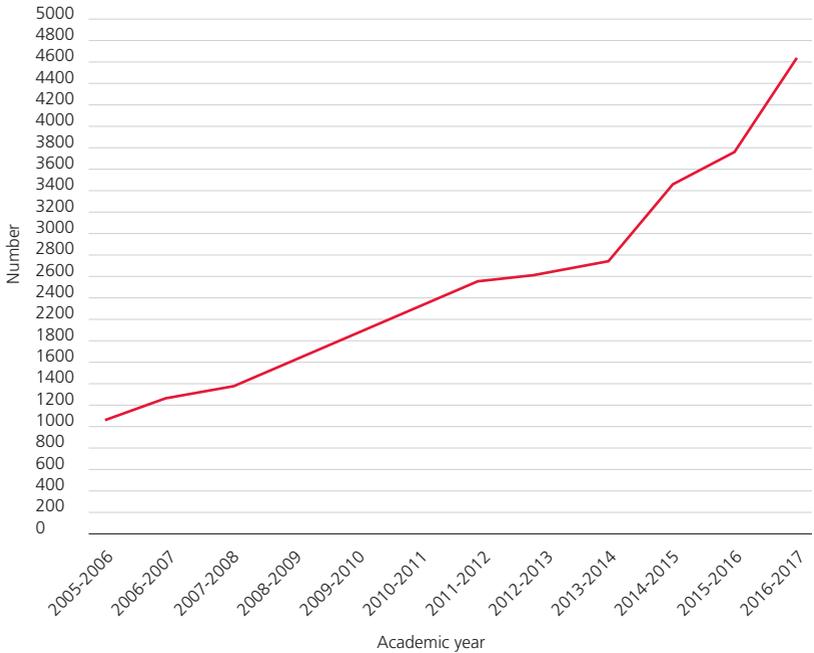
In spite of the substantial increase in the numbers and percentages of international students and researchers, the UvA is aware that the successful continuation of the internationalisation process is by no means guaranteed. On the contrary: this strong growth over a relatively short period of time has led to a number of considerable challenges in terms of the integration of international students into the academic community and the successful introduction of the International Classroom concept. To tackle these challenges, Spencer-Oaty and Dauber at the University of Warwick developed an interesting model<sup>14</sup> which identifies five stages of internationalisation:

---

<sup>14</sup> Spencer-Oaty, H. & Dauber (2015), 'How internationalised is your university? From structural indicators to an agenda for integration', *GlobalPAD Working papers*. Available at GlobalPAD Open House, <http://www.warwick.ac.uk/globalpadintercultural>, p. 4

---

### International degree students (Bachelor's and Master's) at the UvA

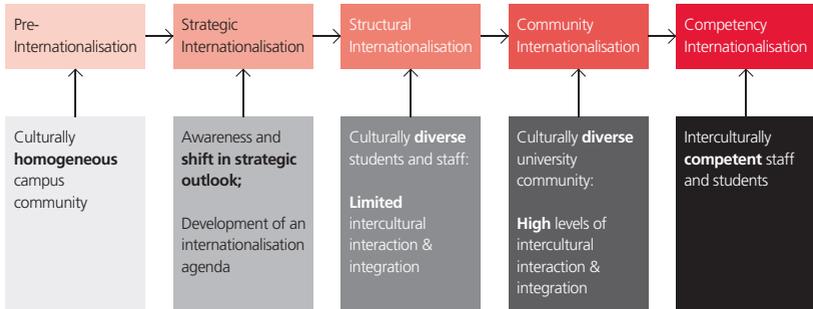


---

With regard to the current update of the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation, we assume that the UvA is currently passing through the third stage, i.e. ‘structural internationalisation’, while it was at the previous stage (i.e. ‘strategic internationalisation’) when the first strategic framework was written.

While the four primary objectives from the previous Strategic Framework for Internationalisation are still relevant in this changing context, they must be revised and supplemented in line with the higher level of aspiration and the new stage of ‘structural internationalisation’ in which the UvA finds itself.

### Stage of internationalising HEIs



© Spencer-Oatey & Dauber, Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick

These objectives were:

1. to prepare each student in the best possible way preparation for a career in the global job market,
2. to attract the most talented individuals from around the world, in particular to Master's and PhD programmes,
3. to strengthen the UvA's profile in the international research domain,
4. to strengthen the UvA's international identity.

We are therefore updating the objectives to increase the focus on quality (moving away from the quantitative growth ambitions identified previously), such as changes to the organisational culture so as to promote the social integration of international students. In addition, the updated strategic framework and the elaboration of initiatives will focus specifically on the impact of internationalisation on Dutch students and staff. In light of this strategy, the existing UvA-wide tools, such as the scholarship programmes and the UvA Summer School, will be used increasingly to realise our internationalisation objectives and will undergo further development.

## Challenges

The most important developments and related challenges that have arisen since the previous strategic framework are as follows:

- I. *A large increase in the number of international degree students.* In addition to the linear increase in the number of Master's students, the number of international Bachelor's students has also increased rapidly over the past few years. This raises questions about the extent to which the UvA degree programmes will be able to absorb this growth, while at the same time safeguarding broad accessibility for target groups in Dutch society<sup>15</sup>.
- II. In spite of the quantitative growth and the fact that the student population harbours more than 100 nationalities, the heterogeneity of the *international population has not increased at the same rate*; rather, the population is dominated by a number of groups. Furthermore, international students are making slow progress in terms of social integration, particularly with regard to their interaction with Dutch students.
- III. Due to the recent *increase in the number of Bachelor's programmes taught in English*, there has been some debate about the *consequences for programmes taught in Dutch* and the *accessibility* of the UvA for students who specifically want to take a Bachelor's programme in the Dutch language.
- IV. *Global developments in higher education and research*, such as the rise of Chinese universities in university rankings and its consequences for our cooperation with these partners, who are now competing with us for the best students.
- V. The *growing importance of university networks* in shaping strategic partnerships with preferred partners for regional and global cooperation.
- VI. *Political developments*, such as Brexit, the exact impact of which remains unclear, but which are certain to have consequences for our cooperation with partners in the countries concerned and for European cooperation in the areas of research and student mobility.
- VII. A *changing social context*, in which the effects of globalisation have contributed to a growing rift between groups which benefit from it and groups which feel excluded. Universities have a part to play in bringing

---

<sup>15</sup> See also the UvA Vision on Teaching and Learning, 2017

these groups closer together, for instance by guaranteeing the accessibility of education for a wide range of target groups and sharing the outcomes of scientific breakthroughs with a wide audience.

In 2016, two new university networks, The Guild and Aurora, were set up in Europe. At the same time, Asia saw the formation of the Asian Universities Alliance, a network of 15 leading universities in the region.

# Conclusion: from strategic to structural internationalisation

The previous strategy period was characterised by the speed and scope of developments in internationalisation, both in a global context and within the UvA itself. This means that our basic position has changed; whereas growing the number of international students used to be a core objective, we are now faced with a different type of challenge. Foremost in our minds is the question of how the UvA can reap more rewards from the presence of a heterogeneous group of Dutch and international students within the academic community, while remaining mindful of the integration of these groups outside of the academic community. In addition, there is an increasing desire in society to guarantee the accessibility of education for Dutch students and the position of the Dutch language<sup>16</sup> as the language of instruction for Bachelor's programmes in higher education. Furthermore, considerable attention has been paid in recent years to encouraging international students and researchers to remain in the Netherlands<sup>17</sup>, particularly in the context of supporting the knowledge economy. In all these issues, the relationships and sustainable interactions between Dutch and international students and researchers play an important role. This illustrates the necessity of shaping our internationalisation policy in such a way that it promotes the engagement of all groups of students and researchers, whether they have a Dutch, international or mixed background. As a result, we have formulated and amended the objectives of the updated Strategic Framework for Internationalisation as follows:

---

<sup>16</sup> At the end of 2016, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science asked the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) to issue a recommendation regarding a language policy for higher education. This recommendation is expected in the summer of 2017, [https://www.knaw.nl/en/news/news/language-choice-in-higher-education-demands-custom-approach?set\\_language=en](https://www.knaw.nl/en/news/news/language-choice-in-higher-education-demands-custom-approach?set_language=en)

<sup>17</sup> See SER advice 2013/01, 'Make it in the Netherlands', EP-Nuffic, 2013 and 'Make it in the Netherlands 2014-2015 report', EP-Nuffic, 2014.

## Objectives

1. To provide each student with the best possible preparation for a successful career in a dynamic, changing global society and labour market.
2. To attract talented students with a view to enhancing the quality and diversity of the student population and our teaching.
3. To strengthen the UvA's profile in the European and international research domains.
4. To strengthen the UvA's international identity, actively facilitate social integration and inclusivity within its academic community and position it as an international employer.

## Guiding principle

Internationalisation within the UvA is primarily intended to *enhance the quality of teaching & learning and research* and to *promote a sense of community among students and staff*. In the field of teaching, the UvA offers relevant curricula in all degree programmes that challenge students to get the best out of themselves by acquiring international insights, knowledge and intercultural skills. Attracting talented international students and researchers will enhance the quality of the degree programmes and research groups. The UvA is a key player in the university networks LERU and U21, which will raise its profile internationally. As a leading international university in a multicultural European capital, the UvA plays a pioneering role in developing an international study and work culture in which the diversity of the academic community is regarded as an asset.

# How we intend to achieve our objectives

- The UvA will commit to providing each student with the best possible preparation for a successful career in a dynamic, ever changing global society and labour market**  
Challenges II, III and VII

The UvA will commit to equipping each student in the best possible way with the knowledge and skills they require to participate with confidence in a dynamic society...

Globalisation and the growing prevalence of networks of people and organisations, both digital and face-to-face, have had a considerable impact on society and the daily lives of many. Many, particularly in academia, regard these cosmopolitan developments as positive achievements, but this certainly does not apply to everyone. Even within the confines of our own academic community, there are differences between students and staff with an international outlook and those who retain a more local focus. To the UvA, internationalisation does not entail an obligation for students or staff to spend time abroad, but rather the cultivation of an open, worldly attitude, which can be applied in various academic and professional contexts. Moreover, the UvA considers it a duty to forge closer links with society, particularly when it comes to raising awareness of scientific and technological advances and their consequences, which are international by definition. The education of a new generation of engaged graduates forms an important part of this process. One way of realising this is the UvA's active participation in the *Universitas21* (U21) network<sup>18</sup>.

*Universitas21* is a network of 27 research-intensive universities which facilitates mutual cooperation and mobility. In addition, U21 offers opportunities for students and young researchers to attend international conferences and summer schools.

---

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.universitas21.com/>

**and a changing labour market, which for many sectors operates in a global context...**

Never before have we been exposed to such a large number of internationally-oriented organisations and people from such a large variety of cultural backgrounds as in today's global labour market. This applies to all sectors, both within and outside the academic community and both in the public and the private domain<sup>19</sup>. In our global knowledge economy, where competition between individuals, both at home and abroad, is growing and employers in all sectors and regions are strongly focused on innovation, international experience and the right intercultural skills set are becoming ever more important for a successful career<sup>20</sup>. More specifically, this means that, as well as using the international insights and knowledge that they acquire from the curriculum, students must learn to deal with diversity and master intercultural skills during the course of their studies. Moreover, the learning process must be facilitated in such a way that students develop an international outlook and a broad understanding of the world around them.

**and, like society, is becoming increasingly international and heterogeneous...**

The UvA strives for a balanced mix of nationalities, Dutch students and international students from various regions, which is not dominated by any single culture or small group of cultures. For this reason, tuition at the UvA partially takes place in an international classroom, which contributes to the further development of the students' critical faculties by introducing them to a variety of educational perspectives. The UvA has made a conscious decision to be a bilingual university and encourages cross-pollination between Dutch and English-language programmes where possible. Academic-level proficiency in both Dutch and English is viewed as a key competence for effective participation and integration, future mobility and employability. Bilingualism is implemented throughout the UvA. Moreover, the UvA strives to stimulate outbound mobility, particularly during the Bachelor's phase, from a conviction that gaining experience abroad contributes in large part to students' education and prepares them more effectively for taking an active part in a changing society and a career in the global labour market.

---

<sup>19</sup> The British Council, 'A World of Experience', 2016, p. 6

<sup>20</sup> The British Council, 'A World of Experience', 2016, p. 4

### **Against the backdrop of globalisation and technological progress, community-building and local experience will gain in importance...**

A student's learning process does not end when they leave the lecture room. On the contrary: the knowledge expansion and learning process largely takes place elsewhere. By consequence, the UvA sets great store by its ability to offer each student an enriching and safe student experience, both on and around its four campuses and both within and outside of its digital learning environment. This is particularly important for international students, who lack existing networks in Amsterdam and therefore consider the university their first point of call for assistance in securing their place in the academic community.

### **as will engaging with alumni abroad...**

The learning process does not cease upon graduation either. On the contrary, alumni can add considerable value to the learning process by feeding their experiences back to the UvA and new generations of students. As such, the UvA sets great store by maintaining close ties with its alumni, including its alumni abroad. As an indispensable part of the academic community, alumni are ideally placed to make a vital contribution to such issues as social integration. As the UvA educates a growing number of international students and UvA graduates are increasingly likely to find a job abroad, the number of alumni abroad continues to grow. Over the coming period, the UvA will continue to deepen and maintain its ties with these people.

## **Initiatives/lines of action**

### *1.1 International Classroom*

- The UvA will prioritise the implementation of its International Classroom concept and encourage its faculties, graduate schools and colleges to apply it in their teaching practices. The UvA's International Classroom is comprised of four main components: curriculum, language policy, diversity and student experience. As part of this policy, the UvA is committed to retaining a portfolio of Bachelor's programmes with a balanced mix of programmes taught in Dutch and in English.

### *1.2 Mobility*

- In 2015, at the initiative of the University Committee on Education (UCO), a report with specific recommendations was issued. The UvA

will make it a priority to further define and implement these recommendations in the context of the new Strategic Framework for Internationalisation.

- Within the U21 framework, the UvA will strive for an increase in Semester Exchanges and the development of initiatives aimed at expanding Short-Term Mobility opportunities.

### *1.3 Optimal Student Experience*

- The UvA will continue to elaborate the student experience concept and draw up an action plan aimed at making the best possible use of services and facilities to help both Dutch and international students reach their highest potential.

### *1.4 Deepen and strengthen the UvA's international alumni policy*

- The UvA will deepen ties with existing alumni chapters and strive to expand the activities of the alumni chapters in locations with high numbers of UvA alumni. It will work together with alumni chapters abroad to launch fundraising activities.

## **Benchmarks for success**

### *International Classroom*

- The elaboration of the UvA's International Classroom concept will be completed in 2018, including a language policy framework. By 2020, the majority of UvA programmes will have incorporated international and intercultural aspects into their curricula in the form of teaching methods, case studies, assessments or learning outcomes.

### *Mobility*

- By 2020, the percentage of Bachelor's students with experience of studying abroad at the time of graduation will have increased to 25%.

### *Student Experience*

- Students are positive about student life at the UvA, as evidenced by positive feedback regarding the UvA's service provision and events and International Student Barometer/National Student Survey scores.

*International alumni policy*

- The number of active alumni chapters abroad will be expanded and the UvA will work together with a number of chapters to launch fundraising activities, e.g. for scholarships.

## **2. The UvA will attract talented students, irrespective of their backgrounds, with a view to enhancing the quality and diversity of the student population and its teaching**

### **Challenges II, IV and V**

#### **The UvA will step up its efforts to attract international talent...**

The steady growth in the number of students worldwide undertaking a programme of study at degree level looks set to continue over the next few years and, as a result, the number of students going abroad for (part of) their studies may increase even more rapidly. One way or another, therefore, there will be an increase in the number of international students, including at the UvA. It is therefore crucial that the UvA is in a position to attract talented international students who confidently opt to study at the UvA. Competition over this target group is becoming increasingly fierce, which calls for clear choices and for the targeted deployment of resources such as scholarships and the optimisation of prerequisites including transparent admission procedures. As a consequence of the spectacular increase of international mobility in higher education and the fact that many students are able to spend only a limited period abroad due to time constraints or other limitations, there has been a global trend in recent years towards Short-Term Mobility, short but intensive summer or winter schools and modules. Hosting international and PhD students at the UvA for short, intensive courses represents an excellent opportunity to position the UvA as an attractive study destination for those target groups.

#### **and ensure that appropriate support services are provided for a heterogeneous, diverse student population...**

The UvA is an open community which aims to attract students from across the globe who demonstrate a potential for successful development within its academic environment. As such, the UvA considers the further development of

a heterogeneous, international student population an enrichment of its academic community. Currently, the UvA is attracting considerable numbers of students from Europe and Asia. The UvA will launch further initiatives to present itself to a broad international target group as the ‘university of choice’. The UvA will make every effort to increase the diversity of its student population, not least when it comes to recruitment, with a special and increased focus on North America, Latin America and Africa. Guaranteeing broad accessibility and facilitating a heterogeneous intake are of major importance in this context. Among other things, the UvA should utilise the extensive network it has built up in a number of African countries as part of research programmes concerning Global Health<sup>21</sup> and current research programmes concerning entrepreneurship in the food industry, organised by the Institute for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Dynamics (IBED) and the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR)<sup>22</sup>. The utilisation of existing networks in Africa and on other continents will also offer a useful point of reference for positioning the UvA as an attractive study destination.

Due to geopolitical developments in the global arena, the UvA has recently experienced an increase in the number of students and staff from a refugee background. The UvA believes that the active participation of these groups in higher education and research is the ideal catalyst to promote their successful participation in our society. Furthermore, it is believed that the inclusion of this special group will benefit the UvA community at large.

## Initiatives/lines of action

### 2.1 *Organise international student recruitment with a view to heterogeneity*

- In view of the UvA’s ideal of a student population with a balanced mix of cultural, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds, its marketing and

---

<sup>21</sup> A useful overview of current research programmes carried out in cooperation with African partners can be found in the booklet *Progress through Partnership, The UvA and Africa*, which was compiled on the occasion of the opening of the 2014-2015 academic year.

<sup>22</sup> See also: <http://knowledge4food.net/research-project/women-food-entrepreneurs-in-kenya-and-burkina-faso/>

recruitment strategies will devote more attention to increasing the heterogeneity and diversity of the international student population.

### *2.2 Expand the UvA's scholarship programmes*

- The UvA will review the range of scholarship programmes currently available to international students and draw up a list of recommendations, as well as an action plan, with the aim of expanding and improving its offer. A lack of financial means should present no barrier to international talents who wish to study at the UvA.

### *2.3 Further develop the UvA Summer School*

- The UvA Summer School will be further developed and expanded to raise the profile of the UvA amongst its international target groups.

### *2.4 Consolidate the UvA's policy and programmes for refugees*

- The UvA will develop and consolidate programmes directed at students and staff from a refugee background.

## **Benchmarks for success**

### *International recruitment*

- During the upcoming strategy period, the UvA will attract more students from North America, Latin America and Africa.

### *Scholarship programmes*

- From 2018, the UvA's scholarship programme resources will increase, in part as a result of external fundraising, and its offer will be expanded in order to reach more diverse international target groups.

### *UvA Summer School*

- From 2018, the UvA Summer School will be expanded, more visible and more prominent within the UvA offer.

### *Refugees*

- Students and staff from a refugee background will be made to feel welcome and invited to join and play an active role in the UvA community.

### 3. **The UvA will boost its profile in the European and international research domains**

#### **Challenges IV, V, VI and VII**

##### **Scientific research is international by nature...**

In an ever changing global society increasingly buffeted by geopolitical developments, conflicts and cross-border challenges such as climate change and pandemics, the solution of complex challenges calls for cooperation in international consortia. The partners in these consortia contribute complementary knowledge and information to create synergies and develop new knowledge. In addition, such international partnerships grant access to infrastructure and data which are not always available at the UvA. The UvA has built up a robust network of prestigious partner universities worldwide. This puts it in an excellent position to step up cooperation efforts in areas which are likely to yield new synergies, such as research priority areas, and achieve high-impact research outcomes. A prime example of long-term cooperation is the foundation of the UvA-Tsinghua Joint Research Centre for Logic in 2013. Likewise, the UvA's cooperation with the local and international business communities has taken on increasing relevance for the development of strategic alliances. Notwithstanding such alliances at both university and faculty level, there remains room for differentiation and individual researchers and research groups to seek other partners and networks.

In September 2013, the UvA and Tsinghua University founded the UvA-Tsinghua Joint Research Centre for Logic to crown several years of cooperation between the two universities. Since its foundation, the joint research centre has been awarded a number of prestigious research grants by parties including the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the National Natural Science Foundation of China. Professors Johan van Benthem and Fenrong Liu serve as co-directors.

##### **which necessitates the raising of funds for high-quality research programmes...**

As the resources necessary for high-quality research are decidedly scarce at the national level, it is crucial for the UvA to act both adroitly and strategically when seeking opportunities for research funding at the European level. Given the significant interests at stake in the design of and choices made concerning the European Commission's funding instruments, such as Horizon2020 (and its

successor FP9), the ERC and EIT, it is important that more detailed and effective policy and activities be developed in this field.

**as well as a positioning of the interests and expertise of European research universities.**

The UvA has been a member of the League of European Research Universities (LERU) since 2006. Set up in 2002, LERU has 23 members, all of which are research-intensive universities at the top of the European rankings. LERU's aim is to emphasise and reinforce the importance and position of fundamental scientific research within research-intensive universities. The League has become a highly respected discussion partner for the European Commission and, partly due to its publications, has a significant influence over European research policy. During the upcoming strategy period, the UvA will need to embed and make optimal use of the benefits of LERU membership.

### **Initiatives/lines of action**

#### *3.1 Embed and elaborate the UvA's partnership policy*

- The UvA will strengthen collaboration with preferred partners in China, India, the United States and Australia in specific research areas which allow for synergies, such as the research priority areas.
- The UvA will elaborate criteria for a strategic partnership policy at university level and make the progress of existing partnerships subject to ongoing monitoring.

#### *3.2 Increase the UvA's visibility and representation of its interests in Brussels*

- The UvA will develop a strategy aimed at increasing both the visibility of its research (including its research priorities) and its influence in the European research arena. To achieve this aim, it will make use of its alumni and network in Brussels.

#### *3.3 Intensify the UvA's work within the context of LERU*

- The UvA will intensify its work within the context of LERU and will specifically ensure that the results and outcomes of LERU activities and papers are embedded within the institution.

The League of European Research Universities (LERU) is a European network of 23 research-intensive universities. It is a highly respected discussion partner for the European Commission and a vigorous promoter of the interests of research universities in areas related to higher education and research at both the European and global level.

### **Benchmarks for success**

#### *Embedding the UvA's partnership policy*

During the upcoming strategy period, the UvA will develop a UvA-wide partnership policy, which will leave room at the decentralised level for different emphases. Successful partnerships with preferred partners will be expanded substantially, whereas less successful partnerships will be phased out.

#### *Increasing the UvA's visibility and representation of its interests in Brussels*

The UvA will draw up a 'plan of attack' in the near future for raising its profile and enhancing its lobbying capacity with the European Commission.

#### *Intensifying the UvA's work within the context of LERU*

The UvA will develop an internal structure to more effectively incorporate LERU outcomes into its policy and initiatives, thus intensifying its LERU work and enhancing LERU's relevance to the organisation.

## **4. The UvA will strengthen its international identity, actively facilitate social integration and inclusivity within its academic community and position itself as an attractive international employer**

Challenges I, II, IV, VI and VII

**he UvA's international and multicultural character reflects the character of Amsterdam...**

An international university in a city with more than 180 nationalities must play a pioneering role in the creation of an open, international study and work culture in which diversity is regarded as an asset. In this context, attention must also be paid to the diversity of the international student population and the

importance of social integration between Dutch and international students and staff to all members of the community.

**However, social integration is not a given...**

Now that international students and staff form a substantial part of the academic community, it is vital for the UvA to take targeted steps to improve the social integration of this heterogeneous group of students and colleagues. This would also serve the interests of Dutch students and colleagues. The key principle is to accommodate a 'soft landing'. Even more crucial is the period immediately after arrival. The UvA will provide well-organised orientation programmes and dedicated services to ensure that each recently arrived new member of the UvA community is made to feel at home.

**and a maximum effort to provide accommodation for international students and staff is essential.**

Given that an increasing number of Bachelor's, Master's and PhD students are pursuing a degree programme at the UvA, the need to provide sufficient accommodation is more acute than ever. During the upcoming strategy period, the UvA will step up its efforts to expand its student accommodation offer in consultation with all parties involved, including the Municipality of Amsterdam, housing corporations and others.

**The UvA' status as an international employer is defined in further detail...**

The UvA is one of the largest international employers in the Amsterdam Metropolitan Area. This should be reflected in its HR policy, particularly when it comes to services for its international researchers and members of staff. Services such as a smooth arrival in Amsterdam, housing and 'spouse care' can contribute to improving the UvA's appeal as a potential employer for internationals. One consequence of the UvA's conscious decision to be a bilingual university is the need for structural communication in the English language (governance).

**in an organisational structure befitting its scale and level of ambition...**

The rapid internationalisation of all aspects of the UvA, including teaching & learning, research and its organisational culture requires that the institution reconsider the internal organisation of its internationalisation efforts across the board. This includes a reflection on the fitness for purpose of the UvA's central departments and units. One of the predominant themes in the UvA's inter-

nationalisation strategy is the integral safety of the academic community, both on and around its campuses and for students and researchers staying abroad for study or research. Embedding the internationalisation policy deeper into the institution will become a key focus of the new organisational structure.

### Initiatives/lines of action

#### 4.1 *Improve the 'soft landing' of students and staff*

- The UvA will expand its 'soft landing' services, paying particular attention to the organisation of its orientation programme for international students and staff.

#### 4.2 *Provide housing for international and PhD students*

- The UvA will set up a housing task force and prioritise the elaboration of a plan to ensure sufficient housing for international and PhD students over the coming years.

#### 4.3 *Position the UvA as an international employer*

- The UvA will integrate the themes in the HR agenda into its internationalisation policy, paying particular attention to the needs of international researchers and members of staff.

#### 4.4 *Improve the UvA's organisational structure with regard to internationalisation*

- In the near future, the UvA will evaluate the existing division of roles and tasks with regard to internationalisation and develop an organisational structure befitting its increased scale and stated ambitions. It will also devote attention to the integration of its integral safety policy into the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation.

### Benchmarks for success

#### *Improving the 'soft landing' of students and staff*

International students and staff will be visibly happy with the UvA's 'soft landing' services and the optimised orientation programme aimed at improving their social integration into the UvA community.

### *Housing of international and PhD students*

A new Accommodations Plan will be ready in 2018. The stated intention is to be able to offer housing to all incoming international first-year students and PhD students.

### *Position of the UvA as an international employer*

The themes in the HR agenda will be explicitly linked to the target group of international students and staff. This will be reflected in the organisation and improved visibility of dedicated services for international staff, such as ‘spouse care’ initiatives.

### *Organisational structure of internationalisation*

In the near future, the UvA will elaborate a new organisational structure (based on the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation) for the development and implementation of its internationalisation policy.

## **Overview of initiatives and lines of action**

Below is a point-by-point overview of all the initiatives and lines of action that stem from the primary objectives and policy decisions in the Strategic Framework for Internationalisation. A working plan for the implementation phase, including a prioritisation of the action lines, will be drawn up in the summer of 2017. The initiatives and action lines will be elaborated from September 2017.

### *Objective 1*

- 1.1 International Classroom
- 1.2 Student mobility
- 1.3 Student Experience
- 1.4 Strengthen the international alumni network

### *Objective 2*

- 2.1 Recruit international students with a view to increasing diversity and heterogeneity
- 2.2 Expand the UvA’s scholarship programmes
- 2.3 Further develop the UvA Summer School
- 2.4 Refugee policy

*Objective 3*

- 3.1 Embed the UvA's partnership policy
- 3.2 Increase the UvA's visibility and representation of its interests in Brussels
- 3.3 Intensify the UvA's LERU work and embed the outcomes within the institution

*Objective 4*

- 4.1 Improve the 'soft landing' and the orientation programme for students and staff
- 4.2 House international and PhD students
- 4.3 Position the UvA as an international employer
- 4.4 Analyse and improve the organisational structure for internationalisation and integration of the integral safety policy



### **Credits**

© University of Amsterdam, 2017

**Photography** Ilsoo van Dijk

**Design** April Design

[www.uva.nl/en](http://www.uva.nl/en)