

# STRATEGIC PLAN 2024-2029

Amsterdam  
University  
of the Arts



# Contents

Prologue	4
Reader’s guide	6
<b>1. Teaching and research at the AHK</b>	<b>10</b>
• Who we are and what characterises us	10
• Mission and vision	12
<b>2. Teaching and research in 2029</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>3. Six AHK-wide themes for teaching and research</b>	<b>20</b>
1. Sustainability	21
2. Diversity, inclusion and social safety	22
3. Internationalisation	24
4. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity	26
5. Digitality and technology	28
6. Lifelong learning	29
<b>4. Preconditions</b>	<b>32</b>
• Reducing academic pressure and work pressure	33
• Personnel policy	34
• University buildings and facilities: sustainable, inclusive and interdisciplinary	36
• ICT and Information Management to facilitate teaching and research	36
• Strengthening internal communication and university-wide collaboration	37
<b>5. Implementation and finances</b>	<b>40</b>
<b>6. About the creation of this strategic plan</b>	<b>44</b>
Appendix: Participants of the thematic meetings	48
Appendix: Glossary	49
Colophon	50

# Prologue

‘Ever tried. Ever failed.  
No matter. Try Again.  
Fail Again. Fail Better.’

– *Samuel Beckett*

Arts education is about practising, exploring, experiencing and collaborating. It's about trying, failing and trying again. And again. That requires a vulnerable and curious attitude, and that is only possible with proper guidance and a safe environment. The Amsterdam University of the Arts (AHK) wants to be a place where everyone is challenged and invited to learn.

A place where mistakes are allowed to be made. A place where solutions are sought together in a good atmosphere. Because everyone – students, teachers and employees – deserves to continue learning throughout their lives. A learning organisation; that is what we want to be and what we stand for.

This strategic plan, which was drawn up in consultation with many people, contains our objectives and ambitions for the coming six years. These are divided into six themes. The idea of the learning organisation is a key element of this. This plan is an agenda, not a checklist. It is an agenda that is close to our hearts and that should enable the AHK to implement a number of transitions. These will not happen overnight, because genuine changes require time and sustained attention. This involves large and

sometimes complex processes, such as inclusion and sustainability. That is why space has been incorporated into this six-year plan for changes and evolving insights. In other words: to learn from mistakes, and to continue experimenting and improving.

The two most important conditions for the implementation of this plan are: space and reflection. Space is needed to fulfil our ambitions in the fields of teaching and research. Space is equally necessary for addressing (acute) problems. That not only concerns a physical space, but also mental space. Study stress and work pressure are obstacles we need to work on in that regard.

Space is also essential for reflection. That reflection goes beyond just thinking about what you need to do today and tomorrow. Reflection is also about doing some soul-searching: what could I do differently? How am I contributing to sustainability? What can I learn about inclusion? It is about daring to take responsibility for your own choices. And it is also about: having insight into your own role in the world, society and the university.

Society and the world are changing rapidly. In the fields of climate and technology, for example, developments are following each other in rapid succession. In the field of social justice, we need to take steps. These topics may require us to make radical choices. We want to create space to think about that in the coming years; space that will enable us to disagree with each other safely; space to make clear choices together and take steps towards creating an inclusive, sustainable and future-proof university by 2029.

This strategic plan is our agenda in these times of major transitions. It provides structure and serves as a guideline for a concrete implementation agenda, which we will be drawing up in the coming academic year. We hope that this agenda will serve as inspiration for self-confident students, teachers and employees, so that we can continue to work and learn transparently and with respect for each other. We owe that to the future, as an arts educational institution, as employees, as researchers, and as (budding) artists, art teachers and creative professionals.

**Annet Lekkerkerker and David van Traa,  
Executive Board**

# Reader’s guide

**Chapter 1** provides a profile of our teaching and research in 2023. Who we are and what characterises us. In this chapter, our core values, and our mission and vision, are discussed: what we stand for and what we are aiming for. This is the point of departure for our strategy.

In **Chapter 2**, we describe where we want to be by 2029. The intrinsic value of art remains the guiding principle for everything that we do. The high quality of our teaching and research is a fixed value for the future.

In **Chapter 3**, six AHK-wide themes for teaching and research are fleshed out in more detail:

- 1. Sustainability
- 2. Diversity, inclusion and social safety.
- 3. Internationalisation
- 4. Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity
- 5. Digitality and technology
- 6. Lifelong learning

Each theme is concluded with a few concrete ambitions. These are the areas we will be investing in with the aid of people and resources in the coming years.

The preconditions that are needed to achieve these ambitions are listed in **Chapter 4**. Reducing academic pressure and work pressure are of paramount importance in that regard. We are investing in personnel policy, university buildings and facilities, ICT and information management, internal communications and university-wide collaboration.

This strategic plan will be followed by an implementation plan and a budget. In **Chapter 5**, we will already talk about this in brief.

A lot of people from inside and outside the AHK have contributed to this strategic plan. We would like to thank them. In **Chapter 6**, the process will be briefly outlined.

The most important consultation partners are mentioned in the appendix and the colophon. A glossary is included in this strategic plan. Words that are marked with a \* are explained in this glossary.







# 1. Teaching and research at the AHK

## Who we are and what characterises us

Teaching and research at the following six academies lie at the heart of the AHK: the Academy of Architecture, the Breitner Academy, the Conservatorium van Amsterdam, the Netherlands Film Academy, the Reinwardt Academy and the Academy of Theatre and Dance. In addition, the AHK has a growing range of interdisciplinary cross-academy initiatives, such as two research groups, CASE (Centre of Arts & Sciences Education) and an Artist in Residence programme. The Service Bureau of the AHK provides expertise and services, and in this way contributes to the development and fulfilment of the ambitions of the academies and the AHK as a whole.

Our degree programmes are held in high regard. Some of them are among the leading programmes worldwide and almost all degree programmes are designated as 'Topopleiding' (Top-rated programme) in the Keuzegids hbo (Options Guide for Higher Professional Education). A few degree programmes are unique in the Netherlands. Assessment panels, which assess the quality, are very positive about the degree programmes. They praise the graduation level of our students, the enthusiasm and quality of our teachers, the excellent buildings and facilities, the educational climate and the didactic concept. As a result of selection and the relatively small number of students that we can accept, our classes and the number of graduates are small. Students, teachers and support staff from the different degree programmes know each other well. There is a lot of personal contact; learning from and with each other is the guiding principle.

Anyone who started a full-time Bachelor's programme in 2023, will belong to 'the class of 2027'. The foundation is laid here for a lifelong network. Our students set themselves apart

through a specialisation in their own field of study and the ambition to excel therein. We not only train artists, but also teachers, designers, heritage specialists and the many professionals who are, 'behind the scenes', invaluable to the cultural sector, the creative industry and education.

There is increasing collaboration throughout the AHK with external institutes, for example in Shared Campus, an interdisciplinary cooperation platform with arts universities from various continents. The AHK is partner of the Centre of Expertise for Creative Innovation (CoECI), a national knowledge and innovation network for the creative industry, and founder of CASE (Centre for Arts & Sciences Education).

Our professors and researchers play an important role in driving innovation. We have seven research groups. Five research groups are affiliated with an academy and there are two institution-wide research groups. The shared research profile of the research groups is 'Engagement through critical creative practice'. On the initiative of the professors, this theme is divided into three sub-themes: *regeneration & climate*, *social engagement* and *ways of knowing*. The sub-themes contribute to the ambitions that we are formulating in this strategic plan.

Professors and the (teacher-)researchers who they supervise in their research groups conduct practice-oriented and artistic research into topical subjects from the professional field and society. In doing so, they are supported by the AHK Research Centre. The research focuses on artistic, social and technological innovation, as well as sustainability and inclusion. The research findings are relayed back to education, the professional field, the wider society and

various knowledge domains. In that way, the research groups contribute to the change that is necessary to solve complex social issues. Among other things, the interaction between the research groups and the study programmes are mentioned as a strong point in the research assessments.

The AHK is rooted in the creative metropolis of Amsterdam. Our teaching and research make an important contribution to the arts and cultural sector, and the development of the creative industry in this region. We do that on the basis of strong regional, national and international networks and partnerships. 'Locally rooted, globally connected' is the ambition in that respect.

Our policy is based on three core values: driven, inclusive and responsible. Moreover, we are continuously striving for a reduction in our ecological footprint. In 2019, the AHK signed the Sustainable Development Goals\*. We train students who contribute to these goals, both locally and internationally, through their work and their stories. Our researchers also focus on combatting the climate crisis and social injustice, among other ways through the arts.

We are proud of our long history, our high quality and our pursuit of permanent improvement. We see it as our duty to play a role in the innovation and enrichment of the arts and the cultural landscape, and to contribute to a sustainable and socially just society.

You can find more information about our academies, our teaching and research at [www.ahk.nl/en](http://www.ahk.nl/en).

## Mission and vision

Art and imagination are indispensable in a resilient democracy and caring economy, and creativity is an essential skill, and a catalyst for social and economic innovation.

The Amsterdam University of the Arts is an internationally-oriented teaching and research institute where students receive excellent training for the national and international professional field of arts, culture and heritage. The AHK, rooted in the cultural metropolis of Amsterdam, connects six Amsterdam academies. Work is carried out in an inclusive and content-driven way within each academy, and students and employees feel respected, safe and responsible, both for each other and for the world.

The artistic and personal development of the student is the key focus within the intensive education, which is characterised by a high level of expertise. A culture of innovation, collaboration and experimentation challenges students to look beyond borders and break new ground.

The AHK trains flexible and self-confident cultural professionals and artists, who have the potential to excel in their field. The teaching and research therefore contribute towards the innovation of the profession and to the debate about social issues.









## 2. Teaching and research in 2029

### Intrinsic value

The arts, culture and heritage create experiences that enrich and are emotionally, intellectually and spiritually challenging. They can confuse, inspire, irritate, innovate or surprise. The arts, culture and heritage help us to better understand and value who we are and our place in the world. In addition, they connect us with others and enable us to look at the world from new perspectives. That intrinsic quality of the arts is an important value that the AHK firmly supports. By 2029, we will make that even more visible and we will be able to protect that effectively.

### Quality and innovative power

Maintaining the high quality of our teaching and research will remain an important ambition for the coming years. As a learning organisation, we will continue to improve and develop ourselves. By 2029, the academies will still form the basis of the AHK: six academies, each with its own profile and a considerable and unique (international) reputation. The degree programmes and research groups will also be among the best in the Netherlands and, in a number of cases, the world. AHK-wide initiatives and the support services will contribute towards innovation of the teaching and research.

### Social justice and sustainability

We are committed to reducing inequality of opportunity by improving the accessibility of our education. By 2029, we will be more accessible and more attractive to young people who we do not reach sufficiently at present. By 2029, we will explicitly stand for fair practice and fair pay, and knowledge about entrepreneurship, both within the sector and within our own organisation. We will train students who, through their work, their stories and their knowledge, will contribute to responsible consumption and production, to climate action, to peace and safety, and to sustainable cities and communities. In the case of operations management, that will happen through the implementation of the Sustainability Road Map. The aim is to be a climate-neutral university by 2035 and to contribute to a regenerative ecology.

### Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity

Interest in interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity is increasing within the arts and cultural sector. Specialist knowledge remains necessary, but the complexity of topical issues in a globalised world also requires experts to be able to look beyond the boundaries of their discipline and enter into collaboration with experts from other disciplines. Creative and artistic skills are used increasingly often when tackling challenges in sectors that are not primarily arts-related, such as the healthcare sector. We are also seeing more and more artists who transcend disciplinary borders in their work and make use of diverse media. The future is therefore both specialised and interdisciplinary. By 2029, we will still be training students who excel in their profession. At the same time, we want there to be more opportunities for transdisciplinary and interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching and research by 2029.

### (Free) space

Within all degree programmes, there is a need among students to be able to make more personal choices, both within their own specialisation, and in an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary sense. By 2029, there will be more space for all students to personalise their education via self-selected themes, interests and stories. In addition, it will be easier for students to participate in cross-academy teaching or research activities. We will make effective use of hybrid and online opportunities in that respect.

### The AHK as knowledge institution

Our research is a driver of innovation in teaching, as well as in the professional practice. Furthermore, it contributes to solutions for social issues. By enabling funds from indirect government funding and contract research funding\* to grow, we can conduct more research and the effect thereof on education and society will become greater. In 2025, we will draw up an updated strategic research agenda. We will vigorously continue the transition from educational institution to knowledge institution, so that by 2029 research will hold a fully-fledged position alongside and within the teaching and it will be seen as a core activity of the university. The research learning trajectory in the education will be reinforced and more visible by 2029. We will provide students with knowledge and skills with which they will be prepared for lifelong development. Critical thinking, self-reflection and a curious open attitude are crucial in that regard.







### 3. Six AHK-wide themes for teaching and research

The elaboration of the development directions mentioned in Chapter 2 will take place through six themes that have a strong relationship with each other. The academies will interpret these themes themselves and determine their own focal points. They will strengthen the interaction between teaching and research within these themes. In addition, we will achieve a number of ambitions together as an institution (university-wide). This chapter will explore six themes in depth, while the preconditions that are necessary to achieve the ambitions will be addressed in the next chapter.

#### 1. Sustainability

The AHK is aware of the urgency to avert the climate crisis. We want to do everything within our power to avert or manage waste of raw materials and pollution of the planet, and to help repair the damage. We want to be a university that minimises its ecological footprint, and promotes the repair of damage to nature and climate. The aim is to contribute to a regenerative, sustainable and socially just world for current and future generations through research and teaching.

We are aware that the international character of research and (arts) education can be detrimental to the environment. For that reason, we explicitly link sustainability to internationalisation. And in order to make sustainable choices, we also want to utilise the possibilities of digitisation, for example by holding auditions partly online. On the other hand, digital technology also has a large footprint, for example as a result of data storage in large data centres.

The AHK will be climate-neutral by 2035. A large part of the improvements to sustainability will be achieved through operations management. Another part will be achieved through the education, where sustainable production and sustainable behaviour in each creative process must become matter of course. Within the degree programmes, there is an increasing focus on sustainable productions and sustainability is a recurring theme in the teaching and in the work that students produce. Students and teachers are utilising the power of imagination and stories to contribute to behavioural change. In doing so, there is a demand for contact beyond the boundaries of one's own academy. Within the research, the research groups have decided to collaborate on the topic *regeneration & climate*.

#### Ambitions

- By 2035, the AHK will be a climate-neutral university.
- In 2022, the AHK adopted a Sustainability Road Map. At the beginning of 2024, we will examine the state of affairs at that time with regard to the implementation hereof. This will result in a reassessment of the road map. A comprehensive baseline measurement may form part of that.
- Since 2023, the research groups have been working together on the theme *regeneration & climate*. The aim of the interdisciplinary practice-oriented research on this theme is to develop a sustainable, regenerative society. Students can actively participate in this research. The research results also feed into the teaching, as a result of which it remains sustainable and topical.
- In 2024, the academies will describe in their policy plan (or in an addendum) how they will further expand or deepen sustainability as a topic in teaching and research, with the aim of educating students for whom sustainable behaviour and production are self-evident. Employees will set an example in this regard.
- From 2025, we will work according to strict frameworks for sustainable work and study. In addition, we will ensure that each student and employee can trace their footprint.

## 2.

**Diversity, inclusion and social safety**

The quality of teaching and research improves thanks to the input of different perspectives. This concerns perspectives in the broad sense – cultural, ethnic and socioeconomic – as well as gender, sex, age, religion or need for support. We want to appreciate and exploit these differences. In recent years, we have had a number of surveys carried out that have identified areas for improvement. Interest in each other, curiosity about new perspectives, humility about one's own rightness and courage to question self-evident truths are an essential part of this.

We want to make space for new stories, styles and art forms, and thus for a broader student population. A new generation of artists with a multitude of backgrounds is presenting itself. They are demanding attention for new values, and sometimes also different ways of collaborating, with innovative productions and styles. In this way, they are also calling conventional quality criteria into question. Because which frame of reference do we use to look, select and assess? By no longer viewing a one-sided perspective as the norm and by creating space for different assessment criteria than the Eurocentric ones, the AHK is stimulating this development in society.

There is also room for improvement in terms of physical and digital accessibility. We are continuing to invest in that and in doing so are making use of the findings of the diversity scan that the AHK commissioned in 2020 and the recommendations that the Expert Centre on Inclusive Education (Expertise Centrum Inclusief Onderwijs, ECIO) gave to the AHK in 2021. This led to audits being carried out in 2023 into the physical accessibility of all our buildings. On the basis of this, we will draw up an implementation plan for the coming years in 2024.

On the basis of the findings of the diversity scan and the recommendations of the ECIO, the academies and the Service Bureau have formulated policy plans and actions, which are currently being implemented. All of this should lead to young people that we are failing to reach sufficiently at present feeling invited to come and study with us.

Participation and inclusion are topics of research at the research groups Arts Education and Cultural Heritage, at DAS Research and at the SPRONG\* research group Verbeelding in Transitie (Imagination in Transitions). We have also been devoting attention to this theme since 2022 through the AHK-wide research group Social Justice and Diversity in the Arts. Social engagement is one of the three themes on which the research groups are collaborating in an interdisciplinary way. In that way, research is contributing to knowledge development in the fields of social justice, diversity and inclusion.

Everyone should feel safe and respected within the AHK. In 2023, a survey was carried out within the AHK into the perceived social safety for students, employees and alumni. The findings of this survey will lead to a plan with which we can safeguard social safety even better on a structural basis. Leadership training courses, didactic training courses, well-trained confidential advisers and an adequate PDCA cycle\* for monitoring form part of that.

**Ambitions**

- By 2029, the study programmes will include a broad representation of cultural trends. To achieve that goal, all academies will report on the progress of their Diversity & Inclusion policy plan in 2024 and adjust this where necessary. Moreover, attention will be devoted to the composition of the advisory committees and the selection procedure for students.
- We will introduce diverse talent to the multifaceted range of degree programmes within the AHK via the preparatory courses and orientation courses. We will do this through more intensive cooperation with schools for secondary education, senior secondary vocational education courses and cultural institutions.
- In 2024, a physical accessibility implementation plan will be drawn up. The aim is to make all buildings and facilities accessible to students and employees with a physical impairment. The online learning environment will also be made more accessible, by which we will devote special attention to improving the systems for neurodiverse students. Examples of this will include enabling built-in software for people with a visual impairment or making dyslexia-friendly fonts, working methods and design available. These adjustments will be implemented as soon as possible, so that the buildings and facilities are accessible to all students.
- The AHK-wide research group Social Justice and Diversity in the Arts will provide a practical and conceptual boost to the process which the academies are engaged in. The other research groups will contribute to social justice, diversity and inclusion via the sub-theme *social engagement*. The research groups will increase various forms of *ways of knowing* within the different knowledge domains and will be responsible for innovation of the education and professional field.
- The findings of the 2023 survey into social safety form the basis for a plan to monitor and safeguard social safety (even) better. As from 2024, social safety is a structural part of the PDCA cycle\*. In 2029, teaching evaluations, the National Student Survey and the employee satisfaction surveys reveal that students and employees of the AHK will feel comfortable and respected. Employees will have the legal capacity to prevent or report socially unsafe situations. Students and employees will know where they can report undesirable behaviour and the organisation will be equipped to be able to adequately address reports. Social safety will remain an important topic within the didactic courses and leadership training courses. We will return to this topic in Chapter 4 (Preconditions, part of the Personnel policy).



3.  
Internationalisation

The Netherlands is a small country with many international contacts and therefore plays an important role in the global economy. As a creative metropolis, Amsterdam occupies a unique position in the Netherlands. Amsterdam has long been an attractive city for students and artists from all over the world. Consequently, an international environment is an obvious choice for many of our students and employees. It is an important added value for students, teaching, research, society and the (knowledge) economy. The strong international dimension ensures that the AHK offers a rich learning environment that broadens the horizons of Dutch students. The cultural sector is developing internationally. It is our duty to prepare students properly for that. Intercultural skills must therefore form part of the exit qualifications of all our degree programmes. By doing an internship or study abroad, students gain an international network and they can play a role in the world.

We recognise that a tension may arise between the importance of internationalisation and sustainability goals. We try to weigh up the pros and cons of these two aspects carefully. It is better to have a long internship abroad than several short visits. Foreign excursions are preferably made to places that can be reached by train. International guest teachers can also provide a lecture online. We adhere to the objectives of Green Erasmus\*.

Some of our degree programmes have classes that are composed internationally. We subscribe to the importance of the International Classroom and discuss with each other the way in which internationalisation can contribute to diversity, inclusion and the broadening of our outlook, and the significance of that for entering into collaborations. Another part of our degree programmes devotes attention

to internationalisation at home, so that the student who do not go abroad will also gain intercultural skills. This occurs, for example, by inviting international guest teachers (physically or digitally), organising Artist-in-Residence programmes with international guests, by joining international research groups or through internships in the Netherlands with an internationally-oriented organisation. All of the research groups and knowledge circles have many international contacts with whom knowledge is exchanged and joint research projects are established.

Ambitions

- International lines of approach and intercultural skills form part of the curricula of all degree programmes. That may be through mobility (see also below), by further strengthening internationalisation at home and by working with a mixed classroom\* model in our teaching. We are continuing collaborations with a number of important international partners within academies and also sometimes jointly and in a cross-disciplinary context.
- We want to increase the number of students that go abroad for an internship or study to 30% by 2029. All students who want that should be able to go abroad for a period of time. We support students who would not typically take part in exchange programmes with Top-up grants and extra information meetings.
- In 2024, the academies and study programmes will determine by consultation how many international students we can jointly accommodate and train in a responsible way (partly in view of scarce student housing), and which balance we desire between different groups of international students. In 2023-2024, we will launch a project to investigate the options for acquiring additional funds and scholarships, which we can use to help talented (international) students of limited financial means to pay the increased institutional tuition fees. Together with partners in the city, we are continuing to lobby through the Coalitie Kennisstad (Knowledge City Coalition) for an increase in student housing in the Amsterdam region. This should lead to at least 9,000 extra student houses in Amsterdam and the surrounding municipalities, and improvement of the public transport to neighbouring municipalities.

We give prospective international students honest information about the scarce availability of houses for students in Amsterdam and the surrounding area, and about the high rents.

- We are continuing to invest in Dutch and English language lessons for the entire AHK. All students and employees who need it can participate in Dutch and English language lessons. The resources from the quality agreements will be used for this purpose on a structural basis. We therefore align with the internationalisation policy of the government. In 2024, the AHK will adopt a language policy.
- The research groups will further expand their collaboration within international research networks. This should lead to more research with an international outlook and research that is applicable to international environments and circumstances.

## 4.

**Interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity**

The AHK traditionally offers many degree programmes with specialisations at the highest level. To achieve that level, it is necessary to put many hours into training and study. At the same time, a broad outlook and an entrepreneurial attitude are needed to be successful. Many artists and designers work in a dynamic practice at the interface of several disciplines. There is therefore a need among a growing number of students and employees for more encounters and interdisciplinary collaboration in the form of projects, productions and internships within their own study programmes. In the process, increasing use is made of new technology, such as virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence (see also theme 5 'Digitality and technology'). That leads to new artistic productions, surprising cultural encounters and pioneering experiments.

Interdisciplinarity can also extend to totally different sectors, such as healthcare or technology, and contribute to changes in social structures. Complex issues require interdisciplinary approaches, in which the input of artists, who are trained to think outside existing frameworks, is of value. This is therefore about arts-driven innovation. In the case of transdisciplinarity, it is not only about the collaboration between disciplines, but also about integrating different forms of knowledge, including academic, practical, local and traditional knowledge. Transdisciplinary research strives for a holistic approach to complex issues, in which new forms of knowledge are also generated. Interested parties from society are also involved in the research process. The ultimate objective of transdisciplinarity is to develop useful knowledge and solutions that are relevant to society as a whole.

In 2023, the research groups internally strengthened their interdisciplinary collaboration concentrating on three sub-themes: *regeneration & climate*, *social engagement* and *ways of knowing*. The AHK Research Centre plays a strategic and coordinating role herein. In addition, the research groups are continuing the interdisciplinary collaboration in the SPRONG\* research groups. The professors' platform Education at the interface of the arts, science and technology (Onderwijs op het snijvlak van kunst, wetenschap en technologie, OKWT), which is part of CASE (Centre for Arts & Sciences Education), plays an important role within the region in the interdisciplinary collaboration between the various arts disciplines, technology, social engagement and the educational field of work.

This requires a teacher population with interdisciplinary experience, as well as good facilities and space to experiment. In addition, there needs to be greater awareness of what is already happening, and practical obstacles (such as credits, timetables and systems for reserving teaching spaces) preventing participation therein need to be removed. This will be elaborated further in Chapter 4 Preconditions.

**Ambitions**

- Within the regular classroom time of all degree programmes, there will be a range of interdisciplinary content or space to participate in interdisciplinary electives or minors, in mixed groups with students from different degree programmes. By 2029, 50% of students will have taken part in one interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary project during their education. The way in which this is implemented may vary per degree programme. An important precondition in this regard is that degree programmes make this possible in their curricula. (See Chapter 4 Preconditions.)
- In addition, it will be possible for all students to participate in interdisciplinary teaching and research projects outside their own degree programmes, such as university-wide electives and workshops. In this way, they will learn to look beyond the boundaries of their own discipline and they will be given the opportunity to build networks.
- By 2029, we will have a permanent position at the Marineterrein and we will collaborate there in an interdisciplinary manner with all academies, with other users of the area and with partners.



## 5. Digitality and technology

Education faces a major challenge in the coming years. The emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) and the increasingly advanced technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are radically changing the professions we train students for. Music, image and text can now also be created by machines. That means that we need to delve into the possibilities of these technologies, but also into the risks, the disadvantages and the ethical questions. We are doing that through research and experimentation. Our students, researchers and employees must be curious about new technologies, able to pick up new knowledge and skills independently, and able to reflect critically on the impact of technology. Our ambition is to train students who know how to integrate technology into their artistic work.

The pandemic has provided a major boost to the digitisation of education. Online and hybrid learning offer unprecedented opportunities for international speakers, for example, and time- and place-independent study. On the other hand, we see that physical attendance has major added value during creative processes, in the case of creative sessions and at feedback or assessment times. Artificial intelligence and a program like ChatGPT are also having a major impact on the content of the education, as well as on the learning environment and didactics. They offer opportunities for designing assignments, but also raise questions about how we can assess students' skills in a valid and reliable way. In our didactic training courses, we devote a lot of attention to such questions.

### Ambitions

- By 2029, all students will be able to experiment and collaborate at the interface of new technology and the arts. We will use existing research initiatives and experimentation labs within the AHK, which promote technological, transdisciplinary innovation, as a source of inspiration.
- Digital and technological skills (including AI) will be part of the exit qualifications of all degree programmes by 2029. Academies and study programmes will cater for this when revising the (national) programme profiles and when developing the curricula further.
- In 2023, we submitted a grant application for the establishment of a Centre for Teaching and Learning. A range of training programmes for technological, didactic knowledge and skills will be offered and further developed at this centre. In 2023, the Taskforcemanager Digitalisering Onderwijs (Taskforce Manager for the Digitisation of Education) drew up a place for further strengthening the connection between digitisation, didactics and content.
- The digital learning and working environment also sets requirements for information and knowledge security, and for data management, security and privacy. In 2024, we will meet the agreement that was made within higher professional education to grow towards a higher maturity level in the field of information security. Moreover, the ambition is to achieve level 3 on average sector-wide, based on the standards from the SURFaudit Toetsingskader Informatiebeveiliging (SURFaudit Information Security Assessment Framework). In addition, we will have an adequate data management system for research by 2024.

## 6. Lifelong learning

Professionals in the arts and cultural sector are constantly reinventing themselves during their career. Characteristics like reflection, an inquisitive attitude and entrepreneurial spirit form the basis for lifelong development. They are skills that are learned during the degree programme and sometime already during the preparatory course. Knowledge about entrepreneurship and an entrepreneurial attitude also play a role in developing and maintaining a stable professional practice. That is why they form part of both the curricula and the AHK-wide range of programmes.

We consider it to be a social duty to ensure that people in different stages of life can come to the AHK to develop themselves. In arts education, that already starts with good preparatory courses and continues into old age. We contribute to the development of professionals and the professional field as a whole with our further training and refresher courses.

In order to exploit our position as a knowledge institute even better, we are working on ways to share this knowledge with a broader target group. That may involve promoting vertical transfer: for example by making it attractive for upper secondary vocational students to continue studying, via an Associate or a Bachelor's degree. Or by developing more Master's programmes that tie in with our Bachelor's degrees. We also believe it is important that the Professional Doctorate\* is anchored within higher professional education for those people who want to specialise further in practice-oriented research.

It may also involve deepening or broadening knowledge: new insights or techniques that are included in the current education, can also be shared in course form with professionals from the relevant professional fields. Lifelong learning for professionals can be facilitated even better by organising our existing education differently.

The assignment to make our teacher training programmes flexible is an example of this. Part-time teacher training programmes offer opportunities to artists who want to teach. Various primary school boards see opportunities for allowing artists with a teaching qualification to contribute towards solving the teacher shortage.

Partly in view of technological developments and labour market shortages in various sectors, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences are working on a national policy. The envisioned changes in legislation may offer opportunities and sometimes obligations in terms of lifelong development. We are keeping a close eye on that.

### Ambitions:

- In 2024, we will explore the options for expanding what we offer for lifelong learning, in which we will respond to the assignment for the flexibilisation of higher education. We will also investigate the opportunities and the needs to increase the range of Associate and Master's degrees. By 2025, we will have completed research into the opportunities and possibilities for making our knowledge more accessible for professionals. This will result in policy choices which we will implement.
- By 2029, we will manage to improve alumni loyalty to our university with an attractive range of further training and refresher courses. The range in the field of entrepreneurship will form part of that.
- By 2029, we will have expanded the range of further training and refresher course, which responds to the increasing interdisciplinarity of the professional field.
- The Professional Doctorate\* will have received a permanent position within higher professional education and within the AHK by 2029.







# 4. Preconditions

## Reducing academic pressure and work pressure

Many students and employees are experiencing excessive academic and work pressure at present. As a result of this, their wellbeing is adversely affected. The causes of this academic and work pressure can be traced back to the intrinsic motivation of students and the performance culture that appears to be inextricably linked to the professional field for which we train students. There is a growing awareness of undesirable side effects both in teaching and research, and in the professional field.

Social and technological innovation are moving at lightning speed. The climate crisis and wars loom large. It is difficult to keep up with the impact of these changes on education. One consequence is that we have to keep adding new topics to the education. However, not everything fits within the available time and duration of the study programmes. That means we have to dare to let go more than ever. We have faith in the ability of our students to learn new knowledge and skills after graduation. That is why we need to ensure that we share our knowledge more broadly with the professional field. It needs to be practically possible and attractive for professionals to return temporarily to the AHK. For example, for a part-time Bachelor's, a Professional Doctorate\*, a course or a workshop.

When designing the curricula, the manner of assessment and the instructional format, the impact on the work pressure of both students, and teachers and support staff must be taken into account. The guiding principle remains that the student should be able to take control over their own study career in a healthy and responsible manner.

## Personnel policy

We are a learning organisation. This calls for a culture in which people are allowed to make mistakes and the courage to experiment is valued. Teachers, researchers and support staff are challenged to develop themselves further and to collaborate, sometimes in an international context and taking sustainability goals into account.

The personnel policy plan sets out our ambitions in terms of staff. Some of them serve to support the ambitions for teaching and research in this strategic plan and are therefore highlighted below.

Personnel policy

Fair practice

As an employer, we comply with the principles of the Fair Practice Code, the code of conduct for doing business and working in the arts, culture and creative industry. The code of conduct has three principles: fair pay, fair share (ensuring revenues and responsibilities are shared fairly) and fair chain (a sustainable and transparent chain of production, distribution and presentation). The three principles from the Fair Practice Code are also the guiding principles when it comes to collaboration with external organisations and entrepreneurs who collaborate with the AHK in a flexible way. Agreements have been made with the University Council about the size of the temporary workforce\*, in accordance with the collective labour agreement (cao).

Everyone sufficiently (didactically) trained

In order to achieve our goals, it is necessary that the teachers (continue to) possess sufficient didactic and educational knowledge. The scope of employment determines how extensive the didactic training of teachers is. Topics like social safety, teaching in a mixed classroom\* and online didactics form an integral part of the didactic training. We are going to offer the didactic training in a more flexible and modular way. Permanent supplementary training is important to everyone, not only in terms of content and didactically, but also for deepening skills in the fields of technology, intercultural and interdisciplinary collaboration and research.

In addition to the standard range of didactic training, we continue to invest in training courses and workshops about, among other things, suicide prevention, neurodiversity, research,

English and Dutch. These workshops and training courses are accessible to all employees, also for those people whose primary duty is not teaching. Knowledge sharing about social safety and an inclusive learning and working environment remains a key objective.

Leadership training courses

The AHK works on the basis of three shared core values: driven, inclusive and responsible. We expect managers to promote these values, act accordingly and set a good example. A management development programme has been developed by the Personnel & Organisation (P&O) department for all managers within the AHK. Educational leadership, where heads of studies and artistic directors give direction to the ambitions from this strategic plan, is part of that. Furthermore, training courses are offered on conducting inclusive job interviews. In this way, we are working on the further professionalisation of the procedures for selecting employees. In addition, all managers do a training course aimed at preventing, recognising, fostering discussion about and tackling undesirable behaviour.

Career development for teachers and researchers

In order to achieve our goal of becoming a knowledge institution, it is necessary that more teachers are able to conduct research and are given the space for this research within their position. When recruiting new teachers, an affinity with research is a criterion that is included in the competency profile. The job matrix (functiehuis)\* has now been adjusted accordingly. Together with 15 fellow institutions, the AHK is participating in the nationwide pilot Professional

Doctorate\* (PD) programme Arts + Creative. This PD, among other things, will have provided a boost to the career opportunities of (teacher-) researchers by 2029. The job matrix has been adjusted accordingly. In addition to the PD, the PhD will continue to exist as a career path. This topic will also be reflected in the new Strategic Research Agenda (Strategische Agenda Onderzoek) that will be drawn up in 2025.

Social safety

Social safety in education is essential in order to guarantee a safe and healthy learning environment for all individuals in question. Everyone should feel safe and respected within the AHK, both students, as well as teachers and other employees – and not regardless of, but inclusive of everyone's background and beliefs. We promote this viewpoint via the Code of Conduct for Social Safety, in which we make what we expect from our students and staff visible and concrete, as well as how people should behave within the school and working environment, and beyond.

The AHK believes it is important to monitor and safeguard this properly. To this end, the previously-mentioned survey into social safety was carried out in 2023. We will address any possible risks that come to light in this regard. The National Student Survey, KUO monitor, teaching evaluations and the employee satisfaction survey are also important sources in order to monitor this topic.

In addition, broader surveys that were conducted in the professional field and among students will also be incorporated by the AHK when implementing and improving the policy. In addition, the AHK is involved with

the 'Handreiking Meldingen van seksueel grensoverschrijdend gedrag op de werkvloer' (Guideline for Reports of sexual transgressive behaviour in the workplace) of the government commissioner Mariëtte Hamer, and with surveys that are carried out by the education inspectorate. These surveys and their findings provide input, of course, for the programmes and activities developed by the AHK in order to continue ensuring social safety within the university.

Prevention is important for ensuring a social safe environment. We do this through numerous activities that are aimed at raising awareness. In addition to the previously-mentioned leadership training courses, programmes will also be developed for both employees/teachers and students. The role of confidential adviser is also important when it comes to prevention.

Anyone who is faced with a socially unsafe situation must feel supported and know that there are people who they can talk to within the organisation. To this end, internal and external confidential advisers are available. Everyone should be able to trust that complaints procedures will be handled properly. The Code of Conduct for Social Safety shows that (sexually) transgressive behaviour is not tolerated. This is acted upon and appropriate measures are taken, where necessary.



## University buildings and facilities: sustainable, inclusive and interdisciplinary

The ambition to be a climate-neutral organisation by 2035 will require a major investment in the coming years. We are implementing the Sustainability Road Map within the operational management. The ambition to optimise the physical and digital accessibility of buildings and facilities is also a challenge. The first step is to formulate a concrete objective. In 2024, a project plan with a multi-year budget will be drawn up for both goals (sustainability and accessibility).

Interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration often arises from an artistic or social impulse, through chance or organised encounters. An important place for interdisciplinary encounters and collaboration is the Marineterrein, where new forms of learning are the key focus. We have shared workplaces here where knowledge is gained about new technology and where cross-pollination takes place. The academies can experiment here with interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching and research. At the Marineterrein, we also work with other educational institutes, companies and the City of Amsterdam on solutions to social and urban challenges, and on the further development of this innovation district. By connecting students, teachers and researchers to this development AHK-wide, we are encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration within the AHK and we are shaping the future of this area together.

Therefore, we are continuing to invest in the collaboration with the municipality and partners at the Marineterrein, and we are continuing to make it clear how the arts can be a starting point for innovation processes and can contribute to a sustainable society.

## ICT and Information Management to facilitate teaching and research

The AHK has an information strategy plan. In 2024, a new four-year plan will be drawn up. This will describe the goals and ambitions for digitisation of teaching, research and operational management.

In April 2022, the National Growth Fund (Nationaal Groeifonds) application for the Digitisation Impulse Education (Digitaliseringsimpuls Onderwijs) was approved. The objective of this programme is threefold: to improve the quality of education, to increase the adaptability of the education, and to improve the functional and critical digital skills of students and teachers. Within this context, it has been agreed within the Netherlands Association of Universities of Applied Sciences that Centres for Teaching and Learning will be launched or expanded in the coming years. In these centres knowledge sharing, professionalisation and support for teachers in the fields of digitisation and educational innovation will be organised systematically.

In February 2023, a Digitisation taskforce manager started working within the AHK. This manager has been instructed, together with the members of the taskforce, to develop a vision on the digitisation of teaching and research, to encourage knowledge exchange and to draw up a project plan which sets out which preconditions are necessary to provide a boost to digitisation.

DANS (Data Archiving and Networked Services) is the national expertise centre for research data. The application DataverseNL, which is intended for saving, sharing and publishing research data online, will be implemented in 2024. A data steward will help people to work with this. Research groups work according to the FAIR principle (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable) and thus comply with

the requirements that grant providers set. With proper management, research data is more accessible, more secure and sustainably archived, in a way that reflects the uniqueness of the research conducted in and by the arts.

The libraries/media centres play a role in making knowledge and data accessible and the management thereof. We will discuss with them, the directors and the AHK Research Centre how we can make even better use of this expertise and which preconditions are needed for this.

## Strengthening internal communication and university-wide collaboration

Communication about and within the AHK focuses on many different target groups, each with their own information needs and focus. Our community is not sufficiently aware of many activities and initiatives that take place at the AHK. And if people do know about their existence, the information about that is not always easy to find. We communicate a lot, through various channels, but apparently not always effectively. We are going to review the vision and policy on internal communication. This will also address the allocation of roles between the academies and the central organisation. We will make agreements about how we can better streamline the communication processes. Within that context, we are also going to revamp the websites and MyAHK. Communication with students also merits special attention.

We not only want to use communication to inform, but also to create engagement and connection. We want to get students and employees to contribute ideas, to consult them and for them to help us produce communication materials. We partly align the corporate and internal communication, including the events that we organise, with the strategic goals of the AHK.







## 5. Implementation and finances

In the spring of 2024, an implementation plan, which will elaborate how we plan to achieve the strategic ambitions and which resources are needed for that, will follow this strategic plan.

The driver of all topics described in this plan will not only be one academy or the Executive Board. Many ambitions will have to be tackled jointly. Moreover, the academies will also elaborate a number of joint ambitions within their own strategy. We want to be able to effectively exchange the knowledge and experience that we gain from this, so that we can learn from each other. That is why we want to better facilitate cross-academy exchanges and meetings, so that interdisciplinary collaboration in teaching and research can be effected more easily.

A steering group will be created for each theme, which will be led by one of the directors. The composition, size and assignment may differ per steering group. Moreover, students can also be involved. A project leader will be appointed for each theme, who will draw up a project plan and will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the project. There will be a communications officer in each steering group, who will contribute ideas and provide advice on how the strategic objectives will be brought to live and implemented within the organisation. The steering groups will be accountable to the Executive Board.

This strategic plan will set out a number of large projects for which financial resources should be reserved, such as making the operational management more sustainable, research into the range of course on offer within the context of lifelong learning, research into the opportunities for promoting interdisciplinarity, and improving the internal communication.

The funds that we have been receiving from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science since 2018, within the context of the quality agreements, will be added to the regular funding. That will provide us with the opportunity to continue the activities that were started thanks to the quality agreements or – if completed or less successful – to reassign those activities.







## 6. About the creation of this strategic plan

The Executive Board of a university of applied sciences is legally obliged to draw up an institutional plan at least once every six years. This is referred to as the strategic plan at the AHK. The previous plan expired in 2023. That is why we already started preparing a new plan in 2021, which will enter into force from January 2024. This plan, which will run until 2029, was drawn up by the Executive Board and created in collaboration with the academy directors, professors, University Council, Supervisory Board and with committed employees, students and people from the professional field. Special thanks go out to the supervisory committee (see colophon), which commented on all versions of the plan.

Where this document says: 'we believe' or 'we are going to', 'we' means the Executive Board, with input from many persons involved. First and foremost, that concerns the directors, who will implement this strategic plan in concrete terms within their academy. In addition, they take into account the specific situation of the teaching and research within the academy. Wherever this document talks about employees, this means: teachers, supervisors and support staff.

At the beginning of 2021, in the middle of the pandemic, we carried out an online midterm review\* of the previous strategic plan 2018-2023. Approximately 75 employees and students took part in this. The state of affairs at the AHK and which topics should be given more attention were also discussed with the directors, the University Council and the Supervisory Board. On the basis of those discussions, we concluded that major steps had been taken in recent years, but that the main topics from the previous plan are still relevant.

In order to draw up this strategic plan 2024-2029, we held six in-depth discussions with students and employees in the spring of 2022. Moreover, we asked these questions: What is the current state of the teaching and research in relation to these topics? Which developments do we see? What do we need to strengthen?

During these meetings, there were several request for more cross-disciplinary exchange and collaboration. In addition, there was discussion about dilemmas, such as: incorporating new themes into the curricula without compromising the study programme feasibility, the teachability and the organisability; offering customisation without forfeiting the high expert quality; and making better use of hybrid and online opportunities in the process.

During the thematic meetings, there was a lot of discussion about student wellbeing. A lot of study pressure is being experienced as a result of full study programmes. Other matters that may have a negative effect on the wellbeing of students include financial worries, housing shortages, competition and performance pressure, psychological distress, and concerns about the climate and war.

In November 2022, a meeting was held with people from the arts and cultural sector. They feel that the AHK has a leading role to play as an innovator of the sector. According to them, the 21st-century artist or cultural professional is someone who collaborates, disseminates ideas and has an influence on processes and policy. We want to prepare our students for that role. The professional field also sees a role for the AHK to

share our knowledge more widely with alumni and professionals within the context of lifelong development. Our researchers have an important role to play in that. They can drive innovation and make the connection with society.

Over the course of six meetings, a supervisory committee (see colophon), composed of several directors, representatives of the University Council and a professor, reflected on the results of the thematic meetings. They also gave feedback on the draft texts of this plan. In the interim period, the University Council and the Supervisory Board were regularly informed about the progress of the process and the results of the meetings, and provided valuable input. The analysis that the professors conducted in June 2022 about the future of research within the AHK was also used.

The Executive Board would like to thank all the parties involved for this valuable process. We are looking forward to start working on the implementation of this plan with the entire AHK organisation, while maintaining an ongoing dialogue with the participation councils.

On 10 October 2023, the University Council consented to the strategic plan. The Supervisory Board approved the plan on 25 October 2023.







Appendix

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Appendix

**Glossary**

*(Indirect government and contract research) funding:*  
A distinction is made between three types of funding in higher education: the funding through the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (government funding), grants – e.g. for research – through public organisations like SIA and NWO (indirect government funding) and the conferral of money or gifts by private institutions (contract research funding)

*Green Erasmus:*  
Green Erasmus is a project subsidised by the European Union that provides information to students – who are going abroad for their study within the Erasmus+ programme – about how they can do that in a sustainable way. See [greenerasmus.org](https://greenerasmus.org)

*Job matrix*  
A job matrix is a diagram which contains all the positions in an organisation, including a description of the duties, skills and qualifications that are associated with a particular job.

*Midterm review:*  
A midterm review is an analysis of the state of affairs halfway through a project; in teaching it often concerns an analysis of the

state of affairs in relation to the last accreditation of the degree programme.

*Mixed classroom:*  
A mixed classroom is an educational model developed by the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, in which students learn to be receptive to differences, create an inclusive environment and utilise different perspectives to create value.

*PDCA cycle:*  
PDCA stands for Plan, Do, Check, Act. It is a way to design procedures and processes for that which you are planning to implement (Plan), subsequently executing that (Do), evaluating that afterwards (Check) and making improvements on the basis of that (Act). After that, the cycle starts again.

*Professional Doctorate:*  
The Professional Doctorate (PD) is a doctoral programme in higher professional education. The PD is aimed at the (professional) practice and trains highly-qualified, inquisitive professional who ‘learn to intervene in complex practices’ at level 8 of the European Qualification Framework. The level is therefore equivalent to a PhD at universities.

*SPRONG:*  
SPRONG is a grant programme of Stichting Innovatie Alliantie (Innovation Alliance Foundation, SIA) that is intended for the further development of the research infrastructure of practice-oriented research at universities of applied sciences. The grant is therefore not directly intended for co-funding research, but for strengthening the preconditions for good practice-oriented research.

*Sustainable Development Goals:*  
The Sustainable Development Goals are 17 goals that were formulated by the United Nations and that together form the blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, both now and in the future. These goals were signed by all countries of the United Nations (including the Netherlands) in 2015.

*Temporary workforce*  
The temporary workforce consists of employees of the AHK who do not have a permanent contract. They work for the AHK, for example, via temporary contracts, secondment or a contract for the provision of services, for example as a self-employed professional.

# Colophon

**Executive Board (commissioning party)**

Annet Lekkerkerker, Bert Verveld (until 1 march 2023),  
David van Traa, Roos Eijsten (secretary)

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