

# Learning to Excel

## Strategic Plan 2007-2010

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This translation is provided for information purposes only. In the event of a difference of interpretation, the original Dutch version of this document is binding.

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*to accompany the Strategic Plans of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and of the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences (HvA) for the period 2007-2010*

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### **Strategic Plan of the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences\***

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\* A translation of the Strategic Plan of the HvA is not included here.

'The most predictable feature of modern society is its unpredictability. We no longer believe that tomorrow will look much like today. Universities must find ways to sustain the most cherished aspects of their core values, while discovering new ways to respond vigorously to the opportunities of a rapidly evolving world.'<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James D. Duderstadt, *A University for the 21st Century*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000. James Duderstadt is a professor of Science and Engineering. In addition to being dean of the Faculty of Engineering, for years he was also President of the University of Wisconsin, one of the largest public institutions of higher education in the US.

## Foreword

This booklet presents the Strategic Plans of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences (HvA) for the period 2007-2010.\* Resources used in the preparations of these plans include talks that the UvA-HvA Board conducted with staff and students from both institutions. The respective representative advisory bodies have agreed to the intentions set out in these plans.

The Strategic Plans are preceded by a Vision for the Future, which outlines the ambitions the Board cherishes with regard to both the UvA and the HvA. The Vision for the Future has been the topic of intensive discussion with the representative advisory bodies but has not formally been submitted for their approval. It encompasses a longer time period than the Strategic Plans because one of the most important choices which has been made is that in ten years time, the two organisations wish to see themselves integrated into a single institution of higher education and scientific research.

UvA-HvA Board  
Amsterdam, May 2007

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\* Originally published in Dutch as *Leren Excelleren. Instellingsplan 2007-2010*, in June 2007. A translation of the Strategic Plan of the HvA is not included here. The translation of the Strategic Plan of the UvA has been updated to October 2008.

## **Vision for the Future**

to accompany the Strategic Plans of the University of Amsterdam  
and the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences  
for the period 2007-2010

## 1. Introduction

The joint Board of the University of Amsterdam (UvA) and the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences (HvA) has formulated a Vision for the Future to accompany the institutions' Strategic Plans for the period 2007-2010. The Vision for the Future outlines how the UvA and the HvA wish to present themselves in the coming five to ten years, which choices they want to make and why. Their choices have been influenced by recent developments in both institutions, but also and more strongly by outside factors: the changing and increasing demand for graduates of higher education, the growing diversity in the student body and professional population, the rapid development and spread of technology and digitalisation, and the increasingly international labour and education markets. The UvA and the HvA are ideally equipped to face the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, because they are firmly grounded in the Dutch education system in both the university and higher professional education sectors. The UvA and the HvA wish to continue intensifying their cooperation in the coming years, so that within ten years these steps will lead to a single institution of higher education.

The Vision for the Future emphasises the strength of both organisations and the added value that close cooperation can yield for students, staff and the surrounding community. The UvA and the HvA already work with other education partners in the region, including the VU University Amsterdam, the Gerrit Rietveld Academy and the Amsterdam School of the Arts. As Amsterdam institutions of higher education, the UvA and the HvA together wish to be a centre for knowledge and professional practice in the Randstad metropolitan area\* and its so-called 'north wing' in particular. Also outlined in this Vision for the Future is where the UvA and the HvA stand in the national educational landscape, and what role they wish to play in the growing European market for students and researchers with international ambitions. In a rapidly changing world economy, research universities and universities of applied sciences (*hogescholen*) must reflect on their core tasks but at the same time seek ways to meet new needs in society. The most important educational task for the UvA and the HvA will be to bring in and retain students in their organisations and to guide them to an appropriate level of study that will offer them favourable prospects on the job market.

## 2. Changes and challenges

Over the past decades, various social, economic and cultural developments have taken place which have consequences for the structure of higher education. These developments demand strategic choices that may initially seem paradoxical:

- a. The need for higher education among young people and adults has increased sharply over the past 15 years and successive governments have expressed the desire for this demand to continue increasing.<sup>2</sup> Only with a highly educated professional population will the Netherlands be able to maintain economic growth. The point here is not simply to have **more** people who are highly educated; society also demands higher-level graduates who possess more knowledge.
- b. Society and the labour market are seeking graduates of higher education with a sound **academic knowledge** and the capacity for abstraction, but they are also placing an increasingly strong emphasis on **professional development**. To meet the demand for professional graduates, institutions of higher education are searching for optimal combinations of learning environments and study programmes, also for working people; work-study, part-time and full-time study programmes offer a response to this need.<sup>3</sup> Students and companies also want greater customisation, and there is a need for individual variation in educational careers.
- c. Institutions of higher education in the Netherlands are strongly oriented to **regional and national needs**. The ties to the region and the city are extremely important for the national positioning of a research university and a university of applied sciences. At the same time, the Lisbon and Bologna treaties have initiated the process of internationalisation. With the introduction of the Bachelor's-Master's structure, Dutch higher education will increasingly be subjected to **international** scrutiny, for example in the form of international accreditation processes, and institutions will increasingly be competing in a European and global market to recruit the best students and researchers.
- d. Institutions of higher education in the Netherlands have grown **larger** in recent decades through mergers and alliances. This increase in scale was necessary because modern education requires major investments, and efficiency can only be achieved at a certain scale. On the other hand, it is clear that the effectiveness of education

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\* An area in the west of the Netherlands including the four largest Dutch cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) and their surroundings.

<sup>2</sup> See *Investeren in Vermogen. Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport*, The Hague: Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), 2006, p. 28, for the percentages according to ethnic group.

<sup>3</sup> See *Duaal als ideaal? Leren en werken in het beroeps- en hoger onderwijs*, Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), 2006.

and research only improves if staff and students work in **small communities** where they know each other and feel a sense of connection in their daily work.

- e. The ethnic and cultural composition of the Dutch population is rapidly changing. At the present time, 15% of primary school pupils in the Netherlands are from ethnic minorities. This percentage is much higher in the greater Amsterdam area: over 50%. In the coming five to ten years, the percentage of young people from ethnic minorities studying at an institution for higher education will increase considerably.<sup>4</sup> Higher education serves a major **emancipatory** purpose and should function as a model for the desired **social cohesion and diversity** in society.
- f. The demand from the business community and government for both **fundamental** and **applied** research continues unabated, while the financing for such research is gradually shifting from government funding to indirect government funding and contract research. On the one hand, these developments demand careful consideration when selecting **research priority areas**; on the other, they require the promotion of research that takes place on the cusp where disciplines meet.<sup>5</sup> The need for multidisciplinary research is also increasing.<sup>6</sup>
- g. Developments in the technological infrastructure and the increasing digitalisation of services require that graduates of higher education be able to develop optimally and autonomously in a **technological culture**.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, a constant flux can be noted in determining the required knowledge and skills and the interrelation of these aspects of competence. Higher education must constantly – but also critically – move with the times and link up with the final level of the schools that supply their students.

### 3. Strategic choices by the UvA and the HvA

The combination of the UvA and the HvA – a research university and a university of applied sciences – offers an excellent starting point for responding to these developments in society and the education sector. A broad institution of education offers many opportunities and is capable of meeting requirements that may at times seem contradictory. However, clear strategic choices must be made for the future.

#### a. Broad base with many peaks

The UvA and the HvA are broad institutions which at the same time aim to excel in education and research. The strength of a large institution is that it can offer a wide range of programmes and thus bring in and retain a large number of students. Students with ambitions in the academic, public or professional sectors of the labour market will be able to develop their talents optimally at the UvA and the HvA. This is not facilitated through 'selection at the gate', but by monitoring student performance and success rates, and by maintaining a good system of academic student counselling, focusing in the first year on orientation, selection and, possibly, referral to other study programmes. The UvA is also committed to becoming and remaining one of the best comprehensive universities in Europe, in both education and research, while the HvA seeks to be among the best comprehensive universities of applied sciences in the Netherlands. Students and lecturers are expected to have a willingness to seek excellence. Students at all levels must feel challenged and constantly stimulated to do better (for example, through the Honours programmes). Lecturers will have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and expertise through the availability of permanent (didactic) training and arrangements for sabbaticals or breaks for refresher training. Good researchers will be assessed on the basis of their performance, and excellent performance will be rewarded with more time and money.

#### b. Two institutions in one

The UvA stands for academic development and scientific knowledge; the HvA sets great store by its profile of application-oriented knowledge and professional development. In order to meet the increasing demand for graduates of higher education who combine academic knowledge with professional development, the UvA-HvA combination has decided to make two choices.

First, it is committed to achieving greater uniformity in the way education is organised at the two institutions, thereby making it easier for students to move from one institution to the other, and ultimately, to take part in both profession- and research-oriented university education. Uniformity in how credits are awarded, transparency in how the level of modules is specified in the two education systems, agreements about advancing from the Bachelor's to the Master's level, and a uniform schedule for the academic year will ensure that transitions between the two types of education are smoother.

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<sup>4</sup> See *Investeren in Vermogen. Sociaal en Cultureel Rapport*, The Hague: Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), 2006, p. 28, for the percentages according to ethnic group.

<sup>5</sup> See Sybille Reichert, *Research Strategy and Management Development at European Universities*, European University Association, 2006, Chapter 3. See also *De bevordering van multidisciplinair onderzoek*, Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT), 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See *Ontwerp en Ontwikkeling. De functie en plaats van onderzoeksactiviteiten in hogescholen*, AWT advisory paper presented to the government, August 2005.

<sup>7</sup> See Harry de Boer et al., *Academia in the 21st Century: An Analysis of Trends and Perspectives in Higher Education and Research*, Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT), 2002.



Second, the UvA and the HvA will be improving the way the different types of education are presented to the outside world by setting up colleges (formerly known as 'undergraduate schools') and graduate schools. This is a logical consequence of the Bachelor's-Master's structure. The Bachelor's programmes will be organised in the colleges. The graduate schools will divide their programmes along two lines. One section will house the Research Master's programmes (*onderzoeksmasters*), the Master's programmes that automatically follow on from a Bachelor's programme in the same field (*aansluitmasters*) and the PhD programmes. The other section will house the Professional Master's programmes (the so-called *duale* or Professional Master's). The UvA already has programmes that focus on professional and profession-oriented skills (these include the Professional Master's programmes), and the UvA and the HvA offer excellent opportunities for pooling their strengths in some of these areas. Cooperation between the UvA and the HvA at the programme level over the past five years has laid a solid foundation for the further expansion and institutionalisation of existing alliances.<sup>8</sup>

#### c. Villages in a city, village in a world

The UvA and the HvA are firmly rooted in the city of Amsterdam and the Randstad metropolitan area. As the largest institutions of higher education in the Netherlands, the UvA and the HvA play an important role in the region; the need for highly trained personnel in the city and region is more likely to increase than decrease in the coming years. As a large, broadly oriented institution, together the UvA and the HvA represent an important partner for Amsterdam. Not only do many of the buildings operated by the UvA and the HvA determine the cityscape, but the student population also leaves a colourful mark on the cultural and dynamic social climate of the capital city. Conversely, the wealth of art and culture in Amsterdam adds a distinct flavour to the activities and signature of the UvA and the HvA.

In recent years, there have been many initiatives to strengthen the ties between government, the business community and the UvA and the HvA. In the coming years, the UvA and the HvA will invest in the consolidation and further strengthening of these ties.<sup>9</sup> In cooperation with municipal and regional governments and local organisations, social and cultural activities will be initiated that will ensure dynamic interactions between the students and the city. The UvA and the HvA aim to realise accommodations in what will be known as 'city campuses', which will offer a clear home base for both students and lecturers. These city campuses will form 'villages' within the Amsterdam biotope, where students and lecturers will feel at home and be able to meet and come to know and recognise each other.

Strengthening the ties to the city and region will also enhance the profiles the UvA and the HvA present to the outside world. Amsterdam is an attractive location for international students, lecturers and researchers. Over the past ten years, the UvA and the HvA have played a prominent role in the internationalisation of Dutch higher education. As well as offering a wide range of Bachelor's programmes at both the research and applied sciences university levels, the UvA and the HvA focus primarily on the level of the Master's programmes, in order to attract students from Europe and other continents. It is only by maintaining and preserving an international profile that the UvA and the HvA will be able to compete with the best universities in Europe.

#### d. Small within large

Economies of scale will allow the UvA and the HvA to make the necessary and desired investments in the accommodations, technology and infrastructure needed for education and research. As a result, students will have access to extensive shared facilities in the form of libraries, technological support and cultural activities. By contrast, education and research will be organised according to the principle of 'small within large', namely, in units with their own ambitions, authorisations and obligations to achieve results. Only smaller units will be able to respond effectively to the changing needs of the students, and to cultivate a strong link between lecturers, researchers, students and the social or professional environment. Many institutes, **colleges**, **schools** and centres, for example, operate under the auspices of the UvA and the HvA, each with its own face and each offering its own exceptional programmes. Within these units, the primary processes (education and research) will be organised in such a way that they motivate and inspire professionals and students alike. The entire structure will have a few central but very clear rules, and there will be a certain degree of autonomy in translating those rules within the units.

#### e. Diversity and social cohesion

An international orientation suits such a colourful and vibrant city as Amsterdam. Both the UvA and the HvA harbour student populations appropriate to the international and ethnic diversity of a 21<sup>st</sup>-century metropolis. Both institutions have set the goal of allowing room for this diversity in the coming years, by encouraging the expression of the international component of the field or profession in all the curricula. At the same time, the UvA and the HvA will

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<sup>8</sup> See Jacqueline van Zoggel, 'Intensieve samenwerking tussen universiteiten en hogescholen: een onafwendbaar perspectief', *Th@ma* 2: 11-14 (2005). See also L. Schrijvers, 'HBO-Rechten in Amsterdam een feit: het resultaat van samenwerking tussen de HvA en UvA', *Tijdschrift voor Hoger Onderwijs en Management* 10 (4): 50-56 (2003).

<sup>9</sup> This involves such initiatives as the Amsterdam-based *Innovatiemotor*, *Kenniskring Amsterdam* (Knowledge Network Amsterdam).

assume their social responsibility by training more students from non-Dutch backgrounds and appointing more lecturers and researchers from countries outside the Netherlands. A strong representation of ethnic and cultural minorities in both the student body and the institutions' staff of lecturers and researchers contributes to social cohesion in society at large. It is precisely a broad institution that can meet the emancipatory requirements that the government sets for both higher education and the classic *Bildung* ideal: training and shaping the student to become a citizen of the world.

#### f. Research

Scientific research conducted by staff is central to the UvA and its medical faculty, the Academic Medical Center (AMC), together with the system of Research Master's and PhD programmes. Research funding increasingly comes from indirect government funding (allocated to projects by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and the EU) and from contract research (for companies and government ministries). The UvA rewards good research and offers incentives for excellent research. The aim in designating **research priority areas** is the strategic acquisition of extra funding. This aim does not need to be achieved at the expense of research that is less equipped for large-scale fundraising, but it does have an impact on lower-performing researchers or research programmes that receive poor assessments. To keep researchers from choosing only established fields and safe strategies, the UvA and the HvA encourage interdisciplinary programmes with innovative potential. This interdisciplinary focus also characterises the Bachelor's programmes, notably in the form of the Honours programmes and the extra modules for talented students.

The HvA too is investing in research activities. The introduction of tutors (*lectors*) is a first step towards promoting research. In some fields, cooperation between academics and HBO lecturers will yield new types of research; this development could result in the creation of joint UvA-HvA research centres. It is in society's best interests to have more lecturers who have a PhD teach in universities of applied sciences and secondary schools. Interest in scientific research can only grow if the seeds for it are sown far and wide.

#### g. Quality and competences

Programmes at the UvA and the HvA are provided by committed people who prefer to convey their knowledge of and passion for their field to students as directly as possible. Students benefit from intensive guidance and contact with their teachers. Accordingly, both institutions encourage teaching in small groups together with knowledge transfer in larger contexts. That students and lecturers feel committed to their programme (institute, school, etc.) is essential, because engagement and a sense of connection are important success factors. As well as providing intensive guidance, this also means that the UvA and the HvA will offer ample room for activities such as sports, debating, mentor projects, representative advisory participation, creativity and encounters with others.

Competence-oriented learning is based on intensive educational activities where the necessary knowledge and skills can be acquired. The rapidly changing high-quality technological environment sets high standards for future employees, knowledge workers (*kenniswerkers*) and entrepreneurs. The UvA and the HvA are committed to bringing students into frequent and extensive contact with high-quality ICT and other technologies, so that they will learn to be able to work independently in a digital environment. The ICT expertise present at both the UvA and HvA will be utilised for this purpose.

## 4. Ambitions and aims

- The UvA-HvA combination, including the AMC and the dental faculty ACTA (shared with the VU University Amsterdam), will provide high-quality education and research at all levels as well as a transparent system offering options for mobility between the institutions, thus creating the best possible opportunities for the successful completion of studies and the intellectual development of every student.
- The UvA and the HvA will offer all students a suitable programme, with a focus on identifying talented students so as to be able to offer them optimal challenges and guidance.
- The UvA aims to achieve a higher position on respected global ranking lists.
- By 2010, the UvA will be one of the three best comprehensive research universities in the country and, together with the VU University Amsterdam and knowledge institutes such as the FOM Institute for Atomic and Molecular Physics (AMOLF), the Dutch National Institute for Subatomic Physics (NIKHEF), the National Research Institute for Mathematics and Computer Science (CWI) and SARA Computing and Networking Services, will be part of the largest national centre for fundamental scientific research.
- By 2010, the HvA will be the best comprehensive urban university of applied sciences in the Netherlands, where students will have the best chance of successfully completing a programme and the best opportunities for moving on to studies at a research university.
- By 2010, the UvA and the HvA will be among the most valued research partners in the Randstad metropolitan area for both companies and public institutions.

- The UvA and the HvA will promote their connections with the city of Amsterdam as well as their strong international position by working together closely with urban and regional partners in government and the business community.
- The UvA and the HvA will continue to be linked with the city of Amsterdam as a centre of art and culture and are committed to pursuing closer cooperation with partners in this area (such as the *Rijksacademie voor Beeldende Kunsten* and the *Rijksmuseum Amsterdam*).
- Together with the VU University Amsterdam, the UvA will give shape to a renowned University College that will be characterised by its interdisciplinary programmes and Amsterdam allure.\*

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\* Amsterdam University College has now officially been launched and will welcome its first students in September 2009.

# **Strategic Plan** of the University of Amsterdam

## 1. Brief summary of the ambitions and aims

In the coming four years, the University of Amsterdam (UvA) will continue to pursue its goal of becoming one of the best comprehensive, all-round universities in the Netherlands, where excellent teaching is linked to excellent research. The UvA aims to attract excellent researchers and lecturers and offer a stimulating environment in which they can develop their talents to the full. The UvA has an international allure and is a magnet for foreign students who feel drawn to the city of Amsterdam, where ambition, intellectual development and creativity are given high priority. Cooperation with the Hogeschool van Amsterdam, University of Applied Sciences (HvA) gives the institution a unique profile in the Dutch higher education landscape, and in particular leads to useful new forms of research and education. The collaboration is also intended to create good opportunities for the personal development of those Dutch students who come from a background where attending higher education is not customary. In order to realise these ambitions, the UvA aims to achieve a clear and transparent organisation and a stimulating personnel policy. The UvA asks for commitment and effort on the part of its students and, in exchange, will offer a challenging environment with good support structures. As well as allowing room for individual and discipline-specific preferences, the UvA will encourage and reward ambition, achievements and innovation. The UvA will present a clearly recognisable face to the outside world; smaller units that maintain a specific profile within the academic community and beyond will do so under the auspices of the UvA. The UvA aims to explicitly position itself in the Amsterdam area, but with a strong outward focus on Europe and the rest of the world. In order to become such an organisation, the UvA has set concrete objectives in the areas of education, research, personnel, organisational structure, internationalisation and finance.

## 2. Education

The *Onderwijsvisie UvA* outlines a number of clear choices and principles with regard to education.<sup>10</sup> The UvA chooses not to use 'selection-at-the-gate' methods for the Bachelor's programmes,<sup>11</sup> but instead to set mandatory basic teaching qualifications for lecturers, promote interdisciplinarity, coordinate the schedules for the academic year and focus systematically on academic student counselling. These themes have now become an integral part of policy at the level of the faculties and education institutes. A number of the underlying principles are specified and developed more clearly in this Strategic Plan.

Student evaluations and external rankings, such as those included in the Dutch publications *Elsevier* and the *Studiekeuzegids*, show that the UvA offers programmes with good content that are appreciated by students. They also reveal that the teaching of that content is considered sufficient to good, and that the lecturers are viewed as competent in their fields. The UvA also has a strong research environment, which is a prerequisite to maintaining a high-quality programme of scientific education. However, the same evaluations and **rankings** also reveal a number of persistent problem areas: the relatively poor logistical and material resources available to support the education processes and the patchy services provided to students. In addition, study progress often leaves much to be desired, there are a relatively large number of dropouts who earn few credits and not enough attention is paid to the student's learning process.

On both issues – education and the organisation of education – the UvA aims to pursue a policy of mutual **commitment**. Education will be organised in such a way that students will commit to their studies and the UvA will make a commitment to those students who give priority to their studies. Studying is a wide-ranging and enriching experience in which commitment and effort are essential. In addition, students can pursue personal development through board memberships, involvement in civil society and other extracurricular activities.

The UvA aims to dedicate itself to strengthening ties between the students and the University. A sound policy of academic student counselling will create a climate in which students can embark on a programme with a long-term commitment and actually finish the modules they start. Such a policy demands that all those involved – the lecturers, the students and the managers – make an effort at every level of the organisation: at the level of the individual courses and modules, at the level of the degree programmes and education institutes, and at the level of the University as a whole.

### Courses and modules

Students in turn will be asked to do their part and commit to their studies: signing up for a module or another programme unit brings with it certain obligations and should in general result in successful completion. The courses

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<sup>10</sup> *Onderwijsvisie UvA* (in Dutch only), Academic Affairs, 2 February 2006.

<sup>11</sup> Other than for Medicine and Dentistry, both of which have a fixed quota. These programmes use decentralised selection to select a certain percentage of their first-year students themselves each year.

themselves need to become more participation-oriented, in the sense that students should not first attend classes and then start learning, but should be prompted to study from the outset. There are various ways to achieve this goal: by structuring modules to include smaller tests between exam periods, by creating supplemental working groups and by assigning projects that can yield bonus points. In deciding which measures to implement, the faculties can base their choices on **best practices** within the UvA and beyond.

The education organisation has accepted the task to provide education at a high level. A good class schedule with sufficient opportunity for self-study, together with well-conceived exams and interim tests are a vital part of that. In addition, more attention will be given at the course level to strengthening social bonds and collaboration between students.

#### Level of degree programmes and education institutes

Bachelor's programmes<sup>12</sup> do not have a 'selection-at-the-gate' policy. They do, however, focus on advising and referring students who receive low or insufficient marks, particularly in the first year but also in subsequent years. The introduction of a form of **intake**, involving a placement file, as described in the *Onderwijsvisie UvA*, will ensure increased **self-reflection** and, consequently, increased **self-selection** on the part of the students, so that the UvA will have a better idea of who is joining its ranks. A better initial impression will help predict a student's chances of success in his or her studies. With the aid of an intake interview and a placement file, students can, if necessary, be referred to other programmes even before admission. Cooperation with the HvA offers the option of referring students who are not in the right programme to a more suitable (profession-oriented) programme, with the least possible loss of credits. A placement file will also serve as a starting point for ongoing academic counselling. The study progress of individual students will be closely monitored, not only so as to be able to indicate suitable minors or other programmes at a later point in the programme, but also because this type of placement file will help to encourage and motivate students to get the most out of their studies. A mentor-tutor system will help students to find their way around the programme more effectively.

A standard of student commitment should be set especially at the beginning of or during the first year. Research shows that a student's study habits in the first year are carried over into following years and accordingly determine the student's pace of study to a significant degree.<sup>13</sup> Most students do not earn more credits in later years than they did in their first year. By ensuring that they achieve better results during their first year, the target of having the majority of students achieve a Bachelor's degree within four years will come within reach. Assessment moments need to be distributed effectively, especially in the first year, so that students will receive feedback on their performance early on and can identify more quickly if they are on the right track or if they need to fine-tune their study habits or switch to another programme.

Ties between students and programmes can be strengthened by introducing uniform schedules for the academic year and by promoting coherence within curricula. Education institutes will need to actively pursue a 'class policy', whereby groups of students will go through their programme together. Insofar as this is not already the case, small-scale, intensive teaching will be offered alongside large-scale lectures, under the motto that 'every student should know that he or she is known and acknowledged'. A clearly defined coordination of the contents and didactic methods in annual schedules will enhance the internal coherence of the curriculum, and allow students to develop closer ties with their programme as a whole. An essential part of the way education is organised will be through consultation in teacher teams that jointly determine and define the curriculum. These teams are responsible for the contents of the courses and study programmes and, together with the students represented in the programme committees, monitor the quality of the programme. The UvA values effective quality assurance (for example, via the programme committees) and representative advisory participation (faculty and University student and works councils), which involves students and lecturers in the programmes.

#### Institutional level

Only a few students take a minor outside their own education institute during their Bachelor's programme. The UvA aims to improve the way education is organised with regard to being able to take courses in other programmes.<sup>14</sup> To this end, a uniform structure for the academic year will be introduced as well as uniform sign-up procedures and deadlines for modules.

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<sup>12</sup> Other than for Medicine and Dentistry, both of which have a fixed quota. These programmes use decentralised selection to select a certain percentage of their first-year students themselves each year.

<sup>13</sup> For example, K. Meerum Terwogt-Kouwenhoven, *Niet gewogen, toch te licht bevonden: analyse van de rendementsproblematiek bij de universiteit* (academic dissertation, Kampen: Mondis, 1990), and M. van der Berg, *Studeren? (G)een punt! Een kwantitatieve studie naar studievoortgang in het Nederlandse wetenschappelijk onderwijs in de periode 1996-2000* (academic dissertation, Amsterdam: Thela Thesis, 2002).

<sup>14</sup> Figures from Concern Control (22 October 2007) show that nearly 90% of the ECTS credits earned in 2005-2006 were earned within the student's own education institute and 95% within the student's own faculty.

Secondly, the UvA aims to introduce a system whereby levels are indicated, so that the level at which each course is developed and assessed is clear (research university or university of applied sciences' Bachelor's modules in year 1, 2 or 3; **Honours** modules; Master's modules). This type of system will make it possible for examination boards to determine more effectively what terms they set for a minor; it will also make diploma supplements clearer, which is a precondition for continuing to other or more advanced degree programmes. The new student information system to be implemented at both the UvA and the HvA will include this level indicator.

UvA programmes offer challenges tailored to the individual talents of good and excellent students. However, a significant group of students (approximately 20%) feel they are not receiving sufficient stimulus from the content and range of courses and the testing options.<sup>15</sup> Some Bachelor's programmes have already developed Honours programmes for students who can handle more, and there are also suitable Master's programmes, which are often selective about who they accept. Talented students can also take part in interdisciplinary (Honours) programmes that can broaden their horizons. However, the attention these students receive can be intensified by developing selective Honours programmes in all degree programmes and by offering more content-specific challenges.

The UvA has a great deal to gain by improving the organisation of education, the services provided to students and the facilities. The 'small-within-large' concept will be the guiding principle for improving the facilities. This means that the needs of the research and education institutes will determine the management and development of support at the University and within the faculties.

Finally, the UvA commits itself to the professional development of its teaching staff. Lecturers should not only be competent in their fields but also able to apply teaching skills and didactic principles. The training offered will include such things as developing coherent modules, curriculum structures and tests. Cooperation in teacher teams will also receive attention, for example by offering peer review. Academic education is distinctive not so much through its organisation and teaching methods, but through its capacity to understand challenging research results and convey new knowledge. At the UvA, excellent teaching should be clearly linked to excellent scientific research, and that connection should already be explicitly present in the Bachelor's phase.

### 3. Research

The *Onderzoeksvisie UvA* encompasses all the strategic research objectives that the Board wishes to achieve in the coming six years.<sup>16</sup> A recent report by the **European University Association (EUA)** offers an overview of effective measures that European universities have taken to increase the quality of research.<sup>17</sup> The main themes highlighted in the *Onderzoeksvisie UvA* are indicated below, and in some cases suggestions are made for how to implement them based on the EUA conclusions.

#### Research priority areas

The UvA is a broad, internationally prominent research university. If research is to flourish, scope and mass are needed but also specialisation and focus. Such initiatives as the Dutch government's policy paper *Peaks in the Delta*, which describes its economic agenda, highlight the necessity of choosing research priority areas which have already proven successful and which have sufficient appeal to bring in external subsidies and attract renowned researchers and talented students to the UvA. This is why the Board wants each faculty to choose a limited number of research programmes or research groups, for example between one and three, to be designated as research priority areas. The Board and the dean will lay down agreements about the priority areas in the policy and management covenants (*Bestuursconvenanten*). Earmarked resources can, for example, be used as temporary initial funding in order to attract an excellent researcher, professor or visiting professor. Research priority areas can be proposed by the deans based on recommendations from the research directors, and should be supported by external evaluations (for example, of assessment committees). Research priority areas should have clear (international) profiles and be focused on acquiring external research funding and/or making a major contribution to transferring knowledge to society (knowledge valorisation). Research priority areas will in any case be led by eminent professors.<sup>18</sup> The dean will allocate the necessary resources from the faculty budget. The priority areas will be evaluated on an agreement-period basis; when the period ends, a new selection process will take place.

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<sup>15</sup> See *Tevredenheidsmonitor UvA* (Satisfaction Monitor).

<sup>16</sup> *Onderzoeksvisie UvA* (also available in English), Academic Affairs, September 2006.

<sup>17</sup> Sybille Reichert, *Research Strategy and Management Development at European University Association*, European University Association, 2006.

<sup>18</sup> The EUA report calls attracting good professors based on research priority areas one of a university's 'most decisive strategic choices'.

### 'Managing' for quality

The UvA aims to improve the quality of research by giving successful research groups more room to manoeuvre and by rewarding excellent researchers. The EUA report highlights this policy item as one of the important measures by which to promote quality.<sup>19</sup> In the first place, when granting PhD and post-doc positions financed from their government-funding budget, faculties and research institutes will be expected to favour groups that are performing well. Where possible, extra financial leeway will be created by downsizing the less successful research groups. The UvA will monitor the quality of its research through the *UvA-protocol Onderzoeksevaluaties* (UvA Protocol for Research Evaluations) and will take part in as many nation-wide external evaluations as possible. Operating on the basis of the external evaluations, the research institutes will consult with the dean and relevant department heads for each agreement period to review whether it is desirable and/or possible to redistribute research funding. Apart from the assessment cycle for institutes, research management within a faculty or institute can also reward high-performing individual researchers, by giving them more time for research.

### Promoting interdisciplinary research

The EUA notes that encouraging interdisciplinary research is one of the most important quality incentives for successful research.<sup>20</sup> Up to the introduction of the new allocation system in 2006, the Board encouraged the exploration and opening up of innovative scientific fields via the *Universitair Onderzoek Fonds* (University Research Fund). In general, cooperation between researchers from various disciplines and faculties is necessary to make this possible. The Board will continue this policy in consultation with the deans. Because all research funding is allocated to the faculties, the Board will ask the faculties to spend 5% of their research budget on interdisciplinary research, as a way of funding **cross-faculty** initiatives. This will create an **incentive** for research institutes and faculties to take part in cross-border initiatives and give researchers the opportunity to allow new research to develop into interdisciplinary programmes. If such programmes are successful, the faculty may eventually decide to incorporate them into a research institute or research centre.

The UvA also aims to promote professorial appointments made jointly by more than one faculty. The Board and the deans will reach agreements on this matter. High-performing innovative interdisciplinary research groups can be nominated for extra funding within the research priority area framework by two or more deans. Interdisciplinary research groups will have the opportunity to grow into research centres, because an institutional setting will allow the group in question to more effectively acquire indirect funding and contract funding.

### Promoting PhD research

Good research is closely intertwined with good teaching. In accordance with Dutch and European ambitions to increase the number of people with a higher education, the UvA aims to increase the number of PhD positions. One of the priorities in the coming four years will be to increase the number of PhD graduations by 10-15%. The performance-based funding model known as the 'allocation model' already includes a strong incentive for increasing the number of PhD graduates. This incentive will be increased in the coming years by creating alternatives for appointing PhD students, whereby the **match** between the individual PhD student and the specific teaching situation in which the PhD programme takes place can be improved.

The PhD yield can be increased in part by ensuring a better link between the PhD and Research Master's programmes. The responsibility for this will lie with the graduate schools (see section 5), but the research institutes still make an indispensable contribution to the training of PhD students. By introducing clear phases in the PhD programmes which may or may not build on Research Master's programmes, it will be possible to attract more high-quality candidates, especially from abroad. With this in mind, it is also important that the post-Master's level allows (Research) Master's degrees earned elsewhere to count towards programmes leading to a PhD.

**Graduate schools** can develop new degree programmes for professional specialisations which do not currently have corresponding programmes at the UvA (see section 5).<sup>21</sup> In a recent policy document, the Netherlands Advisory Council for Science and Technology Policy (AWT) argued in favour of introducing varied research programmes in addition to the traditional PhD programmes.<sup>22</sup> The Council also noted the need to involve professional associations and civil society organisations in the development of shorter degree programmes for researchers. The UvA encourages these initiatives and hopes they will also lead to closer cooperation between UvA and HvA staff.

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<sup>19</sup> See EUA report, section 3.1, 'Fostering excellence and improving performance'.

<sup>20</sup> See EUA report, section 3.3, 'Interdisciplinarity and cross fertilization'.

<sup>21</sup> One example of this type of PhD programme is the **professional doctorate**; a 'PsyD' in the US, for example, is a professional doctorate in psychology for therapists working in the field. See, e.g., John Norcross *et al.*, 'Graduate Study in Psychology', *American Psychologist* 9 (December 2005): 959-75.

<sup>22</sup> AWT, 'Onderzoekslaanbanen' letter addressed to the Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW), dated 15 July 2005.



### Attracting strategic research funding

In the past five years, there has been a shift from government funding to indirect government funding, and from fundamentally oriented research to research with a more strategic and public sector-oriented focus. Individual and unaffiliated research projects are increasingly giving way to programmatic, internationally oriented, large-scale research. Such research only becomes eligible for subsidies by competing in application rounds coordinated by the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the EU and the Dutch Ministries of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) and Economic Affairs (EZ). To successfully take part in these competitions, the UvA will need to provide sufficient financial resources through its research institutes, so as to be able to offer the required **matching** commitments to qualify for these subsidies. Research groups will be encouraged to formulate themes that may qualify for external subsidies if pursued in the framework of larger alliances. The aim is to increase income from indirect research funding and contract research funding by 10% in the next four years. **Incentives** for these measures have already been allowed for in the allocation model. In distributing the research budgets to the research institutes, faculties will have to keep in mind the need to fulfil matching commitments.

### Knowledge valorisation and partnerships

The UvA and the HvA, in close cooperation with the AMC Medical Center, aim to achieve strong ties between the University and its partners in industry and society. These ties will need to be expressed primarily in the form of research partnerships. Regional partnerships have proven an important stimulus for research initiatives.<sup>23</sup> The UvA and the HvA participate in various networks aimed at cooperation within the region (*Amsterdamse Innovatiemotor*, *Kenniskring*). Encouraging cooperation is not only important for attracting contract **funding**, but also because indirect government funding is increasingly dependent on such alliances. Research institutes will be explicitly encouraged to focus on cooperation with partners in industry and society. The UvA will use the allocation model to encourage the establishment of temporary knowledge-institute consortiums, which are better able to obtain external funds for a specific, socially inspired research theme because of working together.

In the international arena, the UvA is a member of the **League of European Research Universities** (LERU). The LERU seeks to promote research-intensive universities as prime partners for government bodies and as providers of excellent teaching that is closely associated with fundamental research.

## 4. Personnel

In recent years, the UvA has focussed on a personnel policy which takes into account a dramatically changing educational environment, student body and funding system. For example, a level of mandatory basic teaching qualifications for new lecturers has been introduced and more attention has been paid to refresher teacher training programmes for lecturers. And this is just the start. In the coming years, personnel policy will continue to focus on promoting quality. Future personnel policy at the UvA should not be overly dependent on fixed budgetary and historically conceived staffing plans, but should pay more attention to the professional development of individual staff members. In the coming four years, the personnel policy will focus on the following areas: career policy, strategic personnel planning, working in teams that bear responsibility for their own results, and alternative forms for PhD appointments.<sup>24</sup>

An adequate career policy is crucial to the quality of the UvA as an institution of education and research. On the one hand, it strengthens 'selection at the gate': permanent appointments will only be granted after a member of the scientific staff has proven him or herself in research and education over a number of years. On the other, scholars will sit down with their managers to make agreements about the long term. In an age-sensitive career policy, people look ahead, taking into account changing preferences and opportunities throughout their career. Annual interviews form the basis of the career policy. In these reviews, agreements will be reached with staff members regarding the nature of their involvement that year, and longer-term prospects will be discussed. The agreements reached by the manager and staff member in these annual interviews will be binding; investments will be made accordingly in training managers to conduct these interviews. Because scientific research achievements generally need to be evaluated over a slightly longer period of time, researchers will also undergo assessment at least once every five years. Research will be assessed on the basis of (external) evaluations of the entire research group, but also on the basis of individual dossiers. These dossiers can be submitted to the research directors for assessment, but they can also be reviewed by **peers** in the Netherlands or abroad. On the basis of the researcher's achievements, binding agreements will be

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<sup>23</sup> See EUA report, section 3.5, 'Expanding knowledge transfer, building partnerships with industry and creating a mentality of innovation'.

<sup>24</sup> The contents of the personnel policy are described in detail in a separate document.

reached on future involvement in education and research. If permanent staff members are not performing to standard, research time may be cut back and/or the job ranking adjusted. As a rule, new university lecturers start out with 30% research time. This percentage can be increased on the basis of research achievements. The aim is for periodic bonuses not to be awarded automatically, but to be linked to assessment moments. Only when this policy has been structurally implemented will it be possible to switch to a performance-based, flexible system of remuneration and to maintain a good promotions policy, for example in the form of **tenure tracks**.

Management staff of individual schools or research institutes will make clear agreements with the deans regarding the strategic personnel policy. This is only possible if management has a clear impression of the individual capacities of each staff member. Where possible, long-term agreements regarding working hours and career preferences will be made with staff members. This type of structured approach makes it possible to reach agreements in the medium term with schools and institutes as to the hours that personnel will devote to the University's primary tasks. A long-term perspective on personnel policy will include a structural training policy for staff members, agreements about saving towards and taking **sabbatical** (if relevant), and temporary mobility in the form of secondment or exchange. Talented researchers employed by the UvA who wish to spend more time concentrating on groundbreaking and innovative research can apply for a sabbatical financed by the University. Analogous to the situation at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study in the Humanities and Social Sciences (NIAS), these researchers will conduct their research in a shared setting and, analogous to University Professors, will develop several joint initiatives to promote the interdisciplinary transfer of knowledge.

In the organisation of work for the academic staff in both education and research, the emphasis will be on teams who are responsible for their own results. There is no simple formula for how these teams will be structured since their composition will depend on how they function in their specific teaching or research environment. Teacher teams are responsible for carrying out a set of clearly defined tasks. The team leader is responsible for the result, and promotes consultation within the team and among other (clusters of) teams. Research has a great capacity for self-organisation, but this does not change the fact that research in many disciplines of the humanities and social sciences will benefit from the formation of teams. Conducting research in teams boosts performance, as long as sufficient attention is paid to important success factors such as the availability of sufficient financial resources and the presence of a competent senior researcher. Scope will be created in the job-ranking system to reward team coordinators or research leaders who have not (yet) achieved the rank of senior university lecturer or professor, by allocating extra time or a financial bonus and by giving them incentives for developing and ripening their leadership or coordination skills.

Another important goal at the UvA is to promote the completion of more PhD degrees. The current forms of PhD appointment are no longer suitable for the complex ways in which much research is financed. Accordingly, the UvA will develop supplementary alternative models for the current forms of appointment, based on the preferred combination of teaching, taking classes and writing a dissertation. Options that will be investigated will include linking paid **research or teaching assistantships** to grants for the study component of the PhD programme or, as the case may be, the Research Master's programme. In the Anglo-Saxon model, PhD students are given five years to take classes and write a dissertation while being paid for teaching or working as a research assistant. This model offers many advantages for international students, but it could also offer an appealing way for Dutch candidates to gain the necessary work experience and improve their job prospects on the labour market.

A high-quality support structure is crucial to realising the ambitions for education and research. This is why the support and management staff will also be offered clear career prospects and good opportunities for training. They will receive clear instructions from their managers and operate on the basis of responsibilities and authorisations, working in teams wherever possible.

## 5. Organisational structure

The UvA aims to achieve a clear and recognisable organisational structure that leaves sufficient room for the necessary differences between faculties. Moreover, the UvA wishes to introduce an organisational matrix that reflects international practice, in which various forms of education and research are made available under recognisable names. Faculties, headed by deans, will manage the units for education and research (clustered in **colleges, schools** and research institutes) as well as for personnel (clustered in departments and teams). Some faculties, like the Faculty of Economics and Business, have more than one school (Amsterdam Business School and Amsterdam School of Economics); other faculties, like the Faculty of Medicine, have an undivided Bachelor's-Master's curriculum, but also have a graduate school. Most faculties – the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Science and the Faculty of Law – currently still have one or more 'old-style' education institutes. Several faculties, like the Faculty of Science, the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Humanities, are currently in the process of adapting the education structure by introducing a division into two units: a **college** and a

**graduate school.**<sup>25</sup> To promote a uniform organisational structure and international recognition, the UvA will start establishing colleges and graduate schools.

### Colleges

All Bachelor's programmes, which are themselves divided into programme clusters, will be housed in the colleges (formerly 'undergraduate schools'). The colleges will be headed by a **director**, who has independent powers and responsibilities and answers directly to the dean. The colleges will coordinate the programmes offered in the Bachelor's phase, monitor programme quality assurance, provide programme information and handle recruitment. The programme coordinators and teacher teams in the various (clusters of) Bachelor's programmes will continue to be responsible for the content of the programmes.

### Graduate schools

All Master's, Research Master's and PhD programmes will be housed in the graduate schools. Each graduate school will offer a differentiated range of study and degree programmes; in addition to Research Master's and PhD programmes, one-year Master's programmes in specific disciplines (the so-called 'transfer Master's' or *doorstroommasters*) may also be included. There will be a major separation between the Research Master's programmes and the PhD programmes; the two programmes will have their own selection times. To promote the link between the Research Master's and PhD programmes, the PhD programmes will also be described in terms of study components (e.g. taking classes, teaching, conducting research and recording research results in a dissertation); in this framework, the dissertation will continue to be the exclusive criterion for awarding the doctoral degree. Some components of the PhD programme will be offered by the graduate school itself or defined in consultation with the research institutes or national research schools. The latter option is only possible if agreements are reached with all the research schools involved as to the weight assigned to the specific components of the PhD programme.

The graduate school, headed by a **director**, is responsible for the structure, quality and organisation of the Master's, Research Master's and PhD programmes. The director is supported in his/her work by a Board of Graduate Studies, which includes student representatives. A separate division will be created within the graduate schools that will primarily house the profession-oriented (*duale*) Master's programmes and possibly also the post-Master's programmes. This division may also include alliances between the UvA, the HvA and perhaps one or more partners from the profession itself. To optimally coordinate the learning and working environments, the division will work closely with public partners and partners from the profession itself. Preferably this division will include a cluster of programmes that enhance and supplement each other. The intended interaction need not be restricted to programme contents, but could also mean that all programmes adhere to a common teaching concept, involving such things as learning studios, study-work combinations, joint internship projects and research projects. In any case, clusters of professional programmes will be introduced in the fields of ICT and multimedia, teacher training courses, healthcare and the life sciences.

## 6. Internationalisation

A uniform system of scheduling, assigning credits and indicating course-content levels (see section 2), together with a transparent education structure at the UvA organised in colleges and graduate schools (see section 5), will further stimulate the internationalisation process within the UvA. The UvA aims for an increasing number of the new students entering the post-Bachelor's phase to come from abroad. The introduction of attractive Master's programmes taught in English enhances the potential appeal of Amsterdam as an international student city.

Internationalisation is and will remain an important focus of the UvA, and it will be further intensified in three areas: exchange, collaboration and promotion of new admissions.<sup>26</sup> The UvA aims to promote the mobility of incoming and outgoing students at both the Bachelor's and Master's levels via exchange programmes with permanent foreign partners. To facilitate such mobility, the list of exchange partners will be reviewed on a regular basis to assess available places and levels, and will be modified as needed. The main stumbling blocks are the rigid curricula and the limited incentives that programmes (can) offer students; there is room for major improvements in the way the curriculum is organised (see section 2). To better prepare Dutch students for a stay abroad and to make studying at the UvA more appealing to students from other countries, the UvA will offer more courses in English language skills to both lecturers and students. The desired level of 'academic English' should be included in the exit qualifications for all

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<sup>25</sup> The following graduate schools have already been or are currently being established at the UvA: Amsterdam Graduate School of Medical Science, Amsterdam Graduate School of Science, Amsterdam Graduate School for Humanities and the Tinbergen Institute for Economics. The Tinbergen Institute is a national graduate school and research institute arising from cooperation between the UvA, Erasmus University Rotterdam and the VU University Amsterdam.

<sup>26</sup> See 'Notitie Internationalisering en Marketing', Academic Affairs, August 2005.

Bachelor's programmes. Student mobility in the Bachelor's phase is extremely important for attracting students to the later Master's phase; by that time, the Bachelor's students will already have become acquainted with Amsterdam. This is why the colleges will strive to ensure that as many English-language options as possible are offered, in addition to the existing Dutch-language programmes; if possible, the English options will be offered in combination with the Honours programmes.

The UvA aims to intensify its institutional cooperation with foreign universities. Alliances will be used to create favourable terms for exchanging students and personnel, but also to share experiences with sister institutions relating to the **contents** of the programmes on offer. This could take place both in a lesser form (by exchanging modules) and in a more intensive form (joint programmes leading to double degrees).

The UvA seeks to promote the enrolment of foreign students in the graduate phase. The Research Master's programmes in particular should be modelled on the concept of the **international classroom** and should appeal to good students from around the world. The ambition is to recruit at least 25% of the Master's students from abroad by 2010. A survey on the experiences of international students attending an entire degree programme at the UvA reveals that students are satisfied with the quality of education, but dissatisfied with social aspects and the provision of facilities such as housing, information, visa application processes, administrative procedures and interaction with Dutch students and lecturers. To realise the ambition of 25% foreign students in the Master's programme, the UvA will need to make a concerted effort to alleviate these practical obstacles.

Finally, the UvA wants to promote access for international students by lowering financial thresholds for talented students from abroad. Since 2007/2008, Amsterdam Merit Scholarships have been available to the most talented students from outside Europe who would otherwise have to pay full tuition fees.

## 7. Cooperation within higher education in Amsterdam

It goes without saying that the UvA's most important partner is the HvA. In addition, the UvA, the HvA and the AMC Medical Center maintain partnerships with a great many institutions at all levels of higher education in Amsterdam. The cooperative relationship with the VU University Amsterdam occupies a special place in these partnerships since the two institutions are located in the same city. For years the UvA has successfully operated the dentistry faculty ACTA together with the VU University Amsterdam, and for some time now there has been close cooperation between their science faculties. The UvA and the VU University Amsterdam also participate in interuniversity alliances such as the Tinbergen Institute.

Two new partnerships will be a priority in the coming years. First, there is the 'Systems Biology' research initiative; a formal agreement has been signed for setting up the Netherlands Institute for Systems Biology, in which the UvA, the VU University Amsterdam, the Institute for Atomic and Molecular Physics (AMOLF) and the Center for Mathematics and Computer Science (CWI) will participate. Second, the City of Amsterdam, the UvA and the VU University Amsterdam will work together to explore options for starting a University College in Amsterdam (see section 4 of the Vision for the Future). This plan coincides with the city of Amsterdam's policy priority to promote itself as a 'knowledge city' (*Amsterdam kennisstad*), and fits with the ambitions for internationalisation as expressed by the UvA and the VU University Amsterdam. An important priority in the UvA's cooperation with the HvA in the coming years will be the quality assurance and quality improvement of preparatory programmes (*schakelprogramma's*, formerly known as 'conversion programmes') and transfer programmes (*doorstroomprogramma's*) for students coming from the HvA to the UvA, in order to safeguard the quality of the Master's programmes. The UvA examination boards will have a role to play in formulating and monitoring the exit qualifications of the Bachelor's programmes, as well as the admission requirements for the Master's programmes.

## 8. Operational management

The policy intentions outlined above, which include improving success rates, working in small units and creating schools and colleges, require establishing clear pre-conditions for how the University is organised as a whole. The UvA will be investing in the improvement of operational management and the services provided to students and staff. In the time period encompassed by this Strategic Plan, the following objectives will be realised:

- To continue developing the central services, offered, for example, by the Administrative Centre, the Facility Centre and Central Computer Services, into smoothly running **shared service centres** for all of the UvA. Clear agreements about the quality and price of the services need to be reached with the people and units that use those services. This requires close cooperation between the central units, faculties and institutes. The tools

- To optimise the quality of the operational management by means of the further utilisation of the shared service centres referred to above, in cooperation with the HvA and, where advisable, the AMC.
- To introduce a stronger control function at the centralised and decentralised levels.
- To improve **governance**, namely the horizontal and vertical accountability of the Board to the supervisory bodies, representative advisory bodies, subsidy providers and society in general.
- To adapt the operational management to the proposed organisation into colleges and graduate schools. A business case will be developed in 2007 to serve as a model for further implementation.

The realisation of the policy intentions expressed in this Strategic Plan will naturally have consequences for the balance between internal and external funding.

### The allocation model and the Strategic Plan

The allocation model was established in 2006 after extensive discussions within the UvA. This performance-based funding model results in a clear distribution of resources across the faculties, and offers the faculties the opportunity to set their own policy priorities within these frameworks. The allocation model is intended to create a transparent distribution of the national contribution and the tuition fees that the UvA receives for fulfilling out its statutory duties. Although the University is authorised to shift funds back and forth between teaching and research, the structure of the budget allocation aligns with the subdivision of the national contribution. In other words, the UvA views the education component of the national contribution together with the statutory tuition as the amount that the Netherlands – on average and in its role as task-setter – considers appropriate for a university education. A university itself has only very limited options for increasing its income through other means. It therefore follows that the ambitions set out in the Strategic Plan should as a rule be achieved through shifts and cost-cutting in the existing range of tasks and by making more effective use of the current financial resources.

There are two other areas where the allocation model and the national budget are inconsistent. On the one hand, there is a significant **time lag** between the UvA receiving the national contribution and the internal budgeting process. On the other hand, in the current system, the internal budgeting for education and research is much more closely linked to and therefore affected by (educational) achievements than is the external financing for the University. Internally, an extra study credit generates on average €40 more budget for the faculty concerned than the University ultimately gets back via national funding.

All this means that if performance rises sharply (if there are more students or more achievements per student), the University will experience a shortage of funds at the central level. In 2007 (and 2008), it has been possible to compensate for shortages by cutting extra costs in the central units and the theme budgets. However, in a structural framework, other solutions need to be found for making do with what is actually available. In the coming years, further discussions will be needed in light of the Strategic Plan, regarding the financial consequences of the current allocation model and its significance for such things as the investment of the strategic component, the UvA portfolio of degree programmes, the way education and research are linked, the standard price per study credit, the options for differentiation in tuition (in particular, a self-supporting fee for the preparatory programmes) and arguments in favour of unregulated or less-regulated tuition fees for Master's programmes. In addition, as stated earlier, work needs to be done to increase revenues in the longer term by:

- increasing (net) revenues from indirect and contract funding;
- **'friend'**-raising (including alumni policy) and **fundraising**.

The budget allocation model is cost-oriented, at least with regard to education. With respect to indirect and contract funding, the growth of these resources will define the tasks for the faculties in the coming years; within the faculties, costs will need to become more flexible by focusing on the balance between fixed and variable costs for people and resources.

## 9. Location policy and accommodations

In the coming years, the UvA will concentrate on four campuses in the city: the City Centre, Roeterseiland, Science Park Amsterdam and the Medical Science Park (AMC). ACTA will be housed on the campus of the VU University Amsterdam. The Science Park will house UvA and NWO institutes, but also be the location for divisions of the VU University Amsterdam and the HvA. In 2007, the 2005 Accommodations Plan (*Huisvestingsplan*) will be updated; its implementation is expected to take approximately ten years. Financial resources for the implementation have been taken into account in the long-term budget. In its accommodations policy, the UvA opts for generic buildings that can be used for teaching, research and office purposes. In designing new accommodations, the 'small-within-large'

concept requires that specific attention be paid to creating buildings that allow sufficient scope for distinct encounters and identities. All this will take place within the relevant frameworks of the UvA, which attaches great importance to the aspect of sustainability in investments and optimal use of spaces and buildings. The links with the city will also demand extra attention with respect to the development of public spaces. The implementation of the plans for increased mobility between the Roeterseiland and the HvA Amstel Campus, for example, will result in an appealing location where, in five years time, approximately 40,000 students will attend higher education in small and recognisable units.

## Colophon

UvA Communications Office, November 2008.

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