

Quality agreements 2019-2024

HZ University of Applied Sciences



Version: 29 October 2018
Approval University Council (The HR): 31 October 2018
Approval Supervisory Board: 12 November 2018

1. Motive

On 9 April 2018 the Minister of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) entered agreements with the Association of Universities (Vereniging van Universiteiten, VSNU), the Association of Universities of Applied Sciences (Vereniging Hogescholen), the Intercity Student Consultation (Interstedelijk Studenten Overleg, ISO) and the National Student Union (Landelijke Studentenvakbond, LSVb) on the design of quality agreements for higher education from 2019 up to and including 2024. The quality agreements form part of the 'Higher professional education sector agreement 2018' (Sectorakkoord hoger beroepseducation 2018) and aim to achieve visible quality improvement in higher education. The resources that are released as a result of the introduction of the student advance loans are linked to these quality agreements and are distributed pro rata among universities of applied sciences. It is up to the universities of applied sciences to translate the use of resources at local level into concrete measures and policies. This is done in collaboration with teachers, students, administrators, employee participation and supervisors.

This memorandum describes how HZ University of Applied Sciences (HZ) intends to use the student advance funds in the period up to and including 2024, and which goals are pursued, in keeping with the objectives of the organization. The sectoral agreement stipulates that the student advance funds must be used for the following six themes:

1. More intensive and small-scale education (educational intensity);
2. More and better student counselling;
3. Study success;
4. Educational differentiation;
5. Appropriate and good educational facilities;
6. Professionalization of teachers (teacher quality).

Intended spending and goals can apply to the entire institution, or to certain parts thereof.

2. Structure of the memorandum

This memorandum starts with an explanation of the content of the quality agreements and the substantive choices that HZ will make in the context of the quality agreements, including embedding them in the HZ Institutional Plan 2018-2021. This is followed by a financial overview of the available resources, including an explanation of how HZ will use these resources. A brief explanation is then given of the process agreements with regard to the allocation of resources and the monitoring process, followed by an explanation of how the HZ community is involved in the establishment and implementation of the quality agreements. Finally, it is described how HZ will account for the realization of the quality agreements.

3. What substantive choices has HZ made?

In consultation with teachers, students, employee participation, management, the Executive Board and the Supervisory Board, HZ has come to the following intentions for the use of study advance funds:

1. Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff (reduction of teacher-student (TS) ratio);
2. Strengthening the HZ community and student participation;
3. Strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperative organization;
4. Further development of an inspiring campus (physically and digitally).

3.1. Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff (OP) (reduction in TS ratio)

HZ will employ the largest part of the available resources (63%) to reduce TS ratio. The number of lecturers, lecturer researchers, and instructors per student will increase. The aim is to have the TS ratio fall to 1:24 in the period 2019-2024 (based on the long-term budget, it will be considered whether this target figure is realistically feasible, and a clear definition of the TS ratio will also be reached).

The purpose of this reduction is to strengthen the quality culture and to give the quality of education and practice-oriented research an extra boost for students.

The fall in TS ratio offers room for various initiatives. For example, study programmes can opt for more intensive and small-scale education. Employees can focus more on (individual) study and study coaching and (personal) monitoring and feedback from teacher to student. This fits in closely with HZ's main motto "The Personal University of Applied Sciences". By lowering the TS ratio, teachers can also have more time to connect education to the link between education and research with the professional practice, focusing on the socio-economic spearheads of the region. In this way, students will come into contact with real-life case studies and can participate in research groups projects. This will help students to develop 21st century skills and research skills and to increase their professional orientation.

Furthermore, the reduction of TS ratio can be used to adapt the education and research portfolio to the needs of companies and institutions and to the diversity of target groups that choose to study at our university of applied sciences (Associate Degree programmes, bachelor and master programmes, both full-time and part-time and dual). The reduction of TS ratio can also offer room for further professionalization of employees who are actively involved in the study programmes. Passionate and skilled teachers are incredibly important for the quality of education. HZ explicitly wants to give teachers the freedom to further professionalise themselves, both with regard to subject-specific and to didactic competencies and behavioural competencies.

3.2. Strengthening of the HZ community and student participation

The relationship between teachers and students is crucial for good education. A study programme gains in diversity and quality as soon as students, teachers, researchers and the professional field work together intensively and learn with and from each other. Thanks to HZ's small scale, a strong bond between students and teachers can be created and both education and research can be better tailored to the needs of students and to those of the professional field. HZ wants to further strengthen the community feeling and student participation, with the aim of improving education and practice-oriented research in co-creation with teachers, students and the professional field.

To achieve this, HZ wants to invest extra resources into facilitating study programme committees and

study associations. HZ wants to intensify the involvement and impact of study programme committees by strengthening their role with regard to education policy, educational implementation and quality assurance. This requires additional facilitation for the (student) members of the study programme committees.

HZ wants to encourage the participation of students in the study programme by facilitating the establishment and creation of study associations. Study associations act as co-creators of the study programme.

HZ wants to improve the connection between secondary education, senior secondary vocational education and higher professional education, so that students can make more conscious choices for further education, have a better picture of the work field for which they are trained and can study more successfully in higher professional education (career orientation and guidance). To this end, HZ wants to come to a regional ambition plan to achieve these objectives together with fellow institutions in the educational column (secondary education, secondary vocational education, higher professional education).

HZ wants to intensify the care for its students. The Student Welfare Action Plan (*Actieplan Studentenwelzijn*; Student Welfare Network, 2018) shows that many students in higher education suffer from psychological problems. HZ is aware that also in its own student population there is an increasing need for mental guidance and support for students. HZ believes care for students is important.

HZ wants to give students the space they need every year by means of an annual budget that can be spent freely to come up with proposals aimed at strengthening the HZ Community and student participation. This could include the incentive to allow students to meet each other more on and off campus.

HZ wants to give students more room to participate in talent programmes such as the HZ Honours Programme, in which students work on complex world issues (world orientation and 'Bildung').

3.3. Strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperative organization

HZ wants to develop further into a leading knowledge institute. Successful and challenging education and research is largely determined by the strength and quality of teams as a collective and the individual employees within them. They are the ones that will make the difference. HZ intends to make teams function more responsibly and in self-organizing ways. This places high demands on team composition, team development, quality of managers and the effectiveness of talent management. In the coming years HZ wants to focus strongly on team composition and team development, starting from a supported vision, goals and ambitions from within the teams. This with the aim of empowering employees and making better use of their qualities, in line with their passions and professions.

3.4. Further development of an inspiring campus

HZ positions itself through its Student and Process-oriented Education, characterized by intensive, small-scale and challenging education and the integration of education and research. It is important that the study facilities and infrastructure support our educational concept. An adequate physical and digital campus is an important component of our education and research innovation. HZ wants to invest in the further development of its campus, with the aim of continuing to keep innovation in education and research possible and to be able to continue to offer high-quality education and research.

3.5. HZ spending intentions in relation to quality assurance issues

Linking HZ's spending intentions to the quality agreements, it can be concluded that the intentions connect to all six themes of the quality agreements:

HZ spending intentions in the scope of the quality agreements	Themes quality agreements					
	More intensive and small-scale education	More and better coaching of students	Study success	Educational differentiation	Appropriate and good educational facilities	Professionalization of teachers
1. Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff (reduction in TS ratio)	x	x	x	x		x
2. Strengthening the HZ community and student participation	x	x	x	x		
3. Strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperative organization		x	x			x
4. Further development of an inspiring campus (physically and digitally).					x	

4. Embedding of the quality agreements in the HZ Institutional Plan 2018-2021

The HZ Institutional Plan 2018-2021 has been made concrete in 7 strategic initiatives. The choices that HZ made in the context of the use of the student loan funds and the goals that it wants to achieve with this are closely related to the strategic initiatives of the HZ Institution Plan 2018-2021. The quality agreements are thus embedded in the course that HZ has taken for the coming years, including the organizational transition that has been initiated and our financial policy (including the framework letter and the (multi-year) budget). HZ has deliberately chosen to link the ambitions in the context of the quality agreements to the HZ Institution Plan 2018-2021. In this way the existing organization can work on the six themes as expressed in the sector agreement.

HZ goals in the context of the quality agreements	Strategic initiatives HZ Institutional plan 2018-2021						
	Challenging education	Practice-oriented research and valorisation	Professional teams of employees	Recruitment and development portfolio	Inspiring campus	Future-proof organization	Internationalization
1. Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff (reduction in TS ratio)	x	x	x	x			x
2. Strengthening the HZ community and student participation	x	x					x
3. Strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperative organization						x	
4. Further development of an inspiring campus (physically and digitally).					x		

5. Finances – available resources

The table below contains an overview of the available resources from the student advance loans for HZ. This is an estimate; exact amounts are linked to the number of registered students and can fluctuate per year. In the period 2019 up to and including 2024, HZ will receive an increasing amount for investments in the quality of education. With unchanged student numbers, this is expected to be 1.1 million Euros in 2019 and 3.4 million Euros in 2024 (see Table 1).

		10%	90%	
Available student advance loans HBO		OCW (Ministry)	Institutes	HZ portion
2018	111.279.000	11.127.900	100.151.100	1.110.986
2019	113.900.000	11.390.000	102.510.000	1.137.154
2020	134.100.000	13.410.000	120.690.000	1.338.826
2021	227.900.000	22.790.000	205.110.000	2.275.306
2022	284.800.000	28.480.000	256.320.000	2.843.383
2023	300.400.000	30.040.000	270.360.000	2.999.131
2024	341.800.000	34.180.000	307.620.000	3.412.459

Table 1. Available student advance loans, HBO and HZ level

In addition to these extra funds from the student loan system, austerity measures from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) have also been announced that resulted from the coalition agreement and that relate to an efficiency reduction. The Normative Government Grant (NRB) therefore does not increase with the amounts mentioned in table 1 but is reduced by the efficiency cut.

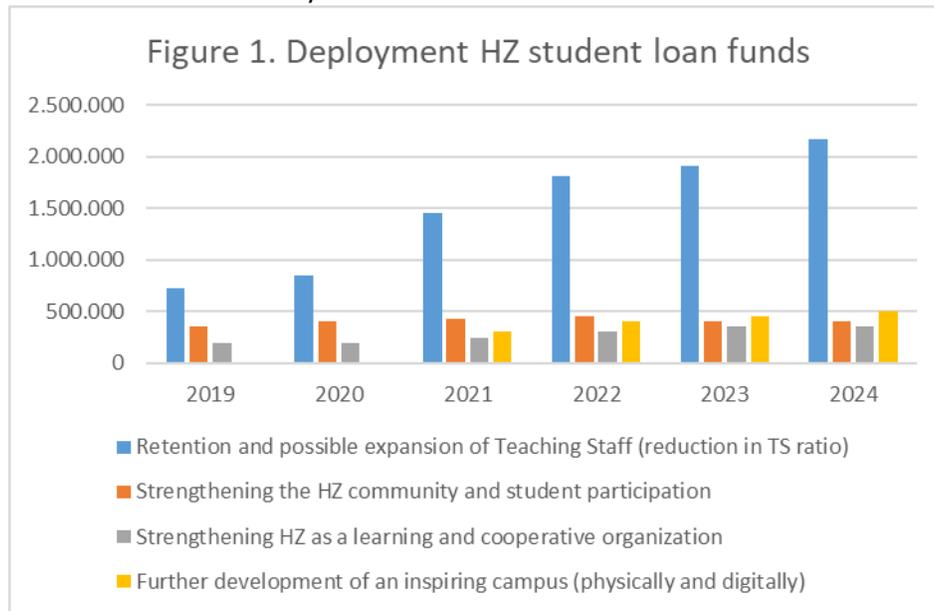
HZ has decided, in addition to the available student loan funds, to make extra budget available in the coming years to realize the spending intentions regarding the quality arrangements.

HZ will use the available resources, including additional investments, as follows in the coming years:

#	Spending intentions	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1.	Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff (reduction in TS ratio)	723.500	852.000	1.448.000	1.809.000	1.908.000	2.171.500
2.	Strengthening the HZ community and student participation	350.000	400.000	425.000	450.000	400.000	400.000
3.	Strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperative organization	200.000	200.000	250.000	300.000	350.000	350.000
4.	Further development of an inspiring campus (physically and digitally).	0	0	300.000	400.000	450.000	500.000

Table 2. Use HZ student loan funds

Schematically this allocation of resources is as follows:



The above-mentioned distribution of resources is based on current insights and expectations that exist

at present. Possibly this division will be adjusted in parts over the years, in close coordination between the Executive Board and the University Council (the HR), HZ's co-participation body.

Budgeted study advance budget that has not been fully utilized in the relevant budget year will be included in the appropriated reserve. In this way, any remaining funds can still be invested in the following year.

6. Process agreements - allocation of resources and monitoring process

Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff (TS ratio reduction).

With regard to the reduction of TS ratio, HZ explicitly chooses to allocate resources to the study programmes on an annual basis. In line with HZ's management philosophy, we allocate resources where the most impact can be made on education. For example, HZ offers study programme teams the scope to implement the expenditures that contribute to the desired noticeable improvement in quality of education for each study programme in consultation with study programme committees, students and teachers. Planning, monitoring and adjustment are linked to the existing PDCA cycle, with the annual plans as a basis.

The process arrangements with regard to the intention to retain and possibly expand Teaching Staff are as follows:

- The HR has the right to consent on the spending plan of the quality agreements. The framework letter (outlining the outline of the budget) shows which resources per study programme are available within the framework of the quality agreements. The HR has the right to consent on the framework letter.
- The study programme coordinator annually, in consultation with the team and students, draws up a plan for the deployment of the available resources in connection with the reduction of TS ratio.
- The study programme team is free to determine on which of the six themes of the quality agreements it wants to use the available OP formation (with the exception of theme 5. Appropriate and good education facilities). The plan is in line with the HZ Institutional Plan 2018-2021 and the development phase in which the study programme finds itself and with the needs of students and developments in the professional practice. The study programme plan regarding the quality agreements is an integral part of the annual plan of the study programme. Students and study programme teams must be explicitly involved in the development of the annual plan of the study programme.
- Study programme committees must provide advice on the annual plan of their study programme (including the use of study advance funds).
- The Executive Board draws up the annual plans for the study programmes and departments, which include the parts on the quality assurance agreements. Assessment criteria are: (1) feasibility, (2) alignment with the HZ Institution Plan 2018-2021, (3) alignment with the framework letter, appropriate to the available budgets and (4) involvement of students and the study programme team in the realization of the plan.
- The use of resources in the annual plans is aggregated at HZ level and forms part of the budget. The HR has the right of consent on this part of the budget.

- The study programme coordinator accounts for the realization of the annual plan - and specifically the ambitions regarding the quality agreements - in the existing Planning and Control Cycle. The involvement of employee participation and student participation are important accountability items.
- HZ reports in its annual reports as from 2019 on the progress of the spending of the student loan funds for improving the quality of education. The HR also has the opportunity to independently report on the use of the student loan funds.
- If interim results give cause for this, intentions can be adjusted.

Strengthening the HZ community and student participation, strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperative organization and further development of an inspiring campus.

The resources for the other ambitions are allocated centrally. Due to interdependence and added value of cooperation and synergy across organizational units, an HZ-wide approach is valuable. This concerns the strengthening of the HZ community and student participation respectively; the strengthening of HZ as a learning and cooperative organization; and the further development of an inspiring campus. The following process arrangements have been formulated together:

- The HR has the right to consent on the spending plan of the quality agreements.
- The framework letter (outlining the outline of the budget) shows which resources are available centrally within the framework of the quality agreements. The HR has the right to consent on the framework letter.
- The Board and Management Consultation sets up a process in which criteria for allocating resources are developed in a participatory manner. These criteria are in line with the HZ Institutional Plan 2018-2021 and the six themes of the quality agreements.
- These criteria are submitted to both the Executive Board and the HR for approval.
- The financing nature of the applications can vary per theme:
 - Strengthening the HZ community and student participation: structural or incidental financing;
 - Strengthening HZ as a learning and cooperating organization: incidental financing, but possibly with a long-term character;
 - Further development of an inspiring campus: incidental financing, but possibly with a multi-year character.
- Applications are submitted to the Director of Operations and submitted for decision-making to the executive and management consultations.
- Applications can be made by student study programmes or service departments.
- Accountability for intentions and realization takes place via the applicants for honoured requests. They are accountable to the board and management consultations, which integrate this into the existing Planning and Control cycle.
- HZ reports in its annual reports as from 2019 on the progress of the spending of the student loan funds for improving the quality of education. The HR also has the opportunity to independently report on the use of the student loan funds.

HZ aims to safeguard the feasibility of the plans as follows:

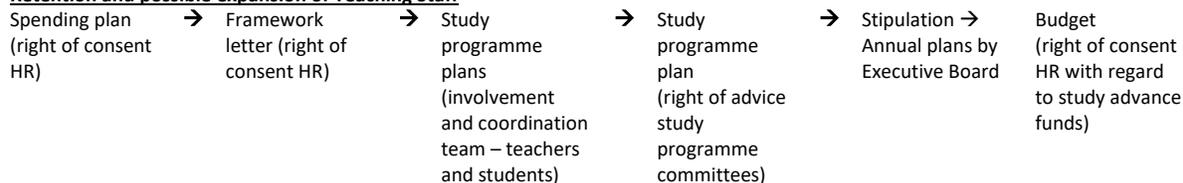
- Planning, spending and accountability of study advance funds are linked to the existing Planning and Control cycle (framework letter - budget - annual plans - Management and Management reports).
- Because study programme teams, students and staff from support services draw up their own plans, they can make their own choices, set priorities and indicate their level of ambition that lead to realistic and feasible plans (bottom-up).

7. Involvement HZ community

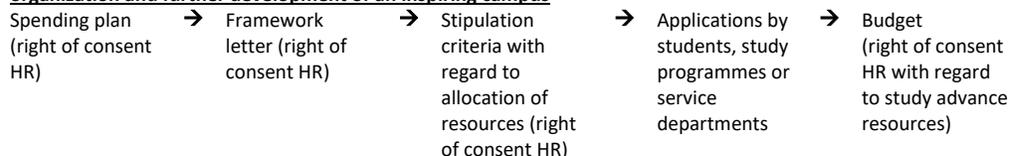
The HR plays an important role in the creation, implementation and reporting of the quality agreements. The HR and the Executive Board have reached the following agreements:

- The Executive Board and the HR have reached process arrangements on how to arrive at the outline of the spending plan on quality arrangements.
- In the context of the establishment of the spending plan, substantive coordination has taken place several times between the HR (both the lecturer and student section) and the Executive Board. The HR has been given the opportunity to submit ideas.
- The Executive Board and the HR will jointly ensure a broad involvement of the HZ community in the quality agreements. They have reached an agreement on how to ensure this involvement. The focus here is on internal stakeholders, since the use of the student advance funds is primarily an internal matter. In the context of practicability, it has been decided to organize the involvement of the HZ community as much as possible from existing forums. The HR, study programme teams, students and study programme committees have been given a position at various moments in the process of establishing and implementing the quality agreements:

Retention and possible expansion of Teaching Staff



Strengthening of the HZ community and student participation, strengthening of HZ as a learning and cooperative organization and further development of an inspiring campus



With regard to the project applications for the above-mentioned ambitions, the HR will inform the Executive Board once every quarter about the progress of the projects and the state of affairs regarding requested projects. If necessary, allocation criteria and evaluation criteria can be adjusted.

The Executive Board and the HR have agreed that the process arrangements as formulated in this outline agreement will be further substantiated and elaborated jointly in the coming period.

This set-up is in line with the philosophy of the organizational transition that has already been initiated, whereby teams will increasingly have freedom to operate as self-organizing teams.

- The spending plan is submitted to the Supervisory Board for approval after approval from the HR. The Supervisory Board will subsequently be informed periodically about the realization of the quality agreements.
- During management sessions, academy directors, heads of departments, study programme coordinators and lecturers were informed about the quality agreements and substantive coordination took place about both process agreements and the substantive implementation of the spending plan.
- In the context of process arrangements, special attention has been paid to the facilitation of the HR members. In accordance with national agreements, HZ will facilitate the HR student members for 4 hours a week. The facilitation of the study programme committees will also be reviewed.

8. Accountability

In its annual reports from 2019 onwards HZ is accountable for the progress of the use of study advance funds for improving the quality of education. The HR also has the opportunity to independently report on the use of the student loan funds.

Internally, the Executive Board and the HR will jointly evaluate annually the impact of the intended intentions.

9. Appendices

- PowerPoint presentation of the HR student section regarding the quality agreements