

CONTRIBUTING TO A BETTER WORLD

Institutional Plan of HZ University of Applied Sciences
2022 to 2027



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CHAPTER 1

FOREWORD

You are looking at the Institutional Plan of HZ University of Applied Sciences. A plan that sets out our mission, vision, and ambitions and indicates how we want to progress those.

I recently heard someone say: "If you are here anyway, you might as well be present". And somehow those words stuck with me. What does that mean for the HZ? And what does it have to do with the desire to be meaningful? Those are the questions I asked myself at the start of this Institutional Plan (IP).

In recent years, within HZ, the need to reflect on the meaning and purpose of our existence has been regularly expressed. Everybody knows our social missions: we educate professionals for specific professional fields and perform applied research. In doing so, we are supporting the human capital agenda and stimulate innovations within the region. And that is something we definitely need to keep working on.

But there is also an increasing conviction that, within hbo education, work field relevance is increasingly making space for social relevance. In what way can our students and professionals contribute to a better society in relation to companies, institutes, governments, and civilians? That is the question we want to work on. And that is the reason for the title of our IP: Contributing to a better world.

I am exceptionally proud of this IP: of the substance but also the fact that it is the product of a close collaboration with our internal and external stakeholders. That is why I trust that, together, we can also work to realise this plan. If you are here anyway, you might as well be present!

John Dane
Chairman of the Executive Board



Hello, goodbye: at the HZ, everyone is welcome!

ACCOUNTABILITY

In this Institutional Plan, you can read in which direction the HZ will be moving over the next six years.

But first: why are we writing a new Institutional Plan? Not because our current approach is being thrown overboard. Many elements from the previous iteration continue to be as relevant as they always were. We see these as the foundations for the new plan to build on. But simultaneously, there has been significant movement in the outside world, to put it mildly. That changed world imposes new requirements on our colleagues and the professionals we educate.

Gandhi once said: “Be the change you wish to see in the world”. It is that mindset that makes the HZ see it as its duty to provide innovative education and research to contribute to a better world. And, in this context, by ‘better’ we mean ‘more sustainable’. Because if the world of today is facing one challenge that education and research can play a major role in, it is sustainability.

This Institutional Plan sets out the guidelines for the coming years. We have opted for a concise plan, which only describes the main lines. The Institutional Plan offers the framework within which the strategic decisions are made and within which the programmes and teams within HZ can prepare their own action plans. This working method makes the HZ more agile and resilient. More agile because the action plans can be quickly adjusted when necessary. And more resilient because the decision-making process is placed with the employees themselves. In our view, that offers a guarantee for actions to align with the demands and needs of society at any given time.

We have prepared the Institutional Plan in close collaboration with our stakeholders. Over multiple meetings (both online and in person) we have engaged with our internal and external stakeholders on what themes are currently important to them and how the HZ can play a part in these.

To achieve maximum agility and resilience, we are opting for what we are calling the cascading of objectives:

- The mission/vision and ambitions of the HZ cover a period of six years.
- The strategic objectives, also at the level of the HZ as whole and derived from the mission/vision and ambitions, cover a period of three years.
- The objectives at the level of Domains, Part-time Academy and Departments, derived from the strategic objectives, are in effect for a period of one year.
- The action plans for programmes and teams are in effect for a period of one year.

By setting a shorter timeframe at the level of Domains, Part-time Academy, and Departments and at the level of programmes/teams, we can respond to important social developments and challenges faster and better. This Institutional Plan is therefore limited to the mission/vision and ambitions of the HZ and our core values. In the next chapter, we will begin with a description of our ambitions because they provide a nice overview of our choices. This will be followed by a brief outline of the context within which the HZ functions – the world in transition. In Chapter 5, you will read the mission that forms the foundation for the Institutional Plan. In Chapter 6 we will address our core values, which are at the heart of (the development of) our moral compass. We end with a description of the ways in which we intend to implement this Institutional Plan.

We invite you to share your thoughts with us in the further elaboration of this Institutional Plan. Because only with the input of employees, students, the professional field, fellow institutes, governments, and all other organisations in our network, can we as HZ properly perform our duties and positively contribute to a better world.

OUR FOUR AMBITIONS

With this Institutional Plan, the HZ seeks to clarify what our students, employees, partners, and other stakeholders can expect from us in the coming years (2022 – 2027). We view the realisation of these ambitions as our contribution to a better world. You can hold us to it!

Please read below what our ambitions are. In the other chapters of this Institutional Plan, you can read more about the mission and vision that our ambitions are based on and about the ways in which we seek to realise our ambitions.

AMBITION 1:

WE ARE AN EDUCATOR OF PROFESSIONALS FOR A WORLD IN TRANSITION

- The HZ offers a broad portfolio of programmes and applied research.
- The HZ - as the personal University of Applied Sciences - offers students and employees a personal and interdisciplinary development route and optimal guidance.
- The HZ stands for Life Long Development. This means that we strive to allow everyone to achieve maximum development of their talents, regardless of their age, experience, or role in society.
- The HZ offers its students innovative, market-oriented and personal higher professional education and applied research. The HZ trains the professionals of the future through continuous dialogue with the professional field. In collaboration with the field, demand-based work takes place on the innovation of education and research.
- The education and research at the HZ are characterised by: professional relevance, responding to the demand from the market, options fitting the ambitions of students and economic profitability. The build-up of our education enables students to take different pathways to achieve qualifications for the employment market (courses, Associate degrees programmes, bachelor and master programmes). On the other hand, this modularity offers the HZ the possibilities to respond to the changing demands of the market more rapidly.
- Our small scale allows us to respond to the job market of tomorrow rapidly and personally.



Students of the Maritime Officer programme on the ship bridge in the simulation centre of the HZ.

AMBITION 2:

WE ARE A VALUED INSTITUTE IN THE AREA OF WATER, ENERGY, AND VITALITY

- The HZ enforces its position as a valued institute and strengthens that position where possible. Staying on top is harder than getting to the top.
- The HZ primarily focusses on the themes of water, energy, and vitality (of people, organisations, economies, and societies). The focus is both on the individual themes and on the cohesion between them. The HZ has chosen these themes because they have a major social, regional, and even global impact, and form part of the DNA of the region Zeeland.
- The HZ is a University of Applied Sciences. That means that we perform influential and applied research, derived from our social objectives, presented by companies, institutes, and organisations. We work together with regional, national, and international partners for the development of knowledge and sustainable solutions.



A student and lecturer-researcher, Tanja Moerdijk, working with seaweed: a versatile resource in the bio-circular economy.



Field research by students within the framework of an Interreg project in the Hedwige-Prosperpolder in Zeeuws-Vlaanderen. They are conducting an international study into the strength of coastal defences and the consequences of dyke failures.

AMBITION 3:

WE ARE THE PARTNER FOR SOCIAL MISSIONS IN OUR REGION

- The HZ combines education and research and links that to the development of residents, institutes, and companies in the region.
- The HZ is an important engine of innovation for the region and is therefore an important partner.
- The HZ has a unique bridging function between students, companies/institutes, and the government. Co-creation in a living lab is a keyword in the development of sustainable solutions for our social missions in the professional field.
- The HZ participates in various relevant fora of the region and contributes to them.

AMBITION 4:

WE ARE A VIBRANT COMMUNITY FOR ALL PARTIES

- We strive to provide an enjoyable and safe learning environment with a culture based on trust and inclusion, where students and employees feel invited to further their personal and professional development.
- The core values (see further down in this Institutional Plan) form the basis of our behaviour.
- Students, employees, and external stakeholders are engaged in policy development.
- Our campuses - both physical and digital - form an appealing home base and meeting space for students, employees, and our external relations.
- The HZ is an appealing community. We promote community formation through digital activities and on and off-campus meetings.

The community of HZ encompasses more than 50 nationalities.





During the We Explore Together week 2021, students worked with a care robot, among other things. During this week, students from different programmes in multidisciplinary teams work on a practical assignment.

CHAPTER 4

DEALING WITH A WORLD IN TRANSITION

The fact the world is changing is not exactly news. What it all comes down to is how we deal with that. The HZ educates professionals who end up working in sectors facing enormous challenges. Think of the energy sector, the socio-economic sector, or ICT. Developments like climate change, the depletion of fossil fuels, social unrest, digitisation, and artificial intelligence are crucially affecting the requirements our professionals, and thereby the HZ itself, must meet. After all, the higher professional education student of the future must not only be able to perform their job in a complex environment, but also be able to respond to changes. Even more so, the higher professional education student of the future must also be able to contribute to stimulating and shaping that change. Being a change agent who looks further than their own profession and who acknowledges the relations with the regional, national, and ultimately even the global level.

All of these new developments are crossing the thresholds between sectors and disciplines. That means that the solutions must also cross those thresholds between sectors and disciplines and that includes the education the HZ provides these professionals. In consequences of the changing world, existing professions and positions will disappear and new ones will arise.

The HZ believes that we can deal with this transitioning world differently. Not reactively but proactively: taking responsibility for improvement initiatives in collaboration with others. The British philosopher Bertrand Russell said it even better: "The only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation".

CHAPTER 5

OUR MISSION: CONTRIBUTING TO A BETTER WORLD

In the transitioning world, it remains our duty to ensure a good knowledge infrastructure, in collaboration with secondary education, professional education, and (inter)national knowledge institutes. But it has to be aligned to the employment market, the needs, and developments in our region. We are aware of this responsibility as a regional knowledge institute and as a hub that connects companies, institutes, and government. By combining education and applied research, we contribute to the knowledge development. In addition, we are a link in the educational chain. We are the alignment with advanced education: from Associate degree (Ad) education to higher professional education (bachelor) and from higher professional education (bachelor) to a master.

Our mission indicates how we, through our duty and responsibility, want to contribute to a sustainable world.

OUR MISSION

The HZ contributes to a better world...

...by **educating higher professional** education professionals as the personal University of Applied Sciences;

...by, as **University of Applied Sciences** and together with partners, finding solutions for questions in the field of water, energy, and vitality;

...by, as a **regional partner for the Zeeland Delta**, supporting the developments in the region.

As such, our mission is effectively based on three pillars. Those who are familiar with our general Institutional Plan will see that these same pillars are identified there. In this Institutional Plan, they are enhanced and updated, as you will read in the following paragraphs.

5.1. EDUCATING PROFESSIONALS AS THE PERSONAL UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

In this turbulent world, the HZ explicitly chooses to remain the personal University of Applied Sciences. That means:

- We are an open, free, inclusive, and personal community of students, employees, and partners.
- Students are trained to be entrepreneurial, innovative and value-driven professionals with ambitions to make the world a better place.
- They do this via a personal interdisciplinary development route, and that especially makes the HZ such a unique university of applied sciences.
- Students are guided by HZ employees who are constantly developing themselves and by partners from the region.

Each of these points is elaborated below.

5.1.1. An open, free, inclusive, and personal community

We are a University of Applied Sciences that has space for anyone who wants to develop their talents. Acceptance of diversity and equal treatment are essential for people to be able to think and develop themselves freely, with respect for the core values of the HZ. This applies to employees and partners just as much as it applies to students.

We know our students and guide them as they develop into professionals. And the students know us. Our guidance is personal. Our small scale enables us to monitor the individual development of each student. For employees, our Community is the environment where they feel at home. This Community facilitates personal attention for students and colleagues. The work offers each individual employee the opportunity to contribute to our mission, a better world.



Students from different programmes working on a project.



Students have been working on and with the 'zonneboot' (solar boat) for years. The boat is solar powered. Teams take the boat, of which various models have been developed over the years, to participate in competitions both at home and abroad.

5.1.2. Entrepreneurial, innovative, and value-driven professionals

Even in times of uncertainty, our professionals are able to offer professional judgment based on knowledge and reflection and to conduct themselves appropriately on the same basis. They develop an 'independence of thought and behaviour', to be able to deal with that uncertainty effectively. They demonstrate an investigative attitude, enabling them to effectively experiment and take justified and sensible risks. To shape professionals into entrepreneurial professionals, the HZ organises various entrepreneurial activities within the programmes, such as the Student Company.

This always based on our core values and the Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations. They form the moral compass of the HZ (see Chapter 6). As such, our professionals show respect for others in everything they do. As well as a willingness and ability to always collaborate with others.

Our professionals are able to function in international collaborations. Internationalising in various forms is therefore part of the HZ culture. Examples include international cases, projects, and internships, but also 'internationalisation at home'. This enables our students to get acquainted with other cultures and to learn to understand other cultures; helping them to view complex questions from different perspectives.

During their studies, the students work on real life innovation projects. This enables them to obtain valuable practical experience using state of the art design practices, processes, tools, and methods. And also collaboration formats that promote and facilitate innovation in particular. In this way, they learn to think innovatively for themselves and moreover to adapt if their working environment changes or if they are subjected to new requirements.

Our education and research respond to these sometimes quickly changing requirements. All of our students develop a so-called T profile. That is a combination of discipline-specific expertise on the one hand and on the other hand a broad set of knowledge and skills, such as market/domain/system knowledge, digital skills, and collaboration skills. That broad set of knowledge and skills retains its value under changing requirements and helps the professional to move with the changes.

We have determined that the market has a need for various types of higher professional education professionals. We have an eye for diversity in the inflow and acknowledge that this means there must also be diversity in the outflow. For the HZ, this means a wider differentiation in the development routes: the one student will opt for a more standardised development route while the other prefers a more individual pathway.

We are explicitly an institute for Life Long Development. The HZ is there for students in different stages of life and with different development objectives: pupils, students, alumni, employees, and other education requiring parties, such as jobseekers. They are all welcome at the HZ. The HZ will continually align its educational offer and market profile to the needs.

5.1.3. Personal and interdisciplinary development route

The HZ is the University of Applied Sciences where we are able to set out a personal, interdisciplinary development route for everyone. A route where we determine the ultimate goal but remain flexible in the journey we undertake together. That flexibility is also apparent in the development offer (programmes, courses, projects). The offer depends on the development needs and ambitions of the student and the demand from the professional field. Aligned to everyone's specific talents and with room for everyone's personal development.

The development routes of the HZ are not only personal but also interdisciplinary. This is thanks to the unique combination of cross-sectoral themes - water, energy, and vitality - with the various programmes. Development routes that we implement together and in which we all take our responsibility: students, lecturers/researchers of the HZ, and partners such as governments, NGOs, and companies.

5.1.4. Personal guidance from HZ employees who continually develop themselves

We are a learning organisation. HZ employees continue to develop themselves. The HZ supports them in the realisation of their individual development pathways. The professionalism and the quality of the employees is decisive for the quality of education and research, valorisation and business operations. This places demands on the recruitment, maintenance and development of passionate, motivated and competent teams of professionals to be able to remain a vital organisation. Together with the team, supervisors determine the collective goal. Employees are given space to achieve this goal. Space in the sense of professional freedom, but also in terms of responsibilities.

5.2. HELPING TO RESOLVE QUESTIONS AS A UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES/KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE

We are a knowledge institute where education and research are seamlessly interwoven. For its applied research, the HZ has chosen a focus on complex social questions in the three areas of water, energy, and vitality. In the selection of research questions, the Sustainable Development Goals are our guideline, and we strive for alignment with, among others, the Nationale Wetenschapsagenda (National Science Agenda), the national Meerjarige Missiegedreven Innovatieprogramma's (Multi-year mission-driven innovation programmes) and the Knowledge and Innovation Agendas for



Lector Jacob van Berkel of the HZ lectorate Delta Power and Professor Jan de Boer of the Eindhoven University of Technology working together with students in the tidal energy project "Spelen met Strooming" (playing with currents).

Agriculture, Water and Food, and Energy Transition & Sustainability. The researchers, lecturers, and students of the HZ, in collaboration with partner organisations, perform the (interdisciplinary) applied research in the stated fields. In the coming years, our focus will shift even more towards current complex (sustainability) questions. The region is exceptionally well-suited for facilitating testing grounds, thanks to, among other things, the mutual trust that has been built. As such, we already have invested very much in this. We focus on the practical and concrete impact of the research: helping to solve social questions or generating new economic activity. In other words, not just research but also capitalising on the results (valorisation). We see that, for that reason, the applied research is valued by the professional field and the government.



An oyster farmer and student conducting research together at low tide into the oyster borer, a predatory snail that causes damage to the oysters in the Oosterschelde. The research focuses on the reduction of the effects of the oyster borer.

5.3. CONNECTION REGIONALLY AS A PARTNER IN THE ZEELAND DELTA

As a regional partner for the South-West Netherlands, we support the socio-economic development of the region in the broadest sense. The Zeeland Delta has a unique interaction between water and land. It makes the South-West region of the Netherlands into a 'living lab'. The unique position of the HZ - in the heart of the living lab - makes it a source for the development of innovative solutions.

Our most important role: the educating of professionals who can contribute to these solutions. This is simultaneously important for strengthening the competitive position of the region and for stimulating employment. And also not unimportant: the HZ itself is also one of those employers in the region. In doing so, the HZ bears partial responsibility for the habitability of the region.

Furthermore, the HZ is a discussion partner for governments, companies, and institutes. Through practice-oriented research and (special) programmes, we support these parties in their search for solutions for current social questions. In this way, the HZ seeks to utilise its expertise to serve as an engine for innovation for the region, in collaboration with social partners. In the education activities of the HZ, those partners fulfil a major role. The HZ closely involves them in the planning and realisation of those activities.

After all, the HZ forms an important open community in the region, where stakeholders meet and collaborate. In this society, the HZ can fulfil different roles, for example that of host, director, or expert. This all depending on the question and the needs in the region.

CHAPTER 6

CORE VALUES

The HZ realises the Institutional Plan based on its core values. We have published those before, but they are still very much alive and relevant. Core values are guiding for the thinking and acting of all groups within the HZ. There is cohesion between the core values; jointly, they determine the culture of the HZ.

6.1. INTEGRITY AND RESPECT

Integrity means that we are honest and reliable. Students and employees adhere to the generally accepted social and ethical standards inherent in their role or function. We are honest in our work and in contact with others.

Respect means that we see each other as valuable people. We have respect and reverence for others and show them our appreciation. The other has standing. We want to actively invest in knowing each other and respecting each other's expertise.

6.2. TRUST AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Trust means that we believe that the other is honest and that we can count on them. Part of that trust means looking for the good in the other. We are a reliable partner within the university and in relationships with others outside of the university. Trust also means making space for professional development, behaviour, and making independent choices.

Accountability means that we want to take responsibility for what we do. We understand that we can only achieve our goals, desires and ambitions if we are open about our work or studies and our progress therein. Accountability also means that we consciously guide and monitor work and studies.



A student of the Nursing programme caring for a patient as part of an internship.

6.3. COLLABORATION AND QUALITY

Collaboration means that we make agreements about the results to be achieved based on shared views. We convert the plans formed in dialogue into concrete actions and agreements. We collectively achieve the results through commitment to these agreements. This applies to both internal collaboration and collaboration with partners outside the HZ. Co-creation is the basis for inspiring and motivating each other.

Quality means that we meet expectations or even exceed them. This concerns both the quality of the programme (education and research) and the quality in terms of dealing with students and stakeholders. Quality, among other things, is expressed in a high placement in the national rankings, strengthening of the programme portfolio, and the accreditation-worthiness of our complete offer of education and research. But especially in a high study yield and high student satisfaction.

We continue developing and we help others to develop themselves through sharing knowledge and insights and performing research together. We do this with students but also with the business world and government and others in society.

Working together in the media library.



HOW ARE WE GOING TO REALISE OUR MISSION?

Our point of departure is that in concretising and implementing, there should be space for making own choices. We envision teams of HZ employees getting to work, together with students and the professional field. But that point of departure is not voluntary or non-committal for the HZ: if you want to create space to make your own choices, that has consequences for working methods, leadership, and the organisation of the HZ.

To start with, the consequences for the working method. If we want to make the HZ more agile, then we will need to move away from the top-down approach. We do that by opting for Agile Transformation. For that reason, we also chose the cascading approach in this Institutional Plan. That works as follows:

- This creates an organisation with a clear vision for the future, while retaining the agility that these times of rapid change require. The Institutional Plan is elaborated in interdisciplinary teams, in which various specialties collaborate; education, research, and services. These development teams take their responsibility and in doing so continually check their choices against this plan.



7.2. SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Then the consequences for leadership. The effective realisation of our HZ mission requires a suitably adapted leadership. A top-down leadership with expansive multi-year plans and blueprints as guiding tools is not effective in a rapidly changing and complex environment. The HZ therefore opts for servant leadership.

In our vision, the strategic leadership resides with the Board and Directors Team (BDT), but the operational leadership is situated as low as possible in the organisation. With this vision, the BDT presents a strategic framework for all activities of the HZ. Teams are given autonomy and space to give implementation to the vision and take and implement suitable decisions within the relevant frameworks set out for them in the Institutional Plan. The BDT is tasked with facilitating the teams in this. Management and Board members show leadership by example, acting in a manner that demonstrates they take this form of leadership seriously (practice what you preach).

7.3. FLEXIBLE ORGANISATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Given the dynamic the HZ is subjected to, we opt for an agile organisation that is able to adapt quickly. Not the survival of the strongest or the smartest, but the one best able to adapt. With a flexible organisation, we create opportunities for entrepreneurial employees and students to benefit from. That means that we will have to do a lot of trials and we do that via short-term experiments embedded in the vision.

Our infrastructure - buildings, ICT-infra, services, finances, processes, and policy – also face the challenges associated with increased flexibility. We will continually organise and adapt the HZ in such a way that the organisation and infrastructure optimally support our core duties of education and research.



Students of the Architectural and Construction Engineering programme at work in practice-oriented education, topic: Biobased Economy.

7.4. IN CLOSING

Let's get to work. The HZ wants to further shape this Institutional Plan in collaboration with students, employees, and external stakeholders, in order to contribute to a better world. "Because if you are here anyway, you should be actually present."

