

CREATING  
POSITIVE  
SOCIETAL  
**IMPACT**

THE ERASMIAN WAY

Strategy 2024

# Introducing 'The Erasmian way'

'Creating positive societal impact.' This new mission is how we are shaping the transition ahead of us at Erasmus University Rotterdam. This concept is the core of our societal engagement; it is how we embrace our responsibility for addressing the complex challenges that our society faces today. It characterises who we are as Erasmus University Rotterdam, and reflects the way we think and act. We want to make a real difference, not as a knowledge institute separate from society, but as a knowledge generator at the very heart of society, constantly in dialogue with others.

That is what being an Erasmian means to us. Engaged with society, as world citizens, connecting, entrepreneurial and open-minded: this is our identity, our DNA. Embodied and embraced in our research and education, in what we do and in how we do it: the Erasmian way.

*This unique strategy design process was only possible due to the talent, entrepreneurial drive and engagement of all Erasmians. It illustrates the rich resources of the university and shows what we are capable of achieving together. The choices we made give me great confidence for the future.*

Kristel Baele

This shared identity is what made us realise at the start of our strategic design process, early in 2018, that we had to do things differently – and that we had the capacity to do so. As a university, we stand at the

crossroads in a time of frequent changes that have a huge impact on all of us. The rapid pace of the digital revolution affects the very fabric of our society. The effects of climate change dominate the news, accompanied by political and economic crises. The diversity of our society and its many cultures is an accepted fact – and our society is flooded with massive amounts of information at any given moment. Last but not least, technology seems to offer us infinite opportunities for innovation.

These opportunities have great potential, but the combination of all these factors also leads to complex societal challenges – and society expects universities like the EUR to provide answers. We must be independent, but engaged: stepping onto a playing field with many other players, all working together to make a substantial contribution to achieving a sustainable society for future generations. Not offering superficial trivia, but solid information and substantiated knowledge. Not tomorrow, but today.

*The university of the future is fully engaged with society. Operating from our independent position, we want to make a real difference through excellent scientific knowledge; we can and we must, and we wouldn't want it any other way.*

Rutger Engels

With Strategy 2024, we are shaping a future in which we can effectively create the positive societal impact that we envision.

In this vision for the future, our students define our impact first and foremost. We will educate them as creative, critical thinkers engaged in society, equipping them to make a real difference as change leaders of the future. Our excellent research generates impact, building on the foundations of our strong disciplines. By strengthening the connections between these disciplines, we will tap into our unique interdisciplinary potential. Long-term fundamental research remains vital in this context. The professional services organisation pro-actively supports research and education, embracing modern approaches with expertise and

professionalism, allowing space for strong co-creation with their colleagues. Our campuses offer an inspiring environment for work and study, where everyone's talents are acknowledged and developed to the fullest. We are committed to providing an ambitious, but friendly workplace where we respect everyone's contributions to our success.

*Our new strategy is about connection: between research, education and professional services, between different fields of knowledge, and between the EUR and the surrounding region. Above all, it is about connection with each other, leading us to achieve great things.*

Roelien Ritsema van Eck

None of this takes place in isolation. We maintain constant connections to our surroundings by working closely with our partners in society as a whole and in the business sector, in Rotterdam and around the world. And we are constantly engaged with our community of Erasmians: students, researchers, lecturers, professional services staff, and our alumni. We are one university, one community, pursuing a shared purpose together.

Our vision for the future is solidly anchored in the EUR as it is today. Much of what we want to achieve is a continuation of who we already are, and what we are already successfully doing. The way in which this strategy was established is an illustration of that fact. In a unique strategy design process, we worked together – the board, students, researchers, lecturers, professional services staff, and stakeholders – to formulate our shared ambitions in co-creation. It has been a journey that gave us in-depth insights into what makes us unique and how we can create even more positive societal impact by building on our strengths. We are fully justified in stating that Strategy 2024 is our strategy.

We will maintain that momentum as we move forward, fully confident that we will fulfil our ambitions. At the same time, we invite our university community and our stakeholders in society to join with us, open-minded and critical, to shape Strategy 2024, the Erasmian way.

The Executive Board of Erasmus University Rotterdam,

Kristel Baele

Rutger Engels

Roelien Ritsema van Eck





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Public lectures in the city of Rotterdam

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM STRATEGY 2024

# Creating positive societal impact, the Erasmian way

The world is changing rapidly. Technological developments and digitalisation, effects of climate change, globalisation, geopolitical issues, economic and financial crises: the list goes on. Knowledge is developing faster than anyone can comprehend, giving us rapid access to massive amounts of information. Tapping into this rich potential will require clarification and contextualisation. In a society flooded with social media, truth, fact-finding and dialogue take on a whole new dimension.

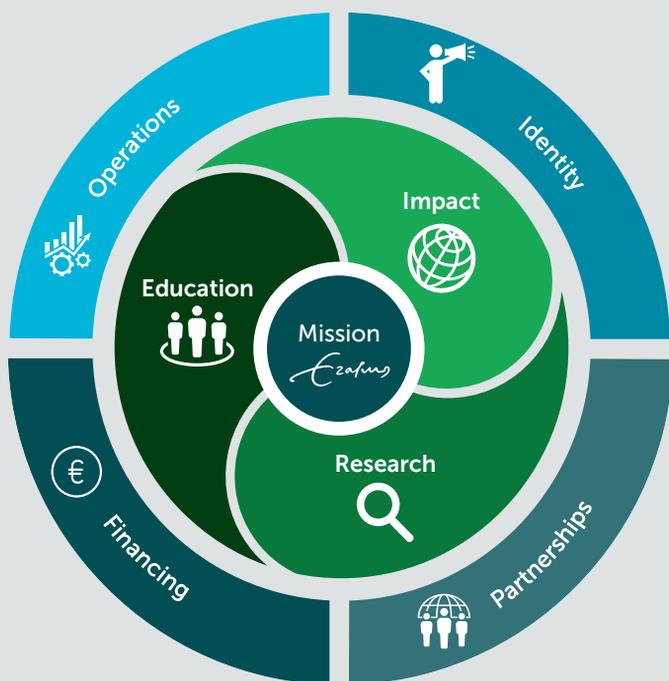
Children are calling for a sustainable society for future generations. Teenagers demand responsible leadership. Societal debate takes place every day on the ethics of technological progress, on the economies and careers of the future. The challenges society faces today are multifaceted and complex, opening up new opportunities – chances to explore new avenues of research and education, chances to make a difference. Solving these challenges calls for a common purpose, for truth, fact-finding, dialogue and an interdisciplinary and collaborative approach. Our own students tell us they want add value to the world they live in – and they want to start today, not after graduation.

For centuries, the role of universities has been to educate students and to conduct research. Traditionally, these institutes of higher learning have been perceived as somewhat distant from society, concentrating on specific fields from a monodisciplinary view. We will keep building on these strengths, but we need to change our role. We are one of the key players that need to collaborate in order to tackle society's challenges. We aim to create impact in society through our future-oriented

education, our excellent research, and our public engagement:  
in dialogue with our community, we strive to be a force for good.  
Therefore, Erasmus University Rotterdam has redefined its mission:

## Creating positive societal impact

Our mission serves as a compass, guiding our decisions. Similarly, our way of thinking and working will be guided – and recognised by our community and beyond – by the values that we express and embody as Erasmus University Rotterdam. These core principles show who we are and what we stand for. Our values are in our very DNA, embedded in our research and handed down in our education. As students, alumni, researchers, tutors, lecturers, professional service staff, and leadership, we can identify with these values and carry them with us, now and in the future. Inspired by the legacy of the philosopher whose name we bear, we shape our identity and define our way of thinking and acting, summarising it as the core concept: *'Being an Erasmian'*.



Our education enables our students to become game-changers and to lead change where necessary, all in their own playing field and while embracing societal responsibility. We enable them to take ownership of their personal learning. They acquire a solid academic foundation and a mind-set that is critical, open to change and entrepreneurial. They walk out of here ready and eager to make an impact on society. Our curiosity-driven research will be increasingly interdisciplinary, building on excellent research in individual disciplines. It needs to be open and responsible in order to provide added value and societal relevance. At the same time, there is a strong and continued need for fundamental research, even when we cannot yet identify its immediate impact on wicked problems. We have the courage to rethink conventional criteria for research performance, focusing on quality rather than quantity, and prioritising the contribution to society in line with our mission.

The Erasmus Initiatives are three ambitious focal areas for research that streamline our academic activities to increase the societal and economic impact of our work. The Erasmus Initiatives join forces for science that matters. The three themes of the Erasmus Initiatives – Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity; Smarter Choices for Better Health; Vital Cities, Vital Citizens – are a good reflection of our academic and societal strengths. These themes will be complemented by an initiative focused on the societal impact of disruptive technologies.

Understanding the causes, mechanisms and effects of societal challenges, as well as how to deal with them, implies that we have to acknowledge the relevance of the social, behavioural, cultural and historical context in which they become manifest. Therefore, the EUR wants to strengthen the profile and positioning of the social sciences and humanities within the EUR context by creating a fourth strong academic pillar, alongside health, business & economics and law.

An important part of the societal impact approach at Erasmus University Rotterdam is a mutual understanding of the value of research, methodology and education in designing for societal validation and innovation. Through design, we can systematically extract, teach, learn and apply human-centred techniques to solve problems in creative and innovative ways – thus impacting business, tackling societal challenges and increasing prosperity. By adding design to the core of our university, we build capability and expertise for societal validation throughout the institution for both faculty and students.

We also believe in entrepreneurship as an important driver for societal impact. It creates jobs and welfare in the region, and offers students and staff an opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills that will benefit their future careers and lives. In order to achieve this, we will be exploring a number of initiatives the coming years, including (social) incubation programmes.

Aiming for our mission means making real choices, and considering the economic and environmental consequences of those choices. We embrace the concept of sustainable development as a global footprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. We want to contribute to a sustainable society by critical and dedicated thinking, teaching, and action in research, education and operations, as well as in our partnerships.



We co-create education and research programmes with our partners and alumni, both locally and around the globe. Our strong ties to the Rotterdam area and our global community of alumni help us play our part in achieving our goals. In the coming years, these relationships and partnerships will be all the more nurtured and encouraged.

Technology – and specifically digital technology – is changing the world at a rapid pace. In the face of these developments, we will work closely with TU Delft and Erasmus MC to strengthen our collaboration and explore the added value of closer scientific collaboration in a range of fields. Through this initiative, we will also continue shaping the existing ties within Medical Delta and between Leiden University, TU Delft and EUR (known as the LDE Alliance), as well as building on previous partnership initiatives.

We are one community, working together to create positive impact on society. Our organisation is evolving, and our talent management and professional services need to reflect those changes: pro-active, agile and strongly aligned with our core business. There will be a firm emphasis on fostering leadership, facilitating career paths and ensuring we are prepared for the technological future.

Because actions speak louder than words, we used an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach in redefining our mission and defining our strategy towards 2024. The Executive Board, the Deans, our students, faculty and staff, alumni and partners collaborated in delivering this new strategy. In the process, we defined seven strategic priorities that will guide the execution of our mission leading up to 2024:

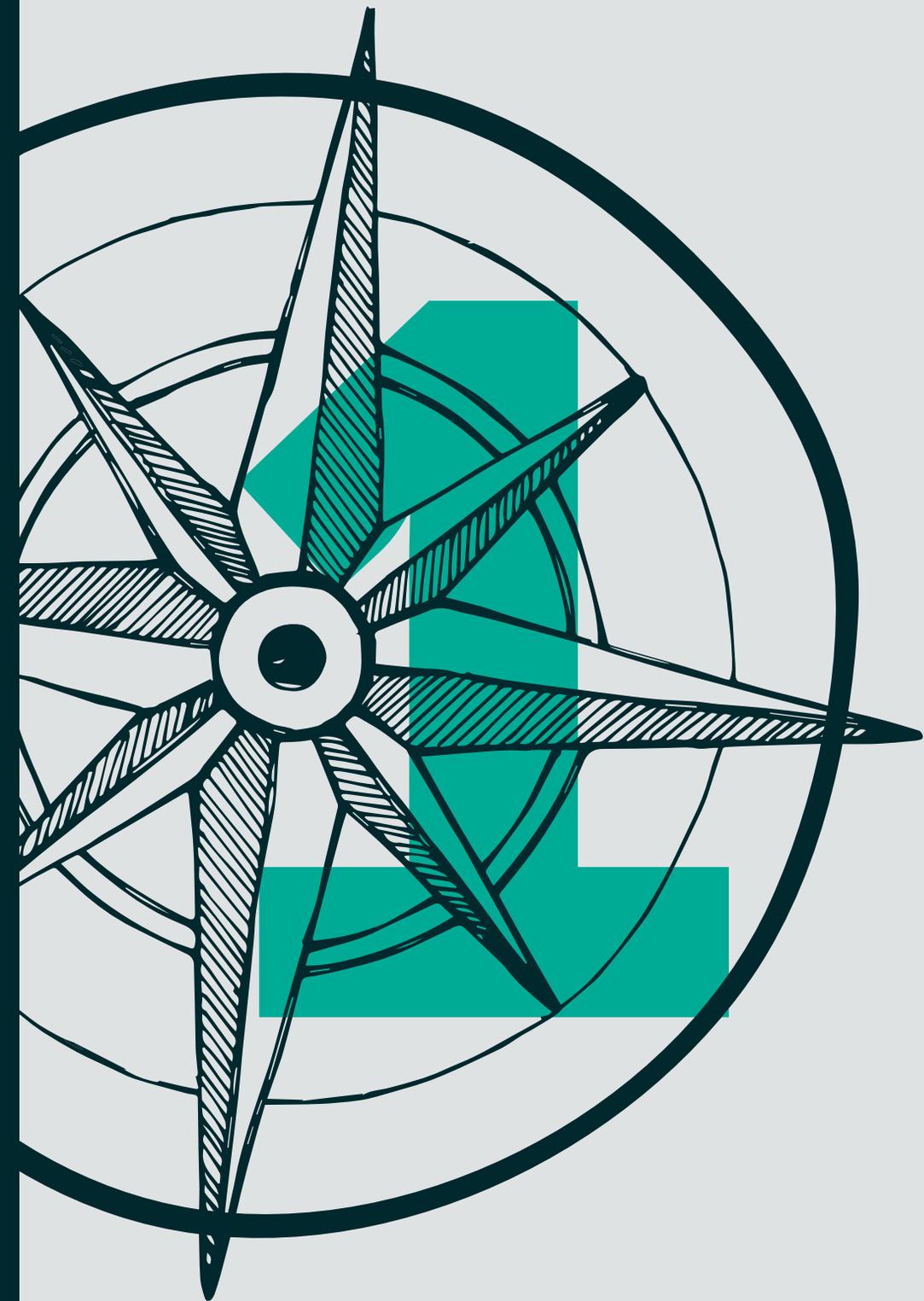
- » Fostering our societal impact identity
- » Ensuring our education is future-oriented
- » Embedding excellent academic research in society
- » Taking responsibility on sustainable development
- » Investing in our people for the future
- » Stepping up our professional services
- » Making the most of our interdisciplinary potential

We are very proud of the joint efforts of our community and will continue this approach in the years ahead. The Erasmian way will resonate in how we execute and monitor our strategy.





Who  
we are



# Our mission: creating positive societal impact

## A new strategic plan: the start of a journey

In our ambition to launch a new strategic plan for 2019-2024, we have wholeheartedly embraced the philosophy behind our renewed mission: to create a positive impact on societal challenges, working in close cooperation with our community and our internal and external stakeholders. We wanted to walk the talk, putting our new insights and ambitions into practice. It was the start of an intense journey, moving forward together, exploring challenges and opportunities, getting to know each other's ideas and perspectives, getting the best out of each other. Our aim was to bring together the hearts and minds of our students, staff, and community in working towards a new plan for the future. The process was a success. Working together, we have designed an innovative Erasmus University Rotterdam Strategy 2024, which will be implemented from now on.

## Building strategy the Erasmian way

We redefined our mission in response to the multifaceted and complex challenges of today's society. Solving such challenges is only possible when a diverse community works together in close collaboration. Our strategy to create societal impact also needed to be designed to take into account the complexity and multiplicity of today's world. Therefore, we actively involved our community in the university's strategy design process, generating ideas for the strategic plan for 2019-2024.

The collaborative, interactive and inclusive process focused on gathering insights from a variety of angles within the university: cross-faculty, cross-department, cross-generation. Around a hundred people took part, drawn from the faculties and departments, the University Council, a Green Team of students and junior academic staff, and various alumni and external partners. They formed Strategic Design Labs and Communities of Interest, each tackling one of the seven strategic priorities that had been defined previously. Working together in these various groups, the participants were introduced to the concepts of design thinking and large-scale interventions.

Facilitating the dialogue created opportunities for changing the dialogue, taking a critical look at business as usual and allowing room for ideas that might not always seem like the safest direction or most obvious outcome. As new directions were explored, potential paradoxes became apparent between old structures and new intentions, and were addressed through collaboration and co-creation. The result was a set of proposals that focused on the university as a whole, generating a collective ideology rather than focusing on the separate identities of the individual faculties. Looking back on this process, we can truly say we have created this strategy together, *the Erasmian way*. We cherish the legacy of this process, experiences and insights in new ways of thinking and working, and will foster this legacy in executing the strategy and designing the implementation.

## Erasmus University Rotterdam in a changing world

The world today faces many challenges. In preparing for the strategy, we reviewed global and national macro trends as well as trends in education and research and analysed the impact of these trends for our institution, resulting in our strategic priorities.

### **Climate change**

As the effects of climate change become more and more visible, we see a resulting increase in debate, societal unrest and political initiatives to curb the contributing factors. Schoolchildren and students demand action, seeking to secure their future. The Netherlands is a signatory to the Paris Accords and has set climate targets for itself that are among the most ambitious legislative measures worldwide.

The Rotterdam municipal authorities and the port of Rotterdam want to play a leading role in this transition. This will require the city and the port to embrace an energy transition, transforming the regional economy in the process. The energy transition is one of the main themes in the coalition agreement for the municipal government<sup>1</sup>. As an academic institution that is proud to be located in the city of Rotterdam, Erasmus University Rotterdam is committed to fulfilling its responsibility, both in taking the necessary measures on its own campus and in an advisory and co-creating capacity.

## **Demographics**

We see a trend towards higher percentages of older people in countries around the globe, as well as an increase in urbanisation and migration in response to climate change, economic fluctuations and geopolitical shifts. The ageing population is placing new demands on healthcare systems worldwide, changing affordability and costing structures. As cities grow rapidly and become increasingly diverse, they face challenges in the context of social cohesion, inclusion and liveability.

## **Economics**

Continuing globalisation leads to new economic activity, but also to social tensions and new forms of inequality. A general sense of alienation and isolation continues to swell. The economic balance of power worldwide is gradually tipping in Asia's favour, specifically featuring a growing role for China and India. Emerging technological innovations present both opportunities and threats. Rising inequality feeds political unrest and tension.

## **Technology**

The biggest driver of change worldwide is technology, particularly digitalisation.<sup>2</sup> Artificial intelligence, robotics and big data are changing how we work, learn and interact. More and more personal data is collected, leading to massive volumes of sensitive data compiled not only by traditional parties, but also by new actors. This trend has

1 "Coalitieakkoord 2018-2022: Nieuwe energie voor Rotterdam": Rotterdam municipal coalition agreement, 26 June 2018.

2 Global Risk Report 2018 and 2019, World Economic Forum, <https://www.weforum.org/reports>.

created more ambiguity about data ownership, feeding into the design discussion and public debate about privacy, security, and semantic interoperability.

## Employment

The labour market is changing rapidly, primarily driven by innovative technologies. The urgency of lifelong learning<sup>3</sup>, ongoing refresher courses, and retraining opportunities is increasingly acknowledged; this theme is prioritised on regional, national and European agendas.



3 "Trendcomplex van het onderwijsstelsel": Trend Complex presented by the Education Council of the Netherlands, December 2017).

Soft skills, creativity and a talent for collaboration and co-creation are becoming increasingly important, supplemented by skills to access and apply rapidly increasing and continuously changing sources of knowledge. There is a growing need and urgency for graduates who are flexible and lenient enough to take on entirely new jobs requiring composite skill sets.

## **Education and research**

Society increasingly expects engagement with universities, seeking involvement in tackling these challenges together. There is a major demand for new approaches to initial and post-initial education. Our own students are demanding education that is more focused on societal issues and sustainability. Education must enable them to start making an impact right now, not waiting until after graduation. The need for personalised education and education in co-creation is increasing. Demographic shifts and globalisation influence student streams. Technological advancement is affecting how we provide education, how we do research, and how we should support our education and research processes.

In the Trend Complex of the Education System published in 2017, the Education Council of the Netherlands identifies the most influential systemic trends as the growing influence of technological progress, internationalisation, and the changing role of lifelong learning.

Research is becoming more data-driven, more open, more shared, and co-authored by many researchers. Open science is a trend that has implications for the way we use and store data and for how we publish and share our research findings and underlying data. Funding organisations such as the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), as well as larger bodies like the European Union, are increasingly incorporating criteria related to societal impact and interdisciplinarity. The EU is also increasingly determining policy and regulation in research. These research trends have implications for how we measure and reward impact.<sup>4</sup>

Looking at these trends, and viewing them in the context of how they will affect the future of our institution, it can in any case be stated that many different trends are currently in play, both globally and within the Netherlands – and all of them have a major impact. Moreover,

4 OECD (2018), OECD Science, Technology and Innovation Outlook 2018: Adapting to Technological and Societal Disruption, OECD Publishing, Paris.

these trends are not isolated; they influence and interact with each other in how they affect the content of education, research and impact, but also in how we pursue these core activities. Last but certainly not least, they also increase the demands placed on the organisational support we provide.

Taking into account these trends and how they affect us, we have given them a significant role in our vision and defined actions to address them in our strategic priorities. More generally, we have viewed the complex web of trends, in conjunction with the complex societal challenges at hand, as an opportunity to assess our role and position as a university and recalibrate as needed.

## Renewing our mission

Looking at the global and national trends and facing the current complex challenges worldwide, society urges universities to reconsider their role and position. There has never been a greater need for nuance, truth, fact-finding and mutual understanding of each other's backgrounds, ideas and expertise. Real-world problems can only be solved when we are thinking and working together.

For centuries, the role of universities has been to educate students and to do research. They have been perceived as somewhat distant from society, mostly contemplating societal challenges from a monodisciplinary perspective. In preparing for our next strategic planning process, we felt the need to change our role. The EUR is one of the key players that will need to collaborate in order to tackle society's challenges. Therefore, Erasmus University Rotterdam has redefined its mission:

# Creating positive societal impact

Our mission is to make a positive impact on societal challenges. We strive to understand and make progress towards solving complex societal challenges, with alignment in our core activities of education and research and in close cooperation with our partners locally and globally.

We achieve our mission by being a research-intensive academic institution that develops and shares excellent scientific knowledge and skills. Our education helps students develop the skills required for the current and future job market, with the inspiration and ability to contribute to positive societal impact. Our research is driven by the curiosity of our academic staff and a strong focus on quality and relevance. This leads to a research portfolio covering the full continuum from fundamental to more applied research, each essential in fulfilling our mission.

## Our mission serves as our compass

Our mission functions as a compass: it focuses our attention, inspires us in our daily activities, and provides direction when faced with strategic choices – as a university, as an individual school or institute, and as a department.

We achieve our mission by being a research-intensive academic institution that develops and shares excellent scientific knowledge and skills and actively pursues engagement with society. Our research is driven by the curiosity of our academic staff and by a strong focus on quality and relevance, covering the full continuum from fundamental to more applied research.

Our educational vision is to help students develop the academic expertise and the critical, entrepreneurial and pioneering mind-set and skills required for the current and future job market, in which they will lead change. Our community engages with society, seeking to understand and make progress towards solving complex societal challenges, in alignment with our core activities of education and research, and in close cooperation with our partners, both locally and globally.

We need to significantly increase our efforts to create positive impact on society, above and beyond current efforts to excel in research and to provide excellent education. Therefore, we need to increase interdisciplinarity in our research and education, while maintaining our solid foundation of monodisciplinary expertise. And we will strengthen our ties with the local community, while maintaining and enhancing our role in the global community. Our alumni and existing societal partners are key in this journey.

## Our foundational values and principles: *Being an Erasmusian*

Our mission serves as a compass, guiding our decisions. Similarly, our way of thinking and working will be guided – and recognised by our community and beyond – by the values that we express and embody as Erasmus University Rotterdam. These core principles show who we are and what we stand for. Our values are in our very DNA, embedded in our research and handed down in our education. As students, alumni,

researchers, tutors, lecturers, professional service staff, and leadership, we can identify with these values and carry them with us, now and in the future. Inspired by the legacy of the philosopher whose name we bear, we shape our identity and define our way of thinking and acting, summarising it as the core concept: *'Being an Erasmian'*.

## **Being an Erasmian**

So who was Erasmus and how does his philosophy shape our identity today? Solid *academic scholarship* based on leading by example and establishing internationally visible and recognised expertise, in conjunction with *critical engagement* with important contemporary developments and debates, framed within a *mind-set* of cosmopolitanism and independence. *That was Erasmus.*

Translating this to the present day, we strive to realise this combination of (a) excellent research and (b) engagement with and sensitivity to urgent contemporary societal and cultural challenges. The starting point is meticulous and trustworthy research and solid expertise, which are key to developing a critical position and independent mind-set (academic integrity). In this context, we are not striving towards polarisation, but working to establish an ethos of informed dialogue.

First and foremost, EUR Strategy 2024 is based on our core values and positioning of the university; the academic values are and will continue to be fundamental to our institution. Precisely in this transition towards increasing societal impact, such values as academic freedom, integrity, independence, and a capacity for critical and self-reflective analysis will serve as a shining beacon that guides the way.

*'Being an Erasmian'* means being a *world citizen*, embracing *societal engagement* and an *open and critical mind-set*. But it also means looking at *how* we do so: *entrepreneurial, innovative*, and based on *diverse* backgrounds and opinions, always *unifying and collaborating*, taking action and willing to be unconventional and daring when the situation calls for it. That is what we proudly call *the Erasmian way*.

# ERASMIAN VALUES



## Engaged with society

In our role as a university, we feel a sense of *responsibility* to deliver added value in resolving the complex problems of today's society. Impact implies societal engagement. It also entails commitment to egalitarian and democratic values, as well as inclusion and a culture of dialogue and debate – and commitment to research and education that truly has an impact in the region, in our country, and in the world as a whole. Our students and employees embrace the ethos of societal engagement and equal opportunity.



## World citizen

In the spirit of Erasmus himself, world citizen and the namesake of our university, our students, researchers, educators and alumni achieve new scientific insights and create solutions for regional and global challenges in society. In this ongoing search for solutions, we reach beyond the boundaries of countries or disciplines, embracing a cosmopolitan worldview. We tap into international networks as a source of alliances, knowledge and inspiration.



## Connecting

Societal impact implies connection, convergence, collaboration: building bridges between different scientific disciplines, working together in collaboration with society. An ethos of dialogue is an intrinsic aspect. Students are educated to become experts in their own individual discipline or in a multidisciplinary context, equipped with the knowledge and insights they need to establish connections. Our research and education are interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary, building on our solid foundation of monodisciplinary knowledge and expertise. This is supported by new, co-creative and inclusive ways of working and collaborating. Connections are integral to the way we think and work.



## Entrepreneurial

Building on the legacy left by our founding fathers, our university is defined by an entrepreneurial mind-set: a can-do culture focused on results, experimentation and innovation. Unafraid to stray from the beaten path at times, daring and sometimes unconventional. Building bridges between past inspirations and present challenges, framed by our shared values.

Our students, educators and researchers play an active role in how research and knowledge are put into practice. Our dedication to experimenting and innovating is also applied to our own research and education. An entrepreneurial mind-set also means accepting ownership and taking responsibility.



## Open-minded

Erasmus was an adamant advocate of freedom and tolerance. We encourage our community to take part in the academic debate on the basis of their own strengths, talents and background. The diversity of our international and multicultural environment is reflected in our students and staff; we believe in the power of inclusion.

We have an ethos of independence and integrity, striving for mutual understanding across social and cultural divides. Our students develop the knowledge and competences they need to accurately assess different angles and opinions. Academic faculty members set a good example and encourage healthy debate. As a community, we embrace a wide-ranging perspective on societal, political and ethical dilemmas. Opinions, accepted standards and personal values are introduced into the dialogue and subjected to critical debate.

## One university, one community, one goal

Guided by our mission, we aim to create positive societal impact, to make a difference in our society, working *with* our society. Our strategic themes bring focus to our efforts, while our values define what we stand for and how we want to achieve that outcome. Our commitment to creating positive societal impact is accompanied by major challenges, and many aspects of how we plan to respond to those challenges still need to be defined in more detail in terms of substance and methodology. One thing is very clear, however: it is imperative to do this *together*. We will embrace this course together, as a unified community.

Connecting, embracing a shared way of thinking and acting, based on shared values: these are core to our strategy, and with good reason. It is about true connection and collaboration, both outside the university and within our own context. We are one community, consisting of academic faculty members as well as professional services staff. It is self-evident that we need each other in order to maintain our position as a top-ranking institution that attracts ambitious students and talented researchers, educators and professional services staff. Our people make the difference, in terms of knowledge, expertise, skills and competences. This holds true in our core business of excellent research and education, but also in the service organisation that makes it all possible. Students not only expect us to provide excellent education, but want to receive that education on a lively and dynamic campus that provides a stimulating and safe environment for study, as well as state-of-the-art classrooms and modern student services (including digital options). Academics also want a working environment that is both challenging and safe, with excellent policies and HR services that facilitate their ambitions, as well as modern IT resources and facilities to support their work in research and education. Professional services such as IT, HR, Real Estate & Facilities, Education & Students Affairs, Marketing & Communications and Finance are an essential part of our ambitions. The EUR stands as one community, inclusive and diverse, comprising academic faculty and professional services staff, each contributing their own expertise and providing their own unique added value towards our university's success. We respect each person's contribution and vision based on their own expertise, and their ownership and responsibility for their own tasks and work activities.

## Building on our strengths, developing for the future

In this strategic period, we have defined a new vision with impact at the core. Impact was already included in our strategy for 2014-2018, which addressed and prioritised themes that were and are relevant in today's society. Innovation and pioneering were given free rein, and our community demonstrated passion, inspiration and dedication. The great results achieved through those efforts were acknowledged in the Mid-Term Review of Impact & Relevance. The entrepreneurial drive so characteristic of Erasmus University Rotterdam also led us to take important steps forward in educational innovation, online learning and internationalisation. The establishment of the Erasmus Initiatives marked an important start in our development of a multidisciplinary profile.

Moving forward from here, we will continue building on these strong foundations. Our efforts will build on what we have already set in motion (e.g. the Erasmus Initiatives) and on the strengths that our community possesses in terms of innovation, knowledge, passion and drive. There are great opportunities present here, and lots of future potential. At the same time, we are acknowledging the improvements proposed in the Mid-Term Review and aligning our strategy accordingly, placing our focus on impact by putting it at the core of our mission.

That intensified focus is expressed in a profile defined by creating positive societal impact and identifying the areas in which we achieve a distinctive reputation and identity. The touchstone here is the definition of our shared values, of what it means to be an Erasmian. Our values offer a visible framework for who we are and what we represent, what we will embody for our entire community in education and research, but also how we think and work.

There will be fundamental differences in how we shape and steer our strategy, compared to previous practices. We will be continuing the dialogue between the Executive Board and the Deans, as structured in the process leading up to this strategy, but that is not the only change; throughout the implementation, we will continue building on the methods devised in the strategy design phase and actively engaging our community. There will be a strong focus on new ways of working together: collaborative, co-creative, iterative, inclusive, multidisciplinary, working from the outside in. To that end, we will not only be utilising our full potential on the campus and beyond, but ensuring that we remain agile and flexible in a constantly changing world.







# Building on our distinctive profile

At Erasmus University Rotterdam, we believe in the power of humanity – and our mission reflects that. As Erasmians, our ambition is to be a force for positive change. Our strategy is the key to make a real difference in society, with our community and through our people.

## In our society

In this challenging world, we aim to be recognised as a force for good. We create impact in society through our future-oriented education, our excellent research, and our public engagement. In the spirit of our namesake Erasmus, we constantly strive to re-invent ourselves, keeping an open mind about opportunities in our changing society and about the hopes and needs of future generations. Founded by entrepreneurs more than 100 years ago, we are still dedicated to redesigning ourselves for one common purpose: to surpass the highest standards of quality in the world.

## With our community

Today, we are a research-intensive academic institution that develops and shares a broad spectrum of scientific knowledge and skills. The wisdom of our communities combines in-depth knowledge ranging across the fields of health and healthcare, humanities and social sciences, law, economics and management. Driven by the curiosity of our academic staff, we are able to work across faculties, across departments, across generations, and to build bridges between all our external networks.

With our interdisciplinary way of working, we cover the full continuum from fundamental to more applied research. The Erasmus Initiatives are three ambitious focal areas for research that streamline our academic activities to increase the societal and economic impact of our work. The Erasmus Initiatives join forces for science that matters. The three themes of the Erasmus Initiatives – Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity; Smarter Choices for Better Health; Vital Cities, Vital Citizens – are a good reflection of our academic and societal strengths. These themes will be complemented by an initiative focused on the societal impact of disruptive technologies.

## Through our people

No one wins in a world that loses. Our ultimate drive is to help, educate and prepare our students, our academic faculty and professional staff, our alumni and our partners in cooperation to realise their full potential in life. Being engaged with the world around us is a means to an end: our students tell us they want to change the world they live in. Our faculty members feel the responsibility to re-invent our education and research programmes to solve the most complex societal challenges. And our stakeholders stress the importance of cooperation to create positive societal impact.

The Erasmus University Rotterdam is regarded as an internationally driven, ground-breaking and world-class institution. As an academic institution, we aim to be widely recognised as a responsible partner, focused on positive societal impact. We will strengthen this reputation, increasing our national and international recognition to secure a position at the top. We will concentrate ourselves on advancement for the better; it is crucial to stay a force for positive change in the world.

## Extending our core with design research and education

We believe that an important result of the new Erasmus societal impact approach will be an institution-wide dedication to effective societal validation of our research in ways that have an impact on innovations. We will realise our belief through strategic investments targeted at augmenting the core capacities and capabilities of our faculty and students, incorporating new expertise in design research and education. It has already been proven that organisations and business that consistently apply design principles perform better. By investing in joint design facilities and initiatives, we can systematically apply human-centred thinking and methods to our societal validation initiatives. Design will help us to develop innovations that will impact businesses, governments and societal organisations, ultimately increasing human prosperity. Through design, we will produce better research for a better world.

Based on a systematic benchmark of top design schools in the US and Europe, Erasmus University Rotterdam has decided to explore a systematic approach to facilitate students and faculty to create impact through design and through principles of design thinking, developing our own form of a design school. This design *initiative* will have an interdisciplinary project portfolio, working in close co-creation with research and education at all Erasmus schools, and in partnership with businesses and societal stakeholders.

We envision that adding design research and education to our university will accelerate the development of many possible innovations in the years to come. Examples include new products, services and interactions, sustainable systems for socio-economic governance, management of major transitions in healthcare, climate change adaptation, the composition of the economic and corporate landscape, and social segregation and education – all in line with the unique makeup and current strengths of Erasmus University Rotterdam. Given the strong identity of EUR as a research-driven university, it is paramount to ensure that design and design thinking at EUR have a strong foundation in academic research.

## Creating societal impact through entrepreneurship: building an ecosystem

We believe in entrepreneurship as an important driver for societal impact. It creates jobs and welfare in the region, and offers students, faculty and staff an opportunity to develop entrepreneurial skills that will benefit their future careers and lives. Moreover, it will help to create the optimal conditions to build actual businesses and endeavours based on the knowledge coming from the university. In order to achieve this, we are exploring a number of initiatives.

The first initiative is the idea to establish a number of start-up incubator programmes. The second initiative to support entrepreneurship within the EUR is the proposal to set up an investment fund to financially support start-ups at various stages of the incubator programme. The third is the inception of a Knowledge Transfer Office (KTO) at the EUR, supplementing the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) at Erasmus Medical Center. For all of the above, the EUR will position itself as a contributor to the ecosystem consisting of the city of Rotterdam, the accelerators and incubator programmes in the region, and investors that are needed to finance the emerging enterprises.

## Societal impact requires a strong pillar of social sciences and humanities

Understanding the causes, mechanisms and effects of challenges such as globalisation, digitalisation and inclusion, and deciding how to deal with them, implies that we have to acknowledge the relevance of the social, behavioural, cultural and historical context in which they become manifest. For instance, when talking about the role of algorithms, robots or social media, it is important to understand how these technologies influence the way we think and act. Globalisation not only influences our economy, but also touches upon the vitality of cities, especially in the context of migration and integration issues that are closely related to the process of globalisation.

However, looking at the way in which the social and behavioural sciences and the humanities are structured within Erasmus University Rotterdam, we see that organisational fragmentation obstructs vital efforts to scale up relevant resources, cross-fertilisation between these disciplines, and future opportunities in research and education. Furthermore, we see that policy-makers and funding organisations at the national and European level increasingly define the social sciences and humanities as an integral domain. Given these two considerations, the EUR aims to strengthen the profile and positioning of this domain within the EUR context by creating a fourth strong academic pillar for the social sciences & humanities, complementing the existing pillars of health, business & economics, and law. Building such a strong pillar, in terms of merging the two faculties, enables the EUR to improve its competitive position in national and international contexts and to present itself as an attractive university for students and faculty in the social sciences and humanities.

## Impact in the health field: collaboration between TU Delft, EUR and Erasmus MC

New technologies and digitalisation are having an increasing impact on social sciences, health and health care. The EUR needs to adapt its research and education to accommodate these trends, equipping our students to be tech-savvy digital natives. The social and medical disciplines need to incorporate these disruptive technologies, while the science and technical disciplines need the knowledge of the social disciplines for the successful implementation of their research results and innovations.

Delft University of Technology (TU Delft), Erasmus Medical Center and Erasmus University Rotterdam offer complementary disciplines that are essential for this development. To further broaden interdisciplinary research and education, TU Delft, Erasmus MC and EUR will strengthen their collaboration in education, research and impact activities in the field of health and health care, and will also be exploring the added value of closer scientific collaboration in a range of other fields. Examples include data science and artificial intelligence, entrepreneurship,

the energy transition in the Rotterdam region (and specifically the port area), the development of cities and urban regions, and man-machine interfaces (with a specific focus on robotics).

In 2019 we will explore opportunities for systematically expanding our existing partnership. The EUR will also continue shaping the existing ties between Leiden University, TU Delft and EUR (known as the LDE Alliance), as well as building on previous partnership initiatives such as Medical Delta.

## Fostering impact in the world

Over the last few decades, the world has grown ever more globalised. Erasmus University Rotterdam considers it our responsibility to give each and every student the best possible preparation for this changing global society and labour market. One of the ways we do so is by being international, diverse and inclusive, and by communicating those priorities to our community and beyond.

Erasmus University Rotterdam wants to offer all its students an international, diverse and inclusive educational climate so they will be ready for the globalised future. The ambition of maintaining a balanced makeup of nationalities and backgrounds within the international bachelor's and master's programmes is an important part of this. As part of its inclusivity policy, the EUR is outspokenly bilingual as an institution, using both Dutch and English in its education, research and community outreach – and the reasons for choosing a specific programme's primary language are transparent. We facilitate the integration of international students, faculty and staff and work to establish an inclusive culture in many ways, not least helping the international people in our community to improve their Dutch language skills.

Teaching and research are designed around open and ongoing cooperation in international, intercultural teams and networks. Erasmus University Rotterdam will continue to build up its profile in the European and international research landscape by pursuing a directed partner policy and by boosting visibility and advocacy in Brussels. The university will also be intensifying and expanding its contacts with universities abroad to create more opportunities for expanding mobility, in terms of academic credit as well as diplomas.

Attracting and retaining international talent is a requirement for quality in education and research. To that end, EUR will continue to invest in an attractive and inclusive work environment and to foster the growth and development of new talent throughout their careers at EUR. We promote the social integration of international staff within the academic community, in cooperation with relevant parties in Rotterdam.

As more and more international bachelor's, master's and PhD students opt for EUR programmes, there is an increasingly urgent need for suitable housing. EUR is working actively with relevant organisations, including the municipality of Rotterdam and local and regional housing cooperatives, to expand the range of student housing available. Improved access to housing also makes it more likely that talented international students will stay in the greater Rotterdam area after graduation.

## Fostering impact in the city and region

Our university is rooted in the multicultural metropolis of Rotterdam, a city that faces a range of issues and challenges that are relevant to today's world. This orientation is reflected in our student and staff population, which is diverse and multinational, and in the content of our curricula and research agendas, in which global societal issues take a prominent role. We are constantly working to creating a balanced, content-driven, international classroom based on a curriculum that incorporates international, intercultural, intended learning outcomes. And we will continue investing in research so that we can pursue this policy in an evidence-based environment.

Rotterdam is a dynamic city characterised by a can-do mentality. The culture of the city revolves around doing, achieving, experimenting and innovating. It is this attitude that drove enterprising Rotterdam residents to found the institutions that would later become Erasmus University Rotterdam. That same mentality and ambition continues to define the faculty and students at the EUR: not to just collect knowledge, but to put it into practice, to innovate, and to drive economic growth.

Rotterdam grew to its current size by building and developing a major shipping port that serves the entire world. That port, and the associated services and industry, have become the backbone of the regional economy. But Rotterdam's economy remains very much dependent

on fossil fuels, and its location in a river delta makes the city vulnerable to the impact of climate change. Both the city and the port have the ambition to lead the transition to a sustainable economy and to adapt to climate change.

Rotterdam has always been a city of immigration, and today is home to over a hundred different nationalities. It is also a city of significant socio-economic contrasts: differences between poverty and wealth, economic access, education and literacy, and mobility. Achieving social cohesion, building an inclusive city, and turning its richness of cultures into a strength all represent challenges, but are also inherent elements of the city's development.

In all these areas, EUR is working with the municipal authorities and with companies in the region. In pursuit of our mission, we will be increasing these partnerships over the coming months and years, integrating them into our activities, and taking them to the next level. We are committed to actively engaging with the city's most entrenched issues, Rotterdam's 'wicked problems', in our partnerships in education, research and commerce.

We will also be intensifying our role as a strategic partner in the regional economic board and various regional networks. In the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Alliance and in partnerships with regional parties, we will be participating in four regional transition deltas: Sustainable Society, Digital Society, Inclusive Society and Healthy Society. These themes correspond to the social agendas of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Horizon 2020 – Horizon Europe, the National Science Agenda and the Next Economy Roadmap.

## Fostering societal impact in our community

### **Diversity and inclusion**

Our university is committed to being welcoming, respectful and inclusive. We want to be a university that minimises implicit and explicit barriers, and eliminates any form of harassment that obstructs the full participation of everyone who is part of our community. We will continue to install



Erasmus

Universiteit  
Leiden

TU Delft

policies, procedures and practices that facilitate diversity and inclusiveness. These themes are incorporated into the very fabric of the EUR at all levels.

We will be seeking more diversity in our workforce – both faculty and staff. Appointing a higher number of women as professors continues to be a goal of the utmost importance; we are committed to have women in 25% of our full EUR professorships by 2025. Maintaining diversity also remains a priority, which means focusing not just on recruitment, but also on retention. That includes improving awareness of implicit bias by providing training for leadership, faculty and staff.

The EUR will also be addressing several institutional aspects that influence a climate of diversity and inclusion at our university. In addition to showcasing a wide array of positive role models by using smart, creative communication methods, we will also work on increasing both objective and subjective safety by improving the institutional response to incidents of harassment and intolerance. We will consistently be making every effort to create and maintain a safe environment for all.

In education and student engagement, we will focus on activities to ensure equal educational opportunities and appropriate support for prospective and enrolled students, drawing on diverse cultural background experiences as well as studying non-Western perspectives. We want to provide a platform for regular debate and dialogue about related challenges on campus and in society. Moreover, we will identify, support, and initiate research with the explicit aim of fostering policies and goals related to diversity and inclusion.

## **Student wellbeing**

One of Erasmus University Rotterdam's priorities is the emotional and behavioural wellbeing of its students. This is why we foster an inclusive campus that provides a sense of social safety, and make every effort to take early and pro-active action, in all aspects of student welfare, to inform and support students, preventing serious problems from arising wherever possible. In doing so, we take our duty of care for our students seriously, focusing on their experience as students at our campus. With this as our priority, student wellbeing will be an important theme for the coming years and an integral element of our strategy.

We will be using research data to support behavioural health among our students and to ensure that we continue to apply evidence-based approaches to interventions. The university is working with the faculties to create a pro-active, integrated and visible framework on student wellbeing. Within this framework, we identify three aspects of student wellbeing: psychological wellbeing, community & social safety, and health & lifestyle.

Erasmus University Rotterdam actively aims to facilitate students as soon as they arrive at the EUR, or even earlier. Central and local introduction and embarking programmes are arranged for freshmen students, and a range of 'soft landing' activities is organised for international students. Students are also being familiarised with the Diversity & Inclusion office, and there is a Pre-Academic Programme that helps future students prepare for studying at EUR. Beyond this, the EUR already has a network of central and local student facilitators: study advisors, student deans, student psychologists, confidential advisors, tutors, buddies, etc. More staff has been allocated for supporting students with a disability. Through interventions, we are actively working to make student wellbeing a topic of open discussions, awareness campaigns, and early identification by teaching faculty and mentors. Next to this, we will implement a pro-active blended stepped-prevention approach, so tools are available for all students to avoid developing mental problems, and to increase emotional resiliency. Further, we are creating a student meeting place that is openly accessible to all international and Dutch students regardless of cultural background, ability or disability, gender, or sexual orientation.

To support these efforts, transparency is needed by defining clear performance indicators wherever possible. In addition, we will participate in relevant national university networks, and develop strong partnerships with external agencies to support student wellbeing that fall outside our scope.

## Friendly and safe atmosphere, ambitious work environment

To put its mission into practice, the EUR is focusing strongly on attracting, retaining and developing talent. Erasmus University Rotterdam aims to offer its faculty, staff, students and visitors a challenging, inspiring, safe and pleasant environment in which they can study and work. In line with

our vision on what it means to be a good employer, and our awareness of how important it is to have passionate, motivated employees, a focus on physical and social health and safety is essential. That is why we stand for a safe, supportive and healthy work environment.

Working at the EUR is a demanding position. The university has soaring ambitions, and the passion and dedication of our people are similarly strong. The EUR is an organisation where competition (and therefore also high-paced work and pressure to perform) will always be part of the game. Our organisation needs to have facilities and policies in place to maintain a healthy balance. In response, the EUR has devised a comprehensive plan to combat work-related stress, focusing on solving systematic causes of high-pressure situations and empowering people to be resilient, capable of handling stressful situations at work and rising to the challenge. Valuing team performance is seen as a way to reduce stress. The EUR aims to create a work and study environment where both objective and subjective safety have been increased. Harassment and intolerance will not be tolerated on campus. Friendly interaction with co-workers will be prioritised, with a strong focus on integrity, respect, and awareness of others. The goal is to respond appropriately to incidents involving harassment or intolerance, both informally and in a formal procedure. We call that a culture of care.

To that end, the EUR is taking steps to create a safe environment where people can work and study, providing a coherent system to support that. This system includes a network of confidential advisors, the appointment of an *'Ombudsfunctionaris'* to resolve disputes, and access to social workers and a Chief Diversity Officer, as well as a psychologist specifically for PhD researchers. Our aim is to ensure that issues and problems are addressed beyond the individual level, enabling us to learn from mistakes so we can recognise and resolve ineffective and harmful patterns within our own organisation.

## Alumni as part of our community

At Erasmus University Rotterdam, we view alumni as part of our community. The university is proud of its alumni and cherishes the bond we have with them. Many of these people are successful entrepreneurs and leaders in the public and private domain. It is important to ensure that our alumni are informed about the university and its mission and feel

inspired to support us as we seek to address the major global societal challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century through our education, research and engagement. If we are effective in maintaining connections and inspiring pride in and affinity with their university, alumni will support us with their advice, advocacy, network contacts and philanthropic donations.

At the Dies Natalis of 2017, we engaged our alumni with the mission as we publicly launched our first comprehensive engagement and fundraising initiative: the Challenge Accepted Campaign. The university is currently working in partnership with the Erasmus Trust Fund to continue to build on our early successes. In the coming years, we want to take a major step forward in our relationship with our alumni. We will strengthen and facilitate connections through an Alumni Engagement Strategy, expand our international alumni activities, and develop an Alumni Benefits programme that includes lifelong learning. We will also continue to engage our current student cohorts with our alumni with the aim of enabling opportunities for career advice, supporting the employability agenda, and promoting student recruitment. Effective alumni engagement programmes must be mutually beneficial and will require long-term investments. A master plan is being created to develop and deliver a first-class alumni engagement programme that is rewarding for alumni and supports the strategic ambitions of the university.



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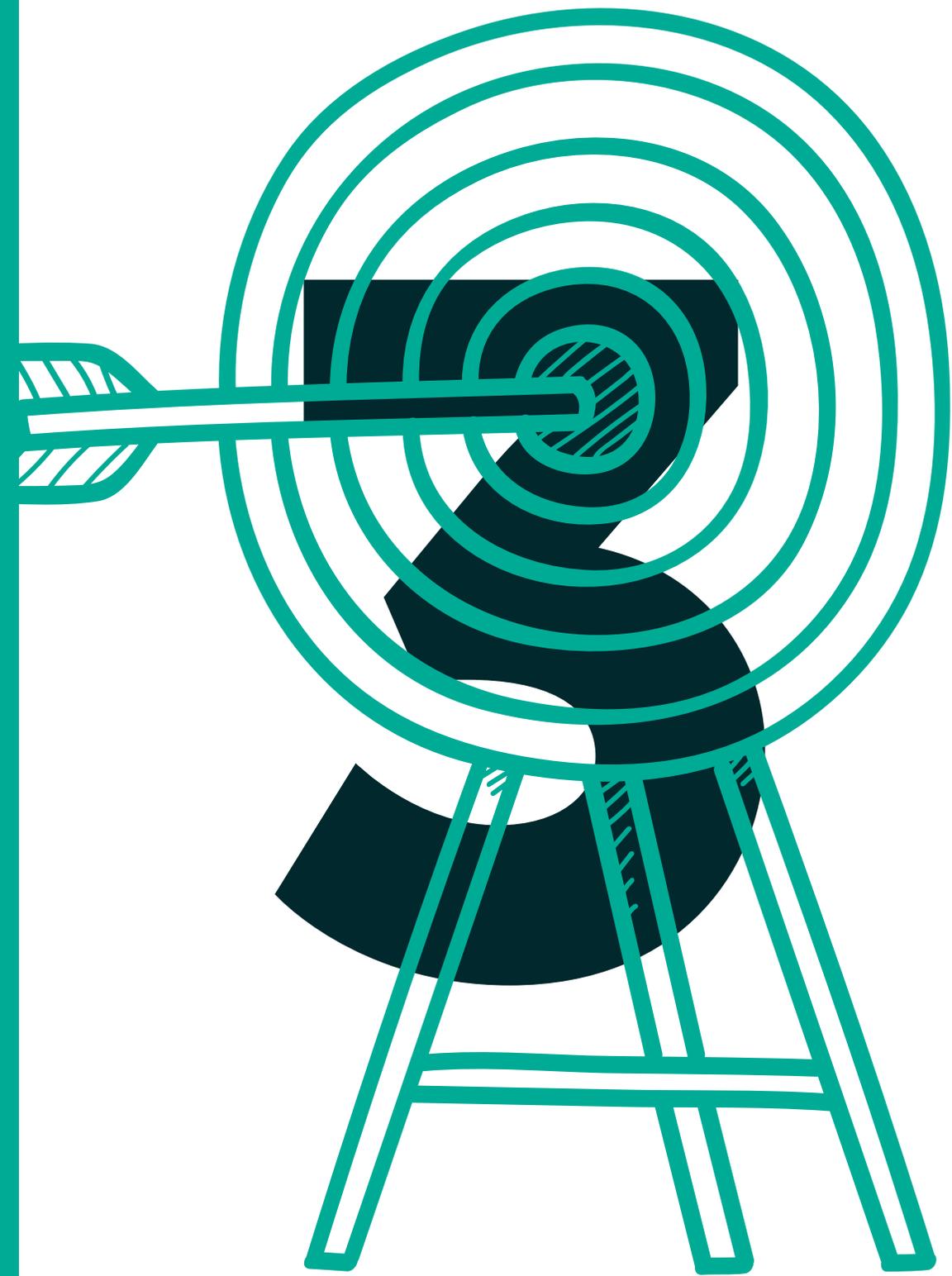
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# Our ambitions



# Our strategic priorities towards 2024

With a renewed mission to create positive societal impact and a defined profile, a common set of Erasmian values, and an inclusive, bottom-up approach to our strategy design and implementation process, we are confident and ready to work on our strategic priorities for the years to come. We will do so as one community, consisting of academic faculty as well as professional services staff. We can only offer excellent education and research when our support achieves a high standard of quality. We defined seven priorities that will guide the execution of our mission leading up to 2024.<sup>5</sup>



## Fostering our societal impact identity

We aim to be widely recognised as a responsible, reliable partner with a unique profile based on our core disciplines and focused on societal impact, both locally and globally.



## Ensuring our education is future-oriented

We create impact in our education by educating our students to become the change leaders of tomorrow – in both the public and the private sector, within their own work environment and beyond.

<sup>5</sup> These themes were defined in our Strategic Framework *Working toward Strategy 2024*, July 2018.



## **Embedding excellent academic research in society**

We make an important contribution to solving societal issues through excellent academic research conducted responsibly.



## **Taking responsibility on sustainable development**

We embrace the concept of sustainable development as a global footprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. We want to contribute to a sustainable society by critical and dedicated thinking, teaching and action in research, education and operations, as well as in our partnerships.



## **Investing in our people for the future**

Erasmian talent management aims to bring out the in best in all employees, allowing our people to realise their full potential at work, within the context of an ever-changing world.



## **Stepping up our professional services**

Erasmus University Rotterdam provides state-of-the-art, pro-active and adaptable professional services as an essential force behind excellent education and research.



## **Making the most of our interdisciplinary potential**

We will build on our existing interdisciplinary efforts and encourage further interdisciplinary alignment and collaboration in our education and research.

This last priority is a key element in our mission and strategy. It is one of our core aspirations; it is a simple fact that solving complex societal problems – creating impact – requires interdisciplinarity. We use the terms interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity in our plan, knowing that the interpretation of these terms is complex.

*Intermezzo*

**What is interdisciplinarity?**

“The notion of interdisciplinarity is a difficult one, as many related concepts exist with various interpretations: multidisciplinarity, crossdisciplinarity, pluridisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity. ...These forms of non-disciplinary knowledge (...) can be seen as ways of combining elements from various disciplines, as an interaction between two or more disciplinary practices in order to answer practical questions and to solve practical problems. ... The basic difference between the various manifestations of non-disciplinarity is the level of integration.”  
*(Van den Besselaar & Heimeriks, 2001, p. 708).*

We need to significantly increase our efforts to create positive impact on society, above and beyond current efforts to excel in research and to provide excellent education. Therefore, we need to increase interdisciplinarity in our research and education, while maintaining our solid foundation of monodisciplinary expertise. The Erasmus Initiatives already express our ambition to create impact and supplement our solid monodisciplinary foundation with interdisciplinary accomplishments, and we will be building on these strengths. In the field of education, design thinking will offer an innovative way to implement our interdisciplinary ambitions.

The Interdisciplinarity pillar influences all of our strategic ambitions and activities. In this chapter, each strategic priority is presented as a theme. Starting with a long-term aspiration for each theme, we then define strategic goals and action planning, and explain the connection: how the theme will contribute to impact and what it requires in terms of interdisciplinary enablers. That is why interdisciplinarity is not a separate theme, but is instead embedded in all the other themes to underline the importance of an integral approach.



The Erasmus MC teddybear hospital



# Fostering our societal impact identity

Through our education and research, we aim at strengthening our society for all. This means that we strive to engage the community at all levels of society. Solving complex societal problems, we need to broaden and deepen our knowledge about human motivation and behaviour, basic societal drivers and systems, and economic models, all from the perspective of how this knowledge contributes to positive societal impact. Our deep and demonstrable commitment to impact will be visible in strong results for communities: in our region, in our country and worldwide.

An interdisciplinary approach requires researchers to step outside their comfort zone. Solid interdisciplinary work can only be achieved by building on a strong foundation of monodisciplinary knowledge. It should therefore be emphasised that monodisciplinary research will continue to be a major priority at the university.

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We aim to be widely recognised as a responsible, reliable partner with a unique profile based on our core disciplines and focused on societal impact, both locally and globally.



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## Strategic goals



- 1. Accommodating impact:** We will improve the conditions for creating positive societal impact: how we communicate about our impact-oriented activities, how we enable our staff to work on impact, how we measure our impact in meaningful and responsible ways, and how we ensure sufficient support for the strategy.
- 2. Advancing impact:** All our activities regarding education, research and engagement can be more relevant to society if our overall mind-set is more impact-oriented. We will provide a stronger focus on creative problem-solving in our education, more emphasis on relevant and engaged research, and a dedicated Public Engagement Strategy for the university as a whole.
- 3. Accelerating impact:** We are developing a uniquely Erasmian way to make impact flourish. We make intelligent connections between different areas of expertise and build networks. Knowledge co-creation and entrepreneurship are key concepts.

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## Translation to results: action planning



### **Goal 1. Accommodating impact**

#### **Defining the core concept**

- » We will define the concept of impact in a way appropriate to the identity of the EUR.

*Intermezzo*

**What is impact?**

Impact is central to our mission. However, the definition of this core concept (achieved through research or education) is still evolving within the academic world. The way in which societal impact is measured is also subject to ongoing exploration and development. Multiple definitions of impact are currently in use in an international academic context, varying between scientific fields and academic disciplines. In order to arrive at quantitative and qualitative metrics for measuring impact, we will be exploring prevailing views and best practices before determining the impact assessment framework for the EUR.

## **Designing communication and branding**

- » We will build a clear brand identity based on our core disciplines and oriented towards societal impact.
- » We will communicate impact more clearly, and make the expertise, research and impact of our researchers more visible and easier to find, not least by providing more support and tools for professional science communication.

## **Measuring impact**

- » In order to substantiate our impact and to enable assessment and comparison, we will adopt a learning approach for producing substantiated impact narratives based on responsible metrics (qualitative and quantitative), followed by a generalised protocol for impact measurement developed through experimentation and development within the faculties.
- » We will initiate research at Erasmus University Rotterdam to explore our own impact. To that end, an EUR impact agenda will be created.

## **Integrity and transparency**

As the university pursues collaboration and co-creation with civil society organisations, the public, and key figures in politics, transparency and integrity will become increasingly important. From the perspective of society as a whole, EUR is able to maintain the highest level of trust and credibility. We will focus on compliance with the Netherlands Code of

Conduct for Research Integrity 2018 of the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (in Dutch: VSNU) by providing regular training for current faculty and staff and for new employees. We will provide transparency and accountability to our stakeholders via the EUR Corporate Social Responsibility Statement and Annual Impact Reports.

## ***Goal 2. Advancing impact***

### **Engaged education**

We will facilitate student engagement, for example by incorporating co-creation of solutions for real-life wicked problems into the curriculum. A facility will assist our external partners and our staff in matching supply and demand for student contributions. Graduates will then create positive impact in their work, in their further studies, and in their personal life.

### **Public engagement strategy**

We will establish a Public Engagement Strategy with the aim of becoming the local forum for dialogue and reflection on key public issues and the preferred partner that the public turns to for reflection, critical thinking, and expertise. This strategy will promote faculty, staff and student engagement with societal issues.

## ***Goal 3. Accelerating impact***

### **Ecosystem & incubator programme**

We will develop an innovator/accelerator programme: the EUR Incubator Hub. The programme will facilitate start-ups created by students and spin-off ventures based on our own intellectual property. The central concept is to replace the profitability goal at the core of mainstream businesses with an impact mission focused on enacting positive societal and/or environmental change. Its stated aim will be to support students and staff interested in launching a social enterprise or related initiative, designed as a customisable programme for entrepreneurial ideas that blends know-how with societal change.



## Goals

1. Building on the existing Erasmus Initiatives (Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity, Smarter Choices for Better Health and Vital Cities, Vital Citizens) and establishing a fourth initiative to address the societal impact of disruptive technologies (digitisation/datafication).

## Actions:

- » The agenda of the existing Erasmus Initiatives has to reach all faculties and should allow for initiatives to percolate upwards from the bottom.
- » We will be actively looking for ways to enable integration of knowledge. This allows us to make connections across our disciplines in order to explore complex problems and design and develop effective solutions. In this way, we can build bridges between disciplines, faculty members and knowledge. This approach allows us to identify challenges for interdisciplinary solutions.
- » We will use the incubator/ecosystem to empower initiatives.





# Ensuring our education is future-oriented

What will education at Erasmus University Rotterdam look like in 2024 and beyond? If we ask the students, they're hoping it will prepare them for the future, not just in terms of what they learn, but also how. Our students want to learn about wicked problems that affect their local and global communities, and understand how these complex issues can be studied and addressed. Our aim is to involve students as co-creators and 'critical citizens', focusing on interdisciplinarity and inclusiveness in an international context, and equipping our teachers to do so.

We can ensure that we work with students and the community to provide education that is aligned with future labour market demand. Digital technologies will be incorporated into educational structures, facilitating continuous feedback for students, group work and peer learning, and communication with external stakeholders. Disruptive innovations that are experimental, even non evidence-based, will be encouraged in order to actively develop and design new approaches towards 2024.

Our students will be educated to pair critical and creative thinking with solid academic knowledge and skills, supported by communities of practice. We will confront them with real-time societal challenges during their studies, and teach them the skills they need to address these challenges effectively – not only metacognitive skills supplemented by ‘soft’ skills (empathy, self-efficacy, collaboration), but also the transformative competencies to shape our future: creating new value, reconciling tensions and dilemmas, and taking responsibility.

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We create impact in our education by educating our students to become the change leaders of tomorrow – in both the public and the private sector, within their own work environment and beyond.



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## Strategic goals



- 1. *Engaged and challenged by societal changes:*** We are creating an environment where students feel engaged and challenged by societal challenges from the Rotterdam region as well as international contexts during their studies. The Rotterdam region and beyond will be used as a living lab. In this way, we will strengthen the impact of our education by educating our students to become the change leaders of tomorrow.
- 2. *Personal learnership, personal leadership:*** Changing demands require students to be self-aware and critical in their personal and professional development. To teach what needs to be preached, we will train students to become critical, creative problem-solvers, enabling students to deal with undetermined or vague problems,

identifying incongruities that prompt them to first explore exactly what the problem is. We help students to be personal learners, to build professional and academic competencies, and to lead and direct themselves and cooperate with others. Their involvement in educational innovation is a part of this broad development.

- 3. *Becoming an Erasmian:*** Building (academic) careers will remain the primary task of any university, but we also need to share the importance of freedom of mind, critical thinking and the ability to understand different standpoints. We educate students to become Erasmians. The challenges we face require an interdisciplinary, inclusive, critical, entrepreneurial and pioneering mind-set.
- 4. *Erasmian education:*** We develop Erasmian educators into educational leaders: inspiring team players, surrounded by interdisciplinary learning teams consisting of educational professionals, learning technicians and content specialists and supported by advanced tools. We will also make use of our diverse community of highly motivated students as co-creators: we will engage them in designing our education. We will give room to research in education and focus on creating impact, which will make education more fun (and more curiosity-driven). Complex innovations designed to improve educational quality will not be approached with one single-minded method.
- 5. *Personal and personalised learning:*** We will make room for personal and personalised learning by investing in technology. We provide a toolkit for all students to enhance personal development and growth, including an instrument (still requiring further development) that enables students to create their own personal learning path.
- 6. *The inestimable value of alumni:*** Alumni can help us achieve our goals in terms of impact and education. They are our ambassadors, participants in our curricula, and our friendly source of constructive criticism on education in the context of quality. We ensure that alumni are part of our academic community, engaged as stakeholders and co-creators.
- 7. *The importance of lifelong learning:*** In creating a learning society, lifelong learning is fundamental to meet the challenges of economic and societal change and sustainable development that we face today. Lifelong learning serves Erasmus alumni by providing extraordinary resources throughout their professional lives.

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## Translation to results: action planning



### ***Goal 1. Engaged and challenged by societal change***

- » We will entice our students to feel engaged and challenged in small-scale educational programmes, employing their ability to think critically and creatively. We will also teach our students to successfully tackle societal challenges. We will consistently do so within all our bachelor's and master's programmes, and through the establishment of a Design Initiative.
- » This initiative will be a vehicle for interdisciplinary education, where students and teachers learn to contribute to solving complex problems in their own way. They will develop their own methodology to measure impact.
- » The problems that our students grapple with could be generated in various ways: stakeholders can present their issues in an online environment, teachers can guide students by identifying valid problems connected to their academic research, or students can submit projects and select their own partners.
- » The Design Initiative is a hotbed for innovation through experimenting and accelerating.
- » Student-directed learning processes will be supplemented by small groups of students working closely with academic faculty members. Each student will define a personal plan or goal, and more students and courseware will be linked to flexible routes.
- » Design thinking requires teams whose members have specialist knowledge and skills, supplemented by the ability to integrate different disciplines and to be open to themes and viewpoints outside their own knowledge domain.
- » Creating an incubator/ecosystem to empower young and first-time entrepreneurs.

### ***Goal 2. Personal learning, personal leadership***

We will invest in the personal and professional development of our students. We do so by reaching out to students that are first-generation academic learners, by helping students focus on their personal goals in their study career, by providing them with courses and guidance on



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Institute of  
Social Studies

personal and professional skills, and by offering them career orientation towards the end of their studies. We actively involve alumni to achieve the right focus on personal and professional guidance. Implementation of this theme will be accelerated with support from the Quality Funds provided by the Ministry of Education. Together with participatory bodies, all faculties have joined forces to develop initiatives for implementing activities within the theme of personal and professional development.

### ***Goal 3. Becoming an Erasmian***

Being an Erasmian: every academic career starts with an immersion in our Erasmian values, which will be intensified and internalised along the way.

### ***Goal 4. Erasmian education***

Partly with the help of the Quality Funds and in alignment with our strategy, we will continue investing in educational leadership. We will make room for our faculty to do what they are best at: challenging our students to become critical and academic thinkers. With the help of the Quality Funds we will invest in the improvement of educational leadership within our faculties. We will develop a model to value educational performance. Furthermore, we will invest in the unbundling of educational tasks by appointing learning innovators to help redesign challenging education, by professionalising tutor competencies vital to our model of small-scale education, and by redesigning support structures if needed.

### ***Goal 5. Personal and personalised learning***

We will invest more in blended learning to support student preferences and to enhance the quality of the academic debate. We will invest in personalised learning to meet student demands and personal development goals. We will continue investing in giving feedback to students, both by making use of learning analytics and by investing in digital formative assessment.

## **Goal 6. The inestimable value of alumni**

We will forge new avenues to engage alumni in the university: as co-creators in impact design, through student recruitment, by creating internship opportunities, and through advocacy and mentoring.

### **Investing in quality: the Quality Agreements for Higher Education**

The Ministry of Education challenged us to co-create an investment plan aimed at educational quality leading us to 2024. Relying on input from our University Council and the support of the academic community, we designed a quality and innovation calendar for Erasmus University, addressing our major strategic focal points.

By working with a grassroots approach from the bottom up and by periodically sharing insights within our community, we designed a quality and innovation plan that will help students to work on their personal development, gain control of stress-related issues, and improve their skills.

We will provide students with state-of-the-art, challenging and – above all – small-scale education with a focus on an integrative academic debate inside the classroom and digital tools to be able to prepare topics outside the classroom.

## **Goal 7. The importance of lifelong learning**

We will develop a vision and approach to lifelong learning.

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## Interdisciplinarity & education



At Erasmus University Rotterdam, we address complex societal challenges that do not always align neatly with individual academic disciplines, focusing on societal impact through collaborative research and education. We aspire to build on our interdisciplinary efforts to date and to encourage further cooperation in education and research. This aspiration is in line with the wide-ranging consortia increasingly required by funding regimes and the shift in student interests towards interdisciplinary curricula.

1. As a strongly interdisciplinary, diverse and international university, we focus on societal impact through collaborative research and education. The EUR maintains a solid foundation in monodisciplinary research and education, increasingly supplemented by interdisciplinary collaborations. Interdisciplinarity is an enabler; it presumes and contributes to inclusiveness.
2. Interdisciplinary collaboration at the EUR is currently organised from within and between the faculties. The experiences in these collaborations show indisputably that our interdisciplinary goals cannot and will not be achieved without significant organisational interventions that eliminate barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Actions:**

- » Strengthening the support structure for interdisciplinarity in master's-level education.
- » Removing bottlenecks in the academic calendar across the university to stimulate interdisciplinary collaboration and student access.

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## Implementation: some examples



### ***Design Initiative*** (Goal 1 & 2)

Scientists are increasingly asked to help solve complex societal problems, and design methods are one of the ways we can do so. We will scale up and professionalise existing EUR initiatives that use design methods to generate solutions, translate academic knowledge into products and services, and arrange societal validation of scientific insights. In addition, we will set up an interdisciplinary design facility, linked to the Incubator Hub, to provide the infrastructure to acquire research funding, develop expertise on impact by design, and facilitate collaboration between all faculties and relevant partners. The design facility will also develop educational modules for faculties seeking to train their students in design, and explore options for design-based programmes.



Caps, stoles and gowns in the Koopgoot as part of a graduation ceremony at de Doelen



# Embedding excellent academic research in society

We aim to foster our excellence in individual academic disciplines, conducting curiosity-driven research which is embedded in society and engaging actively with local and global communities. Our research programme focuses on the entire spectrum of fundamental, applied and practice-based research.

In doing so, we aspire to achieve top-20 positions in European rankings and to be a preferred university for young top talents worldwide.

The EUR wants its excellent research to have the greatest possible societal impact. This maximised impact is achieved by means of cooperating with societal stakeholders, developing new ways of designing solutions to societal challenges, and contributing to the mission-driven research of the National Research Agenda (NWA) and the European agenda Horizon Europe 2021-2027.

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We make an important contribution to solving societal issues through excellent academic research conducted responsibly.



### **The Erasmus Initiatives**

The Erasmus Initiatives are three ambitious focal areas for research that streamline our academic activities to increase the societal and economic impact of our work. The three themes of the Erasmus Initiatives – *Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity; Smarter Choices for Better Health; Vital Cities, Vital Citizens* – are a good reflection of the EUR's academic and societal strengths. These themes will be complemented by an initiative focused on the societal impact of disruptive technologies (*digitisation/datafication*).

These initiatives express our ambition to create positive impact and supplement our solid monodisciplinary foundation with interdisciplinary accomplishments. The connection and interaction between science and society, between theory and practice, are part of our DNA. Talented researchers who enter into international collaborations with an open mind move science forward. The Erasmus Initiatives join forces for science that matters.

### **Investment in excellent research**

Research is not a secure objective; we need to continue making substantial investments and maintain this as a major priority. A strong commitment to academic excellence is needed for the EUR to build its position as a premier research university in Europe.

The first step in shaping our strategy for research involved answering a simple but crucial question: What is research excellence and how do we measure it? We have mapped the scientific excellence of our disciplines in nine different ways.

We will focus on investing in fundamental drivers of research excellence and academic reputation. These include human capital and excellent research support, grant performance, and guidance for PhDs in moving to interesting scientific and non-scientific positions in the world.

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## Strategic goals



- 1. Attracting top researchers worldwide:** We will invest in superior research groups and research disciplines to achieve top-20 positions in European rankings and to be a preferred university for early academic career top talents worldwide. This requires a strong position as an excellent employer, so we are working on enhancing our appeal as an employer and on strengthening our brand. In addition, we will invest in collaboration in the intersection between medical care, technology and social sciences.
- 2. Superior support for researchers:** We will enable researchers to make optimal use of their talent and achieve excellent results. Our focus will be on the very best facilities for our researchers, supplementing the good facilities already in place, such as Erasmus Research Services (ERS).
- 3. Open and responsible science:** We will embrace the goals and approaches of open and responsible science. That means sharing and using knowledge at an early stage in the research process, allowing others to collaborate and contribute, and maintaining a commitment to free availability of our data and, where possible, our notes and research processes. Our researchers are guided by the principles of research integrity and the ensuing guidelines for good research practices (including the Code of Conduct for Research Integrity). Naturally, the EUR will fulfil its institutional duty of care.

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## Translation to results: action planning



### **Goal 1. Facilitating high-performing research groups**

#### **We facilitate research groups and research disciplines on an ongoing basis:**

- » Helping researchers to do top-level research. This requires investing in impact and teamwork, and supplementing our solid foundation in monodisciplinary research with an increased focus on interdisciplinarity. Quality research increases our appeal for top researchers.

- » Attracting good researchers requires a solid employer reputation. We will aim to further improve our reputation in order to attract top researchers from all over the world.
- » Facilitating faculties and departments in improving their performance aimed at PhDs. We will embrace a model in which we supervise and train talented people for a better future in science or in society. Superior support and an attractive model for coaching will help us become a world-class university for talented early academic career researchers all over the world.
- » Investing substantially in disciplines which already perform in the European top-20 and global top-50 positions in the rankings.

## **Goal 2. The right support for researchers**

### **We build effective and accessible research support services:**

- » We improve service levels, so that every scientist working at EUR has access to top-quality support across all stages of the research cycle. In order to achieve this, services will be more customer-oriented and support will be arranged close to the researchers.
- » Development of an Erasmian approach to research. We will develop a research design that provides the conditions for creating positive impact. Moreover, we will earmark the money intended for validation research.

## **Goal 3. Open and responsible science**

### **We take steps towards open science:**

- » We will provide best available financial estimates for organising Open Science (open access & open scholarship), Responsible Science (research integrity and internal review boards), and GDPR <sup>6</sup>-Compliant Science (at the level of the scientific study).
- » We will work towards providing further safeguards for an independent research culture of integrity, in which open and critical dialogue is an inseparable aspect.

<sup>6</sup> General Data Protection Regulation, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2016/679/oj>. Harmonised into Dutch law as the *Algemene Verordening Gegevensbescherming*.

- » We will also move towards integration of the support structure, research support tools, and research culture. To do so, we will build the support structure in open, responsible, collaborative GDPR-compliant science with research support instruments, and engage in a communication, awareness and training programme all in one.

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## Interdisciplinarity & research



At Erasmus University Rotterdam, we address complex societal challenges that often do not align neatly with individual academic disciplines, focusing on societal impact through collaborative research and education. We aspire to build on our interdisciplinary efforts to date and encourage further cooperation in education and research. This aspiration is in line with the wide-ranging consortia increasingly required by funding regimes and the shift in student interests towards interdisciplinary curricula.

1. As a strongly interdisciplinary, international and diverse university, we will supplement our solid foundation in monodisciplinary knowledge with an increased focus on interdisciplinarity, pursuing societal impact through research. Interdisciplinarity is an enabler that presumes and contributes to inclusiveness – which can be seen as the outcome of dialogue between researchers from different backgrounds, focused on the particular challenge at hand, whether it involves research, education or impact.
2. We will strengthen a climate in which there is room and appreciation for the extra effort required for an interdisciplinary approach. We will use concrete incentives to stimulate interdisciplinary work.
3. We will focus on effective alignment with existing and new funding schemes and collaboration, eliminating the barriers to interdisciplinary collaboration (e.g. differences in financial reporting, accounting and accessibility).

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## Implementation: some examples



### ***Investing in strong research groups and strong research disciplines (Goal 1)***

- » Invest in subjective drivers of academic status, e.g. incoming and outgoing PhD placement networks.
- » Focus on selective, high-quality publication instead of raw quantity, targeting a selective set of prestigious, internationally acclaimed journals defined per discipline. Support this focus by incentivising publication in those journals, ascribing a higher status to researchers if they manage to publish in these more competitive outlets.
- » Use evidence-based evaluation to track and analyse the academic performance of EUR disciplines in terms of publication, citation, grant performance, ranking, and placement success.
- » Mobilise research talent to utilise its full potential, working with talent management to identify these researchers, ensuring that diverse talent receives recognition, is valued and has equal chances for promotion. This requires personalised and focused attention by research directors and grant officers.



# Taking responsibility on sustainable development

The world is knocking at our door. Society demands expertise, knowledge and collaboration on sustainability. The leaders of the future are being trained here, and we can feed their growth and intensify our societal impact by setting clear objectives obtained from society, and by supporting individual and project-based sustainability initiatives. Aiming for societal impact means making real choices. We cannot achieve societal impact without considering the economic and environmental consequences of those choices. The question we have asked ourselves is: what role do we seek to adopt in society? The answer is clear: we want to incorporate sustainability into the very DNA of the university.

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We embrace the concept of sustainable development as a global footprint for dignity, peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and in the future. We want to contribute to a sustainable society by critical and dedicated thinking, teaching, and action in research, education and operations, as well as in our partnerships.



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## Goals



- 1. Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals:** We want to contribute to addressing and solving the major challenges society is facing, as defined in the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As a university, we can use our ability to invest and innovate to realise the SDGs. Through our activities, we contribute not only to the overall objective, but also to a specific SDG; carefully considering which goals we select will make our contribution more meaningful.
- 2. Education for sustainability:** We believe it is important that we support our students, faculty and communities in taking action for sustainability, based on values we identify ourselves with and acting on a true motivation – not only on a personal level, but also in interaction with others and within a community; not only at this moment, but also in the future. We aim to create awareness on sustainability issues and knowledge, and to challenge our students in critical thinking: the Erasmian way. That means also transforming knowledge into action with innovations and solutions towards sustainable ways of living.
- 3. Sustainability as a prerequisite:** Sustainability is a fundamental cornerstone and an important precondition for the development of the campus and its facilities: our buildings on campus, the food sold and served at the university, the design of the working environment and the outdoor areas.

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## Translation to results: action planning



### **Goal 1. Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**

- » The SDGs cover a wide range of issues that need to be addressed. We will develop a plan and vision on how to integrate the chosen SDGs into our strategy and reports. Therefore, we will look into the goals that are most relevant and most impactful for our university, so we can integrate these goals in our strategy. In order to make sure we stay on track with contribution, we need to define performance indicators to measure our progress.
- » We will facilitate interconnections between expertise and research, ensure that research acts as an accelerator to help EUR become a more sustainable university, and establish an effective connection to the Erasmus University Rotterdam brand identity and marketing.
- » We will foster interdisciplinary sustainability research by:
  - » Finding a way to bring together interdisciplinary research on sustainability;
  - » Disseminating and sharing knowledge about sustainability, for example by organising a sustainability research summit;
  - » Devising a facility to review sustainability impact and research.

### **Goal 2. Education for sustainability**

- » Sustainability will be embedded in the onboarding for new students, and in due course also in the existing programmes.
- » We will also seek to support student sustainability initiatives by providing more recognition and awarding certificates.
- » We aim to embed sustainable development in our entire education portfolio.

### **Goal 3. Sustainability as a prerequisite**

- » We will conduct research on our current ecological footprint in order to determine our starting point; from there, we will formulate feasible and accountable goals.

- » We will link the campus itself to sustainability research at the EUR, experimenting in collaboration with partners who have relevant expertise and resources, and acting as a living lab for applied research and impact measurement.
- » We foster and facilitate support for an active and engaged community with visible sustainability projects and initiatives.

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## Implementation: some examples



### ***Education for sustainability*** (Goal 2)

We will facilitate critical, entrepreneurial researchers in developing interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research to address sustainability challenges. In doing so, we will facilitate interconnections between expertise and research, ensure that research acts as an accelerator for a more sustainable university, and establish a strong connection to the EUR brand identity and marketing.



Woudestein campus garden

We will launch an interdisciplinary *sustainable research platform*, fuelled from all faculties and beyond. Its core mission will be to develop, stimulate and execute relevant research about sustainable development. We will emphasise joint publications and applied research. In addition to promoting the visibility of existing initiatives, the platform will act as a sustainability accelerator for the Erasmus Initiatives, and an enabler for student initiatives with an evidence-based academic background. The goal here is to achieve a vibrant, self-supporting research community for sustainability by 2024.

To that end, we will also organise a *sustainable research summit*: an annual conference on sustainability where research results are presented, challenges are addressed, and goals are set for the next year. A Sustainable Innovation Challenge will be organised during the event.

Finally, our efforts to improve sustainability in other areas can be supported by relevant research at EUR. We will establish a *review board for sustainability impact and research*. Comprising a small group of scientists, stakeholders and specialists, the review board will monitor developments in the sustainability strategy and report to the Executive Board accordingly.





# Investing in our people for the future

We can only achieve our mission when we are able to retain employees who have talent and enthusiasm. We will embrace this course together, as a unified community, because our people are the key to success in research, education and engagement. Contributing their talent, passion and motivation, our people make the difference in a world-class environment. At Erasmus University Rotterdam, we are one community of academic faculty and professional staff, relying on each other to maintain our position as a top-ranking institution. To fulfil this ambition, we must increase our appeal for international faculty and staff and redesign our approach to attracting, retaining and developing talent in excellent educators, researchers and professional services staff. Erasmus University Rotterdam aims to be an employer where all employees, regardless of their ethnic or religious background or sexual orientation, have equal opportunities to enter our organisation, grow and develop.

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Erasmian talent management aims to bring out the best in all employees, allowing our people to realise their full potential at work, within the context of an ever-changing world.



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## Goals



- 1. Leadership:** Leaders play an essential role in developing strong, effective teams that are inclusive and diverse, and foster a healthy and positive working environment. We support leaders in their effectiveness in developing high-performing, inclusive teams and fostering a healthy and positive working environment. We are aware of the outflow of talent coming up through the organisation, as well as the ambitions and talents of our current leaders; this anticipatory awareness enables us to create a pipeline of potential successors over time.
- 2. Career and talent development:** It is vitally important to explore, encourage and unlock the diverse potential of all our talented staff. In doing so, we position people within our own organisation to embark on the next challenge in their career. Employees need room to develop (in terms of time, budget and facilities), and they need our support, trust and back-up during development. Agility will be key, and this core quality will be prioritised in our workforce.
- 3. Employer appeal:** We are committed to providing a challenging and positive working environment for everyone, based on a clearly communicated brand identity: a working environment that provides an open and transparent culture. We offer personal and professional development for all employees and a perspective that is in line with current developments within the organisation and beyond. We will convert this into a strong employer brand. Moreover, we are committed to being an inclusive, equal-opportunity employer.

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## Translation to results: action planning



### **Goal 1. Leadership**

- » We will intensify our focus on spotting and developing leadership talent, operating on the basis of an awareness of people's motives. Our starting point will be the relationship between people's motivations and the identity and core values of the EUR.
- » Related to leadership positions, we will adopt a strategic approach to talent management, identifying strategic positions and building programmes around them. In doing so, we will also identify people who can help a team flourish.
- » Talent portfolios will be developed that outline the desired leadership values, skills and competences.

### **Goal 2. Career and talent development**

- » We are creating differentiated career paths for leaders, faculty members and professional services staff.
- » We are developing tools for talent management, mobility, recruitment and selection.

### **Goal 3. Employer appeal**

- » We will present ourselves as an employer with an appealing and recognisable profile, creating the working conditions needed to attract and retain talent.
- » We will create the conditions for a high-performing organisation, specifically ensuring that the academic faculty is more appealing to international employees.
- » With diversity & inclusion as a priority, we strive towards a diverse workforce in the broadest sense of the word, with the aim of achieving an inspiring and motivating work culture.

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## Implementation: some examples



### **Employee appeal** (Goal 3)

- » Developing an employer brand identity:
  - » Incentivising and rewarding staff differently;
  - » Focusing on talent development, quality and impact, and maintaining a good balance between education and research;
  - » Developing a strong employer brand, starting by researching the university's current image.
  
- » Creating conditions for a high-performing organisation:
  - » For international employees among the academic faculty: community-building, onboarding;
  - » Implementing a strategic recruitment strategy.
  
- » Achieving societal impact by prioritising diversity and inclusion:
  - » Implementing the Diversity & Inclusion plan;
  - » Maximising results by fostering diversity and a heterogeneous mix of skills and talents within a team;
  - » Focusing more on team performance than individual performance, not only in research, but also in education and in professional services staff.

co-creation

forward

legacy

care

digital





# Stepping up our professional services

The business models of each and every industry will be transformed as a result of a changing world and shifting demands. Access to new technology is spreading like wildfire, making it possible for radical, system-wide innovation to happen within just a few years, or even faster. This realisation is nothing new, but even so: the shift in demand has not yet been translated into clear goals and activities, enabling us to pro-actively take part in this revolution. In order to digest the changes accompanying this 'fourth Industrial Revolution', and to be part of it, we need to provide state-of-the-art, pro-active and adaptable Professional Services.

The professionals that work here must be intimately familiar with the core business of the university (teaching, research and impact) and prepared for ever-changing demands in an increasingly digital future, in a diverse and international environment characterised by intense and evolving demands. Our academic faculty and professional services staff form a single community that creates positive societal impact together, each operating on the basis of their own individual expertise but as equal partners. As a result, our professional services will become a value driver for our university.

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Erasmus University Rotterdam provides state-of-the-art, pro-active and adaptable professional services as an essential force behind excellent education and research.



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## Goals



- 1. Smooth interaction between services and processes:** We ensure effective alignment between professional services and our core processes, facilitating smooth interaction between professional services at various levels in the university. We focus on end-to-end business processes and customer processes. This requires good cooperation between the various services and between professional services and the faculties. By doing so, we will enable our professional services staff to pro-actively devise solutions for future challenges. An in-depth knowledge of the approaches, goals and needs involved in the core business of our university will provide triggers for initiating improvements. Rather than focusing on responding to requests from students and staff, we will take a pro-active step forward to contribute ideas, possibilities and solutions, partnering with the faculties and departments to enhance research, education and impact across the board.
- 2. Alignment with digital society:** We will develop our professional services in alignment with student and staff expectations for the digital society. All professional services staff will consider and incorporate digitalisation as the major enabler – not by falling into the trap of automating an existing process, but by redesigning the end-to-end process very deliberately, based on a digital vision. The starting point is identifying the current state of affairs and defining what we want to achieve, and then designing the process based on the needs of the customer and learning from others, in our own sector and beyond.
- 3. Customer-driven:** We ensure that we are pro-active and adaptable by making a shift from profession-driven to customer-driven, in accordance with international standards. We will focus on innovation,

optimising and digitising in order to create room for improvement, thus serving our clients within the university more effectively. We will improve our performance for the customer by using a more uniform way of working. This reduces the risk of errors and improves compliance.

- 4. Prepare for supporting strategy:** As a professional and pro-active service organisation, we are already translating Strategy 2024 into concrete actions for 2019 and roadmaps for the longer term for each professional services pillar.

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## Translation to results: action planning

### **Goal 1. Smooth interaction between services and processes**



- » PS staff has in-depth knowledge of the approaches, goals and needs involved in the core business of our university, which will provide triggers for initiating improvements. This objective will be implemented as a matter of priority.
- » PS staff will be given opportunities for further professional development, leading to mutual cooperation and integrated service provision. The starting point is co-creation and coordination with the customers using professional services at the university and among professional services staff.

### **Goal 2. Alignment with digital society**

- » We will formulate a vision on digitalisation/datafication, starting from the issues we want to solve. The customer's needs are important, but the guiding principle is how we can make the organisation smarter, more flexible and more efficient. The priority will be on digitalisation of processes that noticeably improve the functioning of the organisation, enhancing customer satisfaction immediately.
- » Investing in new IT applications that are compatible with our IT architecture, in close alignment with the IT Master Plan.
- » We will identify and facilitate digital-savvy employees and prioritise up-to-date digital expertise and relevant experience when hiring new PS staff.

### **Goal 3. Customer-driven**

- » Focusing on innovation means investing time in innovation. To some extent, this applies for all levels of the professional services organisation. We will explore ways that we can facilitate and manage these time investments, looking at what is necessary and feasible.
- » We will facilitate a leadership style that enables pro-activity and adaptability (trust, transparency, adaptability, empowerment and ownership).
- » Senior staff will take on mentorship roles, coaching others in taking on risks and new tasks.
- » Single points of contact will be established for people seeking support, and track and trace systems will be implemented to ensure that support requests are resolved.
- » We will prioritise relevant expertise. PS staff are experts in their field, while PS management will be experts in service provision.

### **Goal 4. Prepare for supporting strategy**

In line with the strategy, the following initiatives (not complete) will already be launched or expanded in 2019. All this and more will also be incorporated into roadmaps for each pillar of professional services:

#### **Education & student affairs:**

- » Continuing focus on digitalisation and process improvements; (e.g. direct registration using uniform methods and formats)
- » Developing and implementing new communication channels;
- » Improving and consolidating services to international students.

#### **Talent management:**

- » Developing different career paths and appropriate learning pathways;
- » Focusing on a healthy, safe working environment;
- » Emphasising leadership, talent management and leadership development;
- » Focusing on digitalisation, datafication and process improvements.

## **Real estate and facilities:**

- » Formulating sustainability objectives and action plan, and realising current ambitions;
- » Start of tendering procedure for a multifunctional education building;
- » Starting construction on a new sports complex;
- » More numerous, high-quality study places and teaching spaces;
- » Various inventions such as 'find your place'.

## **IT:**

- » Formulating and defining an IT Master Plan;
- » Soliciting further guidance to ensure that all faculties and services are GDPR-compliant;
- » Setting up data storage and processing for research purposes;
- » Setting up administration structures for educational applications;
- » Developing a sourcing strategy;
- » Introducing various innovations (automated submission checking, chatbot, blockchain).

## **Finance:**

- » Integrating finance and policy during Finance & Control cycle, business control;
- » Introducing, supervising and driving risk management that is sufficient for the purpose;
- » Implementation of Risk & Control framework (system-oriented control);
- » Assessing and adjusting the group-wide controls.

## **Marketing & communications:**

- » Embedding a public engagement and impact mind-set in the EUR community;
- » Influencing national and international perceptions of EUR among external stakeholders, transitioning our image from a career-making university to an institution for positive societal impact;
- » Supporting EUR leadership, researchers and opinion leaders with tools, advice and best practices on how to engage with their public stakeholders, among other resources;
- » Monitoring and managing the reputation of Erasmus University Rotterdam;
- » Repositioning and rebranding the EUR and issuing a brand execution advisory.

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## Implementation: some examples

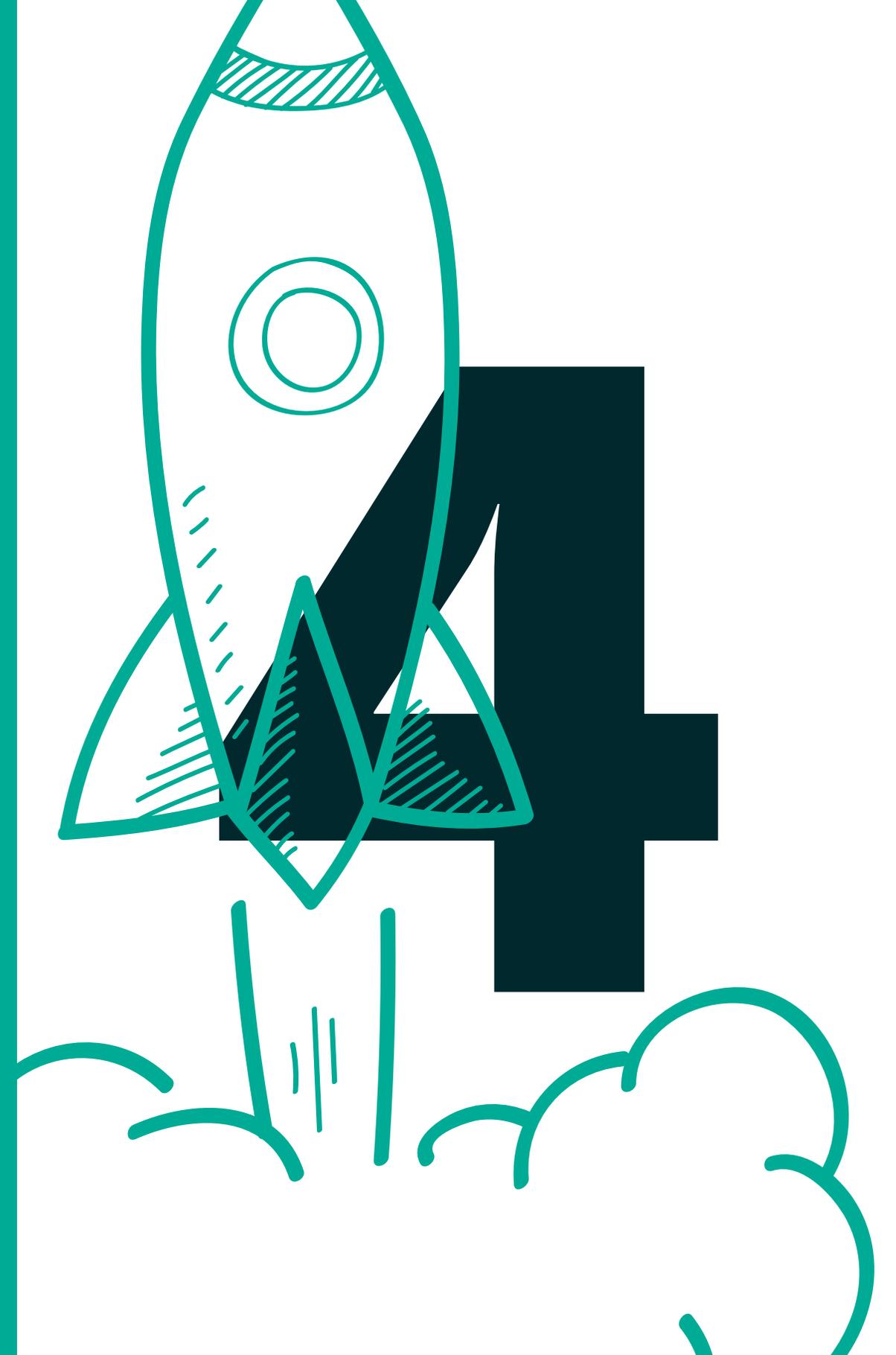


### **Customer-driven** (*Goal 3*)

- » Creating a facility for professional services staff that offers news, trends and the latest insights on support services. This includes such topics as Facility Management, Service Management and People Management.
- » Job rotations and secondments to other parts of the organisation (talent management):
  - » Scheduled periodically to expand expertise;
  - » Improves career mobility;
  - » Creates opportunities for employees to enhance their current direction or to make a career switch later on;
  - » Selected based on skill sets.



Polak 0.06



# Next steps: where and how do we go from here

## Designing for impact: *new ways of working*

'Walking the talk' of our new mission and vision, our strategy design process used interdisciplinary, inclusive, outside-in ways of working and embraced co-creative processes. After all, we have redefined our mission in order to respond to the complexity of societal challenges – challenges that can only be resolved by a community that works together closely, gathering and sharing knowledge, in order to eventually reach multidisciplinary solutions from various different angles.

We want to retain these new ways of working, of developing and designing policy – approaches that not only suit our strategic goals, but are also aligned with our values, such as entrepreneurship, an open mind and connectivity. We want to maintain this course and continue to follow this direction of co-creation and cooperation towards the future. Based on the concept of design thinking, this approach creates room for everyone to provide their own contribution and impact, operating from an open mind while maintaining a critical gaze.

Moreover, it transcends existing organisational structures, providing opportunities for us to challenge each other, regardless of background or hierarchy, on our respective ideas, opinions and preconceptions. This philosophy is supported by providing room for shifts in pacing: sometimes creating a sense of urgency (pressure cooker), and at other moments providing time to 'ruminate' on matters that require further exploration or in-depth contemplation, in proper balance. Such processes require the right support and creative tooling for group dynamics.

This way of working is a prerequisite defined by our vision, but even more: it is a vital necessity in a world that is changing constantly. An integrated and iterative approach to collaboration gives us flexibility and manoeuvrability.

## Implementation Strategy 2024: *implementation labs*

We will continue along the course set out by these guiding principles and ways of working as we design and execute the implementation. Strategy 2024 will be implemented *the Erasmian way*: connected to each other and to the world outside our doors, focused on achieving joint results for the university, innovative, with a can-do mentality – and of course pursuing a positive impact.

Multidisciplinary groups worked together to prepare the design for the implementation and drew up roadmaps for the strategic themes and related subjects. Although the design varies in structure and content depending on the topics involved, the principles for a modern approach to implementation will be incorporated as required parameters. However, the implementation will be tailored in accordance with our prevailing principles. Implementation starts now.

## Strategy 2024 starts today

Erasmus is and will remain an entrepreneurial university. Accordingly, we did not hold back until the official kick-off of the strategic period (September 2019). Instead, based on the results of the Strategy Design Labs and in anticipation of the overall planning, we have already prioritised a number of projects to accelerate their implementation. Some of these involve quick wins, while others are key prerequisites for our strategic ambitions or will act as accelerators for the preferred direction. In 2019 we carried out ten projects, or launched their implementation:

## Strategy 2024 Projects 2019

1. Defining 'Being an Erasmian' & university profile
2. Establishing Erasmus Research Support (ERS)
3. Determining scope and defining 'impact'
4. Designing communication & branding based on impact
5. Professional Services: launching process towards strong connection with the core business
6. Starting leadership development programme: managing operations together
7. Incubator: building an 'ecosystem' for societal impact
8. Establishing a Design Initiative
9. Developing policy for alumni engagement
10. Developing co-creative instruments/methodologies for implementation

## Challenges for change: *mind the gap*

Our 2024 mission and vision are challenging. Building on what was already good, we will pursue a fundamentally redefined course towards achieving societal impact. We will do that our own unique way, enterprising and innovative, in close collaboration with each other as well as our stakeholders. Last but not least, we will pursue the passion and commitment already present in our organisation to achieve our strategic goals together. Our aspirations, goals and implementation have been developed together, in co-creation, and we will continue to build on that solid foundation. Our new ways of working will assist us in taking these steps and achieving results. Creatively collaborating and co-creating supports the new way of thinking and working, befitting the development we need in order to transition from old structures towards new visions and content. It will set everything in motion.

But achieving our ambition does imply a significant change in how we think and what we do. Our strong capacity for innovation and entrepreneurial passion are strong drivers in achieving our goals, but the ambitions are huge and expectations are soaring. How do we ensure that the changes that have been planned are embedded in our robust practice as a university? We are keenly aware that we will sometimes have to take big steps. We will move forward with the necessary changes with all due consideration, by very deliberately looking at the situation: What is the nature of the change and what impact will it have? Where do we want to be heading? What is the most appropriate change strategy? What interventions are required and which people will be needed to make it a success?

As already became clear in the strategy design process, the execution of the strategy will inevitably expose (seeming) contradictions, dilemmas or frictions. Strategy 2024 should be viewed over time, and we should aim to remain adaptable as it becomes apparent where a flexible response will be needed. In addition, we hold ourselves accountable for the fact that the continued development and implementation also means that we still have to face substantial challenges. Accordingly, we are deliberately setting up a reflective process of iterative improvement. As potential frictions emerge, we will therefore identify them and engage in debate with each other about those areas as needed, with the aim of finding a way to address the issues and outlining a subsequent approach or decisive action.

## Leadership facilitates change

Fully aware of the challenges we face as EUR in developing towards our new mission and vision, leadership will play a key role in providing guidance and support. That's why the strategy design process also explored which values the Executive Board and the Deans wanted to focus on for the upcoming strategic period, in order to take this leap in development and to support it along the way. In our organisation, and particularly for the benefit of our people who make our ambitions come true, we will be creating positive societal impact *together*.

A different approach based on design thinking and multidisciplinary co-creation is the foundation we will build on. In accordance with our vision, this approach will support the change process and our new course in iterative and organic ways. Appropriate to that context, and linked to

leadership, we will also set up modern governance to give direction to the strategy. Lessons from the past have taught us that a traditional structure of e.g. programmes is not the optimal way to facilitate innovation, so we hold ourselves accountable for thinking carefully about how to manage that.

Following from that, our focus will be on a different style of leadership, which is necessary in a changing organisation: *transformational* leadership. Our challenge is not only to facilitate development, but also to walk the talk, to be the change we want to see. Although inspiration is key, it is also vital to lead by example. Using a transformational style, a leader appeals to intrinsic motivation, based on a long-term vision, with a focus on people (our people make the difference!) and on the greater collective interests of the organisation that is trying to achieve its ambitions and goals.

By embracing leadership that supports the development towards positive societal impact, we demonstrate *responsibility* and *ownership* in this development mission – both individually and as a leadership collective. That sometimes also requires us to step off the beaten path and think differently, but also show actual leadership; after all, the courage to get things done is a core characteristic of our organisation. Following from our inclusive aspirations, we are mindful of each individual's background, ways of thinking and talents. In line with what our university represents at its core as an institute of higher learning, providing leadership in a constantly changing environment and towards new strategic goals also means that we learn and improve constantly, from our own people and ourselves.

## Leading through values, together

More specifically, in our organisation's transition to the new strategy, we have defined four key values that support this process. These are values that have been embraced by the leadership in its leadership style during the transition. However, leadership also explicitly sees this as a give and take, a dynamic interaction with our people and the organisation. It takes two to tango. From that perspective, all values are inherently reciprocal. We will need that reciprocity in our organisation as we move forward towards the new strategy, together. These values are closely connected, interwoven and interdependent, feeding into and strengthening each other. That makes it vital to engage with them as a coherent whole, living out our shared values in our actions, behaviours and results.

Together, we will focus on the following development values:

## **Trust**

- » Trusting our people gives them the space and self-confidence to continue committing to the things we are already good at, as well as the potential to achieve innovation. We see trust as an enabler for innovation. We will have trust in knowledge and skills, in expertise and competences, trust in their professionalism. It also means that we will not be capturing everything in rigid rules and procedures, with the aim of avoiding unnecessary bureaucracy. Trust also means allowing room to make mistakes and learn from them, and to feel free to show what you're doing. At the same time, it also involves reciprocated trust in leadership and delivering on that mutual trust, because trust is not completely free of obligations. We trust each other and keep investing in this strong foundation.

## **Respect**

- » We receive respect by giving each other respect. It means that you accept someone for who they are, and that includes the ways that they are different or think differently. Respect for each person's individuality. Respect for talents and limitations. Respect for other people's boundaries, as well as for your own. The guiding principle here is respect, but we also have clear boundaries that are defined on the basis of our Erasmian values. Respect also means honesty. Honesty includes pointing out behaviour and actions, giving and receiving feedback, and expressing expectations.

## **Transparency**

- » Transparency is about openness, visibility and accessibility in our organisation in terms of actions, behaviours and results. Transparency means clearly showing where we stand, where we are headed, and how – but clearly acknowledging the dilemmas that we might face, how we will deal with them as they arise, and what choices we make. This will also hold us accountable for actions, results and behaviour. Accessibility also means clear roles and responsibilities, and setting boundaries. The result will be that we can keep thinking, imagining and developing together, that our community knows what they can expect of us, and that we can provide accountability. In order to realise this core value and others, it is essential to achieve communication in line with our vision and goals, and to ensure that it is complete, in time and accessible.

## Collaboration & connection

- » Connection is a fundamental and essential building block in our mission to create positive societal impact. This means that collaboration and connection are essential values for current and continued development in order to bring our organisation and our people along with us on this journey. It is not just about joining knowledge and skills, and thinking and acting together, but also about facilitating actual connections between people from an inclusive and multidisciplinary perspective and coming together on joint goals and inspiration. Last but not least, collaboration and connection also mean collective leadership. Together, we create positive societal impact.

## New ways of monitoring

The redefining of our mission and vision, as well as the content of our strategy and the way we want to put it into practice, clearly demand new forms of monitoring, control and assessment. The traditional methods of measuring and monitoring KPIs are not sufficient to assess whether the development is heading in the right direction, whether our envisioned results will actually be achieved in the end. Moreover, opting for traditional measuring tools would not support our envisioned course either. Since such measuring tools are often based on the principles and methodologies developed to measure output, they do not provide the right indicators to measure development progress.

One of the initiatives that emerged from the strategy is the development of a method to measure societal impact. In the long term, this method will help us clarify and express the societal impact that our university achieves. Achieving impact is core in our strategy, but there are of course other objectives that we would like to see results on. These results cannot be encompassed in KPIs, numbers or spreadsheets.

Even so, we do want to track progress on these developments over time. To be able to do that, we will, where possible, use data that will give an indication of our progress on those developments. Indicators for sustainability could, for instance, include CO<sub>2</sub> emission levels; using relevant indicators, HR could look at how the workforce is developing, or do an employee survey. However, the data from such sources cannot be viewed in isolation and will always have to take on added value in dialogue.

Data can only provide a limited view of the ongoing development and how it is expressed, which is why dialogue is key – not just dialogue between management within the university, but also engaging with a wide-ranging representation of the university community as well as the stakeholders outside of our context. That also corresponds to our new vision and mission.

Interactive forms of control make it possible to jointly monitor the development of the strategy, responding to strategic developments in the surrounding environment where necessary. The strategy does not need to be changed, but goals may need to be adapted or achieved in a different way, for instance as a result of developments around us. A joint response to that is only possible when there is a dialogue about the development, based in part on the available data where possible.

Predefining important milestones and moments when we want to know how the development of the strategy is progressing will also make it possible to set up a cycle for that purpose, and to deploy methods that allow for monitoring. Options include a mid-term review and stakeholder consultation at key moments, but other methods will also be developed. This cycle will be synchronised as much as possible with the existing planning and control cycle, ensuring that targeted adjustments are possible.

In the beginning, these new forms of control will need time to develop, and we will have to get used to working in new ways. But if we follow the same method that we are using to implement the strategy, it will lead to a form of governance that is appropriate to the university of the future and the demands that we place on ourselves, and those that will be placed on us by our community and stakeholders.

## Strategic planning timeline

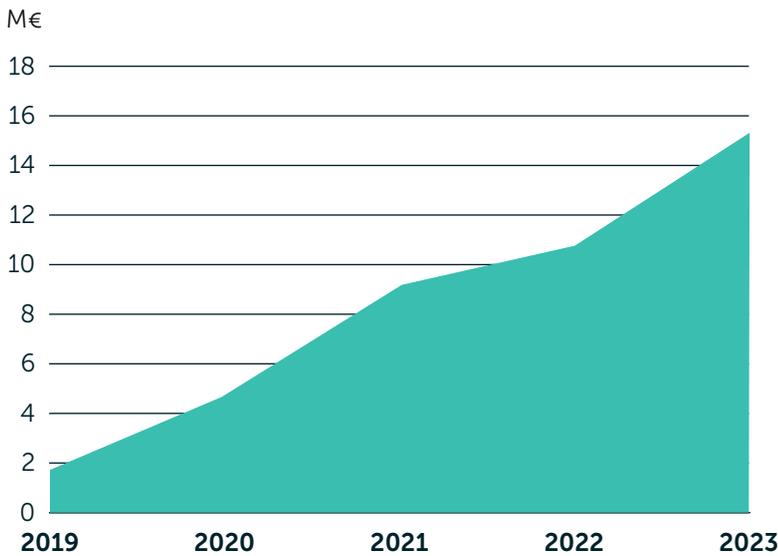
	2019				2020				2021	2022	2023	2024
	Quarter				Quarter							
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4				
<b>Projects 2019</b>												
1. Defining 'Being an Erasmian' & University Profile	█											
2. Establishing Erasmus Research Support (ERS)		█	█									
3. Determining scope and defining 'impact'		█	█	█								
4. Designing communication & branding based on impact			█	█	█							
5. Professional Services: launching process towards strong connection with the core business			█	█	█							
6. Starting leadership development programme: managing operations together		█	█									
7. Incubator: building an 'ecosystem' for societal impact		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
8. Establishing a Design Initiative		█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█			
9. Developing policy for alumni engagement		█	█									
10. Developing co-creative instruments/ methodologies for implementation			█	█	█							
<b>Strategy Implementation</b>												
Implementation of design		█	█									
Detailed implementation budget		█	█									
Detailed design monitoring process		█	█									
Presentation & launch strategy 2024		█										
Implementation of projects			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Monitoring strategy progress			█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Communication	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Mid-Term Review									█			
Development Strategy 2024-2029											█	█



# Strategic budget and investment plan

In the years 2020-2023, a total amount of €68 million is available as a strategic budget. This equals a budget of €17 million per year. Of this budget, €28 million is already allocated to initiatives that emanated from previous strategies. An initial indication of the investments needed for the strategy shows an estimate of €24.2 million.

## Available budget for strategy



As mentioned above in this chapter, ten projects have already been started in 2019. Budget has been allocated for all these initiatives, providing the initial budget needed to be able to launch these projects. Once the projects lead to detailed proposals, it will be possible to outline the way they should be financed in the long run.

Besides those initial projects, budget is currently already allocated to initiatives that support the goals that the new strategy aims to achieve. The plans developed as part of the quality agreements for higher education (in Dutch: *HoKA*) contribute significantly to goals that are part of the strategy, such as future-oriented education. Other existing projects that support the goals of the strategy include the Erasmus Initiatives (available total budget: €4.8 million until 2022) and the Community for Learning and Innovation (total available budget until 2022: €7.5 million). An annual budget of €2.5 million is available for innovation in IT.

Once the implementation plans of the strategy are finalised, more specific information will be needed on the content of the plans and the budget. This will be outlined in 2019 (see strategic planning timeline). Based on these implementation plans (or 'roadmaps'), the available budget, the projects that already have an established presence, and a deep dive into our designated reserves and earmarked budgets, it is possible to arrive at a balanced consideration regarding allocation of financial resources to initiatives in the context of the implementation of our strategy. This will lead to a Strategic Investment Plan, which will be delivered in 2019. Consequently, the allocation of these financial resources will be part of the budget plan for 2020-2023.

## Creating positive societal impact, the Erasmian way

This strategic plan concludes an important step in the strategic process: establishing the institutional strategy. Along the way, we have worked with students, faculty, staff and stakeholders, taking the time to explore the challenges that our institution faces, how we want to address them, what we stand for as EUR, and what ambitions we share and want to pursue. We have truly embraced this process as *one community*, challenging each other to think outside the established frameworks, generate innovative plans, and build connections with each other – based on content, on ways of working, and on each individual's valuable perspectives.

As a result, we can not only look back on an exceptional and innovative co-creative process, which also taught us a lot as a community; we can also state with pride that we have created a unique strategic plan, together. As Erasmus University Rotterdam, we are convinced that this plan enables us to address the challenges of today's society and clearly define the role that our university plays in that context, based on our unique profile. We are proud of the joint efforts invested by our community and are deeply grateful for the commitment they have demonstrated. Without our community, we would not have this strategy. Working together, we have already created positive impact.

As stated, we will be continuing on this course, implementing this approach and way of working as we move forward. We are keenly aware of the fact that reaching this first milestone has brought us to the most important challenge: achieving our goals and ambitions. It is now time to start the journey from plan to result. We have already taken the first steps by laying the foundations in the strategy process and launching implementation projects in 2019; this momentum will be maintained in implementation processes based on the various priorities, keeping close track of their progress. In any case, we have every confidence in our ability to build on this solid foundation to achieve a strong result: **creating positive societal impact, the Erasmian way.**







The image features a white background with several thick, light grey diagonal bands that intersect to form a star-like pattern. Five solid-colored circles are scattered across the composition: a red circle in the top left, a yellow circle in the top right, a cyan circle in the bottom left, a purple circle in the bottom right, and an orange circle at the bottom center. The text 'Strategy today' is centered in a bold, teal font.

# Strategy today



# Joint bachelor and master in nanobiology (Erasmus MC and TU Delft)

Nanobiology is the discipline where nanophysics meets biology, and more specifically the basic biology of human health and disease. The nanobiology programme offered in collaboration between TU Delft and Erasmus MC builds on extensive existing bottom-up research and cooperative organisations such as Medical Delta.

In a previous year, Dutch students in nanobiology won the iGEM (International Genetically Engineered Machine) competition in Boston, out of 300 student teams. The goal was to use nanobiology to solve a worldwide problem: the Dutch team had focused on the problem of antibiotic resistance in animal husbandry.

**This discipline is becoming more and more relevant in, for example, the field of medicine and the food industry.**





# Master in Global Business & Sustainability

What is it about our way of doing business that it is contributing to polluted rivers, and what role can business play in cleaning these rivers? Rotterdam School of Management offers the Master in Global Business & Sustainability: a world-leading programme dealing with the complex sustainability challenges faced by business. In addition to attending lectures, students work in small groups on business cases and assignments. Through real interaction with business, students have the opportunity to think about international corporate strategies, sustainable business models and stakeholder relationships.

**The goal is to provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary to become innovative business leaders and to find opportunities and societal solutions inside companies.**





# Research project in the Amazon (ISS)

The project All Eyes on the Amazon aims to halt deforestation in the Amazon. It combines modern technologies such as satellites and drones with the knowledge of the indigenous inhabitants. Regardless of how close the research team gets to this goal (which is quite ambitious), their engagement with the communities they have been collaborating with for a decade can create a plethora of positive results. The overarching goal is to achieve environmental justice: to create conditions in which impacts of natural resource extraction do not create unfair and unsustainable environmental, social and economic outcomes. This is done for example by training indigenous women and men to fly drones to produce actionable intelligence on the impacts of oil extraction in the Amazon; an international academic conference is organised that helps build better understanding of the forces shaping environmental conflicts.

All Eyes on the Amazon is unique because it brings together a diverse group of academic and non-academic organisations: Erasmus' International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) and the University of Maryland, but also Hivos, Greenpeace and Digital Democracy. These projects are also designed and executed in a way that transcends the boundary between 'research' and 'action'. Our researchers aim to undertake research that is informed by the needs of local partners and seek to create outcomes that benefit them directly. The researchers and PhD students focus on Peru and Ecuador, and work very closely with communities living deep in the Amazon.

**With our research project in the Amazon, Erasmus University is working towards a global reputation for positive societal impact.**





# 'Wetenschaps- knooppunt': Science Hub at the EUR

It's our social responsibility to enable as many children in Rotterdam as possible to be introduced to the university and to acquire research skills for the future, so they can make a positive societal impact on tomorrow's world. The simplest way to teach (young) children what research is, is asking them the question: *How do you get from a question to an answer?* At Wetenschapsknooppunt, children from primary and secondary schools from all parts of Rotterdam are invited to undertake scientific research on a small scale at the campus, and at their own schools, in collaboration with researchers and university students, on topics like 'the conscious will' or 'how to make innovations in the harbour more sustainable'. The method used is inquiry based learning: encouraging children to express their curiosity, finding the answers to questions themselves by doing research.

Researchers design the programmes for schools and children that students from different faculties execute. This student participation part is unique in the Netherlands. The children involved get to know the campus and might be inspired to enrol at this university themselves later on.

**Wetenschapsknooppunt reaches more than four thousand children each year and more than ten thousand children have joined since the beginning, from all levels of society.**





# Community for Learning and Innovation

Contemporary students are digital natives; they grew up with the Internet and social media, and have come to expect a constant stream of feedback and interaction. Education, however, doesn't yet live up to these expectations. The Community for Learning & Innovation (CLI) will make sure our university offers a new generation of students the education they need and want. For teachers it is important to stay inspired and ahead of the game. Teachers can follow training courses, 'Microlabs' and coaching trajectories on educational innovation. In addition, the Student4Students project provides support to students, enabling them to set up projects themselves in order to strengthen and improve their education. In 2018 the Education Lab opened its doors: a studio on our Woudestein campus where students can meet and work together on (digital) innovation.

**CLI helps by encouraging teachers to keep learning, and to improve their professional development and growth.**





# Master in Urban Management and Development

Cities today are complex, continuously growing and evolving, and facing challenges on multiple levels. It is our belief that contemporary cities need trained and innovative urban managers with skills in action and strategic planning, policy analysis, research methods, negotiation and communication to be able to manage the complex urban multidisciplinary environment. Erasmus' Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies offers the Master in Urban Management and Development. It provides in-depth insight into urban theories, policies and trends globally.

**To stay sustainable but competitive in an ever-changing urban environment, cities need to balance their economic, environmental, physical and social challenges with forward-looking urban policies.**





# Joint European Master in Health Economics & Management

Employment in health and social service is rapidly growing throughout Europe: around 10% of all jobs are now to be found in the health sector. New technologies and healthcare models require appropriate qualifications on the part of employees. Increasing financial pressure on European healthcare systems forces healthcare providers to hire specialists who can optimise processes for more efficiency.

For health care managers, policy analysts and academic researchers, knowledge of the range of relevant disciplines and an international network and frame of mind are keys to understanding and solving the problems that health care systems are facing.

To meet these challenges Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management of Erasmus University Rotterdam has developed a joint masters degree in Health Economics and Management, in association with the Management Centre Innsbruck, the University of Bologna and the University of Oslo. This partnership provides students of the programme with ample insight into interdisciplinary content as well as the ability to stand their ground in an international setting and different cultural environments.

**In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, interdisciplinary  
teamwork and internationalisation  
will be essential.**





# Honours Programme: Tackling Inequalities

Tackling Inequalities is the first multidisciplinary, international and extra-merit Honours Programme for master students at Erasmus University Rotterdam. It gives students from all schools access to academic expertise in three societal themes: sustainability and equality in economic growth ('Dynamics of Inclusive Prosperity'), equality in the access to health care ('Smarter Choices for Better Health') and equality in modern urban planning and urban policy ('Vital Cities and Citizens').

Inequality is not only a relevant academic entry point into these three themes, it is also a pressing societal, cultural and economic concern, as evidenced by the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Moreover, inequalities are prevalent in Rotterdam, for example in terms of access to economic opportunities, to social mobility, to clean air, to health care, to education and to culture. The Tackling Inequalities programme offers students an interdisciplinary opportunity to research inequalities but also finds solutions for the kind of societal challenges that Rotterdam faces.

**Inequality is not only a relevant academic entry point into these three themes, it is also a pressing societal, cultural and economic concern, as evidenced by the UN Sustainable Development Goals.**





# Junior Med School & Pre-Academic Programme

## **Junior Med School**

For very talented students of the last two years of pre-university secondary education (the Dutch 'VWO'), Erasmus MC offers an opportunity to be educated in the sciences and to conduct research. Students who complete the programme and graduate from secondary school can enrol in medical school without having to take part in a 'lottery' or selection process. The programme consists of two weeks of lectures, laboratory demonstrations and experiments, visits to outpatient clinics and education by different research groups, followed by four weeks of undertaking research at Erasmus MC. Because the Junior Med School makes it possible to start a career in medicine, the selection process is very strict.

## **Pre-Academic Programme**

The Pre-Academic Programme offers 250 prospective students in the fields of Medicine, Law, Fiscal Law, Law and Economics, Criminology, Health Sciences and Liberal Arts & Sciences a 'soft landing' at Erasmus University Rotterdam. In lectures, workshops and assignments they get to know the academic culture and diversity of our university, and learn how to study effectively.

**For many first-year students,  
transferring from high school  
to university is a huge step.**





# Leiden-Delft-Erasmus Centre of Big, Open and Linked Data (BOLD) Cities

Start-ups as well as large technology companies often use cities as a laboratory for new products. They thrive on data of all kinds that help local government and business to plan, monitor and innovate. It is unclear, however, if and how citizens themselves benefit from such Big, Open and Linked Data (BOLD) cities where it seems their every feature, movement and behaviour is monitored.

This citizen perspective leads the research in the Leiden-Delft-Erasmus (LDE) Centre for BOLD Cities, a joint research centre of Leiden University, Delft University and Erasmus University Rotterdam. The metropolitan area, containing the major Dutch cities of The Hague and Rotterdam, functions as a living lab as well as an area of cooperation. The emerging urban data landscape is diverse and complex, and involves big data as well as open or linked data. It raises questions about storage, analytics, presentation and visualisation, but also about appropriate data governance and management, and particularly about the social and individual consequences of the urban data revolution for people in the city.

**Technology makes life easier for residents, but their rights are under pressure: data is collected everywhere, and decisions made by algorithms are not transparent.**





# Generation R and Generation R Next

Even nowadays not all children in Rotterdam have the same opportunities to develop optimally, be it physically, cognitively, emotionally or socially. Improving the health of next generations of 'Rotterdamers' are the goals of two excellent and unique longitudinal studies conducted by the Erasmus Medical Centre: Generation R and Generation R Next.

A separate wing at Erasmus MC-Sophia Children's Hospital is dedicated to Generation R. This study has been up and running since 2001 and involves more than seven thousand participants: children approximately thirteen years of age by now. Generation R Next aims to follow ten thousand pregnancies from the very beginning. Eventually, interventions will also be part of the process. By relaying specific advice to women who hope to get pregnant, the future health of their children may be improved. As it turns out, parents' health and lifestyle early in pregnancy and even before conception appears to influence a child's growth and development. Sometimes the connection doesn't become clear until later in a child's life. 'We know half of all women still consume alcohol during pregnancy. Sometimes you will not notice the effects until many years later,' one of the researchers explains.

Studies with such large numbers of participants over such an extended period of time are unique in the world, and extremely valuable. It is an example of what Erasmus University Rotterdam wants to be: a university that tackles societal challenges together with professionals, the city and its inhabitants.

**These studies are keeping track of children's health and even pregnancies from the very beginning. Not just one, but thousands at a time.**





# Research: Sustainability and affordability of cancer drugs – a novel pricing model

To cope with the rapid increase of cancer rates, we need a global revolution in cancer drug pricing. Research being undertaken by professors from the Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management at Erasmus University and Erasmus MC has led to the proposal of an algorithm that can be used to determine innovative drug prices with ‘a maximum level of transparency’. Their research was published in Nature Reviews. The algorithm takes into account the actual costs of research and development, manufacturing, sales and marketing, as well as a fair profit margin based on the clinical benefit, in order to arrive at a reasonable price for each cancer drug. This new pricing system will improve cancer outcomes, make treatments more widely accessible and ease the economic burden of cancer, in one fell swoop – not just in poorer countries, but also in Western Europe and the United States.

**This new pricing system will improve cancer outcomes, make treatments more widely accessible and ease the economic burden of cancer, in one fell swoop.**





# Dutch Research Institute For Transitions (DRIFT)

Because complex societal problems cannot be addressed from behind desks, we founded DRIFT, a world-leading research institute on and for sustainability transitions. DRIFT differs from the usual scientific institute because our researchers take a normative starting point and experimentally develop solutions in real-world settings through action research. It conducts transdisciplinary research to better understand and facilitate new ways of thinking, doing and organising in transitions.

In 2018 our university hosted the Rotterdam Lecture at the Arminius church about poverty in Rotterdam, one of the challenges the institute aims to make a positive contribution to. If we cannot solve the money problem, maybe we can improve the quality of life of people with little money to spend. This can be done for example by introducing more green nature into the poorer neighbourhoods, by organising local vegetable gardens and healthy food cooperatives or by providing free refrigerators that run on solar energy and reduce energy bills. DRIFT pleads for these kinds of small-scale sustainable transitions.

In our own region, the institute therefore develops sustainable transition road maps for the municipality of Rotterdam and for Greenport West-Holland. These transitions take into account not only ecological factors, but also social and economic aspects of transitions, ensuring that these transitions will be resilient and inclusive. The type of research DRIFT stands for functions as an accelerator for a sustainable society, and for a university creating a positive impact by working together with societal partners and the city.

**DRIFT researchers experimentally develop  
solutions in real-world settings.**



Resilient Carnisse, social innovation project  
in the southern Rotterdam area



# Energy transition in the port and city of Rotterdam

The city and port of Rotterdam have a big impact on the climate, if only because of their size. Therefore, the city authorities together with hundreds of companies and citizen groups have launched the Rotterdam Climate Alliance. Reducing CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by half, cleaner energy and increased employment are among the primary objectives set out by this alliance. The Rotterdam Climate Agreement will approve concrete plans to save carbon dioxide and seize economic opportunities before the end of 2019. Erasmus University Rotterdam is extensively involved in this local energy transition. Furthermore, our university is partner in SmartPort, the knowledge platform for the harbour of Rotterdam that furthers the port's complex energy transition and digitalisation.

**The aim is to turn Rotterdam into an energy-efficient and sustainable city with clean air, a city with a future-proof economy that no longer depends on coal, oil and gas, but runs on clean and renewable energy sources.**





# Leiden-Delft-Erasmus minor in Frugal Innovations for Sustainable Global Development

Frugal innovation refers to the (re)design of products, services and systems to making them affordable for low-income people without compromising on utility and ease of use. 'Frugal' means being economical, avoiding waste, being sustainable and thrifty. Inventing this type of innovation requires social, entrepreneurial and technological skills. Frugal innovation is increasingly seen as a promising way to overcome constraints in access to health, energy and water for people who live and work in adverse or resource-constrained environments worldwide. It contributes to global societal challenges and themes, and to several of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The LDE minor 'Frugal Innovation for Sustainable Global Development' offers in-depth insight into how and under what conditions frugal innovation can contribute to sustainable global development.

**Frugal innovation is increasingly seen as a promising way to overcome constraints in access to health, energy and water.**





# Career in Progress

With the Career in Progress programme (CiP) Erasmus University Rotterdam makes staff members more conscious about talent and job opportunities in and outside our organisation. Our second objective is to enhance talent management and job mobility. On the one hand, CiP brings innovations in career development and labour mobility. On the other hand, it improves and supplements existing instruments and activities. CiP establishes a framework of tools and facilities such as Career Coaches, a Mobility Manager, 'Workspot' for temporary work and short-term assignments, a personal career budget that can be freely used by employees, a CIP (mobility) fund, a Career Week, training courses and networks. Employees, as well as faculty professional services staff, can consult the Mobility Manager on questions like: Am I ready to embark on the next career change? What could be my new position and how do I get there? The programme was introduced in 2016 and is now fully embedded in our organisation.

**The CiP programme works specifically on the sustainable employability of the university staff; these efforts have been highly appreciated by the staff and are distinctive in the sector.**



Career in Progress week



# Erasmus Centre for Women & Organisations

We need more women in positions of leadership: women bring a wider perspective, innovative ideas and a different thought process to the challenges and opportunities that we face today. A world where women have an equal share of organisational power and influence is what we should strive for. Research shows that diverse companies are more successful. However, for women it can be challenging to move beyond certain obstacles for career growth, and for companies it is challenging to close the gap because of sometimes deeply rooted male-based cultures. The Erasmus Centre for Women and Organisations (ECWO) was founded to accelerate the advancement of women into leadership positions across multiple sectors.

ECWO's focus is on professional women, mainly at mid-level management, the centre also works with various companies that want to accelerate the position of women in leadership. ECWO also runs a programme that focuses on female professors: to advance women to get into higher academic positions at our university. It is their aim to increase the number of female professors at Erasmus University Rotterdam. ECWO also hosts student events to raise awareness among students and help them with their negotiation and communication skills.

**Through ECWO, Erasmus University Rotterdam invests in the talent that is already present in our community and fosters a more diverse and inclusive culture.**

Erasmus  
University  
Rotterdam



# International Women's Day

**8 March**

[www.eur.nl/iwd](http://www.eur.nl/iwd)





# Working on tomorrow's campus

For the last nine years Erasmus University Rotterdam has been focused on creating a modern and attractive campus. In the first stage, a lively campus heart was created including a grand café, theatre, food court, student housing and a small lake surrounded by greenery. During the second stage of the renovations teaching facilities for small groups were created, as well as study spaces, a modern library and a park. Moreover, the parking garage was completed, and various buildings were renovated to meet the requirements for modern ways of flexible working. Sustainability has been prioritised throughout the whole renovation.

There is more to come. A second state-of-the-art building for education will be built providing another six hundred study places. The south side of the campus will be modernised, and the north side will become greener. These extensive renovations generate an attractive, healthy and sustainable environment in which our whole Erasmus community can flourish and excel.

**A lively campus heart was created including a grand café, theatre, food court, student housing and a small lake surrounded by greenery.**





# A system for a healthy and safe work environment: work-life balance coaching

Juggling work and family life is challenging nowadays, at our university as well as in other organisations. Erasmus University Rotterdam aims to offer its faculty, professional services staff, as well as students and visitors an ambitious and challenging work and study environment. At the same time we strive to be a good employer, safeguarding the conditions for a safe and friendly atmosphere, caring for the physical and social health and safety of our people.

Since June 2018, Erasmus University Rotterdam has had a team of eleven work-life balance coaches who support employees in this juggling act.

The work-life balance coach pool has been created in response to the widespread perception of work pressure, as expressed in our employee surveys. By offering tools to deal with work pressure, e.g. teaching people how to set priorities, our university builds a healthy working atmosphere in which they can flourish.

The coach pool is a freely accessible resource that employees can call on for assistance in answering questions related to their professional and private life. Examples include: How do I say 'no'? How do I set the right priorities? By offering coaching sessions, including tools, tips and tricks, our work-life balance coaches aim to reduce intensity of the workload employees often perceive.

**Participants say they have learned to plan their days more effectively in only three coaching sessions. Others state the sessions gave them more energy.**

This is one example out of many of our efforts to create an infrastructure for a safe working environment and a supportive organisational culture; this includes the appointment of a psychologist for PhD researchers in 2019. Since the introduction of this professional, many of the PhD researchers have already called upon this service. Erasmus University Rotterdam also broadened the network for a safe environment with several confidential counsellors, an 'Ombudsfunctionaris' and a Chief Diversity Officer (CDO), the latter working together with local diversity officers. With this network we do not only strive to help our people on an individual level, we also enable our organisation to learn from possible mistakes, and recognise and solve possible ineffective and harmful patterns.



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