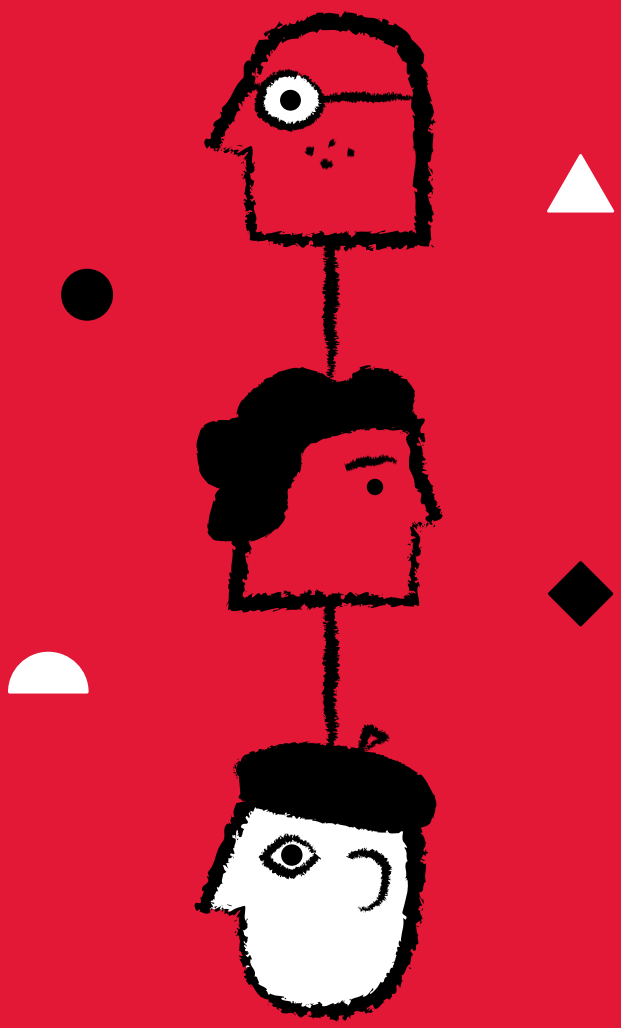
UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM



HR Programme 2022-2026

Foreword

The HR Manifesto outlines the path towards a new approach to working at the UvA: an approach in which we account for the rapidly changing world while at the same time acknowledging changes in the meaning of work itself. Our aim is to guide employees through a turbulent and sometimes confusing phase and make the organisation resilient and agile.
All this is summarised in nine ambitions, in which we set the bar appropriately high for the UvA and do not choose the easiest route.

But ambitions alone are not enough. These ambitions must be translated into concrete actions: a translation from thinking to doing, from words to deeds. Here, too, we have decided to take a unique approach. Rather than devising and planning all the steps we want to take in advance, we are instead working in the moment. In other words: we are building the bridge as we walk across it. In line with current needs and capitalising on momentum, we are shaping the future of work at the UvA one step at a time.

This 2022-2026 HR Programme sets out the objectives and activities we wish to accomplish and implement during the term of the Strategic Plan. The numerous objectives are also ambitious, and achieving them will require prioritisation and a measured approach. Perhaps this is the greatest challenge for the UvA: how do we ensure that all these developments come to fruition in a way that is accepted?

The answer is by doing it together and by being and remaining connected with the organisation. The HR Programme is therefore explicitly not only the programme of the HR domain, but of the UvA as a whole. This will allow us to increase the university's effectiveness while also taking into account what the staff and the organisation can handle. The approach we have chosen ties in well with this, and gives us the opportunity to fine-tune and make adjustments together in the interim. But the most important things we will do during this HR Programme are learning, gaining knowledge and breaking new ground, which are the core competencies of the UvA.

Robert Grem
HRM Director
University of Amsterdam

Introduction

Acting as a magnet for talent is one of the major ambitions in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, 'Inspiring Generations'. But how can we be and remain attractive to all UvA staff, and are we able to attract new employees? A broadly constituted programme group used a design method to formulate answers to these questions. This resulted in an inspiring HR Manifesto with nine HR ambitions focusing on the future of work at the UvA. This manifesto was endorsed by the Executive Board on 22 November 2022 and will serve as the compass for the UvA's HR policy in the years ahead.

The 2022-2026 HR Programme presented here is an elaboration of the HR ambitions in the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan. The programme was developed in collaboration with the faculties and shared service units and has been assessed in a number of forums. The programme includes 15 concrete objectives with sub-objectives and activities, which together are aimed at ensuring that the UvA will continue to be an attractive employer in the future.

The objectives in the HR Programme are divided among the three clusters of the HRM department:

I. Recruitment & Development
II. Work Environment & Well-being
III. Strategy & Organisation

The objectives vary in their nature and implementation. Some objectives are aimed at building capacity within the organisation, while others focus on changing policy and practices. In addition, some projects are still in the analysis/research phase, while others are currently being developed or are already in the implementation phase. There are also various themes that require review of existing rules and tools.

Reader's guide

The first section sets out the 15 objectives, sub-objectives and actions in the HR Programme. The objectives stem from the ambitions and are divided among the three clusters of the HRM department. The second section contains a brief description of the programmatic approach we will take to pursue the programme.



Cluster 1
Recruitment & Development

Manifesto ambitions

- **We are able to attract and retain talent**
- **We offer long-term prospects for all our employees**
- **We encourage and facilitate personal leadership**

Explanation of Cluster 1

The UvA's success depends entirely on the knowledge, talents and dedication of our employees. Staff are therefore our most important asset, and that is why attracting and retaining talent – especially in the midst of the current labour market shortages – is HR's top priority.

It is crucial that we are able to attract people from outside the university, but at the same time we must also focus on the talents and ambitions of those who already work at the UvA. This requires a **professional recruitment organisation** that will help the university find the right people for the right positions. In addition, we believe it is important that new employees feel at home within the university and want to be and remain part of the UvA community. This requires an effective **onboarding programme** that is appropriate for the new role or position.

The UvA offers an attractive and challenging work environment in which we are attentive to the wishes and ambitions of our staff. We operate on the basis of a hybrid working model and give employees the opportunity to develop their talents and advance their career, whether internally or elsewhere. We recognise that **differentiated career paths** reflect modern academic practice and we do not expect our employees to excel in all areas.

The context of the university is constantly changing, and that calls for flexibility and adaptability from both the organisation and its staff. We are therefore building a **learning culture** in which it is a given that employees will continue to develop and invest in the knowledge and skills that are needed both now and in the future. We operate on the basis of personal leadership and enable our employees to take control of their own development and career. To achieve this, we are creating a **professional learning and development organisation** that is in line with these ambitions.



2022-2026 HR Programme objectives

1 A more professional organisation focused on recruitment & selection

- Targeted profiling of the UvA as an attractive employer based on the UvA Employer Value Proposition
- More expertise and capacity in the area of internal and external recruitment
- Develop digital toolbox for recruitment & selection

2 The UvA gives new employees a warm welcome

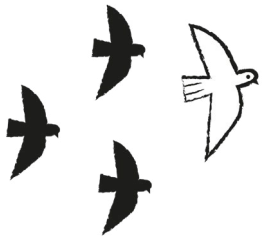
- Develop guide for UvA-wide onboarding programme
- Develop central onboarding module (e.g. app/e-learning module)
- Develop central onboarding module for international staff members

3 Lasting fit between talents, skills and wishes of employees and the needs of the organisation

- Establish specific development and career policy for the UvA (e.g. career paths, development plans, transparency about rights, obligations, resources and opportunities)
- Design differentiated career paths aimed at balanced recognition of the various academic tasks in the areas of teaching, research, impact and leadership
- Create attractive working conditions
- Expand internal career prospects for support and management staff (e.g. by further developing the internal job market, including for temporary positions and work experience placements)
- Continue and scale-up talent programmes for support and management staff (e.g. UvA Opportunity Programme, traineeships)

4 A more professional L&D organisation to increase the UvA's adaptive capacity

- Build a UvA-wide L&D organisation (capacity, expertise, advising, tools) centrally and among the organisational units
- Expand opportunities for development with regard to UvA-wide themes such as leadership, talent and career development, diversity & inclusion, social safety, working and collaborating effectively, personal development & effectiveness, skills for the future and health & vitality.
- Create a transparent, well-organised and easily accessible range of opportunities aimed at learning, development and career orientation (career portal, learning platform, etc.)



Cluster 2
Work Environment & Well-being

Manifesto ambitions

- **We actively seek out collaborations**
- **We embrace the differences between our employees**
- **We ensure a safe and healthy working environment**

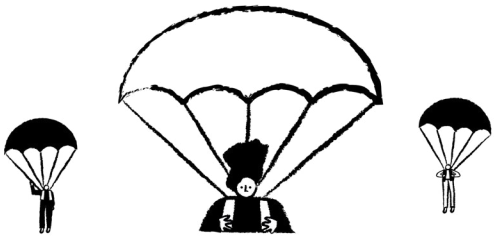
Explanation of Cluster 2

UvA staff almost always work with others, both within and outside the university. Collaboration does not happen automatically, but requires time, attention and support. This means it is essential that we **recognise and reward** everyone's contribution to the different teams and networks. Coaching and engaging leadership is a key factor in this regard.

It is also important that the university has room for a diverse spectrum of perspectives and that everyone participates. Establishing meaningful connections between different talents and perspectives will ultimately strengthen our organisation. Through our talent programmes and initiatives such as those under the Participation Act, we provide opportunities to various groups of employees. In addition, we are aware of the importance of **diversity and inclusion** in developing and implementing HR policy.

A safe work environment where staff can develop their talents, learn from each other and make mistakes without fear is another prerequisite for collaboration. Social safety is influenced by numerous factors. We therefore operate on the basis of an integrated approach in which we focus on both the culture and the structure of the organisation. We are increasing the knowledge, skills and repertoire of actions of supervisors and staff in the area of **social safety**. We are also clear about what we expect from each other, and we are working on the further professionalisation of the system of confidential advisers.

We believe it is important that our employees feel motivated and enjoy their work. We are therefore striving to reduce perceived **workloads and work-related stress** and we are focusing on absence prevention and counselling. We have included the topics of workloads and absence prevention in our training courses for supervisors and staff. We are additionally increasing the expertise on and support for these themes within the organisation through **professionalisation of the occupational health and safety services**. Furthermore, we are taking a critical look at how we organise our work and the impact of rules and procedures on perceived workloads among employees.



2022-2026 HR Programme objectives

1 Better results and greater job satisfaction through teamwork

- Draw up vision on successful teamwork
- Strengthen teams through resources aimed at teamwork and team development (time, money, training courses, tools and support)

2 The UvA offers a diverse and inclusive work environment

- Further integrate D&I into broad HR services (e.g. recruitment & selection, career policy, L&D offer, employment conditions)
- Continue and expand initiatives focusing on jobs objective under Participation Act
- Further develop Talent Mentoring Programme.
- Formulate UvA Gender Equality Plan

3 The UvA offers a socially safe work environment

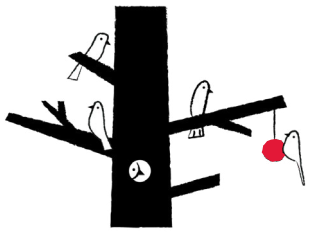
- Translate the UvA Code of Conduct into specific rules of conduct (e.g. aimed at specific target groups)
- Work on further professionalisation of system of confidential advisers
- Embed expertise on social safety (prevention, management, follow-up) at various levels in the organisation
- Continue and scale-up campaign to raise awareness about social safety
- Develop L&D resources for social safety tailored to specific target groups

4 Employees experience reduced workloads and less work-related stress

- Design and support a PDCA cycle focusing on balance between (psychosocial) workload, available manpower (qualitative and quantitative) and the way in which work is organised
- Evaluate and review current rules and procedures with regard to aspects that increase workload
- Strengthen administrative and logistical support for specific target groups in order to reduce workloads (such as lecturers and supervisors)
- Expand services aimed at interventions to reduce workloads
- Develop and offer a range of training courses, guidance and tools to deal with high workloads

5 Less (long-term) absenteeism (through prevention and better support)

- Operationalise UvA prevention and absenteeism strategy
- Professionalise occupational health and safety services and additional services (service providers)
- Strengthen information provision about roles, tasks and responsibilities in the area of prevention and absenteeism
- Expand management information relating to prevention and absenteeism
- Develop and offer training courses aimed at increasing knowledge and skills in the area of prevention and absenteeism among supervisors and staff



Cluster 3
Strategy & Organisation

Manifesto ambitions

- **We are an agile organisation**
- **We operate on the basis of trust**
- **We support our employees**

Explanation of Cluster 3

To continue providing high-quality education and research and to be able to compete with other knowledge and education organisations, the UvA must be able to act quickly and decisively. This means we must develop or acquire the knowledge, talent and skills we need to realise our ambitions. To increase the organisation's ability to anticipate with respect to these themes, each organisational unit is working with a professional form of **strategic personnel planning**.

The agility and strength of the university depend not only on our employees, but also on the way in which we structure the organisation and organise out work. We are therefore taking a critical look at procedures and other barriers that impede collaboration. We will also be **streamlining** our administrative and other **HR processes** to increase efficiency and improve services. In addition, we are taking a critical look at the UvA-wide HR organisation so that we can determine what is needed to actually achieve the ambitions and better align the HR function with the primary process.

We are increasing the agility of the organisation by focusing on more **horizontal collaboration** between different organisational units. We are exploring new forms of collaboration and the support of complex (cross-unit) projects. We expect our employees to show ownership within their work and team and to embrace time- and location-independent working. This expectation assumes a healthy balance between professionalism, accountability and trust.

In nearly all HR ambitions, **leadership** is a crucial factor. It is therefore important that we formulate the UvA vision on coaching and engaging leadership so that everyone clearly understands how we define leadership within the university. Supervisors are responsible for talent development, team development, diversity, social safety and attractive employership. This requires adequate support and explicit clarification of the various tasks and responsibilities of the supervisor. We expect that with every appointment there will be an evaluation as to whether the candidate is qualified to fulfil the supervisory role and we are expanding our range of training programmes. We are also ensuring that a supervisory or administrative role will be recognised and rewarded as an essential part of one's academic career.

The HR professional fulfils a crucial role as a **strategic business partner** in supporting supervisors and addressing organisational issues. By **working in a data-driven manner**, we are strengthening HR policy and increasing the organisation's ability to anticipate.



2022-2026 HR Programme objectives

1 All organisational units at the UvA work with a uniform and fully developed strategic personnel plan
- Further develop SPP policy and implementation
- Via SPP, focus on HR themes such as recognition & rewards, learning & development, team selection, workloads, diversity & inclusion

2 Leadership within the UvA is professional and recognisable
- Elaborate vision on coaching and engaging leadership within the UvA
- Develop range of basic skills modules for supervisors
- Further develop leadership community
- Ensure adequate support for supervisors

3 Horizontal collaboration is easier within the organisation
- Build internal capacity and expertise in the area of programme and change management
- Create and further develop communities for knowledge exchange and collaboration on specific HR themes (e.g. employment conditions, social safety, recruitment, learning & development, leadership, occupational health and safety services)

4 Streamlined and user-friendly digital HR processes and regulations
- Draw up vision and design principles for administrative HR processes and regulations
- Redesign HR processes based on vision and design principles
- Strengthen HR processes

5 HR works in a data-driven manner
- Use HR analytics to substantiate HR policy
- Develop a cohesive set of measurement tools to gather information from the organisation for the purposes of policy development and monitoring
- Develop HR dashboards/reports for supervisors (management information)

6 HR fulfils its role as a strategic business partner
- Increase HR expertise and services within the UvA
- Strengthen collaboration within HR
- Update and improve findability of HR information and regulations on the website

Programmatic approach

During the term of the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, the various objectives set out in the HR Programme will primarily be pursued on a project basis. This approach is based on an iterative process in which we always seek to align our efforts with the current needs and capacity of the different faculties and service units.

Together with the organisational units, each year we draw up an annual agenda containing the priorities and an overview of the expected results for that calendar year.

Programme network

We have opted for an integrated approach and are setting up a programme network. To this end, we use existing consultative structures as much as possible. This guarantees the necessary expertise within the various projects and ensures broad support at all levels within the organisation.

The Executive Board is the commissioning party of the HR Programme and the HRM portfolio holder (Executive Board president) is the first point of contact on the Board's behalf. The programme falls under the direct final responsibility of the HRM director as the contractor. The HRM director is assisted by a programme manager with regard to processes and content. The programme manager monitors the overview and cohesion of the various projects and is responsible for periodic accountability reports.

Ownership of the HR Programme lies with a programme group which consists of the HRM director, the heads of P&O at the UvA faculties (excluding Amsterdam UMC), service units and the executive staff and the head of the Personnel and Salary Administration office. Together, they are responsible for implementing the UvA HR Programme.

To ensure broad support and engagement at administrative level, we are working with three ambassadors at administrative/executive level. These include a dean, a director of operational management and the director of the Administration Centre. They are involved in the development of the programme and have been asked to provide critical input. They additionally serve as ambassadors for the programme in the various forums within the UvA.

We are also putting together a sounding board group from a broad delegation from the UvA community. The participants in the sounding board group can share ideas about (parts of) the programme and act as a 'testing panel' that can be used where necessary when refining and expanding the different projects and initiatives.

Working method

Each project is led by a project leader. Depending on the subject, this role is held by an HRM policy adviser or jointly by a policy adviser and a head of P&O (duo role).

The HR Programme is based on integrated collaboration across the UvA. It is important to involve the entire spectrum of HR expertise (policy, advice and implementation) in the various projects and, where relevant, to include the necessary expertise from other disciplines (such as Academic

Affairs, Finance, Planning & Control, Information Management, Administrative Information, Legal Affairs and the Communications Office).

The progress of the various projects and the programme are periodically discussed in the programme group. The members of the programme group determine the prioritisation and details of the different themes and projects. The heads of P&O are responsible for internal coordination within their respective organisational units. They keep the stakeholders at decentralised level informed of the progress of the programme and provide feedback to the programme group accordingly. This allows us to ensure support for the various initiatives and make adjustments where necessary.

Accountability

The progress of the HR Programme and/or parts thereof will periodically be discussed in various administrative and other forums. This will include both reporting/updating on the progress of the HR Programme and utilising the expertise of those in the forums.

Funding

Since we have opted to implement the programme step-by-step and we do not yet know how and to what extent a large number of objectives will unfold, we are working with an annual budget instead of a four-year programme budget. A budget will be drawn up every year based on current needs, including a proposal for funding. For a large number of objectives, it is estimated that it will be possible to stay within the existing budgets through efforts such as more efficient organisation, utilisation of synergy gains and reallocation of funds. Where possible, we use business cases to provide insight into how investments are earned back.

For 2023, financial and formative space has been made available in the Executive Staff budget.

Communication

The success of the HR Programme depends entirely on the way in which the programme meets the wishes and needs of our staff. First and foremost, this means that staff must be familiar with the content of the HR Programme and have the opportunity to actively contribute to it. Communication also plays an important role in achieving several of the objectives, especially those relating to behavioural change.

Once the HR Programme has been adopted by the Executive Board, a communication plan for the HR Manifesto/HR Programme will be drawn up. This will include both the overarching communication objectives and timeline for the next four years as well as more specific communication action plans focusing on specific activities (if known).

At the same time, a page about the HR Programme will be created on the employee website to inform staff in general and stakeholders in particular about the various objectives and activities in the context of the HR Programme.