



## Theology with a future

### Institutional plan TUA 2018 - 2023



#### Foreword

Who we want to be, and what we want to do, can be read in the following pages. The run-up to the year in which the TUA is celebrating its 125th anniversary is an opportune moment to make clear how we want to proceed on the solid foundation of education and research that has been laid out in recent years. The development from school to college to university is far from over because we want to become even more than what we have been for a long time: a clearly recognizable scientific institution serving Church and society. That is why we have considered internally our course for the coming years, resulting in the attached plan. A plan that outlines a perspective with realistic ambitions: concrete and achievable in terms of manpower and finances.

In this institutional plan, we consciously describe the main features of our goals. After all, circumstances can change and that requires flexibility.

This plan is written in the plural form, after all, as the TUA community, we want, and need, to implement it together and we will certainly do so!

W.J.A. Hanekamp, Chairman of the Executive Board  
Prof. Dr. H.J. Selderhuis, Rector

**Positioning**

On September 11, 2019, the TUA will celebrate its 125th anniversary and it will have been 100 years ago that the 'School of Churches' moved from The Hague to its current location at Wilhelminapark 4 in Apeldoorn. The building at that address exhibits both our history and our identity. Each time a section was built on the outside showed different architectural styles and inside new adaptations of space. Much has already been said about the variety of students, about the variation in church background and theological 'styles', about the atmosphere of meeting and lines of communication, and about the proliferation of Reformed theology in a limited space. And all this in the almost monastic surroundings of the Apeldoorn parks. What we have now become after 125 years we would like to expand in the same way, and we believe that this is only possible if we keep reshaping our identity in an ever-changing society.

*Profile*

What the current TUA stands for and wants to achieve is summarized in the table below.

Higher goal What does the TUA exist for?	Bold goal Where does the TUA go?	Core Qualities What makes the TUA stand out?	Core values What does the TUA stand for?
academic training of theologians  think tank for reformed vision of culture and society	a reformed theological institute that shapes people and equips them to connect the heart of the Gospel with life today in the midst of secular our reality	Bible research and knowledge of the Reformation and its history with a focus on the study of the source texts.  science and belief go hand in hand in a natural way	scientific theology  service to church and society  religious basis and ecumenical openness

To summarise: 'Serving Knowledge'.

TUA trains people to become broadly employable theologians (pastor, evangelist, missionary, church founder, church worker, religious teacher, Bible translator and scientist) who know how to connect theory and practice, and conducts scientific theological research and actively disseminates the results thereof.

**Ambitions**

TUA sees a changing world in which the position of church and theology in the Netherlands is decreasing in size, has a changing image in Europe, but is becoming stronger in other parts of the world, as an attractive challenge. The increasing attention on 'global Christianity' and the fact that church and theology in Europe are increasingly confronted with the presence and role of other religions, encourage TUA to adopt a new way of thinking and working. Ecclesiastically, in addition to the continuing need for the traditional congregational pastor, there is an increasing demand for people who can communicate the message of the Gospel to the public, who are able to found congregations, who have the capacity to participate actively in scientific and social discussions, and who can use their theological expertise in the public domain and in both commercial and non-profit organizations. For an institution of a limited size, it is a great challenge to train such people and to deal with the above developments well, but it is precisely this size that makes the TUA easily manoeuvrable and effective.

We want to achieve the following ambitions in the coming years:

### **1. Expansion of the training offerings**

TUA has a 3-year bachelor's programme and a 3-year master's programme in Theology, which is mainly focused on preaching, and that is too narrow a range for the present. Churches and organisations ask for theologians with skills other than those of pastors, and students would like to broaden the scope of their studies so that they have more opportunities once they have completed them. The high scores that the TUA has achieved nationally for several years in the area of student satisfaction are mandatory and encourage these students to serve even better. The curricula of both programmes will therefore be adapted, among other things, by means of increased attention to personal development, a scientific attitude, and an international orientation and the expansion of FTEs for practical and systematic theology. The new curriculum will take effect on 1 September 2019. For the master's phase, the package will be broadened and an annual English-language master's programme will be prepared which can be followed on a part-time basis. This master's programme will be organised in such a way that it is internationally attractive and, with a sufficient annual intake, will also be financially profitable. With this master's programme, TUA meets a long-standing wish of its own students who do not want to follow the preacher's master's programme but who do want to improve their skills, as well as the demands of students and partner institutions abroad who want to link this master's programme to their programme. The possibilities of part-time study or the offering of targeted minors will also be investigated. The same applies to an 'education on location' programme, in which use is made of the many historically interesting locations in Europe for theology, where students from home and abroad can teach and receive lessons on the spot.



### **2. Increasing academic output**

TUA has built up a national and international reputation in the field of biblical theology and knowledge of the Reformation. The plan is to maintain and, if possible, increase the reputation of these disciplines, while at the same time strengthening the fields of New Testament, practical theology and systematic theology. This will require an increase in the number of staff, but it will also be possible to increase the output of the existing scientific staff and to bring more focus to them. This is because the total volume available for research is too small to be able to perform adequately scientifically, and it is also necessary to bring more focus to research. It is therefore necessary to increase the number of FTEs and to examine how available time can be used more effectively. An important tool for optimising output is the possibility, together with Driestar, to link more PhD students to the TUA through a graduate school in an educational setting. The aim is to

provide a quality impulse and to increase the number of annual promotions by offering targeted courses and a tight schedule. Several foreign partners have expressed an interest in this.

For the first time, TUA is also participating in a European programme: 'Research Infrastructure on Religious Studies' (ReIReS) with participants from twelve European institutions. TUA is responsible for the training of researchers in the field of digital data and will endeavour to continue to participate in this programme in order to strengthen European contacts. TUA's involvement in the European Academy of Religion, which was founded in 2016, offers the opportunity to contact other scientists and institutions and to present its own output to a broad academic audience.

Up to 2017, professors and lecturers participated in three joint research programmes with TU Kampen. It has been decided to continue the collaboration between Bible scientists and systematic theologians from both universities in the research group BEST (Biblical Exegesis and Theology).

### **3. Strengthen contact with local churches**

The link with Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (CGK) has always been of vital importance to the TUA and the TUA is keen to preserve and strengthen that link. However, the connections that these churches have entered into with other churches over the years could be more strongly reflected in the education and research of the TUA. This will also be good because of the variety of ecclesiastical backgrounds of our students that make the TUA a unique place of ecclesiastical and spiritual connectedness at a time when churches are struggling with questions of ecclesiastical unity, but also with the specific problems of strongly growing churches as well as those of disappearing local churches. Therefore, in the coming years we will also strive to strengthen our ties with other Dutch and foreign churches.

It has always been important that professors and lecturers have experience as preachers within the CGK. This element, which is also very positively appreciated by students, can also be given shape by actively involving other ministers and other workers in the church in courses of study. In this line from the churches to the TUA we also want to move from the TUA to the churches by seeing if and how Apeldoorn can be more locally and regionally present other than just through sermons and lectures.



### **4. Internationalisation of education and research**

The TUA has a growing number of contacts with foreign institutions and would like to expand them. The agreements concluded with some of these institutions - so-called MOUs (Memorandum of Understanding) - will be translated into a targeted and permanent exchange of students and lecturers. An example of this is the Center for Puritan Studies, in which the TUA works closely with PRTS (Grand Rapids) and Hapdong (Seoul). Better facilities for living and studying will be sought

for students, especially PhD students, who are increasingly coming to Apeldoorn from abroad. TUA would like to encourage its own researchers to participate actively in foreign congresses and programmes, for example by making extra financial resources available for this purpose. In the context of internationalisation, the TUA's English-language website will be used to a greater extent and an English-language digital newsletter will also be published.

### **5. Targeted valorisation with 'higher professional education (hbo)**

The link with Driestar Christian University, which is particularly expressed in the special chair of the Driestar at TUA, will be further developed by stimulating practical research in the field of education and research.

Together with TU Kampen and VIAA University of Applied Sciences in Zwolle, we offer accessible, short video lectures on themes from theology that are relevant to everyday life and thinking. As a result, work from education and research at the three institutions (and from their broader network) is made suitable and available to interested parties from the wider community. This is done under the name AKZ+ | 'Know what you believe'. The 'Weetwatjegelooft.nl' website offers a modern online learning environment in this context. The success of AKZ+ is an incentive to continue and, if possible, expand the programme, with an urgent need for a cost-benefit balance. Together with TU Kampen, TUA also wants to make contact with the Protestant Theological University and the Christian University of Applied Sciences Ede and Driestar Christian University in order to jointly set up a valorisation network. The TUA would like to respond to needs and questions from outside the academy on this theme in order to increase the impact of research and education.



### **6. Optimizing the organizational structure**

A small organization like TUA has many advantages. The lines are short, people know each other and it is easy to find each other. The disadvantage is that even a small university has a number of mandatory bodies and that these must all be staffed without creating a feeling of over-organization. Thinking about the organisational structure is therefore high on the agenda. Are tasks and powers clear? Can we improve communication? Can meetings be held more effectively? Can more teachers be involved in assessments and exams? These are just some of the questions that we will be answering in the near future.

### **7. Housing**

Our university is located in a beautiful location, with enough lecture halls for the current student body. However, there is a need for more good workplaces. For teachers, especially on days when

they do not have to give consecutive lectures, for students to study quietly and for foreign PhD students. Quiet places for consultation between teacher and student are also necessary. The current arrangement in the auditorium, for example, is quite static. Removing the benches will create more opportunities for flexible use, for example, for use with the morning prayer and for conferences. There are only a few workplaces for teachers, the number of parking spaces is limited and the redesign of the library is necessary, if only because of the new Puritan Research Center.



## **8. Library**

The library has a limited size, and consists of just over 55,000 titles. In the case of the necessary expansion, the formation of collections will be geared more closely to the themes within the research programmes. This also includes the collections of other theological libraries so that the TUA can build up its own distinct collection. The library's catalogue will be transferred to WorldCat next year, making the TUA's collection more accessible. For this software migration, a subsidy has been applied for and allocated by the Pica Foundation.

In 2017 an agreement was made with the Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids. In that context it is our intention to set up a collection in the field of Dutch and German Puritanism and the 'Further Reformation' separately in the library. Researchers in this field have the material at hand in the study room: the aptly named 'Puritan Research Center.'

## **9. Active fundraising**

We mention funding now only at the end and we do it intentionally. We do not want to think in terms of available resources, but in terms of necessary and desirable changes. Not: how much do we have and what can we do with it, but: what needs to be done, what does it cost, and where are we going to get the money to do what's needed? This approach does not make it any cheaper, but we know that there are people, institutions and funds that are happy to help the TUA achieve its goals. Active fundraising will therefore come at the end of this plan, but it is not a final point in our policy. We want to do more work together to make sure that the TUA can become more what it should and wants to be.

## **10. Serving Knowledge**

With this slogan, the specifics of the TUA have been clearly and concisely expressed. We strive to be a university that wants to stimulate thinking, but that also always has the serving of church and

society as its ultimate goal. This combination alone does not make the TUA unique, but the way in which we have designed this combination in Apeldoorn does.