



## **Educational Vision of the Honours College at Leiden University**

Leiden University offers the opportunity of attending the Honours College (HC) to those undergraduates who wish to get more out of their studies and develop their talents to the best of their abilities. For those students who can and want to achieve more and who seek greater challenges than the standard bachelor's programme can offer, the Honours College has a range of programmes that will enable students to achieve their ambitions.

An abbreviated version of the educational vision and general aims of the Honours College is given below.

### **Aims of the university that address the needs of the students**

The mission of the university is to produce new knowledge and insights (research) and to transfer knowledge to new generations (education). Leiden University aims to educate students who, on completion of their academic training, will be professionals 'with a thorough knowledge of their academic field and a critical and inquiring attitude' and 'who play an active role in finding solutions' (from the *Learning@Leiden* educational vision).

Furthermore, the university must ensure that the new generation is itself capable of producing new knowledge and insights. In the Honours College, students who can and want to achieve more - and who can be expected to become future producers of knowledge - are given the opportunity and are encouraged to develop their capabilities for creative, innovative thinking and the corresponding attitudes and skills further and faster.

### **Tasks Honours College**

The first task of the Honours College is to allow the innovative abilities of students to grow to a higher level faster. During their bachelor's programme students of the HC become acquainted with particular issues and research techniques which other students will only learn about in their master's (or even later). This is made possible through the academic content of the bachelor's programmes and by developing skills such as multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration, innovation and leadership.

The content of the programme offers a 'broadening' (integration of other disciplines with their own discipline) as well as a 'deepening' of knowledge in their own field of study. This makes it possible for students during their studies to attain a higher academic level and develop their innovative capabilities.



The second task of the Honours College is that of being a 'testing ground': the Honours Education programme offers the opportunity to be innovative and allows both students and teachers to experiment, for example with the method of teaching or assessment, the theory of teaching, or the theme of a particular subject. All this is possible because of the composition of the target group (ambitious students from all courses of study), the small scale of the programme and the greater freedom offered to students within the curriculum. The Honours Education system is also attractive to teachers, because it allows them the flexibility to experiment with programme content and teaching methods.

The function of the Honours Education system as a testing ground implies that there is a 'spin-off'. It represents one of the ways in which academic education can innovate itself and continue to improve its role in society. The Honours Education programme is not just an *instrument* for the acceleration and growth of innovative power, but is also a *domain of innovation* itself.

### **The testing ground results: what do you learn as an HC student?**

Students attending the Honours College develop the following:

- a. Knowledge and insights: students continue to deepen their knowledge in their regular bachelor's programme, whilst at the same time becoming acquainted with knowledge and insights from one or more other fields of study. Alternatively, they can decide to engage fully in one or more other fields of study, while still continuing their regular bachelor's programme.
- b. Judgement and the capacity to apply knowledge and insights: students learn to devise solutions for scientific and social issues from a multi- or interdisciplinary perspective.
- c. Skills: students learn to participate in scientific and/or social discussions looking at various scientific or social perspectives; taking an open attitude they are able to identify different (existing or new) perspectives, be critical in their evaluations and seek the connection between science and society.
- d. Academic attitude: students show responsibility for their own personal development and their own learning process, and are open to multi- and interdisciplinary collaboration.

### **Student in the lead**

In order to achieve the above, students are free to choose from various HC programmes, either closely related to their own field of study or in a totally different field. In the Honours Classes - Honours elective subjects - there is greater emphasis on



multi- and interdisciplinary approaches. This is because each Honours Class comprises students from many different disciplines, but also because the class deals with themes that are examined from different angles. Both the HC programmes as well as the Honours Classes address the development of relevant skills.

Students in the Honours College are expected to play an active role. They determine their own personal development by choosing their own subjects from the educational offer. Self-reflection as well as individual coaching of students plays an important role in their personal development. Students are encouraged to play an active part in the discussion to further develop the content and form of the education within the Honours College.