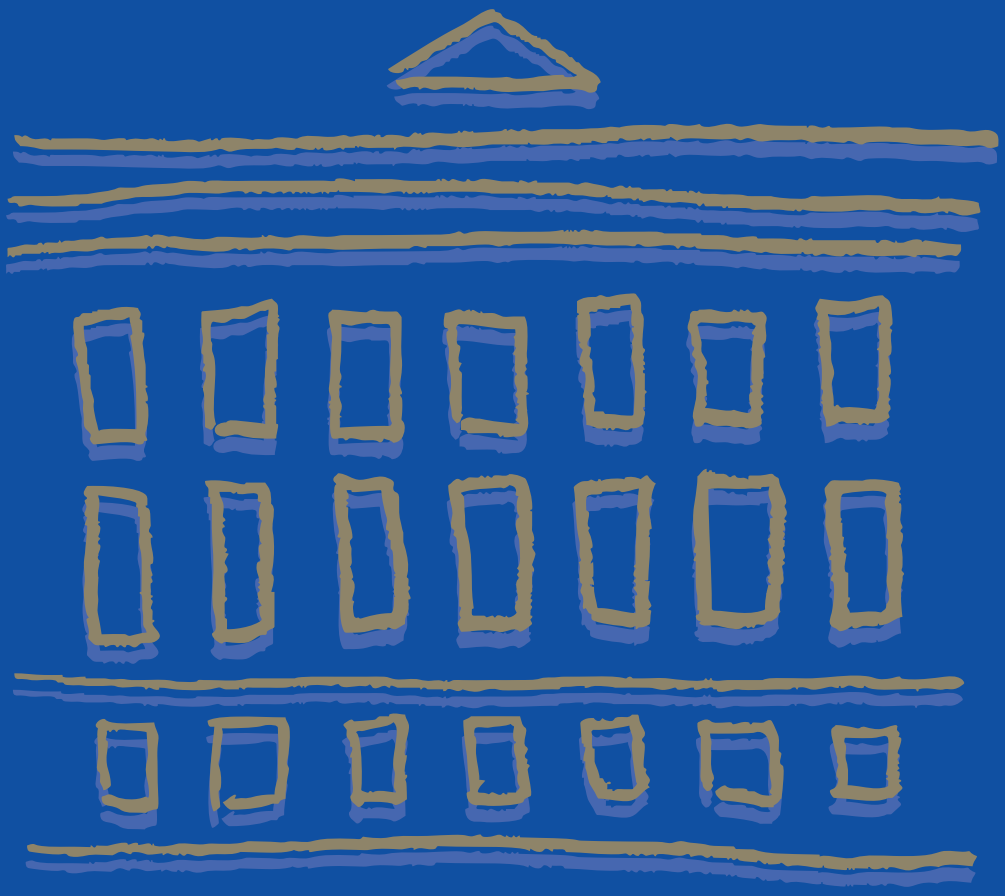
de jonge akademie

ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2026

THE YOUNG ACADEMY



Amsterdam, November 2025

THE YOUNG ACADEMY IS AN INDEPENDENT DIVISION OF THE
ROYAL NETHERLANDS ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Regulations of The Young Academy as adopted by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Royal Academy, KNAW), the Board of The Young Academy hereby presents the Annual Plan for 2026. The Annual Plan was discussed and approved by the members of The Young Academy on 17 November and approved by the Royal Academy's Board on 25 November 2025.

CONTENTS

BACKGROUND 2

INTRODUCTION 4
1. AMBITIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR 2026 6
2. SCIENCE POLICY THEME 9
3. SCIENCE AND SOCIETY THEME 13
4. CONTENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY THEME 16
5. ARTS AND SCIENCE THEME 18
6. INTERNATIONALISATION THEME 19
7. UNIVERSITY TEACHING THEME 22
8. COMMUNICATION 24

LIST OF MEMBERS (2021–2026) 25
TIMELINE IN 2026 27

INTRODUCTION

In this Annual Plan, The Young Academy explains how it intends to continue fulfilling its objectives in 2026. Information about The Young Academy's activities in previous years can be found in its Annual Reports, published at www.dejongeakademie.nl.

Before outlining the plans for 2026, we will take a brief look back at the highlights of the previous year. Unquestionably, the highlight of the year was The Young Academy's twentieth anniversary. The celebrations included a visit from King Willem-Alexander. During the festivities, we not only reflected on our achievements but above all looked ahead together with our various relations, alumni, and other stakeholders. The focus was on topics that have interested The Young Academy since its founding, including the relationship between science/scholarship and society, the international context of research, and the need for a sustainable and futureproof academic system.

April saw publication of the report *First but not least*, in which first-generation academics were interviewed about their experience within Dutch academia. Based on the interviews, The Young Academy produced an analysis and made recommendations for improving the academic system. Publication of the report touched a sensitive nerve within Dutch academia. June saw the appearance of *In control. A Manifesto for a Responsible Digital Future in Higher Education*. With this, The Young Academy intends to launch a broad discussion about the values that underpin the use of big tech systems at higher education institutions.

The Young Academy also made a number of pleas, including to political parties in the run-up to the Dutch parliamentary elections, calling on them to keep the country healthy and resilient by investing in science. We argued that political parties should (1) invest 3% of GDP in research and development, (2) invest in education, and (3) protect and invest in international talent. The Young Academy also issued a critical response to the new 'Tulip Fund', calling on nominations for grants from the fund to be based not only on scientific excellence but above all on institutions to protect scientists and scholars who are unable to carry out their work in safety. The fund should also focus on young researchers from across the entire scientific spectrum. Coordination between organisations that can request funding is therefore essential.

The structure of the 2026 Annual Plan is based on The Young Academy's six main themes, which underpin all of its activities. Sections 2 to 7 provide an overview of objectives, topics and intended activities for each theme. Section 8 outlines The Young Academy's communication strategy. The 2026 calendar of events can be found in the appendix to the Annual Plan.

Board of The Young Academy in 2024-2025

- Eddie Brummelman (2024-2026)
- Daphina Misiedjan (2025-2027)
- Jim Portegies (2025-2027)
- Else Starkenburg (2024-2026)
- Sanli Faez (2024-2026)

1. AMBITIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR 2026

The Young Academy was established in 2005. In the past 20 years, it has evolved into a well-known and respected platform and a serious discussion partner for government and policy, one that is actively involved in raising society's awareness of science and scholarship and is a frequent guest in the media. The Young Academy is characterised by its deeply felt passion for science and scholarship, its commitment to a fair, pluralistic and workable science system, and its desire to bring science and society closer together.

The structure of The Young Academy contributes significantly to its success: as members join and leave, a steady stream of new plans and ideas is guaranteed. The members are collectively responsible for and closely involved in what The Young Academy is and intends to be. The aim is to continue to encourage and deepen the active engagement of all members in 2026.

Each month, members discuss ongoing projects with one another and have the leeway to examine relevant topics in greater depth or to propose new ideas in the theme meetings. A new theme will be launched in 2026, namely university teaching. The aim is to give expression to the importance of teaching and education for society and science, and to promote and contribute to high-quality education.

Members of The Young Academy frequently participate in symposia, expert meetings, councils and advisory committees, grant selection and review committees, juries for Royal Academy awards and prizes, and its institutes' science committees. In addition to The Young Academy's own activities, members are therefore closely involved in the Royal Academy's role as a forum and advisory body. They also participate in other national councils and committees, for example those established by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science or the Dutch Research Council (NWO). The Young Academy furthermore seeks to involve researchers from other institutions in its activities, including by organising members' days at universities or institutes and through contacts with local young academies. In addition, it joins forces with the Society of Arts (also part of the Royal Academy), for example within the context of the Arts and Science theme, in joint projects or in the form of meetings.

THE YOUNG ACADEMY

The Young Academy is committed to securing the future of science and scholarship. It does this by communicating the value of research and by helping to improve the science system. It is a platform of fifty inspired academics who conduct research, advise, share knowledge and bring people together, and who do all this while taking a special interest in young scientists and scholars.

As part of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), The Young Academy is an independent forum of fifty young, inspired scientists and scholars with an outstanding reputation in research, teaching, clinical care or knowledge utilisation and valorisation. Its members also have innovative ideas about the academic system. Members must have received their doctorate no more than 10 years prior to their appointment to The Young Academy. They represent a broad spectrum of scientific and scholarly disciplines and carry out their work mainly at research institutions in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. They are appointed for a five-year period. Each year, 10 members are added and 10 depart.

The Young Academy aims to be as diverse as possible, not only in representing a broad spectrum of universities, disciplines and areas of interest (such as research, teaching, valorisation or clinical care) but also in terms of other forms of diversity, such as gender, ethnic, racialised and cultural backgrounds, first-generation researchers and people with work limitations. New members are selected in part on the basis of these criteria. A further consideration in the selection of new members is an adequate passive command of the Dutch language.

The Young Academy's main objectives:

- The Young Academy supports young researchers in their professional development and introduces them to fields of study outside their own area of specialisation, encouraging interdisciplinary research.
- The Young Academy asks members to make an active contribution to the future of their own and other disciplines and to formulate their views on science policy.
- The Young Academy consults with scientific organisations and government ministries and advises them on science policy.
- The Young Academy conveys its fascination with science and scientific insights to the public and to school pupils and students, and considers the matter of valorisation in the broadest sense of the word.
- The Young Academy encourages its members to consider the Dutch academic context within an international framework and urges them to reflect on the position of young researchers from abroad who work in Dutch academia.

The Young Academy organises a broad range of activities each year, including educational events, research, publications and meetings. It is unabashed in making its own voice heard and has frequently gone public in recent years by entering into debate and raising issues for discussion, such as better support for refugee scholars, a fairer allocation of responsibilities and rewards in supervising PhD candidates ('Everyone Professor!') and ensuring academic freedom and integrity by promoting transparency regarding research funding.

In 2026, The Young Academy will continue to push for equal opportunities for early-career researchers. In the years ahead, it will do this by raising awareness of the consequences of stacking research grants and supervising such large numbers of PhD candidates (in some cases too many). What impact does this have on opportunities for early-career researchers, the quality of supervision, and the fair distribution of resources in the field of science?

Key themes that The Young Academy raises within the academic world and beyond

- Equal opportunities for early-career researchers and a fair start for young researchers
- Making Dutch academia greener and more sustainable
- Mental health of academics
- Collective knowledge development with civil-society organisations

In addition, The Young Academy is continuously engaged in:

- promoting information exchange and cooperation with all departments of the Royal Academy;
- asserting the views of early-career researchers in the media and in its communication with university governing bodies, research funding bodies, government and the political world;
- improving the academic system in the Netherlands by advocating for improvements in current science policy;
- keeping track of and monitoring important developments in academia, such as implementation of the Recognition and Rewards programme, Open Science, the situation of refugee academics, and a *Smarter Academic Year*;
- conveying enthusiasm for and knowledge of science to children, young people, and the general public – including hard-to-reach target groups – and experimenting with ways to achieve this;
- continuing to develop and consolidate ideas for interdisciplinary collaboration;
- enhancing the role that science and scholarship play in society and in public debates;
- facilitating internationalisation through exchanges with other young academies, international umbrella and other organisations and advisory bodies so as to be open to best practices from other countries, and by contributing to science for policy and policy for science at national and European level.

2. SCIENCE POLICY THEME

The Young Academy intends to continue leveraging its position so that it can proactively influence policy development and decision-making in and about science and scholarship. Its input will be based on the idea that science and scholarship encompass many values, all of which are important – intrinsically, socially, economically and culturally. Its primary aim in participating in this debate is to highlight and promote this wide variety of scientific and scholarly activity.

The Young Academy will address current issues and topics that have so far been ignored on political or administrative agendas. It will also further consolidate its network of partners in the research community, for example its links with university executive boards, deans, the Dutch Research Council (NWO), Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), various departments of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU), the PhD Network Netherlands (PNN), PostdocNL, the Comenius Network and the Assistant Professors Network (AP-net). The network of local young academies at Dutch universities also facilitates important exchanges and serves as reinforcement. In 2026, members of The Young Academy will continue to participate actively in the Royal Academy's advisory committees, councils and juries, as well as in steering groups or committees outside that organisation, such as the national Recognition and Rewards steering group.

Funding of Dutch research is an issue that will remain on the agenda – including the influence of the private sector and collaboration with it – with The Young Academy continuing to argue that we must strike the right balance between unfettered, curiosity-driven research and theme-based research. In this context, The Young Academy represents early-career researchers active in all the various disciplines and at all the universities and institutes.

In 2026, the Science Policy theme will focus on the following topics and projects:

The Green Young Academy

Universities must set an example in society as drivers of the transition to a green future. While Dutch universities are currently developing various initiatives, these are largely separate and unrelated to one another. Efficiency and a solid basis of support are lost in this way, with universities often – too often – reinventing the wheel, with a level of ambition pitched lower than it could and indeed should be. This fragmented approach may generate only fragile public support, making it difficult to implement changes that are badly needed.

To truly confront the challenges that accompany climate change, an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary approach is essential. The Green Young Academy is a network of members of The Young Academy and local young academies in the Netherlands who share their knowledge and expertise with

one another. By communicating directly with local university administrators, they can heighten the impact of climate-related initiatives. In 2025, The Green Young Academy published its first report surveying the climate targets and plans of all Dutch universities. It also released its *Think green, act green Manifesto for knowledge institutions*, calling on knowledge institutions to commit to specific action to promote sustainability in education, research, operations and governance. The campaign around these themes will continue in 2026, with a focus on climate education.

The Academy Thermometer

With The Academy Thermometer, The Young Academy intends to 'take the temperature' of the Dutch academic world. How are academics in the Netherlands doing in terms of their mental health? A study based on series of questionnaires distributed among academics in the Netherlands in 2023 and 2024 examined what motivates them in their work. For example, what do they love about their job? In addition to the positive aspects of their work in academia, the questionnaires also delved into psychological complaints (depression, anxiety, stress), perceived work/publication pressure, sleep, motivation, use of health care facilities, perceived social safety and perceived support (at work and at home). The data will provide a better understanding of any complaints that occur among academics, how serious they are and which factors alleviate or aggravate such complaints. More than 2,000 academics in the Netherlands filled in the questionnaires. The results of this study will be published in a report early in 2026. The data also provides numerous leads for further research and for national and international comparisons, such as with the data currently being collected by the Indonesian Young Academy of Science (ALMI).

Big tech in academic education

Big tech firms are playing a growing role in academic institutions, for example in research and teaching. Inherent in decisions to open the door to such technical systems is a fundamental discussion about values. In the view of most universities, however, such decisions are purely technological in nature, comparable to purchasing furnishings or office supplies. The Young Academy intends to launch a broad discussion about the values that underpin the use of big tech systems. In 2025, it published a manifesto for academic institutions, with recommendations regarding technical solutions offered by big tech companies. In 2026, The Young Academy will continue to pursue its involvement in this theme and in raising awareness about the use of such solutions.

The AI challenge

Our academic lives are increasingly bound up with technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), which, besides its benefits, also has significant harmful consequences for the environment. Those consequences are not always properly understood. The purpose of this project, which commenced in 2025, is to raise awareness within the academic community of the negative effects of AI use on the environment, and thus contribute to it being used responsibly. The project group aims to survey the environmental impact of AI use by conducting literature research, consulting experts, and collecting quantitative data from university IT departments. Behavioural psychologists, communication experts, and graphic designers will then be consulted so as to jointly devise an awareness campaign

aimed at students and staff, with tips and tricks for the responsible use of AI. The campaign will be launched in 2026 in the form of a toolbox and infographics; a position paper on the use of AI at universities will also be published on The Young Academy's website.

The inner critic

To what extent does an inner critic play a role in the academic world and within The Young Academy? Is it only among a small group of people or in specific disciplines? The purpose of this project is to examine the extent to which the inner critic has students and researchers in its grasp, clearing scope for discussion. A particular point of interest is the role of the inner critic during meetings and gatherings. To what extent do participants feel free to speak their mind? After conducting a survey and interviews, The Young Academy will publish an opinion piece on the role of the inner critic in the academic world.

Everyone Professor!

The Young Academy declared 2023 to be the 'Everyone Professor!' year. In the same year, it launched a number of initiatives, including a call for academics to engage in discussion of Everyone Professor! at faculty and university level. The Young Academy is continuing to monitor the progress of this project at Dutch universities, and it will be back on the agenda in 2026.

Recognition and Rewards (R&R)

The Young Academy will continue contributing to R&R programme development in various ways, for example by giving workshops and participating in the national steering group. In 2026, the R&R Working Group will address the theme of academic leadership, one that is currently still underrepresented within the current R&R programme.

A Smarter Academic Year

In 2021, The Young Academy published its report *A Smarter Academic Year*. In the light of the report, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science invited universities to come up with a 'smarter' design for the academic year, making €14m available for that purpose. The necessary pilot projects commenced in early 2023, and university departments are currently experimenting individually and collectively with smarter ways of structuring the academic year. An interim evaluation was published in 2025, and The Young Academy remains actively involved in the progress and monitoring of the pilot projects.

National politics

The Young Academy is closely involved in national politics. It seeks direct contact with parliamentarians to facilitate exchanges of information on research and education policy and funding. Alongside UNL, the Royal Academy, the Dutch Research Council, TNO and NFU, The Young Academy will remain committed to the Parliament and Science project in 2026. The main aim is to have evidence-based knowledge play a greater role in parliamentary debate by informing Members of Parliament about recent research findings regarding the topics for which policies are being developed.

The Young Academy also wishes to influence national politics in various ways during the process of forming the new Dutch government (which is expected to continue into 2026). The main input for this comprises the priorities that were formulated in 2025.

3. SCIENCE AND SOCIETY THEME

Science is for everyone and is a collective endeavour. In its Science and Society theme, The Young Academy aims to embed science more firmly within society, for example through collaboration with partners outside the universities and by enabling young children to conduct real scientific research. Members often contribute to national or local newspapers and magazines and appear on radio and television programmes. They organise 'citizen science' projects and participate in public events where they encourage people – from children in disadvantaged neighbourhoods to the elderly in village or community centres – to take an active part in 'doing science'.

The Young Academy also engages in discussion with government, the Dutch Research Council, university governing bodies and the National Centre of Expertise on Science & Society – The Netherlands (NEWS) about such topics as recognition and rewards for science communication, science participation, and evaluating projects that bridge the gap between science and society. The Young Academy is also committed to ensuring a safe space for academic debate, one in which all participants have adequate freedom to give their thoughts free rein.

From the autumn of 2025, a new structure will be introduced for the Science and Society Theme meetings, with scope being systematically provided for reflection on how academia and academics have appeared in various media and the public space in the weeks leading up to the meeting. This will allow the members to gain an even more diverse overview of the visibility of science and scholarship and the frames that exist in various places.

The following activities and projects have been scheduled for 2026:

First but not least. Experiences of first-generation academics in the Netherlands

Educational inequality is widespread; children whose parents did not attend university have lower grades, are advised to attend a less academically challenging secondary school and are less likely to go to university themselves. And if they do enrol in a university programme, they often feel less at home there. First-generation academics face a unique challenge: how do they find their way in an academic world with unwritten rules and a hidden curriculum, without the aid of an existing social network? A report was published in 2025 recounting their experiences and making specific recommendations for greater equality of opportunity within Dutch academia. In 2026, The Young Academy will discuss the report's recommendations with the universities' executive boards.

Collective knowledge development: exploratory research on transdisciplinarity in science

Research funding bodies are increasingly financing transdisciplinary research, i.e. in which civil-society actors and businesses contribute their knowledge and expertise throughout the entire research process. In 2023, The Young Academy, in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council (NWO), conducted qualitative interviews and organised roundtable discussions aimed at identifying best practices for the design and conduct of transdisciplinary research. The focus was on how to create scientific and societal added value and how to better facilitate and assess transdisciplinary research. A report will be published in 2026 that will address barriers to collaboration between researchers and civil-society partners, as well as success stories and recommendations for universities, research funding bodies and civil-society partners that wish to participate in transdisciplinary research. In addition to making recommendations, the report will also suggest guidelines for researchers, research funding bodies and public knowledge institutions concerning the best way to conduct interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research and how this can be supported within the national Recognition and Rewards programme.

The PhD Programme of the Future

Members of The Young Academy actively consider ways to strengthen the relationship between science and society. A significant proportion (40%) of the scientific work at universities is carried out by PhD candidates, many of whom are young people with a temporary appointment for 3 to 5 years. The aim of the PhD Programme of the Future is to help (new) PhD candidates and their supervisors, as well as administrators and policymakers, to establish more successful links with wider society during the various phases of their scientific research. The purpose of this project is to create a dialogue between them and stakeholders from all parts of society throughout their research programme, from the initial research question to the conclusion. Too often, this is still merely 'contact with the public after the fact', i.e. when the candidate's dissertation has been almost or entirely completed.

In 2026, The Young Academy intends publishing a magazine, both online and in print, with articles about inspiring examples and practical guidelines, for example about PhD candidates who work part-time in the field relevant to their research, such as healthcare, primary education, or the technology sector, for a fixed period of time. This project also identified how much scope there currently is for 'doing things differently' at Dutch universities, so that issues can be addressed through discussion with the universities and their graduate schools. A podcast about the PhD Programme of the Future was recorded during the anniversary celebrations and will be released in late 2025. The ultimate aim of the project is not only to increase openness about PhD programmes and spark dialogue with relevant sectors; it is also to encourage researchers at all levels of academia to embed their work more broadly within wider society.

Lil' Scientist

Children are scientists by nature. But many children believe that science is not for them. That is especially true of girls, children with a non-Western migration background and children whose parents did not attend higher education. Lil' Scientist seeks to change this by letting children do real science. Lil' Scientist is aimed at children between the ages of 10 and 14 who are growing up in

environments where they are rarely exposed to science or existing forms of science communication. The project partner is the IMC Weekend School, which has dedicated itself to supporting this group of children for more than 20 years. Since 2022, the project has been extended thanks to a Dutch Research Agenda (NWA) grant, with members of The Young Academy giving dozens of Lil' Scientist lessons at the Weekend School. A significant improvement has been the development of various teaching packages. These make Lil'Scientist less dependent on Young Academy members and creates greater scope for local initiatives. Other partners in the collaboration include the NEMO Science Museum and *New Scientist*.

Collaboration with media parties

Members of The Young Academy regularly engage in public activities, such as radio and TV programmes, public festivals, and blogs. The Young Academy proactively seeks opportunities for public engagement and gladly accepts suitable invitations. Its aim in doing so is to make science and scientists more accessible to a wide audience. At the same time, such appearances are an opportunity to provide interested parties with sound information.

4. CONTENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY THEME

The Content and Interdisciplinarity theme offers a platform for content exchange and cooperation in both teaching and research. It encourages members and others to look across disciplinary boundaries and shows that doing so can generate value and mutual inspiration. It also deals with overarching scientific and scholarly themes and examines options for and methods of interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Each year, The Young Academy gives content – i.e. research – a prominent role during its members' days, for example by having members give short lectures about their own research. This encourages an exchange of conten t and inspiration and serves as an excellent starting point for members to apply for a project grant for interdisciplinary collaboration.

This theme also promotes member-to-member cooperation and includes activities to encourage this, such as a members' day inspired by content and cooperation.

In 2026, the focus of the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme will be on:

InterScience

InterScience is a series of symposia, each one addressing a single topic examined from the perspective of various disciplines. These lectures offer interested parties the opportunity to see cross-connections and contrasts between the different disciplines. Building on the success of jointly organised evenings in previous years, The Young Academy will once again seek to cooperate with the Society of Arts. In 2026, the intention is to organise public meetings again as part of this theme.

I&I Reading Club

The I&I Reading Club organises a bi-monthly interdisciplinary 'conceptual laboratory' involving collective reflection on the concept of the 'public sphere', public deliberation, and the role of science/scientists within it. How do scientists and scholars relate to the public sphere? Are they equal participants within it alongside other citizens, do they have a separate position with different responsibilities, or should they in fact remain entirely outside it, or even be shielded from it?

The Reading Club's objectives are:

- Intellectual leadership: Become more astute thinkers and discussion partners regarding the relationship between science and the public sphere;
- Common ground: create a common language and conceptual toolbox for collaborative thinking;

- Slow science: create a venue where we can discuss and reflect on problems (for example ‘science versus the public sphere’) in a collaborative and interdisciplinary manner, without any predetermined expectations regarding output.

Slow Science Hikes

In partnership with local young academies, The Young Academy organises twice-yearly walks in the countryside in the vicinity of a university city. The idea is to create a relaxed and interdisciplinary setting in which academics can meet and put the concept of ‘slow science’ into practice. The Young Academy hopes these hikes will make academics more broadly aware that aspects of this ‘slow’ approach are already feasible within the existing university structure and will signal to policymakers that allowing their academic staff to ‘slow down’ during working hours can improve the quality of their research.

Walking together invites more open communication than meeting in a conference room; silences are not experienced as uncomfortable, and deep listening comes naturally while walking. There is also an element of serendipity; participants never know in advance who will turn up, who they might find themselves walking alongside and what topics might come up in conversation. The hope is that these hikes will become a creative laboratory for slow science, in which ideas slowly percolate for interdisciplinary partnerships.

5. ARTS AND SCIENCE THEME

Since 2025, the Arts and Science theme has been a fully-fledged theme within The Young Academy and at the same time a shared theme of the Academy of Arts and The Young Academy. It brings together scientists and artists in art/science projects in which equality between the two domains is crucial. The theme is also intended to encourage artists and scientists to join forces in gathering knowledge and to work together on meeting the challenges facing society.

In collaboration with the Academy of Arts, The Young Academy will continue to organise meetings and to regularly launch interdisciplinary projects. The theme seeks a robust way to continue events, such as Mingler Live, at which artists and scientists from inside and outside the Royal Academy can meet, art/science projects are presented and collaborative partnerships are encouraged.

Arts x Science x Society

Collaboration between the two domains on socially relevant themes, both fundamental and applied, can offer new perspectives on such issues as climate change, ecology, economics, digital transitions, loneliness, artificial intelligence, ageing and more. While such collaboration is already taking place, these efforts are small in scale and fragmented, being dispersed across many different initiatives. As a result, the whole never transcends the sum of its parts. The Arts x Science x Society initiative is meant to change this. It aims to do so by making such efforts visible, by systematically examining what they signify and by reinforcing the role that they play for society in conjunction with the arts and the sciences.

In 2026, members of the Working Group will build on the foundations laid during the working conference by continuing to engage with relevant parties, including the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, funds, and funding bodies in the arts and sciences.

Room for Wonder

Not so long ago, scientists and scholars were ‘all-rounders’. They didn’t restrict themselves to a single field or niche; their interests transcended disciplines. The embodiment of this universal curiosity often took the form of a ‘cabinet of curiosities’ (in German aptly named a *Wunderkammer*), in which natural specimens, *objets d’art*, technical apparatus, and a great deal besides, together symbolised the whole of science, representing an all-embracing sense of wonder.

The Young Academy wishes to recapture this sense of wonder, of encompassing science and scholarship within a single space. In collaboration with the Academy of Arts, we intend to construct a compact cabinet of curiosities, within which artists and scientists will jointly capture various forms of scientific research in objects that invite exploration of science. We plan to take this cabinet of curiosities on tour to libraries across the Netherlands, so that everyone can marvel at it.

6. INTERNATIONALISATION THEME

The Internationalisation theme aims to reinforce the merits, quality and impact of science and scholarship internationally, with activities being organised around two core objectives. The first is to strengthen the position of young scientists and scholars worldwide and improve the diversity and sustainability of science and scholarship in general by aligning with European and global initiatives. This can be achieved by promoting the representation of young scientists within scientific advisory bodies and contributing to resolving global issues such as carbon emissions by academia, scientists/scholars in high-risk situations, and climate change. The Young Academy is collaborating with young academies abroad, meeting their members, and working with them.

The second objective is to make Dutch academia more inclusive and attractive for international scientists and scholars so that they come to the Netherlands or remain here. Related activities include: publishing virtually all Young Academy communications and documents in two languages; updating *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia*; taking stock of any forms of exclusion or unfairness at universities; and strengthening the ties with the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Young Academy collaborates with young academies in other countries, the Royal Academy, and international scientific and scholarly organisations, including the Global Young Academy (GYA), the Young Academy of Europe (YAE), the European National Young Academies (ENYA), Neth-ER, the InterAcademy Partnership (IAP), the European Commission and other European organisations. Networking with other international young academies is important for setting up activities in an international context, including in the field of science policy.

The Young Academy also wants the voice of young researchers to be heard in connection with European science policy. It participates in various European stakeholder platforms and working groups and in 2025-2026 has a seat on the board of the European Young Academies Scientific Advice Structure (YASAS), which participates as an equal partner in SAPEA, part of the European Science Advice Mechanism. Within this consortium, young academies, through SAPEA, can influence policy recommendations by the Group of Chief Scientific Advisors to the European Commission. Through SAPEA, they carry out independent, high-quality assessments of the evidence ('evidence reviews'), which are then used to substantiate the policy recommendations made by the Group.

In 2026, the following activities will take place under this theme:

A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia 2.0

In 2022, The Young Academy published a new online version of *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia*, a handbook comprising mainly factual information

about the academic system in the Netherlands. The Young Academy's aim with this publication is to assist researchers who are new to the Netherlands in getting started within the Dutch system and its work culture. The guide will be updated each year.

Safeguarding the international component of Dutch academia

The international component of Dutch academia is currently under threat, with questions being raised by politicians and in public debate regarding the value of its international researchers, lecturers, and students. This issue came to the fore owing to the 'Internationalisation in Balance' bill [*Wetsvoorstel internationalisering in balans*], introduced in Parliament in response to concerns about a preponderance of international students at many Dutch universities and intending to promote the use of Dutch as the language of instruction in higher education. The Young Academy has consistently stressed the importance of internationalisation and the risks that these measures may pose to the quality of teaching and research. In 2025, internationalisation of Dutch academia was also one of the priorities formulated by The Young Academy in the run-up to the Dutch parliamentary elections. We will continue joining forces with institutional partners – and universities in particular – in championing internationalisation as a cornerstone of Dutch academia.

At-risk scholars

In 2016, The Young Academy launched the Science Buddies project to match refugee scientists and scholars with their peers in the Netherlands. In close cooperation with The Young Academy and the Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF), the Dutch Research Council (NWO) then developed 'Hestia – Impulse for Refugees in Science', a programme meant to better help refugee academics find paid work in Dutch academia. The Young Academy is helping to evaluate the programme and is committed to working with the other parties involved, such as the UAF, to support refugee academics in the Netherlands in various ways.

These activities will continue in 2026, with all parties involved considering how best to help refugee academics and at-risk scholars. Members of The Young Academy are working to support colleagues in countries where academic freedom is under threat, for example by ensuring that temporary and flexible bursary programmes are available for refugee academics in both the acute and medium term. For instance, The Young Academy called in 2025 for nominations for grants from the Tulip Fund to be based not only on scientific excellence but above all on protecting scientists and scholars who are unable to carry out their work in safety.

Caribbean part of the Netherlands

The Young Academy is committed to making the Dutch academic landscape more accessible to people from the Caribbean part of the Netherlands. It consistently draws attention to this topic in its discussions with university governing bodies. The Young Academy is a member of the liaison group for setting up a research network organisation, the Dutch Caribbean Research Platform (DUCARP).

In 2026, The Young Academy will continue its efforts to improve the ties between science and scholarship in the Caribbean and European parts of the Kingdom. It will also consider how best to identify the needs and requirements of young researchers on the islands, for example by setting up a society for researchers

there, or by contributing to a Graduate School in order to facilitate progress in PhD programmes. Another facet being explored is how to involve researchers from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom more closely in Faces of Science and other Young Academy initiatives. Scientists and scholars from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom have been able to join The Young Academy since 2022.

7. UNIVERSITY TEACHING THEME

A decision was taken in 2025 to establish a new theme, namely the university teaching theme. By doing this, The Young Academy wishes to emphasise the importance of teaching for the practice of high-quality science and scholarship. The continuing emphasis on research at Dutch universities (including academic career policy) is also at odds with the importance of the close intertwining of teaching and research. In recent years, universities' personnel policy has focused strongly on research performance, with great importance being attached to the acquisition of external research funding and publications in journals with a high impact factor. In many disciplines, it is usual for research achievements to carry much greater weight than teaching in how someone's academic career advances. However, the increased competition for research funding is at the expense of university teaching. For scientists who are successful in acquiring external research funding, their research workload actually increases, leaving them less time to invest in teaching.

Within The Young Academy, there has long been a desire to focus greater attention on teaching. In recent years, it has therefore initiated a number of projects highlighting how important university teaching actually is. The aim of this programme is to promote and contribute to high-quality teaching within academia, as well as to emphasise the importance of such teaching for the practice of science.

Synergy with schools (*Bij de les*)

Dutch academia is groaning under the weight of plans for major cutbacks, and it is not inconceivable that university staff will be made redundant. Meanwhile, there is a significant shortage of teachers at secondary and primary schools, and the links between schools and universities need improvement. Existing initiatives that encouraged synergy between universities and primary and secondary schools – such as the Doctoral Grant for Teachers (awarded by the Dutch Research Council) – are currently being scrapped or scaled back under pressure from the current government. As a result, a great deal of didactic potential, energy, and enthusiasm risks remaining unused. In this project, The Young Academy aims to identify opportunities for mobilising this potential and matching academics in a meaningful way to the shortages in primary and secondary education. This will help to solve the above problems, with university lecturers stepping in where there are urgent, major shortages.

Negative impact of student evaluations

The *Gecondoceerd* project concerns the undermining effect of student evaluations in higher education. The project's milestones are: a website to collect distressing student evaluations, with recommendations as to how things can and must be improved, together with media attention for the issue.

With this project, The Young Academy aims to clarify the undermining effect of student evaluations in education. Research has shown that student surveys do not measure quality of education, but they do have excessive negative effects, such as verbal abuse, a culture of blame, and disrupted didactic relationships. With this project, The Young Academy aims to clarify how the quality of education and teaching is evaluated at universities and to initiate discussion of this topic.

8. COMMUNICATION

The Young Academy intends to continue pursuing a number of communication goals. Towards the end of 2025, it is working on a new **communication strategy** for 2026. Among other things, the strategy will focus on addressing target groups more precisely and making effective use of social media. The use of visuals (such as illustrations, photographs, and infographics) is also being explored.
In 2026, The Young Academy will be launching a new **website**. The Royal Academy is issuing a call for tenders to select an agency that will create a new website for all three learned societies. The new website is expected to be up and running by the end of 2026.

Since autumn 2025, The Young Academy has also been working with **Microsoft Teams** so as to streamline its internal communication. The Teams environment will ultimately replace the online 'members section'.

The Young Academy promotes itself and its projects with the support of the Communication & Information Department of the Royal Academy's Bureau. It seeks advice about communication at an early stage of project development so that the project can be launched as effectively as possible. Where necessary, a communication plan is drawn up for each project or activity, with a strategy for dealing with target groups, the message and communication tools.

LIST OF MEMBERS (2021-2026)

Name	University	Year of appointment	Expertise
Tazuko van Berkel	Leiden University	2022	Greek language and literature
Max Valentin Birk	Eindhoven University of Technology	2025	Human-technology interaction
Marjolijn Bol	Utrecht University	2021	Technical Art History
Shari Boodts	Radboud University Nijmegen	2021	Ancient and medieval history
Bas Borsje	University of Twente	2024	Hydraulic engineering, Climate adaptation
Eddie Brummelman	University of Amsterdam	2021	The development of self-image and the emergence of inequality
Bieke Cattoor	Delft University of Technology	2023	Landscape analysis, landscape theory
Pieter Coppens	VU University Amsterdam	2023	Islamic studies
Irene Dedoussi	Delft University of Technology	2022	Aerospace engineering
Jeroen Dera	Radboud University Nijmegen	2025	Dutch literature
Scott Douglas	Utrecht University	2023	Public administration
Max van Duijn	Leiden University	2023	Media technology
Sanli Faez	Utrecht University	2021	Nanophotonics
David Fernandez Rivas	University of Twente	2024	Microfluidics, engineering and bioengineering
Romy Gaillard	Erasmus University Medical Centre	2024	Paediatrics
Kristina Ganzinger	University of Amsterdam	2023	Complex information processing by immune cells
Caroline Gevaert	University of Twente	2022	Geo-information science
Carolien van Ham	Radboud University Nijmegen	2021	Democratic erosion and renewal
Chiel van Heerwaarden	Wageningen University & Research	2021	Meteorology
Lizzà Hendriks	Maastricht UMC+	2021	Thoracic oncology
Lisa Herzog	University of Groningen	2025	Political philosophy, PPE
Felix Hol	Radboud University Medical Centre	2025	Vector biology
Björn Hoops	University of Groningen	2025	Private law and sustainability
Léonie de Jonge	University of Tübingen	2023	European politics and society
Valentijn Karemaker	University of Amsterdam	2024	Mathematics
Rogier Kievit	Radboud University Nijmegen	2023	Developmental neuroscience
Vasiliki Kosta	Leiden University	2023	European law
Eline van der Kruk	Delft University of Technology	2025	Biomechanics
Olya Kudina	Delft University of Technology	2024	Ethics, Philosophy of Technology
Vanessa LaPointe	Maastricht University	2025	Cell therapy
Jeroen Leijten	University of Twente	2021	Micromaterials and microtechnologies for tissue engineering
Ingrid Leijten	Tilburg University	2023	Dutch and European constitutional law
Cynthia Liem	Delft University of Technology	2021	Reliable artificial intelligence

Esther Metting	University Medical Centre Groningen	2025	e-Health
Noel de Miranda	Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC)	2022	Tumour immunology and immunotherapy
Daphina Misiedjan	Erasmus University Rotterdam	2023	Human rights and environmental justice
Stéphanie van der Pas	VU University Amsterdam	2024	Mathematics, causal inference
Saskia Peels	University of Groningen	2024	Ancient Greek linguistics
Jim Portegies	Eindhoven University of Technology	2022	Mathematics
Ward Rauws	University of Groningen	2024	Spatial Planning
Else Starkenburg	University of Groningen	2022	Astronomy, Astrophysics
Fenneke Sysling	Leiden University	2024	History of science
Pooyan Tamimi Arab	Utrecht University	2022	Religious studies
Joeri Tijdink	Amsterdam UMC, AMC site	2022	Psychiatry
Petter Törnberg	University of Amsterdam	2025	Computational social science
Lilly Verhagen	Radboud University Medical Centre	2025	Infectious diseases and immunology
Joris van der Voet	Leiden University	2024	Public administration
Michel Vols	University of Groningen	2021	Public order law
Mariëlle Wijermars	Maastricht University	2025	Internet governance
Fleur Zeldenrust	Donders Institute	2022	Computational neuroscience

TIMELINE IN 2026

Calendar of recurring activities for The Young Academy

Month	Meetings of members	New members and selection committee	Annual documents cycle	Young Academy Grants Committee
January	29/1 at the Trippenhuis	The Board welcomes new members, with photos and preparations for the installation gathering		
February				First round deadline: 15/2
March	19/3 at the Trippenhuis	19/3: installation of new members and change of Board	Approval of draft Annual Report at members' meeting	Allocation of grants
April	01/4: change of Board	01/4: start of membership of The Young Academy; start of submission of recommendations for membership of The Young Academy	Final version of Annual Report	
May	29-30/5: Contact of the Continents members' weekend.			
June		Mid-June: deadline for submission of recommendations for membership of The Young Academy		
July				
August				
September		Selection of new members and call for new Board members	Approval of draft Annual Plan and draft budget at members' meeting	
October	01/10 away day		Final version of Annual Plan and budget	Second round deadline: 15/10
November	26/11 at the Trippenhuis			Allocation of grants
December				