

Dear Minister Dijkgraaf,

On 13 January of this year, Fontys wrote you a letter. In it, we informed you we were responding to your call (dated 22 December 2022) to temporarily stop active recruitment of foreign students. In the letter, we named which activities we considered active recruitment and which activities we therefore omitted. In this way, Fontys has taken responsibility in the discussion surrounding the influx of international students.

We thank you for your response (dated 5 June 2023) to our letter, in which you express your appreciation for the constructive and responsible manner in which Fontys contributes to the desired recruitment approach.

#### Social mission

As an institution, we take responsibility toward our students, the labour market and Dutch society. Below we explain how we link that responsibility to the well-being of our students and to our social mission in the regions in which we operate.

#### Recruitment

Fontys is a large university of applied sciences, active in the important economic regions of Brainport, Midpoint Brabant and North and Central Limburg. In this role, we feel a strong social responsibility to contribute to the further (economic) development of the Netherlands through the development of talent. Given the current labour market shortages in our regions and the international nature of our regions, this requires both national and international talent. The professional field in our region has also endorsed this on several occasions in light of the political debate.

#### Shortage of talent

Fontys sees that the labour shortage not only affects large national and international companies. As suppliers to these larger companies, SMEs also need talent. Anticipating the needs of our regions, Fontys has, since April of this year, been focusing solely on targeted recruitment of international talent for the undersubscribed sectors you have identified. We will continue this policy in the coming period. Following this, Fontys, in collaborations and agreements with its regional partners, guides and supports international students in finding suitable and safe housing.

We see increasing labour market prospects for international students as part of our sector's social mission. We are working hard on this together with our partners in the professional field. Internationally, we contribute to research and development of support tools aimed at increasing employability and the stay rate of international students. Fontys is, for instance, preparing its language policy in which, among other things, we strive for optimal development of Dutch language skills and socialisation of our international students. We also focus our language policy on language proficiency in Dutch study programmes, professional development of lecturers, our working language and our use of language in internal communications.

#### Overview

We will prepare an overview of our foreign-language course offerings in order to lay a foundation for the conversation we are going to have among ourselves as universities of applied sciences as part of self-management. In this way, we hope to make a constructive and responsible contribution to the national debate on foreign-language offerings. At the same time, with an eye to the future, we develop our programmes to match the labour market for which we train our students.

#### Value of internationalisation

Given the added value of internationalisation, our starting point is that every Fontys student gains international orientation and intercultural competencies. To achieve this, we ensure that all programmes embed these two aspects in student learning outcomes or learning environments.

We are making efforts to provide an increasing number of students with an international experience abroad. Furthermore, we are investing in the broad opportunities of Internationalisation at home, such as virtual and blended projects, international guest lecturers and more attention to the development of interculturality, also in relation to our tasks of inclusion and diversity.

We are not only working on an appropriate network of international cooperation partners, but also on strengthening international prospects and international research cooperation for our students, staff and the professional field. Internationalisation of our research should contribute to the quality and quantity of practice-based research in Fontys' research themes.

As far as we are concerned, this is currently an interim phase pending the long-term policy, but we understand that this is up to the new government. We are still taking a restrained approach to recruitment, barring the undersubscribed sectors. Based on our vision of internationalisation, we are working on recruitment policies, housing policies, admissions policies, language policies and policies related to our foreign-language programmes.

Together, we can then fulfil our social mission as higher education institutions.

Kind regards,  
On behalf of the Executive Board of Fontys University of Applied Sciences,