



# THE YOUNG ACADEMY ANNUAL PLAN FOR 2024

Amsterdam, November 2023  
The Young Academy

# **BACKGROUND**

In accordance with the Regulations of The Young Academy, as adopted by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW; the 'Royal Academy'), the Board of The Young Academy hereby presents its Annual Plan for 2024. The Annual Plan was discussed and approved by the members of The Young Academy on 28 September 2023 and approved by the Royal Academy's Board on 7 November 2023.

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# INTRODUCTION

In this Annual Plan, The Young Academy sets out how it intends continuing to fulfil its objectives in 2024. Information about The Young Academy's activities in previous years can be found in its Annual Reports, published at [www.dejongeakademie.nl](http://www.dejongeakademie.nl).

The Annual Plan for 2024 has been drawn up on the basis of themes that reflect the main topics addressed by The Young Academy. Sections 2 to 5 provide an overview of objectives, topics, and intended activities for each theme. Section 6 outlines The Young Academy's communication strategy. An agenda for 2024 is attached to the Annual Plan as an appendix.

# 1 AMBITIONS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR 2024

The Young Academy was established in 2005 and has evolved into a well-known and respected platform, a serious discussion partner for governance and policy, actively involved in raising society's awareness of science and scholarship and a frequent guest in the media. The strength of The Young Academy is to be found in its deeply felt enthusiasm for science and scholarship and the desire to share that enthusiasm with society.

The structure of The Young Academy has contributed greatly to its success. With members joining and leaving, there is a constant flow of new plans and ideas. The members are collectively responsible for what The Young Academy is and aims to be, and they are highly involved. The aim is to continue to encourage and strengthen this involvement and active engagement on the part of all members in 2024. Monthly online meetings are held at which ongoing projects are discussed, with scope for exploring topics in depth or presenting new ideas.

Members of The Young Academy participate frequently in symposia, meetings of experts, councils and advisory committees of the Royal Academy, selection and assessment committees for grants, juries for Royal Academy prizes, and in science committees of its institutes. In addition to The Young Academy's own activities, members are therefore closely involved in the Royal Academy's function as a forum and advisory body. The Young Academy seeks to involve researchers from other institutions in its activities, including by holding members' days at universities or institutes and through contacts with local young academies. It also cooperates with the Society of Arts through joint projects or meetings.

## ***The Young Academy***

*Within the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, The Young Academy is an independent forum of 50 committed young scientists and scholars who are international frontrunners in their field. Members must have received their doctorate no more than ten years prior to their appointment to The Young Academy. They represent a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines and carry out their work mainly at scientific institutions in the Kingdom of the Netherlands. They are appointed for a five-year period. Each year, ten members are added and ten depart.*

*This method of selecting new members will also ensure in the coming years that there is sufficient balance within the membership in terms of disciplines, gender, and other relevant dimensions of diversity, as well as members' command of the Dutch language.*

*The Young Academy aims to develop and implement activities*

- *to bring young researchers actively into contact with disciplines outside their own area of specialisation and with options for conducting interdisciplinary research;*
- *to encourage young researchers to develop and communicate views on the future of their own discipline, on collaboration with other disciplines, and on science policy;*
- *to encourage young researchers to communicate their scientific/scholarly insights to the general public;*
- *to support young researchers in their progress as such;*
- *to encourage international collaboration with members of other young academies or organisations with similar objectives.*

The Young Academy organises a broad range of activities each year, ranging from media appearances to educational events, research, publications, and meetings. It emphatically makes its own voice heard and has frequently gone public in recent years by getting involved in debates and placing issues on the agenda itself, for example more hospitality in academia for refugee scholars, the 'Everyone Professor!' project, and ensuring academic freedom and integrity through transparency regarding research funding. The Young Academy intends continuing to do all this in 2024. Key themes for the coming year include 'overstimulation' (with a study of the mental health of academics); hierarchy and privilege in science and scholarship ('Everyone Professor!'); diversity and inclusion; first-generation scholars; Recognition and Rewards; the balance between public and private research funding; dialogues on science with various audiences (for example at community centres); collective knowledge development; researchers in the media; and strengthening Scholars at Risk initiatives.

The Young Academy's focus is otherwise on:

- promoting information exchange and cooperation with all components of the Royal Academy;
- expressing its opinions emphatically in the media and vis-à-vis university administrators, research funding bodies, government, and the political world;
- improving the field of science in the Netherlands by advocating improvements in current science policy;
- keeping track of important developments, such as implementation of the Recognition and Rewards programme, Open Science, the situation of refugee scientists and scholars, and internationalisation in higher education;
- encouraging discussion of research and the public relevance of science, for example by means of lectures and symposia;
- conveying enthusiasm for and knowledge of science and scholarship to children, young people, and the general public, as well as hard-to-reach target groups, and experimenting with ways to achieve this;
- continuing to develop and consolidate ideas for interdisciplinary collaboration;
- devoting attention to internationalisation, including through exchanges with other young academies, international organisations, and advisory bodies so as to be open to best practices from other countries.

## 2 SCIENCE POLICY THEME

The Young Academy intends continuing to leverage its position to proactively influence policy development and decision-making in science and scholarship. In doing so, it will continue to make its contribution from the perspective that science and scholarship have many values, all of which are important, intrinsically, socially, economically and culturally. Participation in this debate is aimed primarily at highlighting and promoting this wide range of valuable forms of scientific and scholarly activity.

The Young Academy will involve itself with current issues, but will also place topics on the political agenda itself that are not yet to be found on that agenda, or not high enough. 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), the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), 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 exchange and reinforcement. In 2024, members of The Young Academy will continue to participate actively in advisory committees, councils and juries of the Royal Academy, as well as in steering groups or committees outside that organisation, such as the national Recognition and Rewards steering group, or the committee that was formed in 2022 by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to evaluate the Starters and Incentive Grants and which will continue in 2024 to monitor how these grants are made use of at universities.

Funding of the Dutch research system is an issue that will remain on the agenda, with The Young Academy continuing to advocate unfettered, curiosity-driven research. In this regard, The Young Academy represents researchers from all the various disciplines and universities or institutes.

In 2024, the Science Policy Theme will focus on the following topics and projects.

### **Everyone Professor!**

The Young Academy declared 2023 to be 'Everyone Professor!' year. In the same year, it launched a number of initiatives, including a call for academics to begin discussion of Everyone Professor! at faculty and university level. As 'intellectual ammunition' for such discussion, The Young Academy provided a FAQ on its website with questions that could be expected and suggested answers. In 2024, The Young Academy will continue to engage in discussion of this issue and will argue for Everyone Professor!, including by organising a debate on 1 February 2024.

### **The Academy Thermometer**

With The Academy Thermometer, the Young Academy intends 'taking the temperature' of the Dutch academic world. How is the mental health of scientists and scholars in the Netherlands? Questionnaires will be used to survey psychological complaints (depression, anxiety, stress), perceived work/publication pressure, sleep, motivation, use of healthcare facilities, perceived social safety, and perceived support (at one's department and at home). This data will provide a better understanding of any complaints that occur among scientists and scholars, how serious they are, and whether factors can be identified that may be protective or aggravating. The results will be presented in a publication.

### **Research Funding Consultation**

With the Research Funding Consultation project, The Young Academy experimented in 2022 with a collective participation process in which participants faced the same dilemmas and constraints that policy-makers also face. The idea was for them to propose solutions within the given constraints. The results of the consultation will be published in 2024 and will comprise (1) a position paper on use of the collective participation process for policy-making, and (2) an analysis of the funding consultation data and reflections on it.

### **Influence of collaboration with the private sector on research in the Netherlands**

Recent decades have seen a huge increase in external research funding in the Netherlands. This has shifted the focus onto research with quick results for government and industry. However, science also has the task of generating new questions and anticipating the issues of the future. That task, and with it positive academic freedom – i.e. the freedom of scientists to choose for themselves what research to conduct and to what end – is under pressure.

In 2023, The Young Academy published its report *Space to Think. An analysis of structural threats to Academic Freedom and Integrity*, in which it calls for greater transparency through 'intellectual audits' and the establishment of guidelines for responsible research funding. In 2024, The Young Academy intends continuing to monitor developments regarding this issue and to place it on the agenda at universities.

### **Recognition and Rewards**

After The Young Academy presented best practices in 2020 in order to inspire local Recognition and Rewards committees in developing their advice and policies, it went on in 2022 to conduct and release interviews with professors as a series of podcasts. By having researchers at the top reflect in these talks on their own career and the good but also not-so-good aspects of the current appraisal system, The Young Academy hopes to gain a better understanding of what is needed for the desired culture shift. In the light of this series, The Young Academy will publish a reflective report and will contribute to development of the programme in various ways, for example by giving workshops and participating in the national steering group. The podcast series 'TjongeJonge' (October–November 2023) also covered topics relating to Recognition and Rewards.

### **National politics**

In the run-up to the elections to the Dutch House of Representatives in November 2023, The Young Academy published a set of three priorities for ensuring thriving scientific education and research. These concerns for the forthcoming Dutch government will also be brought to the attention of politicians while coalition talks are going on. The Young Academy seeks direct contact with parliamentarians with a view to reciprocal exchange of information on research and education policy and funding.

Alongside the UNL, Royal Academy, NWO, TNO and NFU, The Young Academy remains committed to the Parliament and Science project. The core aim is to have scientific knowledge play a greater role in parliamentary debate by informing Members of Parliament about recent scientific insights regarding the topics for which policies are being developed.

### **Less work pressure in 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, Robbert Dijkgraaf, invited universities to redesign their academic year so as to make it 'smarter', The relevant pilots began in early 2023. Over the course of four years, departments at fourteen research universities and one university of applied sciences will experiment, individually and collectively, with making the academic year smarter. The Young Academy will continue to be involved in the progress and monitoring of the pilots.

### 3 SCIENCE AND SOCIETY THEME

The aim of the Science and Society theme is to increase knowledge of and interest in science in society. The group targeted is a broad one: The Young Academy wishes to reach children and adults other than those who are already interested in science and who actively inform themselves about it. In addition to the new projects described below, members of The Young Academy will highlight existing projects such as the *Moendes Digital* board game and the comic book *The Scarab and the Mysterious Disease*.

The following activities and projects are on the agenda for 2024:

#### **Collective knowledge development: exploratory research on transdisciplinarity in science**

Research funding bodies are increasingly financing transdisciplinary research, in which the knowledge and expertise of civil-society actors and businesses are expected to be involved from the outset. In 2023, The Young Academy, in collaboration with the Dutch Research Council (NWO), conducted qualitative interviews and organised roundtable discussions so as to understand best practices regarding 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 2024 that will address difficulties in collaboration between scientists and civil-society partners, as well as success stories and recommendations for universities, research funding bodies such as NWO and the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw), and civil-society partners that wish to participate in scientific research. Working in parallel with NWO's [Knowledge Platform](#), The Young Academy aims to generate (real-time) impact at the macro level.

#### ***Niet de eerste de beste*: first-generation scholars and their experience in science and scholarship**

First-generation scholars are those whose parents didn't go to university themselves. In 2023, The Young Academy interviewed first-generation scholars to survey their experience and make recommendations to increase equality of opportunity in Dutch academia. Educational inequality is widespread; children without university-educated parents receive lower grades, are recommended for a less challenging secondary school, and are less likely to go to university. And if they do take a university programme, they often feel less at home there. They 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? What is their experience in Dutch academia? How do they navigate between the two worlds – the one they grew up in and the one in which they now find themselves? What role does their background play in their academic career? And how can Dutch universities and research funding bodies contribute to equal opportunities for first-generation scholars? The aim of *Niet de eerste de beste* is to answer these questions in the light of the interviews with first-generation scholars. A report will be published in 2024 giving a voice to first-generation scholars and making specific recommendations for increasing diversity and inclusion in Dutch academia.

#### **Lil'Scientist**

Children are by nature mini-scientists. The best way to introduce them to science is to put them to work and let them do some actual research. This is possible with 'citizen science', a method that researchers increasingly deploy to answer scientific and social questions. The 'Lil' Scientist' project is targeted at young people aged 10-14, mostly from underprivileged backgrounds – a target group that is currently hardly reached by science communication projects, but for which the IMC Weekend School has been doing highly successful pioneering work for more than 20 years. The project has been extended for 2022–2024 with the aid of a National Research Agenda (NWA) grant. After the official kick-off on 1 July 2023, lessons taught by members of The Young Academy will continue at the Weekend School in the second half of 2023 and in 2024. This involves collaboration with a number of partners, including the NEMO Science Museum and *New Scientist*.

**Collaboration with media parties**

In 2024 too, members of The Young Academy will take part in various radio and TV programmes, festivals, and blogs, for example by giving lectures at the Oerol Festival, or being interviewed in the media. The Young Academy will itself proactively seek opportunities and will also gladly accept suitable invitations. The Young Academy aims in this way to promote the accessibility of science and scientists for a wide audience. At the same time, such appearances are an opportunity to provide people with sound information.

## 4 CONTENT AND INTERDISCIPLINARITY THEME

The Content and Interdisciplinarity theme provides 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 science themes and examines options and methods of interdisciplinary research and teaching.

Each year, The Young Academy gives content – i.e. research – a prominent role at meetings of members through short lectures that they present. This encourages an exchange of content and inspiration, and provides 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. This has become all the more important since the COVID-19 crisis.

In 2024, the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme will focus on:

### **InterScience**

InterScience is a series of symposia focusing on a single topic each time from various different disciplines. With these lectures, The Young Academy offers interested parties the opportunity to see cross-connections and contrasts between the different disciplines. Cooperation will again be sought with the Society of Arts, following successful jointly organised evenings in previous years. In 2024, new themes will be on the agenda again, such as 'Debt' and 'Borders'.

### **The Arts and Science**

The Society of Arts' Arts and Science theme brings together scientists (members of The Young Academy) and artists (members of the Society of Arts). They focus on art/science projects in which the equality of the two domains is a crucial basic principle. The theme is also intended to collect knowledge jointly and focus on solutions to the challenges facing society. In collaboration with the Society of Arts, The Young Academy will continue to organise meetings, 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.

### **The Real Homo Economicus**

How is it that the various disciplines that all deal with economic activity – financial, behavioural, political, institutional, ecological, feminist economics, economic anthropology – build on divergent images of humanity? The fact that different sciences have such divergent images as their starting point perhaps also explains why there is hardly any interdisciplinary interchange between anthropologists and behavioural economists, for example, or between mainstream and heterodox economists. To be able to talk to one another, there must be a common language, and no such language exists if there is not even any consensus on the exact object of study. Moreover, an image of humanity is often part of an unspoken basic axiom within a discipline: within a discipline, an image of humanity is rarely a matter for discussion, while between disciplines there is hardly any dialogue. In an interdisciplinary workshop (in 2023), an English-language podcast series and group interviews (2–3 people), The Young Academy reflects with participants on how confronting other disciplines has influenced their assumptions, opened their eyes, and raised new questions. The results also serve as a topic for reflection for the Content and Interdisciplinarity theme.

### **The Memory of Perfume 2.0**

This is a follow-up to the previous Memory of Perfume project, which re-created a 17th-century perfume and established a link to the past by asking questions about the meaning of sensory experiences in both the past and the present through collaboration with different disciplines. This project will produce new

historical reconstructions of perfume recipes, further exploring interdisciplinary collaboration. For the permanent display at the Huygens' Hofwijck museum, a perfumes cabinet (*simplicia cabinet*) will be set up like the one Huygens must have had. Such a cabinet provides insight into the collection and ordering of knowledge in the 17th century, combining the humanities and exact sciences. A neuroscientific smell experiment with 30 healthy subjects will investigate whether our perception of smells changes over time.

### **Cantata for Invertebrates/All the Sea you Cannot See**

The great majority of the 2-3 million species of fauna that have been described are invertebrates, i.e. animals without bones: insects, snails, jellyfish, crabs, and sponges, to name but a few groups. As vertebrates, however, humans have an unconscious preference for other vertebrates. Animals without a backbone are ignored or loathed, despite these 'un-charismatic' species being crucial to the functioning of our ecosystems. Without invertebrates, we cannot survive. In this project, a scientist (a member of The Young Academy) and an artist (a member of the Society of Arts) will meet in an art-science partnership, culminating in an interdisciplinary musical theatre performance that celebrates the beautiful diversity of life forms, gives them expression, and addresses their position so as to create awareness. The performance will be a contemplation on the climate crisis, more specifically the position of invertebrates in the earth's largest ecosystem, the sea. *Cantata for Invertebrates* will be performed in 2025 by the Netherlands Bach Society.

## 5 INTERNATIONALISATION THEME

The Internationalisation theme aims to reinforce the merits, quality, and impact of science and scholarship internationally. With that in mind, it organises activities with two core goals.

- 1 Strengthening the position of young scientists and scholars worldwide and improving the diversity and sustainability of science/scholarship in general by linking up with European and global initiatives:
  - a. Representing young researchers on scientific advisory bodies;
  - b. Contributing to solving global problems, such as academia's CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, scientists/scholars in high-risk situations, and sustainability goals.
- 2 A Dutch academia that is more inclusive and attractive for international scientists and scholars to come to the Netherlands or remain here:
  - c. Bilingual release of all utterances and documents of The Young Academy;
  - d. Keeping *A Beginner's Guide to Dutch Academia* up to date;
  - e. Identifying instances of exclusion or inequality at universities;
  - f. Linking up with the Caribbean part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

The Young Academy collaborates with young academies in other countries and international organisations in the field of science and scholarship, such as 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 (European) young academies is important for setting up activities in an international context, including in the field of science policy, but also the Sustainable Development Goals formulated by the United Nations, i.e. societal problems intended to be solved before 2030.

The Young Academy also wants the voice of young researchers to be heard as regards European science policy. It is a participant in various European stakeholder platforms and working groups and has a delegate within the European Young Academies Scientific Advice Structure (YASAS), which participates as an equal partner in SAPEA, part of the European Science Advice Mechanism.

In 2024, this includes the following activities:

### **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.

### **Scholars at risk**

In 2016, The Young Academy launched the Science Buddies project to link up refugee scientists and scholars with counterparts in the Netherlands. In close cooperation with The Young Academy and the Foundation for Refugee Students (UAF), NWO then developed a programme – *Hestia: Impulse for Refugees in Science* – to help refugee scientists more effectively in finding paid work in Dutch academia. The Young Academy is involved in evaluating the programme and is committed to working with the other parties involved, such as the UAF, to support refugee scientists/scholars in the Netherlands in various ways. These activities will continue in 2024, with all parties involved considering how best to help them. In addition, the theme will work to support colleagues in countries where academic freedom is under threat, for example by helping to ensure that temporary and flexible bursary programmes are available for refugee scientists/scholars, for both the acute and medium term.

**Caribbean part of the Netherlands**

The Young Academy is committed to making the Dutch academic landscape more accessible to people from the Caribbean. It does so, for example, by pointing out at university meetings that the Kingdom of the Netherlands does not consist only of its European component. Scientists and scholars from the Caribbean part of the Kingdom can also join The Young Academy. The Young Academy is a member of the liaison group for setting up a scientific network organisation, the Dutch Caribbean Research Platform (DUCARP).

**Bilingual information provision**

The Young Academy produces material in English as well as Dutch and aims to make as many documents as possible available in both languages. Information in English can be a source of inspiration for young academics in other countries (including those in the course of formation) and is an important source of information for scientists and scholars in the Netherlands whose command of Dutch is limited or non-existent.

## 6 COMMUNICATION

The Young Academy intends continuing to pursue a number of communication goals. An online members' environment was set up in 2020 and in 2021, a new website was launched, reflecting The Young Academy's vision and identity. The website is a key tool in The Young Academy's external communication strategy. The Young Academy also intends expressing its opinions emphatically in the media and vis-à-vis government and the political world.

Important target groups for The Young Academy are:

- policy-makers and organisations in the scientific field: the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the Universities of the Netherlands (UNL), the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMW), and university executive boards;
- (young) scientists and scholars in the Kingdom of the Netherlands (for certain projects also abroad);
- fellow organisations in the Netherlands and abroad, such as national and local young academies;
- in specific cases: individuals with an interest in science/scholarship (lay people), and various groups in society who do not naturally come into contact with science and scholarship;
- members and alumni of The Young Academy, the Royal Academy's Learned Society, and the Society of Arts;
- members of the Dutch House of Representatives holding the science portfolio;
- media, journalists, opinion leaders, individuals with an interest in science/scholarship and higher education.

There may also be other target groups for specific objectives and projects.

For profiling itself and promoting its projects, The Young Academy receives support from 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.

## APPENDIX: TIMELINE 2024

Calendar of recurring activities for The Young Academy

<b>Month</b>	<b>Meetings of members</b>	<b>New members and selection committee</b>	<b>Annual documents cycle</b>	<b>Young Academy Grants Committee</b>
<b>January</b>	30/1 at the Trippenhuis	The Board welcomes new members, with photos and preparations for the installation gathering		
<b>February</b>				First round deadline: 15/2
<b>March</b>	26/3 at the Trippenhuis	26/3: installation of new members and change of Board	Approval of draft Annual Report at members' meeting	Allocation of grants
<b>April</b>	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	
<b>May</b>	24-25/5: members' weekend away			
<b>June</b>		Mid-June: deadline for submission of recommendations for membership of The Young Academy		
<b>July</b>				
<b>August</b>				
<b>September</b>	24/9 away day	Selection of new members and call for new Board members	Approval of draft Annual Plan and draft budget at members' meeting	
<b>October</b>			Final version of Annual Plan and budget	Second round deadline: 15/10
<b>November</b>	26/11 at the Trippenhuis			Allocation of grants
<b>December</b>				