**Profile of the 'Humanisation of Organisations' chair (full professorship)**

1. *Background*

The University of Humanistic Studies (UvH) in Utrecht conducts scientific research and develops and provides study programmes in the field of humanistics. Humanistics is a multi-disciplinary applied science that embraces the principles of a humanist philosophy of life, viewing the meaning of life and humanisation as its central concepts. These underlying principles characterise the UvH’s study programmes in the field of spiritual care, philosophical and moral education and other counselling or advisory professions in educational institutions, businesses, policy-making bodies and other organisations. These divergent professional fields for humanists are viewed in conjunction with each other while education, research and valorisation at the UvH are approached with an emphasis on their mutual connections.

Against the background of this interconnected approach the UvH is gradually evolving into a network university. We have chosen to position the UvH as a ‘Knowledge Exchange’ catering to the sharing of knowledge and the translation of knowledge into practice. Based around core activities funded directly by the government, the UvH is developing a ‘flexible ring’ of externally funded activities varying in scope and duration, in which education, research and valorisation are closely connected. Valorisation is more than translating academic knowledge: it should also involve co-creation, in which questions are asked and methods and analyses developed and carried out in dialogue with our partners in society. This is the way in which UvH is shaping its identity: totally academic, and totally oriented towards applied science approaches. In our collaboration with academic partners internationalisation is a key focus area.

In terms of broad scientific domains, humanistics ideally integrates the humanities and the social sciences. In respect of the social sciences domain, the profile of humanistics is that of a science in which qualitative empirical research methods are key (alongside the use of quantifying approaches). Guiding principles in humanistic research are the choice for the actor’s perspective, the principle of intentional acts, normativity and the notion that phenomena must be researched in their cultural and historical contexts. The teaching and research remit for the ‘Humanisation of Organisations’ chair has been specified against this background.

1. *The teaching and research remit – in detail*
2. *Focus on the social perspective.* Our society is defined by organisations, and the attention for their structure and influence is increasing. Two aspects play a role from a humanistic perspective: giving meaning to life, and humanisation. The principle of humanistics is that giving meaning to life not only influences the well-being and the ethical and existential choices of the individual but also has a socio-political connotation. An individual’s view of the meaning of life is always defined in a social context that determines the possibilities and impossibilities. Every attempt to give meaning to life is affected by socialisation; the personal sense of meaning is cultivated. Just as the manner in which a person gives meaning to his or her life is influenced by the social context in which he or she participates, that particular meaning-of-life concept will affect that person’s actions and have social implications. Every day in the public arena we see just how much our self-perception, our view of humanity and of the world (important meaning-of-life components) determine our actions. At the same we see how socio-political power structures are a determinant of our self-perception and our view of humanity.

From the perspective of this interplay between personal perceptions and socio-political structures, humanisation relates to the nature of the socialisation and cultivation of meaning-of-life concepts. Questions arising in this context include: is that concept coloured by the ideals of a humane society, and which sources fuel these ideals? Do humanisation processes by definition signify a critical attitude towards society? Questions such as these provide the central remit of the ‘Humanisation of Organisations’ chair: to research how humanisation takes centre stage in meaning-of-life concepts. The scope of humanisation, however, is much broader than this direct relation to the meaning of life and the particular practices by which attempts to give meaning to life from a humanistic perspective could in fact lead to social and cultural change (among and within organisations). Humanisation equally concerns the institutions and structures that determine the possibilities to act within a particular society. It concerns the way in which power is structured in society and how these power structures operate. Humanistics conducts research into the conditions that must be fulfilled for equitable institutions to exist.

1. *Focus on the organisational perspective*. Organisations in their various forms determine the way in which people interact with each other and the way in which society is structured. At the same time organisations depend on the people involved in them. Social relations between people are a key source of dynamics in an organisation. They create varying structured links within an organisation, each with its own logic, which is not always in line with the motives and needs of the individuals concerned. The tension in the interplay between people, their context and organisations raises questions about humanisation and giving meaning to life. These questions in the field of critical organisation theory form a key focus area of the chair.

Another focus area is the emphasis of the UvH on normative professionalisation. The professional has a key role in our modern knowledge economy. The ability to act professionally is subject to moral issues surrounding professionalism and craftsmanship. In order to determine what constitutes ‘good work’, the term normative professionalisation comes into play, which spotlights the normative content of professional actions and the ethical, moral and political questions and challenges that are intrinsically linked to such normativity. Normative professionalisation relates to *reflexive learning processes* in respect of such normative content, and to a development perspective themed around a meaningful life in equitable institutions and a sustainable global society. Key themes in the UvH's research in this field, therefore, are the sustainability, ethics and aesthetics of organisations.

1. *Focus on research in an organisational context.* The holder of the chair will strengthen the UvH's social sciences perspective of organisations, linking it to a philosophical viewpoint and a normative approach to critical organisation theory. He or she will furthermore contribute to scientific theoretical and methodological reflection on these links. The holder of the chair is expected to have the ability to promote and supervise the performance of empirical research.
2. *Focus on thinking beyond boundaries.* Due to the multidisciplinary and (envisioned) interdisciplinary nature of humanistics, the holder of the chair is expected to be willing and indeed eager to transcend the boundaries of his or her own field, and in particular to involve the broad disciplinary fields of humanistics, especially philosophy, (other) social sciences fields, religion science and the study of history. In all conceivable humanist fields issues concerning humane organisations play a key role. The holder of the chair has the expertise to contribute to theorisation and empirical research on these issues. Partly in the light of the above, alongside broad expertise and interest, an aptitude for and capability of collaborating with a highly diverse group of colleagues is essential.
3. *Focus on the tension between theory and practice.* In view of the applied nature of humanistics and the fact that the UvH offers research-oriented *vocational* study programmes, the holder of the chair should be accustomed to working in the area of tension between theory and practice, between academia and policy, and between distance and engagement. The statutory status of the UvH is that of a university oriented towards the philosophy of life: it embraces humanist principles and traditions as shaped – and constantly updated – in Western culture since the Renaissance and the Age of Enlightenment. Humanistics contributes to continued reflection on and the development of humanism as a philosophy of life. This implies that the holder of the chair should have an affinity with humanism and humanist spiritual counselling. Furthermore, he or she is mindful of the complex relationships between science, ethics and philosophy of life and has the ability to make a constructive contribution to discussions on this topic.

Research and staff at the UvH have been assigned to three research groups: Health, Personal Care and Welfare; Cultural Dynamics; and Research Principles and Methodology. Each of these groups has responsibility for part of the education, research and valorisation. In terms of organisational structure, the ‘Humanisation of Organisations’ chair falls under the Cultural Dynamics research group and, within that group, under the theme group of Critical Organisation and Intervention Studies. However, the professor is also expected to contribute to the other research groups at the UvH.

1. *Duties*

The chair’s duties include initiating, developing and providing academic education, research and valorisation in the field. This is coupled with duties such as the supervision of PhD students, the acquisition of external funds for research purposes, external services, and representation and management duties, with a particular focus on making an active contribution to the organisational development of the UvH as a small, substance-driven organisation. Due to the importance of acquiring indirect government funding and contract research funding, expertise in these areas is an important consideration. With the UvH evolving into a network university, the new professor is required to contribute and further develop a wide network. In view of the significance of the humanisation of organisations for other research groups, the new professor has a key role in the further development of the UvH’s Graduate School (PhD programme).

1. *Job requirements*
2. Holds a PhD in social sciences or philosophy having strong affinity with and experience of empirical research, with a focus on the field of organisation studies and political issues, which is reflected in the doctoral thesis and subsequent publications.
3. Academic recognition acquired as a result of authoritative national and international publications.
4. Demonstrable expertise on qualitative research methods and mixed methods.
5. An interdisciplinary and applied orientation, demonstrated by a well-developed network of academic and social partners.
6. Experience of supervising PhD students and the potential to develop a ‘flexible ring’ of externally funded activities in the field of organisation studies (PhD students and postdoctoral researchers) varying in scope and duration.
7. Proven experience in acquiring external funds for research purposes, and the ability to generate 20% of one’s own salary.
8. Extensive teaching experience at research university level and the ability to inspire students.
9. Demonstrable management proficiency and a cooperative attitude.
10. Affinity with humanism.
11. If a non-Dutch speaker, willingness to learn Dutch in the short term.