



# X-STYLE

## GUIDE OF THE X-HONOURS PROGRAMME

2020-2021

**NHL  
STENDEN**  
university of  
applied sciences

**NHLSTENDEN.COM/  
X-HONOURS**

## **GUIDE OF THE X-HONOURS PROGRAMME** **2020-2021**

This document describes the mission, vision and elaboration of X-Honours, the honours programme of NHL Stenden University of Applied Science. It starts with the basic principles followed by a description of the three X-Honours levels, the process of certification and the role of coaching. The related pillars and competence levels are elaborated and exemplified. This document replaces former guides and is applicable to students that start in academic year 2020-2021 and to students that start a new level after September 2020.



# 1. BASIC PRINCIPLES OF X-HONOURS

## 1.1 Mission

X-Honours provides a challenging environment and community within NHL Stenden for students who want more, are able to do more, or want to be able to do more than their study programme has to offer. This in order to develop individually and professionally, broaden and/or deepen their expertise and skills complementary to their programme, with the aim of developing competences that go beyond those of their studies and domains.

## 1.2 NHL Stenden's vision on honours education

Our vision on honours education is as follows:

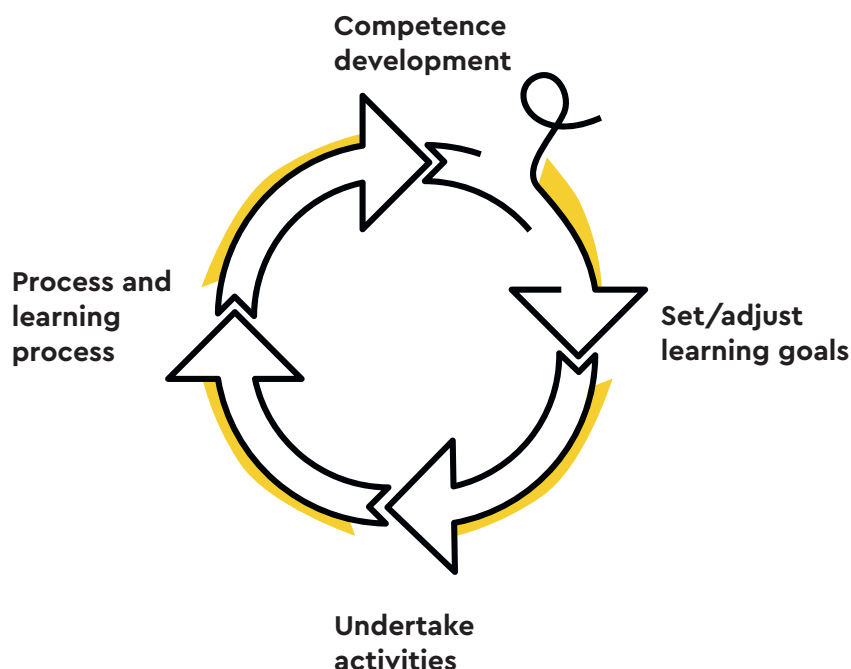
- Honours students shape and conduct their own learning process.
- Honours students are continuously developing themselves and purposefully seek appropriate learning activities: projects and activities that match their goals and ambitions, and that yield growth within the X-Honours pillars.
- Students acquire expertise and skills that lie beyond the scope of their study programme by collaborating with students and professionals from other study programmes and domains.
- Students and lecturers/ coaches learn from and with each other, inspire each other, and challenge each other.

## 1.3 Elaboration

The following principles are applied to achieve this:

- We provide a community of learning in which students, lecturers, and other professionals from different study programmes learn and share knowledge together. In this way, students from various study programmes and domains learn from and with each other, inspire each other, and challenge themselves and each other.
- Students learn to assess issues from various perspectives, keeping in mind different interests, in a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary context<sup>1</sup>.
- Students deliberately develop in topics that lie beyond their study programme and/or require a bigger effort than needed for their study programme.
- X-Honours provides students the opportunity to build a network with a range of stakeholders (students from their own and other study programmes and domains, external parties, lecturers, etc.).
- In X-Honours, students continuously develop the competences that are linked with the six pillars further; personal leadership, value driven behaviour, entrepreneurial behaviour, interdisciplinary collaboration, innovative behaviour, and a pillar of the student's choice (free pillar).
- Lecturers coach the individual and group learning process, share the responsibility for challenging activities with the students, and provide input. In this way, students and lecturers contribute together to challenging, meaningful, extracurricular honours education.
- Students acquire systematic and professional working methods in projects, that reinforce and complement regular education.

X-Honours is not just about mastering competences, but it particularly focuses on the process during the projects/activities and the student's individual learning process and the related activities. In order to go through a meaningful and effective process, students set themselves challenging learning goals. Figure 1 represents this cycle, which comes back in each level of the programme.



**Figure 1.** Vision on development of competences in X-Honours

## 2. THREE PHASES AND LEVELS

X-Honours distinguishes three subsequent phases (or participation years), with three matching levels of pillar development, as shown below. Each level revolves around the same pillars: five fixed pillars and a free pillar.

While the X-Honours programme is based on three years of participation, students can complete the levels at a quicker or slower pace. We expect the student to work towards a level for at least one semester, and undertake appropriate activities during that period. The three phases are explained below. Table 2 features some examples.

### 2.1 Explore (level 1)

All X-Honours students start at this level. Most students will be in their second year of study, although this may not always be the case. This level is characterised by exploration of all pillars, with the student working towards competence level 1 or higher (see Table 1). To conclude this level, usually at the end of the first X-Honours year, the student takes an assessment and continues to level 2.

## **2.2 Develop (level 2)**

Students in the second phase are familiar with the X-Honours pillars, working method, and mindset. Many students in this phase will complete an internship and/or study a minor that may be taught abroad. Students broaden or deepen their expertise and skills related to the pillars in this period. This can be combined with a minor, internship, or visit abroad by engaging in activities that go beyond what is usually expected of them in the study programme.

Level 2 is characterised by further development of the competences towards level 3. The students themselves demonstrate such a development and show how and with the help of which activities it was achieved, and what the outcomes are. Students with an advanced development, may conclude in phase 2 that they already possess the competences of level 3. Once these students start with the actual level 3, they can challenge themselves even more and take their competences to the next level.

## **2.3 Establish (level 3)**

In the third phase, students work towards level 3 competences. At this level, the student has mastered the pillars in such a way that the working method and mindset are applied by default. As mentioned above, level 2 and 3 activities can overlap or coincide.

# **3. PILLARS AND COMPETENCES**

Student activities at all levels revolve around six pillars: five fixed pillars (personal leadership, acting on value(s), enterprising behaviour, multidisciplinary collaboration, and innovative behaviour) and a pillar defined by the students themselves, for which they formulate a theme/subject to which they can link short-term and long-term objectives for their development.

Table 1 features a further elaboration of the competence levels per pillar, while Table 2 provides examples of possible student activities per level.

The levels are described at level 1 (Explore), the starting level at which the student is introduced to the pillars, and at level 3 (Establish), the final level; see Table 1. As described above, a student is not really finished once level 3 has been attained. Rather, there must be a continuous and deliberate development, so that the student is ready for lifelong learning. As such, level 3 is not a final level for the student's individual and professional development. Instead, the development continues; the students keeps setting goals and objectives and seeking activities that enable growth. Level 2 (Develop) can be seen as an interim level that indicates that the student is on their way to level 3.

Table 2 features a number of examples of possible student activities towards attainment of a level and is meant to provide guidance to students.



## 4. CERTIFICATION

Certificates will be awarded twice a year at a celebratory gathering. To attain a certificate, students must perform the following:

### 4.1 Showcase (formative assessment)

The student must organise a showcase meeting where they demonstrate the activities in which they engaged and the outcomes of these (regarding the project results and the individual learning process). Here, the student will collect feedback from at least three relevant people, one of which being the coach.

The objective of the showcase is twofold:

1. To show over the underlying period:

- one or more projects/activities (the task)
- what has been achieved, or not (the results)
- how the student handled it (the process)
- how this all relates to the pillars
- some information about what is learned

2. To gather feedback and input (for the portfolio)

The student is responsible for gathering feedback in a format of their own choice. Important is that feedback is recorded or captured. The main points of feedback/feedforward that is gained in the showcase, should be integrated in and reflected on in the portfolio

X-Honours will organise one general showcase day, usually in the last or second to last lesson week of Period 4. Students can sign up for this day, but may also plan and organise their showcase on another date. They are free to choose an individual format that suits their style. For their showcase, students shall at least invite their coach and two or more relevant people who can provide them with meaningful feedback. They can, for example, be fellow students, experts from a project, a mentor or study career counsellor, or an internship supervisor. During a showcase, the student is in the lead, which means that they are hosts; they prepare the setting and take care of timemanagement.

## 4.2 Portfolio (summative assessment)

From the start of the programme, the students build a portfolio that demonstrates their development and results with regard to the pillars and matches the appropriate level.

The purpose of the portfolio is twofold:

1. To reflect on goals, ambitions, learning process, feedback from showcase etc. with a relation to the underlying period.
2. To show the development regarding the pillars, supported by arguments and proof that the student has reached a certain level of competence.

Students can decide freely on the portfolio format and are invited to choose a creative approach. A portfolio (or portfolio attachment) must at least contain:

- Their objectives, reasons, ambitions, talents, expectations, etc. For this, students start each level by filling in a starting document(or growth document)
- Information about activities, projects and their relations to the students' progress within the pillars.
- Collected feedback (at least the feedback on the showcase, but other responses as well, such as 360o feedback, testimonials, etc.).
- Reflection on the learning process: attained learning objectives, collected feedback, revised learning objectives, and X-Honours objectives (in line with mission and vision).
- A self-assessment (including arguments and support of the attained and outstanding competences, student activities that go beyond those usually required by the study programme, and the way in which they have developed themselves complementary to their study programme (activities and projects).
- A reflection on their role in and contribution to the learning community.

For students in the X-Honours programme there's a separate document in [MS Teams \(section Files\)](#) about the X-Honours portfolio with the above mentioned tools/forms, more explanation and tips and tricks. Students are asked to take note of this document.

We encourage students to view their individual development and activities in a wider perspective than that of X-Honours projects. Their regular study programme itself usually also offers opportunities for activities that broaden or deepen the student profile, but are not compulsory. Also, students frequently engage privately in activities that can be linked to the pillars too. Such activities may all be included in the student portfolio as well.

Students should at all levels support what qualities they possess that are linked to that level, and support their contribution to the community. More important, they must reflect on their learning process in the underlying X-Honours programme and indicate which activities/projects were undertaken in this context. Furthermore, they must have invested a significant amount of time in addition to the time that is required for attaining the ECs in their regular study programme.

Students who have completed levels 1–3 and taken the related assessments, can receive a NHL Stenden X-Honours degree-level certificate and a letter of recommendation from the Executive Board of NHL Stenden University. In order to get a degree, it is important that in their final assessment, they not only reflect on the final phase (level 3), but also on the entire process and all levels.

Students can take at most one assessment per semester.

Students attain a level when they meet the above requirements and when they are able to demonstrate that they:

1. have made a significant time investment in individual and professional development complementary to what is required by the study programme, or that can be seen as an effort that is not a compulsory part of the study programme
2. have made a demonstrable contribution to the learning community
3. have challenged themselves.

## 5. COACHING

All students will be placed in a basecamp with a coach. The coach is their primary contact and provides individual and group coaching. The coach relies on the students' initiatives and their self-management. This implies, for example, that students come forward with their coaching needs and jointly or alternatively ensure meaningful basecamp sessions.

Students are expected to dedicate their Wednesday afternoons to the programme. If this is impossible, for example because of classes or an internship, they must report this to the coach. Absent students are expected to participate and contribute to the learning community and basecamp in a different way.

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### Note

<sup>1</sup>Explanation of the concepts multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary (Huibers et al., 2012, p. 16): "In a multidisciplinary collaboration, all partners work and think based in their own profession and expertise (...) The results of which are collated at a certain moment (...) The disciplines can be clearly distinguished in the [presentation of the] results. Interaction is limited to reflection on, exchange of, and building on the mutual ideas."

"In an interdisciplinary collaboration, the disciplines need one another to solve an issue. The content is determined by reciprocal influence. The resulting insights exceed the boundaries of the individual subject. The disciplines have merged and are difficult to discern in the (...) final product. The interplay is increasingly visible in the joint reflection and creation."

Reference: Huibers, J., Luitwieler, M., Martinot, N., & Meijers, A. (2012). Begrippen en definities van interdisciplinair werken [Concepts and definitions of interdisciplinary work]. Retrieved from [http://finals2012magazine.artez.nl/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CSP\\_BOEK\\_ArteZ\\_2012-H2.pdf](http://finals2012magazine.artez.nl/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/CSP_BOEK_ArteZ_2012-H2.pdf)



**Table 1.** Description of competence levels per pillar

	<b>1. Explore</b>	<b>2. Develop</b>	<b>3. Establish</b>
<p><b>1. Personal leadership</b></p> <p>"Acquire self-knowledge, set the direction, and create impact"</p>	<p><b>Explore and respond</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I am aware of my strengths and my challenges.</li> <li>&gt; I know my interests and understand what is useful for my development.</li> <li>&gt; I have insight in my development and I set objectives.</li> <li>&gt; I solicit feedback from others regularly and can reflect on it.</li> <li>&gt; I have the ability to reflect on my own actions.</li> <li>&gt; I can indicate what activities in the past X-Honours period resulted in which insights or skills.</li> <li>&gt; I can explain what my challenges were in the previous period, what I tried (intentionally or accidentally), and what the outcomes were.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Natural behaviour</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I continuously direct my own development. I set my direction in a purposeful manner, based on prior determination of my development objectives, motivation, and methods.</li> <li>&gt; I adjust my goals and direction when needed and can advocate my choices and changes.</li> <li>&gt; My chosen activities for further development are deliberate and focused.</li> <li>&gt; My drives and values are always reflected in my behaviour, objectives, and choices.</li> <li>&gt; I am able to link acting on value(s) and the activities that I undertake.</li> <li>&gt; I can provide my vision on and definition of each pillar. I am able to advocate any differing vision and definition. I have the ability to relate my actions to this.</li> <li>&gt; I can assess my development regarding the pillars coherently.</li> <li>&gt; I can explain my impact on my learning process.</li> <li>&gt; I have impact on others and/or on society and can explain this.</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Value driven behaviour</b></p> <p>"Act in accordance with your values and create impact"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I can define the concepts of values and norms and their differences.</li> <li>&gt; I am aware of my values and I am able to explain them.</li> <li>&gt; I can discuss my values and standards respectfully with others.</li> <li>&gt; I can explain why my values contribute to society, or not.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I know what my drives are.</li> <li>&gt; I perform activities with a positive impact on myself and others/society (according to my own opinion and within my personal set of values that I can explain).</li> <li>&gt; I can link my values to my personal leadership.</li> <li>&gt; "My path is guided by my passion."</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Entrepreneurial behaviour</b></p> <p>"Recognise, seize, and create opportunities"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I recognise opportunities that are valuable for me and anticipate them.</li> <li>&gt; I have taken risks and I am not afraid to step out of my comfort zone.</li> <li>&gt; I do not wait and see but start the job and try things out.</li> <li>&gt; I take part in challenging activities and projects.</li> <li>&gt; I develop a network.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I scout for and create opportunities, and thereby maximise the chance of realising my goals and dreams.</li> <li>&gt; I initiate a complex project and execute it with others, or I take on a leading role in a complex project.</li> <li>&gt; I am accountable for the process and the results.</li> <li>&gt; I have guts. I take risks and respond adequately to these risks and the outcomes.</li> <li>&gt; I can persuade others.</li> <li>&gt; I can make decisions and take decisive action.</li> <li>&gt; I deliberately develop my network, nurture it, and use it for individual purposes.</li> <li>&gt; In doing so, I recognise mutual benefits.</li> </ul>

	1. Explore	2. Develop	3. Establish
<p><b>4. Interdisciplinary collaboration</b> (see note 1)</p> <p>"Work with other subject areas and learn with and from others"</p>	<p><b>Multidisciplinary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I work with people from other disciplines towards a shared goal. Based on my own study/discipline, I contribute to a component of the larger whole (e.g., with my background in ICT, I am responsible for programming an app.)</li> <li>&gt; I can describe the shared goal and the path to reach it, and identify my role or task and the roles and tasks of others.</li> <li>&gt; I can explain how I have broadened my expertise and skills with multidisciplinary work.</li> <li>&gt; I can clarify how my expertise and skills contributed to a multidisciplinary partnership.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Interdisciplinary</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I can collaborate in an interdisciplinary manner and reflect on the collaboration.</li> <li>&gt; I know the difference between multidisciplinary work and interdisciplinary work and can identify the difference in my projects.</li> <li>&gt; I initiate collaborations deliberately.</li> <li>&gt; I can describe what and how I learned from interdisciplinary partnerships that go beyond the scope of my studies.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Innovative behaviour</b></p> <p>"Create new solutions"</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I am able to present new solutions for existing and new problems.</li> <li>&gt; I can think creatively and outside the box and I undertake activities to grow in creative and critical thinking</li> <li>&gt; I have the ability to realise small improvements or innovations, or develop these further.</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>&gt; I can systematically come up with a new approach or innovation and develop and/or execute it.</li> <li>&gt; I can give examples of how my critical thinking led to ideas for improvements and how my creativity led to solutions for this.</li> </ul>
<p><b>6. Free pillar</b></p>	<p>The student is responsible for the formulation of their objectives and competences and the definition of the appropriate levels.</p>		<p>The student is responsible for the formulation of their objectives and competences and the definition of the appropriate levels.</p>

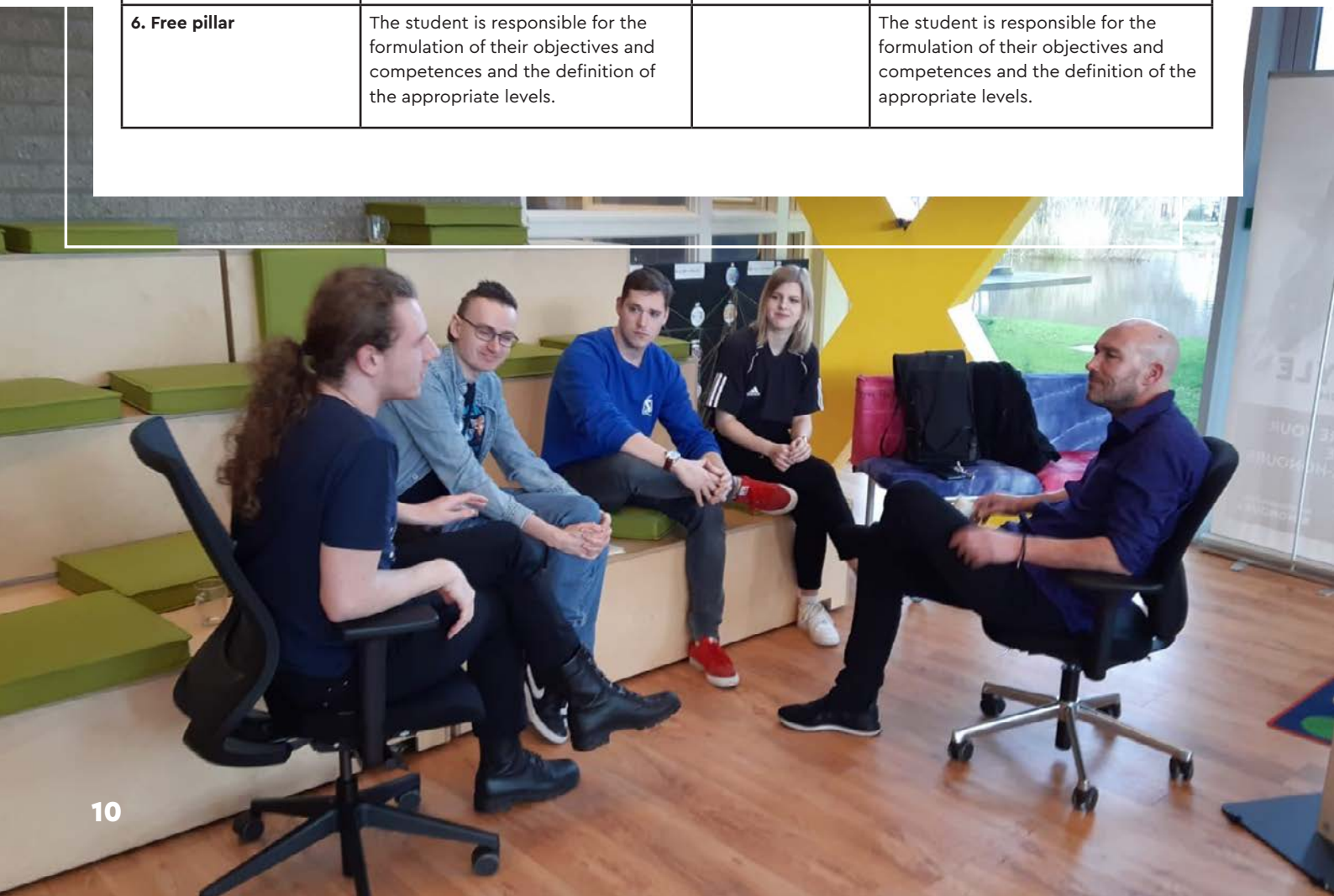


Table 2. Examples of activities per level

1. Explore	2. Develop	3. Establish
<p>&gt; A student attends Wednesday afternoon sessions, participates in a number of projects, and establishes a small project.</p> <p>&gt; For example, a student may take part in various challenges or workshops and participate in an existing project, or initiate a smaller project; such as a camp, a hackathon, or a children's' music workshop.</p> <p>&gt; The student explores options for level 2, brainstorms with others about setting up their own foundation or creating an app etc., builds a network, etc.</p>	<p>&gt; The student initiates a complex project or starts to have a leading role in one, and engages in deepening activities.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 1</u>: The student starts a collaboration with other students and takes the first steps for offering child help in Africa, such as the actual establishment of a foundation or exploring possible collaboration with stakeholders.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 2</u>: The student starts a project with other students, aimed at developing a method to encourage people to use a bicycle for their commute to work.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 3</u>: The student plans to use a 6-month period of study delay to study an additional minor Entrepreneurship and learn the Arabic language. The latter is the student's individual pillar and constitutes an addition to the student's regular study programme Integral Safety.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 4</u>: The student wishes to develop research skills beyond the scope required by the study programme and completes a research internship at a lectorate.</p>	<p>&gt; The student sets up her own, complex project or assumes leadership over one, or the student takes an existing project to the next level.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 1</u>: The student further develops the Africa project, scouts for funds, organises a workshop during Africa Day, and starts with realising the goals of the foundation (help to the first child).</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 2</u>: In collaboration with others, the student further develops the ideas to create a prototype for an app that promotes commuting by bike. The student seeks collaboration with a municipality, aimed at the (future) realisation of the project.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 3</u>: The student tries to realise an idea that was elaborated at level 2, or actually market a concept.</p> <p>&gt; <u>Example 4</u>: The student completes an Integral Safety internship at the Ministry of Defence and combines this with the development of a Defensity College for students at universities of applied sciences. Participating students will become 'work students', who study a programme of master classes and simultaneously work at the Ministry, in addition to their regular programme. Until now, this was only an option for university students.</p>

## Contact

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