

# The scientist of 2035

The scientist of 2035 was created as a result from a two-day workshop involving a diverse group of employees from Tilburg University.

This workshop applied design thinking to envision the future, drawing upon currently existing hard indicators of change.

The participants visualised the scientist of 2035 and developed a vision for how the university must adapt to remain an appealing employer.

Throughout the workshop, numerous potential actions were proposed to facilitate this transition, which are detailed in the colored boxes.

Special thanks to the workshop participants:

- Jeroen Aben
- Marjolijn Antheunis
- Julia Bakker
- Lieke Beekers
- Antoinette de Bont
- Berthilde Boukema
- Maria Paula Baptiste Gonzalez
- Ross Hamilton
- Lynn Hamers
- Ana Hriscu
- Marjan van Hunnik
- Martyna Janowicz
- Judith Künneke
- Ronald Leenes
- Caspar van Lissa
- Katrien Luijckx
- Xavier Salet
- Wout de Vos
- Anneloes Kip

	Quick Wins 1-2 years	Mid term up to 5 years	Long term up to 10 years
<p><b>PhD Career Path</b></p> <p><b>Dream:</b> At Tilburg University, every employee is recognized and rewarded for their talents, regardless of their expertise in research, education, or impact.</p>	<p><b>Trial study days for students</b>   Organize trial PhD days for students, similar to the trial study days for VWO students; master's students can participate in a day to get a clear vision of the life of a PhD candidate.</p> <p><b>Career week</b>   During career weeks, consider inviting a professor and a PhD candidate to showcase the potential of pursuing a career in academia. This highlights the rewarding aspects of contributing to solving complex problems of today and the future in the academic realm.</p> <p><b>Start PhD with training</b>   Start PhD track with a training (collaborative skills, how do you teach, how do you supervise, what is expected of you, etc)</p> <p><b>Performance and talent development talks</b>   Implement P&amp;T interviews. During your PhD, already reflect on your future career path with your supervisor/mentor. Is it outside or inside the university, what is possible?</p> <p><b>Multiple publication possibilities</b>   Provide opportunities to publish dissertation in multiple ways/ more impact driven, less strict, no standard of 3 or 4 papers anymore.</p> <p><b>Deregulate</b>   Become more flexible and start by letting go of strict interpretation of rules, followed by letting go of rules without added value.   Let guiding principles prevail over rules. Focus on 'the most people are good', don't take the bad apples as a starting point for policy writing. Listen to the people (employees) and the signals they give.</p> <p><b>Concrete policy</b>   Concrete policy (= consequences) in case of work conflict with supervisors. As a start towards changing the HR process (longer term).</p> <p><b>Intervention system</b>   Create a reliable, clear and visible intervention system with regard to social safety issues.</p>	<p><b>Top level promotor team</b>   Change promotor team / focus on quality of supervisors. Create a promotor team independently of the needed titles. Focus on quality of supervision, not on title.</p> <p><b>Reverse mentoring</b>   All PhD candidates are provided with the opportunity for "reverse mentoring", allowing them to mentor various officers such as members of the Executive Board and deans of schools for at least one day. Additionally, they are granted a greater say in policy decisions by default.</p> <p><b>Choice of specialization</b>   By providing options for a bachelor like minor (snuffelstage), extended PhD track (cf. traineeship), the option to do a longer PhD track of, for example, 5 or 6 years and thus spend more time teaching, so</p> <p><b>Start as JR scientist</b>   Remove the word student; career path start as a JR scientist not a PhD candidate. Initially of all communication materials and then also in culture. A PhD candidate is an employee, not a student.</p> <p><b>Change HR process</b>   Modify the protocol to allow PhD candidates to address issues with HR instead of the education council when problems arise. This adjustment aims to recognize PhD candidates as employees rather than solely as students.</p>	<p><b>Follow-up after PhD</b>   It should also become possible to remain within the Netherlands when pursuing a career as a professor; a working period abroad is not a necessary condition for an academic career.</p> <p><b>Value of employees</b>   Employees with varying expertise and specializations should be recognized and rewarded. Different types of role models should be acknowledged within the organization.</p> <p><b>Rhineland model</b>   The Anglo-Saxon model primarily prioritizes efficiency and outcomes, whereas the Rhineland model emphasizes sustainability, human values, and is based on trust and craftsmanship.</p> <p><b>Revise the UFO interpretation</b>   Revisit the interpretation of UFO and create a university-wide backbone with room for specific interpretation per school.</p> <p><b>Market based working conditions</b>   Working conditions for PhD Candidates and teachers are market-based. This means: Start on scale 10 salary, without reductions because you are a student. Get a tenured (fixed) contract after 2 years if both parties agree you want to stay in the academic profession to reduce stress and insecurity. Have equal opportunities for a permanent contract in each specialization (research, education, impact).</p>
<p><b>Let go of strict rules</b></p> <p><b>Dream:</b> Tilburg University organized in a way to proactively responds to developments in society and the labor market.</p>	<p><b>PhD lounge</b>   A place to socialize, work and relax for PhD candidates. This place will facilitate interaction and possibilities to collaborate and share personal experiences.</p> <p><b>Swap Offices</b>   Encourage office swaps among colleagues (between schools/departments). To foster connections with new individuals and gain inspiration from diverse perspectives. Deans could initiate this practice to set an example.</p> <p><b>HO Date</b>   Organize a recurring event (HODate) where leaders or designated representatives from various research groups convene to share and align their work, milestones, future plans, etc.</p> <p><b>Academic exchanges</b>   Organize academic exchange programs with other universities and offer teachers to facilitate attendance at events hosted by other academic institutions.</p> <p><b>Team based PhD</b>   Allocate 25% of all Tilburg University PhD positions to team-based projects consisting of four PhD candidates each. Rather than requiring individual applications, PhD candidates will be invited to join these teams.</p>	<p><b>Funding for collaboration</b>   Establish a grant system for funding promising collaborations between different schools, aimed at fostering multi-disciplinary projects.</p> <p><b>Smart Open Agenda</b>   Implement an online, university-wide Smart Open Agenda accessible to all employees, providing personalized events and meeting suggestions generated through AI generated RSS feeds/random.</p> <p><b>Monitor news/politics</b>   Coordinating platform that monitors news/politics to formulate relevant themes (and involve candidates).</p> <p><b>Research hubs on relevant themes</b>   Research hubs that require multidisciplinary collaboration. The domains are chosen via a bottom-up approach and create a space that facilitates collaboration and idea exploration to shape ideas in an open and inclusive manner.   This can be done with a Whiteboard tool (like Miro for example).</p> <p><b>Connect to HBO and MBO</b>   Connect research activities with secondary vocational education and applied sciences to make societal impact.</p> <p><b>Dating app</b>   'Dating' app to get in touch with like-minded colleagues from other schools.</p>	
<p><b>Collaboration between schools</b></p> <p><b>Dream:</b> At Tilburg University, employees work closely together with scientists from other departments and schools, leading to significant scientific and societal impact</p>	<p><b>One liner response training</b>   Organize training sessions to help scientists learn how to respond to one liners politicians/individuals make that are not based on science, unproven, or false according to their research.</p> <p><b>Impact support officer</b>   Appoint an 'Impact support officer' whose role is to collaborate with scientists in strategizing how their research generates impact, and how to clearly communicate this impact (e.g. on a timeline tool or use the SMART model (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound).</p>	<p><b>Redesign support system</b>   Redesign the university's support system and formulate the desired outcome through a collaborative design workshop involving scientific and support staff.</p> <p><b>Focus on communication</b>   Employ additional communication personnel to enhance the quality of images and content on the university website. These employees can also conduct trainings on collaborative and communication skills. Allocate 5% of employees time within their workload for participation in these training sessions.</p> <p><b>Welcome career changer</b>   It is feasible to pursue a PhD after working elsewhere for a year or longer, or even with extensive work experience. Customized pathways can be developed to accommodate the academic value and the wealth of knowledge and experience brought by lateral entrants.</p> <p><b>Front office in Brussels</b>   Establish a front office in Brussels (or The Hague) to facilitate connections, interactions and collaborations with politics and show the relevance of science.</p>	
<p><b>Academic in relation to the university and society</b></p> <p><b>Dream:</b> At Tilburg University, every employee is supported in their role and makes a valued contribution to society, which is also recognized and appreciated by society.</p>			

Context of a world in war with a climate crisis... there are no easy solutions

PhD Considered a lonely start

AI advantage or threat



# The scientist of 2035



International professional  
Impact professional  
Research professional  
Education professional  
External Professional



Focus on quality of supervisory team



Letting go of rules without added value



Working in hubs locally & (inter)nationally



Collective PhD training & market-based employment conditions



Fostering collaboration of multidisciplinary teams



Being heard and proud to speak up

Community based



Career changers

Career changers