



CLIMBING TOGETHER!

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TRANSITION TEAM VERSION 13 APRIL 2021

FOR CONSENT OF THE AVANS JOINT CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL AND FOR INFORMATION TO THE SUPERVISORY BOARD



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1. LEARNING TOGETHER AS WE GO

This implementation plan will provide our Avans organisation with direction, interpretation and guidance in the challenges we face when realising Ambition 2025. This plan forms the policy framework for adoption by the Executive Board (CvB), consent of the Avans Joint Consultative Council (AMR) and for information to our Supervisory Board.

After a full year of working on the structure and developing the vision of sub-topics and sub-plans, we have arrived at the starting line for implementing the plan. Some groups have already begun, others are keen to get started, while yet others would rather wait a while.

With agility and resilience – as described in Ambition 2025 – we are taking our first steps towards more freedom of choice for students, multidisciplinary collaboration, practically-oriented research (including sustainability research) and co-creation with the professional field. Avans; one ambition, one mission, one set of core values, one cohesive set of definable aims and objectives. In short, a unified strategic framework.

This will naturally demand leadership, new forms of cooperation, clarity and standardisation of processes and systems.

Our Ambition 2025 is urgent due to society's pressing questions. Our society and organisations increasingly encounter "wicked problems"¹ that demand a multidisciplinary approach. We want to take a giant leap with our Ambition 2025 plan. Our organisation and our educational methods will be changing. That means every curriculum will be changing. The way students shape their learning pathways will also be changing. In our Ambition 2025 plan we describe how students, lecturers, other staff, partners in professional fields and others involved should approach the form and content of these changes. Good education is essentially a human endeavour and flourishes in social and collective relationships.

Mutual dependencies between the schools, departments and study programmes are increasing. Multidisciplinary collaboration is a decisive factor of success. We can incorporate the Avans culture into the strategic framework through organisational behaviour, which follows collective human behaviour. Successful implementation depends on one unified collective culture, one coherent language of change, and a single-minded vision of organisational development.

¹Unique problems that are difficult or impossible to solve due to incomplete or conflicting information within changing contexts.

Ambition 2025 demands a permanent change in thinking and acting. The final goal is a well-framed dynamic culture which we continually refine and revise to meet the situation of the present moment as we continue to learn. This will not be realised by a specific deadline, such as 23 November at 10 minutes past 11. On the contrary, change proceeds through a zig-zag process of trial and error.

Therefore we will be learning together as we go, and we invite everyone to join in the journey and share in our experiences. The autonomy of all the schools has always been a positive factor within Avans. The schools will continue to follow their own learning pathways within this implementation process. But we will be combining our capacities much more in order to learn with and from each other. In other words, what we expect of our students and what our students expect of us will be modified in our own approach. So that in future we will really be able to provide living examples.

This plan does not contain a blueprint or detailed schedule of exactly how we are going to accomplish this. It primarily sketches out the processes of thinking, doing, evaluating and then looking ahead again. It gives direction to the place we want to end up and how we can learn as we go. Travelling at your own speed and according to your own needs. So that all the study programmes and all staff members ultimately reach the final goal.

We will be doing this primarily by:

- Outlining the route together with intermediate plateaus, Chapter 2 explains how we will be doing this.
- Making sure we are well prepared by setting clear goals, assigning specific roles, ensuring sufficient resources and creating personal ownership. You can read more about this in Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6.
- Starting the journey together and completing the journey together when we reach the top of the hill.
- Taking time to pause and get a good overview, so that we can learn from our insights and make better choices for the next stage. You can read more about this in Chapter 2.

In short, this implementation plan describes the HOW of the transition. The WHAT of the transition has been included in the sub-products.

Decisionmaking process:

With approval of this plan we will be adopting the approach, reserving the financial means available and starting on the route with intermediate plateaus.



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2. PLATEAUS ARE FOR LEARNING TOGETHER

Learning as we go towards Ambition 2025 means journeying together, getting energy from surprises, digging in when the going gets tough and discovering how colleagues can support each other. You might discover that you can't proceed as fast as you could alone, but that you go a lot further together.

Together we are climbing the top of the hill "Ambition 2025". This demands cooperation and collaboration. The journey will proceed organically and at different speeds. In order to be able to learn from each other, we will be creating plateaus. A plateau is a time for evaluation, improvement and accountability. The objectives and actions for the next plateau will be defined in concert with the other components. In order to be sure that we enjoy the ride, check that we are still on the right track and see how we can learn from our travelling experiences. In order to make talking points of what was successful and also what didn't work. In order to secure the success of the next stage of the journey.



The structure of the plateau is as follows:

Plateau	Definition	What has been achieved on this plateau?
0	Ready to depart - September 2021	Avans is ready to depart towards Plateau 1: we have a complete picture of the results of the sub-topics, and the organisation of the implementation has been laid out and equipped with the necessary resources. There is a plateau plan for the first plateau.
1	Ambition 2025 scouted - January 2022	Each building team has had its first experiences of first stage experiments and other initiatives. This scouting stage gives us frameworks for what we think is possible and what we think is not possible for Plateau 2. And we see where potential hindrances or obstacles lie.
2	Ambition 2025 has taken off - January 2023	The low-hanging fruit has now been picked off. Whereas we experimented carefully going towards Plateau 1 with what was and was not possible, we have now implemented changes with larger groups of enthusiastic participants. There is sufficient collective will and energy to embrace the new situation. The organisation is structured with the new units.
3	Ambition 2025 has been upscaled - January 2024	Avans is now actively working on a large scale. The new HR system has been rolled out and business practices have been outlined. A large number of teaching modules have also been renewed. We have better grip on new developments and we are making use of lessons learned. The contours of the new educational model have been given greater shape and definition.
4	Ambition 2025 has landed - January 2025	When we get to Plateau 4, Ambition 2025 has almost been completely implemented. The top of the hill is coming more and more into view. The primary focus is now on making sure those in the rear can keep up with the group. Whatever we postponed on the last plateau to make it more bite-sized we have now included.
5	Ambition 2025 has been fully realised and new ambitions are already beckoning on the horizon - January 2026	Ambition 2025 is tried and tested. We've tackled the remaining points and achieved an optimal result. Implementation of the next Ambition plan, which has already been adopted, is in the offing.

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Each plateau will have its own consolidated plan consisting of different themes drawn from our Ambition plan. The plateau plans contain a specified explanation of the objectives, realisations and structure – what we will be doing – for the next plateau.

Each plateau will have its own time for evaluation in order to reveal where we stand in terms of the different themes of our Ambition plan and whether the parts of the plan cohere securely.

The template for defining a plateau explicitly requires a statement on the contribution of that plateau to the values and objectives of Ambition 2025. And how lecturers, students and professionals in the field will be affected.

Each plateau will end with answers to issues of quality² and a plan for the next plateau approved by the Executive Board.

²Issues of quality: have we achieved our objectives, are we still learning, are we taking lessons learned along with us, which opportunities and threats have been signalled?



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3. WORKING TOGETHER, EACH WITH A CLEARLY ASSIGNED ROLE

Implementation of Ambition 2025 will take place within the units: the schools, centres of expertise and service departments. The driving force will be self-organising teams and passionate staff. At the same time, we want to take a giant step across the whole of Avans to prepare the organisation for the future.

The scope, character and interconnectedness of topics in Ambition 2025 require professional governance structures with clear roles assigned for management, advising and implementation. We will be linking up with existing governance structures, consultation structures, other initiatives, and planning and control cycles (P&C cycles) within Avans as much as possible.

New for the organisation will be the set up of a transition team and 4 building teams for coordinating the implementation by the schools and other units. In addition, we will be addressing several sub-topics within the line, about which the transition team will have regular discussions for coordination. The theme circles will advise the Executive Board about the plateau plans. The Executive Board will take a decision on each plateau plan and the accompanying budget, and issue a mandate for their implementation. The Executive Board will issue this mandate to the transition team regarding the topics within the scope of that plan and to the line for implementation of the other topics. The transition team will make the resources available to the building teams. And there will be frequent coordination between implementation and management, supported by a dashboard and periodic management reports (MARAPs).

The **transition team** is tasked with supervision of objectives, deployment of resources, cohesion, sequencing and absorption capacity. It will also keep a watchful eye trained on workload pressure. The transition team is responsible for nudging or motivating change capacity and change behaviour (journey), ensuring quality of the objectives, the process and contents, and monitoring and reporting on progress.

- Tasks: planning, analysing, monitoring, coordinating and accounting for objectives and initiatives of all building teams within Ambition 2025. Including attention to the soft side, which includes communications strategy, guiding everyone through the changes, dealing with resistance, etc.
- Composition: transition leader, change expert, portfolio manager, PMO, communications and two directors.³
- Satellites: building team leaders, ambassadors, professionals for coordination, organisational change, information provision, communications, finance, project control and project management.

The **Quality and Compliance Team (Q&C)**, tasked with safeguarding the quality of contents and process, is also new. The multidisciplinary Q&C Team will not only check to make sure everyone follows the rules, but will also communicate whether the objectives have been or will be achieved. This forms an extra motivator for change.

- Tasks: assessing the plateau plans and MARAPs, assessing proposals and plans for initiatives (including large initiatives), interim reviews.
- Composition: various specialists drawn from BE&C, Centre for Learning and Innovation (IR), Unit Finance and Student Administration, Facility Management & ICT Unit, Quality in Motion, Transition Team.

By introducing the roles of the transition team and the Q&C Team, there will be overlap with the role of the current Advisory Committee for Projects (ACP). How we will be dealing with this will be explored as we get closer to Plateau 0.

There is a short description of the implementation management process. This details how the transition team and the building teams will be collaborating from within their separate roles. As we get closer to Plateau 0 we will specify this further by adding such things as authorisations and responsibilities.



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³A Dean and a department head will also join the transition team. Their role is to maintain a balance in relationships with the region and stakeholders for 4 hours a week during the implementation period. Their responsibility is to advise the transition team regarding contact with the group they represent and to take action that promotes the collective goal and support for the collective goal.

4. JOINING FORCES IN OUR BUILDING TEAMS

The implementation of Ambition 2025 will take place collaboratively. We will be doing that within and between units, study programmes and schools where students, lecturers and professionals meet together. There will also be building teams for Teaching, Organisation, Co-creation and Tech & Data.

These building teams will have the freedom to choose their own path and the way in which they will proceed to the next plateau. The timeline for the plateaus is the same for all the building teams. This means that the building teams will always work to realise our joint Ambition 2025 according to their own plateau plan. And we will wait for each other before we head out again together to the next plateau.

Themes that have a lot in common with each other will be clustered within the 4 building teams. This means that these fall within the “extended control” of the transition team. Themes that can be handled fairly independently and that are already well underway at this moment in time will be dealt with in the line, under the limited control of the transition team.

The table below lists which sub-themes will be handled in which building teams and which will be handled in the line:

	Transition team				Line
<i>building teams:</i>	Teaching model	Organisation	Co-creation	Tech & Data	
	extended control				limited control
Student Wellbeing					
Educational Vision and Teaching Model Frameworks					
Master's Degree Programme and 3 rd Cycle					
Educational Innovation					
Digital Education (to be included in Educational Vision)					
Organisational Development and Self-organising Teams					
Organisational Development and Business Practices					
Research and Outcomes					
Strategic Partnerships					
Professionalisation					
Avans Provision of Information (IVA)				(consolidation)	
Vision of Data					
AI					
<i>Planning and responsibility:</i>	<i>Plateau Plans and MARAP Transition Team</i>				<i>Other MARAPs</i>

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Two sub-topics are assigned to several building teams. The contents will vary according to the building team, and overarching coordination or consolidation will be needed for these sub-topics.

A building team consists of the building team leader plus a small, fixed team that is responsible for stability, lessons learned and coordination with other building teams. In addition, the building teams include a changing composition, a kind of beehive. The building team leaders will coordinate closely with the boards of the units: schools, service departments and centres of expertise. The boards are in the lead when it comes to making people available to the building teams.

For the themes in the column “line” in the table, each building team and also the units will make their own implementation or plateau plan. They will do that together with the boards of all the units. Each building team will not be thinking for the target group but with the target group, and will actively involve the target group in the preparation, decision making and implementation of activities.

The building teams’ plateau plans will form the basis for the transition team when it comes to coordinating dependencies, sequencing, implementation capacity and absorption capacity of the entire Avans organisation for the plateau. And the Avans plateau plan forms the basis for the division of resources between the teams for the plateau. Based on their plateau plan, the building teams will get to work with the initiatives that lead to their plateau objectives. When launching each initiative, the building team will coordinate with the transition team. The building team will communicate via the dashboard monthly with the transition team, just like the line, regarding the status of the plan. This will include information on progress attained and objectives achieved, along with details of financial utilisation.

The implementation of Ambition 2025 will take place in the workplace, within the units. That means that the boards of the units are responsible.

They will draw up the implementation plans together with the building teams, and the building teams will help with the implementation. The building teams will contribute specific expertise for this, depending on the type of building team, and ensure Avans-wide planning and coordination of the building team’s themes.

Implementation of Ambition 2025 is thus an interaction between boards and building teams, which are mutually linked together, supported by the central transition team.

Although various other initiatives will run in parallel to the implementation of Ambition 2025, such as Internationalisation,⁴ Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and Lifelong Learning, they will have points of contact with Ambition 2025. We will have a better picture of these intersections later on when the building teams are putting together the plateau plans.



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⁴For Internationalisation, the schools with English-language Bachelor’s and Master’s degree programmes will be working together. They will be exploring realisation of an “Avans International Community” together with international research groups and the International Office.



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5. THE FINANCIAL RESOURCES

What resources do we have available for achieving our Ambition 2025? And how do we make the best financial allocation and resource choices as we go from plateau to plateau?

The following table gives an overview of how much funding the project owners originally requested for Ambition 2025 in its totality distributed over the years 2021 through 2025. This framework was devised using the first calculations of sub-plans that the project owners submitted in January 2021 regarding the sub-topics.

The Executive Board already included an amount for Avans Provision of Information (IVA) and Student Wellbeing in the earlier multiyear budget for 2021-2025 (total 73.3 million euros), while estimating 82.9 million euros for the implementation. The basic assumption covers learning effects, efficiency advantages and upscaling the organisation. The expectation is that the amount available may offer the scope to do more if we can make good use of the learning effects and upscaling. The following table shows “amounts requested” versus “amounts available”:

Requested versus available			
<i>all amounts in thousands of euros</i>	Requested	Available	%
Programme Organisation	5,993	5,693	95%
Teaching Model and Innovation	49,574	34,685	70%
Student Wellbeing	1,180	1,180	100%
Master's Degree Programme and 3 rd Cycle	6,581	6,581	100%
Research and Knowledge Transfer Vision	19,910	19,910	100%
(Strategic) Partnerships	6,866	6,523	95%
Organisation Development	5,997	5,997	100%
Professionalisation	6,603	6,272	95%
Avans Provision of Information (IVA) incl. Vision of Data	7,083	6,729	95%
Total	109,787	93,571	85%

The most important change is to the amount for implementation of the teaching model. In the past, the schools received a ballpark amount of 100,000 euros for curriculum development. In the amount requested, we assumed about 1 million euros for each full-time Bachelor's programme. That is approximately eight times as much. The Executive Board has reduced this by a factor of six. We will learn from the first pilots what the actual costs will be.

Taking into account an availability percentage of 85% and the plateaus that mark year-to-year transitions (January), this means that for each plateau an amount will become available as indicated in the table below (all amounts expressed in millions of euros or €M). No differentiation has been made in this amounts between one-time budget components (total €M 61.5) and structural budget components (total €M 32.1).

Plateau	Definition of plateau	Amount*	Year
0	Ready to depart - September 2021	5,500	2021
1	Ambition 2025 scouted - January 2022		
2	Ambition 2025 has taken off - January 2023	18,137	2022
3	Ambition 2025 has been upscaled - January 2024	21,998	2023
4	Ambition 2025 has landed - January 2025	25,750	2024
5	Ambition 2025 has been realised - January 2026	22,186	2025
	Total available for Ambition 2025	EUR 93,571	

* Available amount in thousands of euros: incidental and structural, excluding all amounts formerly earmarked for IVA and Student Wellbeing. The available amount is a designated maximum.

Distributing the resources and making the ensuing choices will be done for each plateau and each building team separately. Each building team is responsible for funding spent on each completed round and will make up a plateau plan for the next plateau indicating their plateau objectives. They will also indicate which initiatives they want to obtain and what kind of budget is needed for each initiative. The transition team will send the plateau plans for decision making and afterwards the building teams can develop their initiatives.

Each unit (study programme), in addition to the funding that can be made available via the building teams, can also draw on their own lumpsum financing from the Dutch national government.

Plateau planning, implementation preparation and implementation execution will therefore require good coordination and a clear process for decision making.

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6. CREATING PROJECT OWNERSHIP

Avans – one ambition, one mission, one set of core values, one cohesive set of definable aims and objectives – in short, a unified strategic framework. This naturally makes demands on leadership, unambiguous language, new forms of collaboration and standardisation of processes and systems.

Terms such as agile, resilient, freedom of choice, multidisciplinary, cooperation, practice oriented, sustainability, research and co-creation have all been given a place in Ambition 2025. The next step is to turn these terms into definitions. What meaning will we give to these concepts? What does Ambition 2025 look like? Which changes will be visible and noticeable? In addition to the contents of the answers to these questions, during the journey we will also make the undercurrents between people open to discussion, as well as within individuals. How do “I” give intrinsic form to collaboration, connections, or one ambition? How are we going to deal with the “emotional” process? We’re starting out on a wonderful journey.

Sustainable change to our way of thinking and acting will only unfold in the fullness of time. Mostly according to a recognisable pattern. This pattern forms the zig-zag path of our change and transition communications:

1. Understanding: we understand why change is needed.
2. Meaning: we understand what has to change in our way of thinking of acting.
3. Confirmation: we have a positive experience of the route we’ve chosen.
4. Momentum: we experiment and adopt the new desirable behaviour.
5. Consolidation: we keep going and master the change, while taking others along with us.

This development forms the basic trajectory we want to guide Avans staff along when drawing up and implementing our plans. The transition team will be supporting this development as much as possible with a sound communications strategy. In dialogue with and with attention to individual differences. Because each one of us will experience this journey and the changes in his or her own way. We will also be explaining why a certain change is required during a plateau, and in doing so will also include arguments from those whose interests are involved in the change and the impacts on those individuals. In addition to knowledge and conviction, feelings, emotions and social norms are also important. By allowing space for learning and building trust we will experience the change step by step. With trial and error where necessary, and by giving each other support and motivation with sharing success stories, but also by being understanding for each other when things are not going smoothly.

A plateau plan is therefore a question of organisational objectives combined with personal learning objectives. What steps will you be taking? Who can you learn from? And what is it you need? These are the crucial questions we will keep asking each other before the start, while we’re on our way and when we reach the plateau.

This will lead to substantial differences in formulation and approach for each building team. The transition team will add up these differences and look for a way of combining the resources and effort needed to support this development across Avans effectively and efficiently. While utilising existing structures and leadership as much as possible.

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A plateau plan therefore always answers the questions necessary for us to continue on our way together:

- What is the goal? Where are we going? And what will it be like when we get there?
- What does that mean for everyone's priorities? What are we going to deal with today?
- What does the process of change look like? What is the journey? Which steps will we be taking? And where do we stand at the present time?

We will be answering these questions by:

- Getting important stakeholders involved, listening to what they have to say and working together on outcomes. For example, by setting up student-assistantships or work placements to enable students to contribute to finalising our objectives.
- Ensuring communication is happening wherever change is happening. Wherever the parties involved are meeting and coming together.
- Setting up a steady rhythm of communication which allows us to remain proactively uppermost in everyone's mind.
- Offering the curious a place where they can find information themselves. Where they can see, feel and experience what is happening with-in our Ambition 2025 trajectory, what the objectives are, what changes are underway, what those mean and how they can participate.
- Creating physical as well as digital meeting places for dialogue and exchanging inspiration, and to stimulate knowledge and experiences.
- Celebrating and sharing successes while at the same time mapping out what we're still wrestling with, obstacles to be overcome and lessons learned.

Connecting, learning, collaborating, communicating are things that are done by us, for us and that are owned by us. The transition team will be working closely with, among others, the Centre for Learning and Innovation, Marketing, Communication and Student Relations Unit, Personnel & Organisational Management Unit and Facility Management & ICT Unit, to support collaboration and dialogue between the units and groups, wherever needed. As well as facilitating ongoing discussions between the units and groups, and that the joint momentum receives the right focus and value. Teaching staff, support staff, boards, school councils, researchers and particularly our students and the professional field will feel like true partners sharing in this journey. We will get to the top of that hill together!



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WHERE DO WE REALIZE OUR AMBITION? AT AVANS, OF COURSE!

COLOPHON

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Text: Transition team

Final editing: Leonore Pulleman and Linda van Leuken, redactie Avans (DMCS realisatie).

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Design: De Studio, powered by Avans & Canon

For more information about this implementation plan, please email: ambitie20-25@avans.nl

SOCIALLY INVOLVED - AMBITIOUS - PERSONAL