

# Strategy

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## Shaping the future

The greater Zurich region is a dynamic hub for education, research and innovation. It is a location that exudes global appeal. In a time of rapid technological change, social and political upheaval, and environmental challenges, it is our duty as a university to provide forward-thinking answers.

Our strategy is underpinned by three key strategic directions: we want to be transformative, entrepreneurial and European. We promote the exchange of knowledge between the realms of academia and professional practice so that our students and researchers can develop transformative solutions to the challenges of today and tomorrow. We strengthen entrepreneurial thinking and action so as to drive forward innovation in a targeted manner.

We step up our European partnerships in order to be internationally competitive and sustainably impactful as a university. Our strategy is a commitment to responsibility – towards our students, the Zurich region and society as a whole.

Together, we are shaping the future.



**Dr. Silvia Steiner**  
Government Councillor  
President of the ZHAW of  
Applied Sciences Council



**Prof. Dr. Regula Jöhl**  
President of the ZHAW

# Our self-image

We are a driving force for innovative education and research as well as for the transfer of knowledge. The importance of seamlessly linking education, professional practice and research and translating knowledge into action is deeply embedded in our self-image.

We prepare our students for the complex challenges of the future and promote a culture of lifelong learning, interdisciplinary cooperation and critical thinking. ZHAW graduates bring solid academic expertise to the professional world and possess the ability to apply and refresh this knowledge in various, even disruptive, contexts. Our research forms an essential foundation for our educational programmes, generates new knowledge and has a strong impact on society.

Proactive and highly qualified employees form the heart of our university. In an attractive physical and digital environment, they provide services that advance academia and professional practice into the future. They act responsibly in keeping with ethical principles and continuously develop themselves both professionally and personally.

Our students, staff and industry partners work together and share their knowledge to sustainably transform society with an entrepreneurial spirit. We are rooted in the Zurich region, active across Switzerland and internationally, and actively involved in strong European university networks. To ensure and develop quality in a systematic manner, we have embedded regular reflection with external peers into our processes.

With the three strategic directions «transformative», «entrepreneurial» and «European» we consistently bring our self-image to life.



Strategic direction

# Transformative

Through close collaboration between the university and industry, the ZHAW prepares its students for the demands and developments of the job market and brings about positive and sustainable change for society. Staff and students work together with national and international partners from the realms of academia and professional practice to create, test and evaluate evidence-based solutions in simulated and real contexts.

# Transformative

## → Goals

### **The ZHAW offers experiential education.**

It enables students to play an active role in shaping a sustainable society. It closely links theory and practice by incorporating hands-on learning within the university itself and offering experiential educational programmes and learning spaces. Co-creation, collaborative learning, experimentation, work and intercultural encounters are key elements of experiential education. A constructive feedback culture between students, staff and industry partners strengthens the professional and personal development of everyone involved.

### **The ZHAW is a leader in lifelong learning.**

The educational programmes of the ZHAW align with the requirements of a dynamically evolving job market and lay the foundation for lifelong learning. Where appropriate, the ZHAW offers open studies and continuing education courses as well as flexible course formats to take account of rapid social change and provide a high degree of autonomy in study planning. With innovative and sought-after programmes in terms of their content, form and teaching methods, the ZHAW remains the leading provider of university-level continuing education in Switzerland.



### **The ZHAW shares its knowledge.**

The ZHAW makes its teaching and learning materials as well as its research data and results as accessible as possible. It quickly adopts and develops ideas, technologies and knowledge through individual and institutional initiatives and disseminates its innovations to others. This makes it possible to rapidly communicate and implement developments, allowing for them to be advanced further by all those who want to work with and on them.

### **The ZHAW takes responsibility for sustainable development.**

It equips students with sustainability expertise and shows how the sustainability transformation can be achieved, for example in the form of real-world laboratories. It researches and teaches regenerative solutions for respecting planetary boundaries and developing inclusive societies, and it gears its own actions towards achieving these objectives. The ZHAW unleashes its full innovative power by taking a holistic view of sustainability across the entire university. It is committed to collaboration with Zurich's universities and beyond.

### **The ZHAW shapes the digital transformation.**

Rather than being an end in themselves, digital technologies serve to consistently support and facilitate the achievement of goals in education, research and innovation. The ZHAW equips its students and staff with digital expertise, highlighting sustainable paths towards bringing about digital transformation. Digitalisation simplifies both communication and cooperation, makes services more flexible and accessible, optimises processes and allows the ZHAW to act in a more agile, efficient and effective manner. In collaboration with its partners in the Zurich university landscape, the ZHAW drives the digital translation forward in a reflective manner.

Strategic direction

# Entrepreneurial

The ZHAW encourages and empowers its students and staff to think and act in an open, proactive and entrepreneurial manner as well as to take on personal responsibility. It empowers itself as an organisation as well as its students, staff and partners to expand their scope for action.

# Entrepreneurial

## → Goals

### **The ZHAW is an entrepreneurial university.**

It promotes entrepreneurial thinking and action among its students and staff and encourages them to develop and implement innovative ideas. Its study programmes are designed to help students develop entrepreneurial skills, and all ZHAW staff and students are encouraged to seize opportunities, advance knowledge and innovation and learn from mistakes. This makes the ZHAW a driving force for generating new ideas and innovations. To this end, it also works to intensify its cooperation with its partners in society and with its partner universities.

### **The ZHAW is an attractive employer.**

It employs and promotes individuals who are proactive and entrepreneurial in how they think and act, who are well established and recognised in their industry and/or their field of research, and who demonstrate great enthusiasm and passion for education, innovation and knowledge transfer. The ZHAW provides its staff with an environment in which they can enhance their self-efficacy and creates an inspiring, trusting and appreciative learning and working atmosphere. The ZHAW also continuously develops at an institutional level.

### **The ZHAW trains the next generation of experts.**

In addition to supporting cooperative doctoral programmes, it is committed to promoting young academic talent with sought-after skills and expertise to strengthen the link between academia and professional practice.

### **The ZHAW grows at its interdisciplinary interfaces.**

The ZHAW grows in response to developments on the job market. In particular, it expands its range of attractive interdisciplinary degree programmes, continuing education courses and business services and grounds them in its interdisciplinary research. In doing so, the ZHAW leverages the diversity and expertise of its Schools and their roots in professional practice in a collaborative manner.

### **The ZHAW uses its financial resources strategically and responsibly.**

Public funding is essential and fundamental for the ZHAW, and it uses these resources in a responsible, strategic and sustainable manner. It diversifies its funding base through the acquisition of third-party funds.

### **The ZHAW strengthens its resilience and ability to learn.**

It systematically prepares for internal and external critical events and is able to deal with challenges and uncertainties, adapt quickly to changing situations and emerge stronger from crises.



Strategic direction

# European



The ZHAW strengthens its position as a European university and increases its importance in a European context. It consolidates forward-looking alliances at a global level, from which students and staff benefit through various professional and cultural perspectives.

# European

## → Goals

### **The ZHAW sees itself as a European university.**

It develops and strengthens its university partnerships in Europe, in particular the European Engineering Learning Innovation and Science Alliance (EELISA). It is a sought-after Swiss university for European universities and university alliances.

### **The ZHAW strengthens the international profile of its students and staff.**

It expands the international aspects of its educational offerings and international degree programmes and intensifies opportunities for international exchange among its students and staff. It is committed to an innovative approach to mobility needs in order to achieve its sustainability goals.

### **The ZHAW promotes diversity and intercultural skills.**

It teaches intercultural skills and creates a diverse, international and intercultural environment in which different people are not only welcomed, but also essential for contributing to the development of the ZHAW and an open society. The intercultural skills of its staff and students reflect this diversity and contribute to the cosmopolitan attitude of the ZHAW.

## **The ZHAW is aligned with European and international standards.**

It is committed to implementing the European education system and European education and university standards, adheres to the principles of good academic practice developed by the international community and continuously evaluates its practices through external peers from the realms of academia and professional practice from both Switzerland and abroad. It deals responsibly with academic misconduct, promotes awareness of the importance of ethical behaviour and the recognition of misinformation, and encourages and fosters critical thinking.

## **The ZHAW is internationally competitive.**

It positions itself as an internationally recognised university through its research and educational programmes and acquires third-party funding in a global context to ensure that it can continue to conduct excellent, internationally relevant and competitive research in the future.

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