Strategic Principles
Version of 6 November 2018: Draft submitted for university consultation

1. Research and Innovation

UZH is part of the international research community, in which it takes a leading role. We facilitate and foster excellent research that refines and develops existing fields and opens up promising and innovative research approaches.

UZH's research is focused on achieving outstanding quality through successful research work that is long-term, sustainable and innovative. In doing so, UZH is committed to embracing diverse and equal research cultures, inter- and transdisciplinarity, independent and free research as well as close international cooperation. Our professorial appointments are based on these standards.

2. Teaching and Learning

UZH offers education and research-based teaching of high didactic quality. We promote intellectual flexibility and the willingness to pursue lifelong learning, thereby preparing our students for their professional careers.

UZH evaluates the quality of its teaching and learning on a regular basis and takes suitable measures to continuously improve teaching quality. In doing so, we aim to be inclusive and foster an open dialogue.

UZH believes higher education should be accessible. We make information about studying available in a clear manner and, where appropriate, in multiple languages. We provide an environment that supports the compatibility of studies, work and family life, and provide advice and support for students. In addition, we encourage our students to gain international experience and engage in extracurricular activities.

3. Academic Career Development

Excellence in research is driven by junior academics, among others. This is why UZH supports junior scholars at all stages of their career. We enable talented students to become familiar with research and teaching processes at an early stage. We also provide the best possible conditions that allow our students and scholars to complete academic qualification papers efficiently and at a high scientific level. The relevant ordinances and regulations are in line with professional academic standards. We also make sure that dependencies on supervisors do not have any negative consequences for the development of junior researchers.

UZH also facilitates and promotes diverse career paths and takes into account their compatibility with skill profiles, family planning and different life stages. This includes providing challenging and rewarding career options that do not necessarily follow the traditional professorship pathway.
4. Organizational Culture and Staff Development

All members of UZH, in particular those in leadership roles, are responsible for ensuring that their area of responsibility embraces a participatory culture of mutual appreciation. We foster respectful communication and cultivate a constructive practice of giving feedback. In so doing, we facilitate non-discriminatory participation of all members of UZH and create a climate of loyalty and solidarity that welcomes new ideas and constructive discussion.

UZH strives to improve its employment conditions on an ongoing basis. We encourage employees in pursuing continuing education and provide training in handling modern technology and digital tools. We promote flexible models of work organization and proven forms of team work. Our staff development not only takes into account UZH’s goals as an organization, but also the needs of our employees in their pursuit of professional qualifications and personal development.

5. Cooperation with Third Parties and Internationalization

UZH maintains strategic partnerships and cooperations with leading research and education institutions at the international, national and regional level. At the regional level, we maintain close ties to ETH Zurich, the universities of teacher education and the universities of applied sciences, in particular. We aim to achieve the right balance of competition, collaboration and coordination in dealing with all our partners.

The purpose of these cooperations is to jointly uphold the significance of scientific work and to make the most of our own resources. Our cooperations make it possible to strengthen the leading role and positive image of UZH.

UZH also entertains partnerships with non-profit organizations, businesses and public authorities. Here, we understand our role as that of an expert organization fostering science-based anticipation, innovation and active knowledge transfer. We draw up initiatives to promote the knowledge transfer skills of our members.

6. Academic Medicine Zurich (UMZH) and One Health

UZH is committed to ensuring medical and health care for the public through excellence in research and teaching. We are developing the medicine of the future, in close cooperation with our Academic Medicine Zurich (UMZH) partner institutions (University Hospital Zurich, University Children’s Hospital Zurich, Balgrist University Hospital, University Hospital of Psychiatry Zurich and ETH Zurich), our partner and teaching hospitals, as well as the teaching practices of the Faculty of Medicine.

Together with all partners of UMZH, we set the standards when it comes to studying, research and medical care. Together with the Vetsuisse Faculty, the Faculty of Medicine of UZH continues to develop the cross-disciplinary One Health approach, which takes into account the systemic interrelationships between humans, animals, the environment and health.

7. University and Society

UZH plays an active role in a vibrant, pluralistic society. We embrace and encourage cooperation between academia and all areas of social life, namely business, politics, culture and civil society. In
particular, we take part in the public discourse by sharing our research findings and by addressing socially relevant topics such as digitalization, climate change, migration and other social and economic challenges of today.

UZH raises society’s awareness that diverse, free academic research is an important part of maintaining and developing a democratic, constitutional society that is committed to fundamental rights and international cooperation. The same applies to the complex cultural principles underpinning society.

8. Cultural Values

UZH promotes a culture of research, teaching, learning and working that contributes to the creation of knowledge in all areas. In particular, this includes embracing fair forms of organization and maintaining appropriate ethical and cultural values. We recognize and uphold social justice for individuals and groups – taking into account the current needs of society as well as those of future generations.

UZH recognizes that equal opportunities, diversity and sustainability enrich university life and considers them university-wide duties to be upheld by our organizational units and members. We undertake to implement the relevant policies and recommendations in an effective and efficient manner.

9. Infrastructure and Administration

UZH provides efficient infrastructure and administrative conditions that meet the highest quality standards for research and innovation as well as for teaching and learning. We carry out our site development strategy in line with the needs of the departments, institutes, faculties and Central Services units, maintaining close cooperation with the relevant partners.

Technology platforms, libraries and digital services are set up to provide broad access to information and state-of-the-art technology. This benefits research, teaching and innovation, and reduces the workload required for organizational tasks.

10. Finances

In keeping with its founding principles, UZH views itself as an institution established “by the will of the people” and recognizes the need for public funding, which is an indispensable part of free research and teaching. We view it as our responsibility to use our resources in an ethical, targeted and sustainable way.

At the same time, UZH seeks to diversify its financial base by acquiring competitive third-party funding and strengthening the UZH Foundation. When raising third-party funds, we are mindful to ensure transparency with regard to their source and intended use. Information about UZH’s sources of funding, any conditions attached to the awarding of third-party funds, as well as any outside professorial activities and interests are disclosed to the public.