

DIT Timeline

2021 - 2024

Inclusive of the **education, research, engagement** and **institutional development** DIT worked towards.

Minor: Sustainability Transitions

2020

Since its start in 2020, this interfaculty minor for EUR bachelor students blends transition, resilience, and design thinking - and has been further developed over the last years. Hosted by EUC, it invites lecturers from six faculties (ESSB, ESHCC, Erasmus MC, ESL, ESPhil, RSM) plus external organizations. Through hands-on projects and coaching, students deepen their understanding of societal and ecological challenges. It equips them with the tools to address complex problems and is currently ending its fifth academic year 2024/2025.

Read more about the [Minor](#)

TransEUR: Transforming the Erasmus University Rotterdam

2021

DIT Platform was developed as an experiment to foster institutional change at EUR. We engaged in research activities to analyse and understand current structures, and to reflexively monitor the experimentation with alternative structures at DIT. Workshops, interviews, and reflection sessions guided the process.

Article: [Navigating force conflicts: A case study on strategies of transformative research in the current academic system.](#)

Policy Brief: [Obstacles to Engaged Scholarship at Erasmus University \(and lessons for change\).](#)

Policy report: [A University in Transition](#)

2021

DIT Narrative for Change

2021

DIT was established to challenge hierarchical structures within the university and create space for transdisciplinary collaboration. The narrative is a collaborative, evolving document that captures DIT's mission, methods, and future vision.

Vision Document: [DIT's Narrative for Change](#)

Just Fashion Transition

2021

This research aimed to accelerate the fashion and textile transition by collaborating across universities, disciplines, and with societal partners to drive systemic change toward a just, sustainable industry.

Article: [Exploring the clothing overconsumption of young adults: An experimental study with communication interventions.](#)

Article: [Designed for the job? An empirical study on the determinants of design graduates' work choices](#)

Article: [Disrupting the status quo: a sustainability transitions analysis of the fashion system](#)

Different career paths at DIT

2021

DIT introduced new roles (e.g. DIT academics seconded for part of their worktime to DIT, or 'developer' roles) that differ from traditional university career paths blending academic and support roles and offering more flexibility. This initiative was designed to experiment with career models that support engaged, action-oriented scholarship.

TRANSacademia: Transforming academia

2021

We explored how universities can institutionalise action-oriented and engaged research. This project examined organisational structures and policies that support societal impact of academic activities.

Working Paper 1: [Transformative Research: Knowledge and action for just sustainability transitions](#)

Working Paper 2: [Institutionalisation of Transdisciplinarity in Research Organisations – A Review of Key Dimensions](#)

Article: [Transforming universities. Mobilizing research and education for sustainability transitions at Erasmus University Rotterdam](#)

Transformative Repair Research

2022

This research reimagined repair as both a practical and symbolic act of sustainability. It explored visible mending to shift cultural norms toward repair rather than disposal. The goal is to promote sustainable practices in design and everyday life.

Transforming Education

2021

This project was designed to reimagine university practices through the exploration of teacher development, systemic change, and innovative learning methodologies. By developing tools and initiatives, the project engaged students, faculty, and staff in dynamic, hands-on activities that address emotional communication, environmental risks, and ecological transformation. The goal is to inspire a more interconnected and sustainable academic ecosystem that fosters societal change and empowers individuals to navigate complex challenges.

Board Game: [Fireflies](#)

Board Game: [COLLAPSE](#)

Education Pilot: Transformative education for teachers

Aimed to explore inner development for teachers in connection to societal transformation and the teacher's positionalities in the transition of the university.

Ecotons Project: [Learn more here](#)

2022

DIT Day 2022: Imagining Science for Change

2022

DIT day 2022 brought together the EUR community to discuss and learn about science for change. How can we tackle some of today's most pressing societal challenges? And how can science become a force for positive change in doing so? Participants discussed how to transform academia and address global challenges. The event fostered collective imagination for a better future.

[Read more about the event](#)

**PhD Learning community:
Action-oriented research**
2022

DIT created a learning community for PhD students focused on action-oriented and transformative research. The community met regularly in a hybrid setting to foster connections across disciplines using transition and design thinking. It enhanced collaborative and engaged scholarship.

Read more about the [Learning Community](#).

Values in Transition
2023

We explored how universities created a new value set that balanced diverse societal and institutional objectives in response to sustainability challenges. By examining collaborative practices between academia and society, we investigated how universities adapted to changing values and promoted interdisciplinary knowledge exchange.

Forthcoming Book Chapter: [Transforming academia – how a university absorbs new values and norms for societal impact.](#)

**Summer School:
Design & Transitions**
2023

In collaboration with Aalto University (Finland), this Summer School explored design and transition theories. Researchers engaged in emerging and innovative practices and approaches that link design with societal transformation to address sustainability challenges.

Article: [Designing for transitions and transformations](#)

2023

Master Societal Transition
2023

Running for its first academic year in 2023/2024, the interfaculty Master Societal Transition (MST) equips students with the knowledge and skills necessary to understand, interpret and work on complex societal transitions. It is inter- and transdisciplinary, integrating knowledge from various disciplines and practice. Its current institutional home is the Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil), while it involves other faculties in leading courses, tracks or teaching.

Read more about the [Masters](#).

**DIT Day: EUR 2043: Imagining
the University of the Future**
2023

Imagine we had twenty years to shape a better university. What could EUR look like in 2043? And what would we have to do today to make those futures a reality? This event invited the EUR community to envision their university in 2043. Participants discussed transforming EUR to address global challenges and foster critical thinking. The event encouraged collective imagining for a better academic future.

Keynote: [“The Climate Justice University”](#)
by J.C. Stephens

Sustainability Dialogues

2023

These dialogues provided a platform for EUR students and staff to discuss sustainability and arose from sit-ins during the OccupyEUR protests. Topics included university operations, research, and education's role in creating a sustainable future. The goal was to translate these discussions into actionable policies for each faculty.

Read the [Posters from the dialogues](#)

Review the [Analysis of the school dialogues outcomes](#)

Transformative Research Methods Course

2023

The Trans Research Modules: Introduction to Methods is a collaborative course between DIT, Impact at the Core, and Convergence Delta, introducing transformative research methods to early career researchers. Together with ESPhil, we developed a module on ethics in transdisciplinary research. It supports researchers in navigating the challenges (or dilemmas) of transformative academic work.

[Read more about the module](#)

Funding and Governing Transdisciplinary Research

2023

In collaboration with ACCEZ, an organisation accelerating sustainable transitions in South Holland, DIT devised a mutually beneficial learning journey to explore lessons for how to fund and govern transdisciplinary research more effectively.

Final Report: [Funding & Governing Transdisciplinary Sustainability Research Programs Lessons from 5 years of ACCEZ](#)

Executive Summary: [Final ACCEZ Report](#)

Radical Imagination in Transitions

2023

Together with the DOEN foundation, this project researched the connection between academics and artists to imagine a sustainable and just future. Social art practices were combined with scientific approaches to explore transformative possibilities. The project highlights the potential of creativity in transition research.

Vision Paper: [Radical Imagination in Transition:](#)

Artist in Residence

2023

Pauline Wiersema was asked to visualize, perform and give form to what we are doing at DIT as the artist in residence. She examined: What is 'impact' really, and what could it look like? How can we connect and reach out differently to all kinds of people at this university? She chose to do this by 'thinking by doing' and 'hands-on' methods. In doing so, a space opened for new ideas, initiatives and (slow but steady) paradigm shifts or unexpected ways forwards.

ORGANISED CONFUSION

Or: "the Artistic Toilet Manifesto"

This toilet is a safe space for new, creative, unheard-of ideas

Be bold, just like this font.

Impact IMPACT by making an IMPACT

(and overthrow the patriarchy while we're at it)

Strategic chaos exists. It can break through walls of institutionalized power structures.

unlearn! 'exnovate!'

YES!

Go into the sun on those rare days that it's out. Unless it is 30 degrees, that's too much, really.

"If you want to excel in a specific way, you can't always comply to the rules of the system"

De-sign it Act on it

What if...?

DIT is getting there!

ask dumb questions

"The University of the Future requires us to change the way we move, the pace, more than changing lanes. Accepting pains, that will come with growth, mindset - sidestep, paving ways, building roads, bridging space. [...] It goes beyond 'Next Generation science fiction'. So... Let us go boldly where no man has gone before. Because today we have shaped a future - that soon will be yours." - Colin Giroth

"Anything worth doing good takes a little chaos." - bassist of the Red Hot Chili Peppers

"To be the Future University: do we really need these buildings and walls?" - Colin Giroth

"Nike always says 'just do it' and I don't like their shoes but I do love that quote."

"There's a whole world beyond the office chair."

"If not now, then never (press)"

"A bit like the joker at the king's court"

"All academic journals became non-profits? University was accessible for all, regardless of somebody's background or previous education? 'disruption' was part of the EUR strategy 2025?"

"What about a Ministry of Degradation?"

"(Kees Doort said that, not me)"

"Like: why did we never put anything on the toilet walls before?"

"Try it out on a small scale, even when you're unsure if it makes any sense. It will take form in the act of doing."

Ecotones

2023

The Ecotones project proposed seven propositions for transforming universities using ecological metaphors. It focused on transitional spaces within academic institutions that foster new knowledge and practices. The aim was to create alternative methodologies and organizational structures for societal change.

[Learn more about Ecotones here](#)

DIT Day 2024: How to Transform a University

2024

How can universities undergo transformation to better address societal needs? The day shared insights from transformative organizations and discussed practical strategies for implementing transformative research and initiatives. It aimed at inspiring participants to rethink how universities can evolve to become more responsive to contemporary challenges.

Collaborative Ethics in Transformative Research

2024

In collaboration with McGill University, the research examined ethical dilemmas faced by transformative researchers and the role that ethical review boards can play in helping to address those.

Article: [Neither right nor wrong? Ethics of collaboration in transformative research for sustainable futures](#)

2024

Education Pilot: Sustainability for Education

2024

This pilot aimed at integrating sustainability into education activities in collaboration with various EUR schools (RSM, ESL, ESSB and ESE), DIT and Impact at the Core. The program classified sustainability topics, created a dedicated course, and provided staff training. It aligned with EUR's Climate Emergency Declaration to promote sustainability education.

Transition Ateliers

2024

The ateliers explored and implemented creative practices to accelerate societal transitions. Transition ateliers made radical alternatives visible and actionable by engaging communities in creative problem-solving. The goal was to mobilize broader societal participation in sustainability efforts.

Communicating about Transforming Research and Education

2024

This initiative aimed to empower the EUR community to drive sustainable change through communication about sustainability. DIT provided case studies, methods, and tools to spread knowledge about transformative practices

Blog Series: [Transformative Research Methods](#)

Summer School: Transformative Research Unlocked

2024

DIT collaborated with the Sustainability Transitions Network and specifically its early career researcher network (NEST), as well as DRIFT to organize a week-long Summer School on transformative research methods. Participants learned about different research methods for sustainability transitions research and reflected on their roles as transformative researchers.

[Read more about the Summer School](#)

Sustainability Summit

2024

A summit for students and staff from Dutch universities to discuss the role of academia in fostering a just and sustainable society. It provided a collaborative space for the more than 300 participants to exchange ideas and strategies for integrating sustainability into education, research, and institutional practices. It aimed to build a unified movement within Dutch academia focused on addressing climate and societal challenges through education and collaboration.

[Read more of the Summit Results](#)

Conference Report:
[Sustainability Summit 2024](#)

Consulting as an academic practice

2024

In collaboration with DRIFT and the Intersectoral School of Governance Baden-Württemberg (ISoG BW), Germany, this research explored the various roles that emerge in the transdisciplinary spectrum between scientific research, consulting and action-oriented research.

[Read more about the project](#)

The Bildung Climate School

2024

The Bildung Climate School (BCS) was a unique nine-week program offering students across different school paths ranging from MBO, HBO and WO an interdisciplinary training on climate resilience. It combined philosophy and physical activities to teach climate action skills and develop a new generation of climate-conscious professionals. DIT also engaged in creating a consortium and find follow-up funding for the BCS.

Article: [Students 'of all levels' learn how to deal with climate change challenges through dance and philosophy](#)

Sustainability Narratives as Tools for Transformative Research

2024

This project examined sustainability narratives and strategies across EUR (faculties, departments, associations) from the perspective of communications professionals as translators of those into action with a view to mapping out current practices and scoping what is needed to develop a university-wide systems perspective to communication for sustainability transformations.