

RESEARCH REVIEW
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION
2014-2019

ONDERZOEKERIJ

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Preface

This review has been a pleasure to undertake, despite the various constraints, difficulties and innovations necessitated on the part of the universities and their stakeholders and by the review panel due to the coronavirus pandemic. It is an immense privilege to read about and talk over the achievements of Dutch departments and institutes of public administration, given the prominent position of Dutch theory and empirical work in this field internationally. Furthermore, in a period of multiple concurrent changes in society and in academic research, it has been stimulating and thought-provoking to hear how these groups of academics, across all stages of their careers, are thinking about and tackling the focus, the quality, the contribution, the societal relevance, the integrity and the openness of research.

The review team was appointed to carry out a review of the work and contribution of four university groups focused on (but going beyond, through inter-disciplinary collaboration) public administration. The review team consisted of five professors from five different countries (and therefore public administration traditions) along with an early career researcher with recent experience of undertaking a PhD. This team, spanning different countries, cultures, sub-disciplines and career stages gave the team a broad base from which to reflect on and analyse on the review materials. The panel was appointed by the boards of the four participating universities.

The review period spanned from 2014-2019 and covered four university departments or institutes: Leiden University, Utrecht University, Erasmus University Rotterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The panel drew on a self-assessment report from each university. In addition, there was a series of meetings with academics, managers, PhD candidates and societal partners at each university. Originally, the plan had been to spend a day at each university, but the coronavirus pandemic precluded travel and meeting up, so instead the panel “met” the various groups through online video conferencing.

The panel prepared very carefully and extensively for the online meetings so that time could be used as productively as possible, even with the inherent restrictions created by digital engagement. Everyone in those meetings worked hard to make sure we used the medium to the very best extent we could. We are very grateful to all for holding some meetings outside normal office hours in order to accommodate different time zones around the world. We are also very appreciative of the huge amount of work from the universities in creating complex and detailed self-assessment reports and preparing for the “visits” when simultaneously having to adapt to new coronavirus restrictions and opportunities for research, and looking after the wellbeing of staff.

Warm thanks are also due to Esther Poort, who has unfailingly and professionally supported the panel’s preparations, actions during visits and preparation of the report. Writing up notes after hours of online meetings was very tiring, but Esther worked efficiently and quickly and with prodigious knowledge of regulations and procedures to continually provide the panel with the information and general support they needed.

The coronavirus pandemic has created major disruptions around the globe and across swathes of society, and this is covered in more general remarks in the next chapter. Its effects are not just immediate (changing research plans, opening new research opportunities, stakeholders seeking advice from public administration experts) but will be longer-term. Public administration, with its interests in how society is governed, the outcomes in terms of public value, and the normative aspects of creating a fair and just society, can be at the forefront of research, teaching and societal relevance as new challenges are noticed, analysed, interpreted



and acted upon. We can see that these departments/institutes are each playing their part with seriousness, expertise and innovation. The world must be immensely grateful for the role they are playing in Dutch universities.

The goals of the review are to contribute to the improvement of the quality of research and to provide accountability for the use of public money for the research organisation's board, funding bodies, the government and society at large. We hope that our comments on each institute and programme will be useful, in our role both as quality reviewers and as 'critical friends' to aid development for the future. We hope the four universities go from strength to strength in their public administration research.

Jean Hartley

Chair of the Committee, with

Peter Munk Christiansen, Kirk Emerson, Ellen Fobé, Sabine Kuhlmann, and Wouter Van Dooren
Assessment committee members.



1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of reference for the assessment

The quality assessment of research in Public Administration is carried out in the context of the Standard Evaluation Protocol For Public Research Organisations by the Association of Universities in The Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO), and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW).

The Committee was asked to assess the scientific quality and the relevance and utility to society of the research conducted by four universities in the reference period 2014-2019, as well as its strategic targets and the extent to which it is equipped to achieve them.

Accordingly, three main criteria are considered in the assessment: research quality, relevance to society, and viability. In addition, the assessment considers three further aspects: the PhD training programme, research integrity and diversity.

This report describes findings, conclusions and recommendations of this external assessment of the research in Public Administration.

1.2 The Review Committee

The Boards of the four participating universities appointed the following members of the Committee for the research review:

- Prof. Jean Hartley – The Open University UK (chair)
- Prof. Sabine Kuhlmann – University of Potsdam
- Prof. Peter Munk Christiansen – Aarhus University
- Prof. Wouter Van Dooren – Universiteit van Antwerpen
- Prof. Kirk Emerson – University of Arizona
- Dr. Ellen Fobé (recently completed PhD) University of Leuven

The Boards of the participating universities appointed drs. Esther Poort of De Onderzoekerij as the Committee secretary. All members of the Committee signed a declaration and disclosure form to ensure that the Committee members made their judgements without bias, personal preference or personal interest, and that the judgment was made without undue influence from the institutes or stakeholders.

1.3 Procedures followed by the Committee

Prior to the site visit, the Committee reviewed detailed documentation comprising: The Self-assessment report of the institutes including appendices, the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2015-2021 and the document “Public Administration and Organisation Studies in the Netherlands”. In addition, the Committee studied previous assessment reports. They met online on several occasions to discuss these reports and to prepare for the online visits.

The Committee proceeded according to the SEP. The assessment was based on the documentation provided by the institutes and the interviews with the management, a selection of researchers of the institute, PhD candidates, and stakeholders. The interviews took place between November 16 and November 20 (see Appendix A).

The Committee held further online meetings to discuss its assessments, including the quantitative rating of each programme according to the SEP criteria. This was the element of



the review that the committee were least satisfied with, finding the range of potential scores too narrow to reflect the programmes' contribution. However, it is noted that this is the last time that the SEP will include such quantitative ratings.

Based on the preliminary assessments and notes taken during the interviews, the committee members wrote an assessment of the programme for which they had been appointed as first reviewer. The second reviewer verified and added to this assessment after which the secretary used it for the report. The chair wrote the general remarks on the review on Dutch Public Administration. The total draft report was verified and added to by the committee before being presented to the programmes concerned for factual corrections and comments. The comments were reviewed by the secretary and incorporated in the final report in close consultation with the chair and other committee members. The final report was presented to the Boards of the Universities.



2. General observations and recommendations

General observations and recommendations

The Review Committee discerned some general themes across the four universities and in this section some of those themes are explored.

The dynamic quality of Dutch public administration research

The academic field of public administration in the Netherlands has a well-deserved international reputation – for its quality, its productivity and for its pioneering of new frontiers in public administration theory, empirical research and methodologies. This is exemplified in the self-assessment reports of the research groups¹ of the four universities reviewed, and in the discussions with the various stakeholders as part of the online “visits” made to each institution. Work from the four institutions has shaped debates, provided theory and evidence, shown societal impact, and reaped awards and accolades in several sub-fields of public administration. It has been a resource to many ministries, local authorities, public services and civil society groups during the coronavirus pandemic, which is a stress test of the value of the work not only academically but in terms of social relevance and impact.

Yet, the context is not static, nor are research activities and an emerging theme is the more varied ways in which quality is assessed. The traditional quality indicators are still in place and are still critically important – articles in academic peer-reviewed journals, increasingly in English and with an international readership, and with the higher-ranked journals being deployed as indicators of higher quality in terms of academic rigour. Academic books from quality publishers are still also valued. Productivity is partly assessed in terms of goals for academic staff in relation to number and contribution of publications per year, as well as total number and range of academic articles. There is a detectable change, though, in terms of viewing quality not quantity of publications as key in academic goals. Bibliometric assessment (which was never originally intended to be a measure of academic quality) is still present but the h index is viewed more sceptically as a blunt indicator. The Shanghai index is mentioned by some universities, but also with a recognition that its criteria are solely quantitative.

It is interesting that there is greater reliance on a wider range of indicators, even within academic publishing. These include shaping a sub-field, participating in debates within journals, selecting the best journal for the contribution regardless of its status, pioneering and refining new methodologies, gaining a reputation for academic contribution in a field, intellectual innovation, and peer recognition through awards and marks of distinction. This speaks of an academic community in the field and is encouraging.

Quality is also viewed more widely than academic outputs. Relevance for societal actors has become more prominent and was a key theme in all four universities. Being useful to stakeholders while maintaining independence, helping them frame and understand problems or look at them in different ways were highly valued services, as was providing toolkits or information to tackle problems. Having a direct impact on public policy, public service practices, and citizens and democracy was a highly prized indicator of quality, as were long-term collaborations and partnerships with stakeholders to understand societal challenges. This

¹ In this chapter ‘research group’ is used as a common denominator for research group, institute and research programme.



was reciprocated by the stakeholders with whom we spoke. This is a richer approach to thinking about quality than cataloguing or counting the number of reports or media interventions.

Broader again was the sense of quality based on undertaking academic research to address societal challenges (i.e. beyond particular stakeholders). This was seen to require (very often) inter-disciplinary research, collaborating with a range of disciplines beyond those traditionally associated with public administration – such as medicine and health care, psychology, data sciences, computer science and more. All four research groups commented that they were doing much more inter-disciplinary research than in the past. There was a sense that this took them to the frontiers of public administration by collaborating in substantial ways with other disciplines with their different theories, philosophies of knowledge and methodologies, other parts of the university, with new and emerging topics, and different funding sources. There was a lot of excitement and interest conveyed, at all academic levels, in this liminal work.

Quality was also sought through cultures and practices in the PA academic community, in both regular and ad hoc ways such as through team discussions about quality, being a critical friend to the work of others, thinking about ethics and data integrity, and using the team to uphold, explore and critique standards, in PhD research days, in seminars about maintaining independence while working with stakeholders, in respecting good questions about theory and method. Culture is a very important aspect of quality assurance, as is known from research, so it is very encouraging to see these implicit norms. From our discussions, they seemed to be widely shared across levels in the academic hierarchy.

Open science and data integrity were also processes to support high quality research processes and outputs and these were widely mentioned.

There was a greater reliance overall on third stream funding compared with second stream funding in three of the four research groups, and a shift over the assessment period in this direction. The value attached to the two streams appears to have changed, in that many researchers are confident that both rigour and relevance can be pursued through third stream funding, particularly where long-term collaboration occurs. Quality appears to be less about the source of the funding and more about what academic outputs can be achieved from the funding, regardless of source. Some universities also have consultancy arms or activities, which they functionally separate from third stream funding likely to result in academic outputs. This more purpose-driven approach to funding shows that rigour and relevance can be achieved through third stream funding. The main problem seems to be its effects on workload planning.

Finally, a number of universities mentioned new supports for quality processes including introducing data stewards and ethics committees aiming to create an open space to discuss dilemmas rather than being a hurdle to overcome, as well as staff running living labs or governance labs, which gave more time for researchers to engage in the scientific work.

This is consistent with the national publication² which states that the assessment of quality is changing: *“The assessment of academics will see a reduced emphasis on quantitative results (such as number of publications) and a greater emphasis on quality, content, scientific integrity, creativity, contribution to science, academia and/or society, and acknowledgement of the academic’s specific profile and domain(s) in which the academic is active.”*

So, the trend to greater pluralism coupled with an interest in quality processes and quality outcomes not solely quality outputs is to be welcomed, as PA research endeavours become

²VSNU et al *Room for everyone’s talent: Towards a new balance in recognising and rewarding academics*

richer, more sustainable, more connected to society and its concerns and challenges, and more focused on ideas and practices, evidence and intellectual matters, not just well-crafted publications in particular journals.

However, the Review Committee was also interested in the trade-offs which may be needed, now or in the future, to handle the increasing range and depth of quality. Inter-disciplinary research may involve publishing in journals outside the PA field, with different epistemological norms and varied criteria about what constitutes quality research. How will PA programmes keep track of quality across very diverse fields of inter-disciplinary research?

The increasing pluralism of quality criteria raises questions about which aspects of quality will be predominant in particular contexts. For example, researchers told us that they are confident that both rigour and relevance can be pursued, and there are many examples in the self-assessment reports of where this was the case – high quality research which has societal relevance. However, there can sometimes be trade-offs created by political, organisational, financial, or scientific pressures, and it would be interesting to see the universities reflect on when there can be alignment and how it is achieved, and when one quality criteria rather than both is important and how that is achieved.

Reflection on these trade-offs is already happening and we heard of several examples such as the new, nationally-derived differentiated career pathways (Room for everyone's talent) which may help with this, by enabling quality to be assessed across many criteria at the collective level. In addition, researchers told the committee that they did not have hard and fast rules about whether to collaborate in an inter-disciplinary team or with societal stakeholders and that they would either withdraw or discontinue future collaboration if it did not prove intellectually interesting, or compromised independence or did not fit longer-term intellectual themes. Seminars, workshops and team meetings helped to tease out the value of particular strategies or tactics. So, reflexivity and experimentation are important themes.

While synergies and tradeoffs were challenges more experienced researchers were comfortable with, there is room for helping early career researchers to analyse and manage these different pressures to achieve pluralistic quality.

Ultimately, in a society which is rapidly changing, with major societal challenges locally, nationally and globally, how quality is assessed in terms of rigour and relevance may well change over time. We were pleased to see the amount of reflection and discussion taking place about quality and urge that this continues, reflecting the dynamic nature of quality in a dynamic society.

The changing landscape of PA research

What is public administration research today? It is a field which is changing intellectually. It has always, from its origins about 70 years ago, been a multi-disciplinary field (initially, law, economics, political science, organisation studies) with a focus on state policy, practices and organisations. Now the greater inter-disciplinarity means a wider set of relevant disciplines and a much wider focus, on matters of public interest rather than only the state sector. This is a strong theme, variously expressed among the research groups as being about public purpose, the creation of public value, the quality of governance in society and about public matters. This is about what makes for a good society – a question which may be tested in the years following this coronavirus pandemic and other societal challenges which humanity faces.

Senior and experienced researchers said they were at home with this increasingly varied and wider landscape of PA. They reported that they could navigate the complexities of



heterogeneous disciplines, perspectives, and frameworks, because they had a discipline of origin, which could act as a kind of anchor for their intellectual endeavours, enabling them to ride out the choppy waters of inter-disciplinarity. The early career researchers did not have that grounding and in the words of one self-assessment report but relevant to all, they found it hard to navigate the “complex fragmented landscape” of the field. They were attracted and stimulated by inter-disciplinarity and by working with societal partners, but they reported sometimes being perplexed and uncertain. Some praised the coaching and support they got from supervisors but others felt rather alone and sometimes unwilling to approach their supervisor with questions if it was felt that the supervisor was already very busy.

A question for the future is how to help early-career researchers to develop mental models of the growing and complex field, and to identify their own current and future place within it. This may be particularly important during the coronavirus pandemic and what will be its aftermath, when researchers are less connected informally with their academic community than in the past. Passing on tacit knowledge in new and existing ways and guiding and explaining focus will become increasingly important, the review committee believes.

Interestingly, this confusion about the field and the research programme was also expressed by some of the stakeholders encountered in the assessment interviews. Most had a single or major point of contact into the university PA programme and expressed some uncertainty or confusion as to who else was working on what topics and how this might be beneficial to their own organisation. Those who had studied at the university or who had long-standing connection seemed to be in a somewhat better position, though still unclear about how to access the best people for particular collaborations. They had liked the short videos, shot for the Review Committee, about the programmes, and felt that a similar venture would be useful for stakeholders and potential stakeholders. One university is already in the process of creating an “institutional map” for stakeholders.

Creating intellectual coherence from the now more varied field will be important as research groups prepare their strategies for the next research period. This could be intellectually exciting and organisationally rewarding as well as clarifying for societal partners.

Time for research – thinking systemically

The focus of the Review Committee was on research. However, one important contextual factor having a major impact on the viability of research was the funding, organisation and staffing of teaching. All research groups mentioned this, in different ways and with different ways to try to find solutions. Teaching loads have increased over the years it was reported, and this has created pressures on research time. In some places, research time has been chipped away, either formally in terms of proportion of time available for research or informally due to the complexity of teaching offerings. In addition, the coronavirus pandemic has created additional pressures due to having to move most teaching online, which has required the reinvention or repurposing of earlier materials. In a sense, everyone has had to create, prepare and teach new courses in 2020 because of the pandemic. Teaching is an essential aspect of the social mission of universities, with a key societal impact being well-educated graduates, so this work cannot be stunted. Considering how to enable both teaching and research to flourish is essential.

All universities were finding imaginative ways to redesign, restructure or refinance courses so that funding more closely followed student numbers or to create economies of scale and scope so that the teaching pressures on researchers were eased somewhat. This is a matter



which may need considerable attention if research time is not to be further attenuated over time. It is clearly a university and faculty matter, and not only a programme matter.

Early career researchers appreciated having teaching-free blocks of time in which they can progress research, though this was not available to everyone.

Some also commented to us that it was important to ensure that labs (e.g. governance lab, living labs) were sufficiently funded and staffed so that researchers can use these efficiently.

Some institutions were able to ensure that time was made available specifically to write grant applications, but others were not able to do so.

Research clusters

There seems to be an emerging shift away from the traditional professorial chair system where research was organised around a particular professor, to research clusters and groups, organised intellectually. Full professors are still influential in the scoping and mobilising of the research grouping, but in all four universities there was a stated emphasis on “team science” with the team created around the research project rather than necessarily an academic chair. All universities commented on the benefits of taking a team science approach, to create intellectual stimulation, to encompass multiple disciplinary perspectives and expertise, to enable a range of talents and skills in the project, and to onboard less experienced researchers. The team might also include collaborators from policy and practice, for example in the design stage, and sometimes in the co-production of research. Most early career researchers said they enjoyed working in teams (though not all did) and they enjoyed the opportunities to work across teams.

What may be emerging is a network approach to research projects as opposed to a strictly hierarchical approach and it may mean that projects and even programmes are more fluid than in the past, as researchers work across boundaries, groups and disciplines more, and less in their chair group. This is combined with greater collaborative working outside the department, the discipline and with societal partners, so that the programme is rich and complex. This raises a question about the importance of having a programme of research. Is this so that funds can be accessed from the university and beyond? Or to create intellectual reputation? Or to organise researchers in ways which enable them to be connected and productive? Is a programme a means of organising before the fact or a rhetoric to explain activities after the fact?

Workloads and career pathways

The shift to a more pluralistic view of quality, along with more inter-disciplinary work and an interest in societal relevance (as well as higher teaching demands) has increased the workload of researchers. This is not quantified in the assessment reports, indeed may not be quantifiable, but a wide range of researchers said that pressures to try to perform in all areas were sometimes intense and were hard to manage. The pressures to publish academically have not gone away, and now there are further quality criteria to try to meet (societal impact notably).

Junior staff raise the most concerns about this, but there was also a concern that academics are often high achievers and can be their own worst enemies in trying to ‘have it all’. While not mentioned directly, workload pressures can be particularly hard for parents with young



children and those who may have less confidence or fewer networks to help them to navigate competing pressures and deadlines, so diversity and inclusion may be affected.

The emphasis on acquiring third stream funding can add to these pressures, due to its sometimes being short-term and with shorter lead times. A number of researchers indicated that they were not clear about when ‘teaching buy-out’ was possible, and that the time scales for third stream research and teaching were sometimes incompatible or created pressures. There is an argument that greater clarity in expectations for younger researchers in particular would be helpful.

The widening expectations about high performance in general have led to all the four research groups signing up to the “recognise and reward” national initiative, which promotes the idea of differential career pathways for academics, so that they do not have to excel in all areas in order to gain promotion. This is widely welcomed, though will take some time to bring in and there is work to do to clarify the criteria being used (and being seen to be used) by each institution. Some of the early career staff reported being unclear about the criteria and also uncertain about whether it will be fully applied fairly. So transparency about the use of the new criteria is particularly important. Job insecurity may well amplify a sense of uncertainty about the criteria and concerns about whether it is being applied in a fair way. Such concerns may increase with future uncertainties due to coronavirus, so this is an area to which management may wish to pay particular attention.

Several early career researchers commented very favourably on having supervisors who mentored and coached them. Ensuring that more senior staff are aware of and sensitive to the pressures as experienced by junior staff will help them to navigate these emerging career pathways. It has been broadly recognized that COVID-19 has disproportionately affected the productivity of younger faculty with families and young children at home.

In all institutions, the formal teaching/research ratio for established staff was between 70/30 to 60/40 (though with different opportunities for buyout from external funding in different research groups). There has been some erosion from ratios more favourable to research over time, and some concerns were voiced about how to protect staff from further erosion of this protected research time. Some early career researchers were shielded from the full impact of teaching, which was beneficial to their establishing themselves in a research field, though this was not available to all.

Diversity and inclusion

It is encouraging to see so many universities talk and act not only about diversity but also inclusion. Diversity remains an issue which the programmes are actively addressing. Gender ratios are still disadvantageous to women in both equity terms and in terms of providing role models for aspiring academics. Some recent and planned appointments are helping to rebalance the ratios to some extent and there is encouraging evidence of research groups overcoming, in some universities, a declining ratio with higher academic positions. Some universities run courses for women academics which is helpful. Workloads do not help parents of young children, of whatever gender.

Data on black and minority ethnic (BAME) researchers was not given, though all research groups recognised this was an area in need of attention. They were also concerned about opportunities for first generation migrants and residents, which is encouraging.

There was a noticeable interest in inclusion. Achieving diversity through balanced ratios among students, staff or researchers is not sufficient. A programme’s organisational culture



and practices need to assure that people from all backgrounds feel safe, included, and their individual talents and contributions respected. It was recognised that inclusion requires more and continuous conversation. We suggest that this topic be kept under regular review.

Diversity and inclusion for future PA researchers will depend, longer-term, on a broader pipeline from undergraduate students (and even before that educationally), so programs should be exploring ways to enhance interest in PA among younger students. PA research groups can contribute to the wider goals of diversity and inclusion across their universities and not only in the research domain.

There may be an emerging aspect of diversity and inclusion to consider in the future, as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The pandemic has had a differential effect on those with school age children compared with those who do not (the former having to manage multiple demands while working from home while the latter may have more time to work with less commuting). In addition, in the near future we may see differences according to whether people who have had Covid-19 suffer from “long Covid” with ongoing symptoms and fatigue or whether they fully recover. Younger staff may have to work in cramped living conditions compared with older staff with more space. Those more established in their careers may have wider intellectual and friendship networks to draw on while unable to meet up face-to-face while early career staff may feel more isolated or uncertain. All these may affect how much time a researcher has to undertake research, feel confident and publish.

Strategy for the future

Each programme completed a SWOT analysis as part of their self-assessment report.

The Review Committee noticed that in most of the reports these analyses were not explored in any detail in textual analysis, largely being bullet points. How far does the SWOT analysis inform the future strategy?

All research groups identified pressures on the education budget in the Netherlands, with the prospect of budget cuts and/or greater competition for resources. Given the pre-eminent position and reputation of Dutch public administration internationally, this is a grave concern.

The coronavirus pandemic has created an extraordinary year for societies across the globe. All of the research groups are to be commended for adapting so well to the challenges and constraints imposed by the pandemic. Effects are being seen not only on research but on economics, politics, society, communities, trust in government, mental health and wellbeing and much more. Some argue that the current pandemic is merely a herald of further climate change pressures to come. The need for public administration research to help to understand and address these pressures is considerable and vital, if societies are to respond, recover and redesign. The assumption of democratic grounding to public administration structures, processes and sources of collaboration cannot be taken for granted. This is arguably very much the time for public administration research to address societal problems, and to keep reflecting on and articulating what constitutes a good society. It is the time for interdisciplinary research, working with hard sciences, and with a range of other disciplines.

The pandemic and its consequences create opportunities as well as problems for public administration research. There is further thinking and analysis to be undertaken, both within programmes and also collaboratively across Dutch universities, if public administration is going to contribute to the resilience of society. This is no small task, but the rich diversity of expertise, and experience in collaboration with societal stakeholders, with normative as well as intellectual questions, which we have seen in these four programmes will aid that adaptation.



Strategy will need to become a continuous process not a planning activity undertaken at the interval of a few years due to the volatile and dynamic nature of changes in society.



3. Institute of Public Administration, Leiden University

3.1 Quantitative assessment

The Committee assessed the quality, societal relevance and viability of The Institute of Public Administration of Leiden University both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its PhD programme, research integrity and diversity are assessed qualitatively. For the quantitative assessment a four-point scale is used, according to the standard evaluation protocol 2015-2021. The explanation of the criteria underlying the scores can be found in appendix C. The qualitative assessment of the Institute can be found in the next sections.

Given the standards laid down in the SEP, the Committee has awarded the following scores to the Institute:

Research quality:	2
Relevance to society:	1
Viability:	1

3.2 Organisation, strategy and targets

Within its field, the Leiden Institute of Public Administration is among the largest and most experienced Dutch academic institutes of research and teaching in PA. It celebrated its 35th anniversary in 2019. According to the present research program from 2017, which is “Governance in an interdependent world: responding to societal challenges and creating public value”, the Institute covers the following fields: 1) public policy, 2) public management, 3) European governance, 4) international governance, and 5) historical and normative perspectives on public administration.

Based on these pillars, the Institute also engages in interdisciplinary cooperation with other institutes and stakeholders in order to deal with complex societal problems. The Institute refers to four of Leiden University’s strategic research programs: 1) artificial intelligence and digitalization, 2) sustainability, 3) population health, and 4) citizenship, migration and global transformations.

Part of the Institute’s vision is to be a *“a leader in the academic field of public administration and speaks to the international research community as well as to society and practice”*. This is unpacked in the Institute’s mission in the following way: *“The Institute of Public administration pursues excellent, independent scientific research that contributes to knowledge accumulation and innovation in the field of public administration and that produces knowledge of societal relevance and impact (Including its ‘The Hague mission’). The institute builds on the foundations of the discipline of public administration as well as explores the innovative potential of interdisciplinary research.”* In other words, the Institute aims for scientific excellence and rigour at the same time as societal relevance.

The Institute values theoretical as well as methodological pluralism and covers a broad range of theories, approaches, and methodologies, including normative perspectives on public administration. The Institute has a core focus on central government and administration, decision-making and stakeholders, and management and leadership of public organisations.

In 2012 the Institute moved physically to The Hague in order to benefit from the closeness to the national government and international bodies of political and administrative centres there. In 2017, the security studies group separated from the Institute. The Institute cooperates



closely with the City of the Hague, and four professorships are presently funded by societal partners.

The Institute undertakes its research in close collaboration with scholars around the world, and it holds active memberships in national and international research networks.

3.3 Research quality

In terms of scientific outputs in books and journals, the Institute is prolific. Bibliometric data shows a high and growing number of research outlets. From 2014 to 2019, the number of refereed non-Dutch articles doubled, while growth in other types of outlet was somewhat less. The number of annual Dutch academic publications oscillated between 2 and 24. The number of fte staff members also grew in the period, from almost 13 in 2014 to close to 24 in 2019.

Non-Dutch articles appear in a variety of outlets, including highly respected high-impact journals within Public Administration, Political Science, and other closely related fields. There are fewer articles in the absolute top-journals of Public Administration and Political Science such as *American Political Science Review* or *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* (JPART). However, many are in the next layer of top journals which is excellent. The bibliometric analyses reveal well-cited journal articles. For example, the fact that 17.6 % of the Institute's publications are among the 10 % most cited in their field is a strong indicator of high-quality research and contributions to the development of quality research.

With a broad portfolio of articles within the various fields and topics studied, the Institute contributes to scholarly development and discussions within many fields and often in a highly qualified, varied, original, and constructive way. Most output corresponds and engages with research going on around the world, i.e. the Institute is part of the mainstream scientific agenda within the fields covered. The Institute consequently contributes to scholarly and scientific developments in many and varied fields and with a significant impact. This includes all subject areas the Institute is involved in: Public policy, including interest group studies, public management and leadership, European and international governance, and historical and normative perspectives on public administration and management.

Some of the senior staff are among the most prominent international scholars within the field, and many of the junior staff appear very qualified. The Institute has increased its international recognition in recent years. In 2017, the Institute was rated #43 in the world on the Shanghai listing. In 2020, the Institute has climbed to position #16. This is a quite remarkable progress in a few years. The Institute's faculty has received a number of prizes and awards. This includes best article prizes from very good journals such as *Public Administration*, *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, *Policy Sciences*, and *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*. To this comes best paper prizes from a number of conferences such as IRSPM and the Academy of Management Annual Conference.

The Institute's conceptualization of research quality is broader than that captured by bibliometric measures of publications in scientific journals. Throughout the Institute, societal impact is stressed when different staff groups were asked to assess the Institute's conception of scientific quality. In short, scientific quality is rigor and relevance. Adding societal impact to the concept of scientific quality is not fully realised yet because of the lack of precise measures on societal impact (see further the section below on societal relevance).

77 % (2019) of the Institute's funding is direct, so-called first-stream funding, down from 86 % in 2014. Research grants in the second stream, make up 12 % of the 2019 budget (10 % in 2014), while third stream funding is 6 % (contract research) and 5 % (other), compared to 4



and 0 % in 2014. Second stream funding includes one ERC Starting Grant, some prestigious NWO grants (Veni, Vidi) and some funding from the Horizon 2020 program. In the light of the Institute's many excellent young scholars and the Institute's ambitions, the Institute could consider investing more in increasing second stream funding from prestigious funding bodies such as the European Research Council and the NWO (see also the section on viability below.)

3.4 Societal relevance

Societal impact and relevance have increasingly become part of the Institute's conception of quality research. The concept of societal relevance and impact is broad and inclusive. Impact implies (1) to help policymakers improve their existing policy responses, (2) to establish an issue as a policy problem, and (3) to change the current discourse about a policy problem.

Creation of societal impact is an explicit part of the Institute's vision and mission. Societal impact was mentioned several times in the discussions with all the groups interviewed. Societal relevance and impact have a quite significant presence in the mind-set of staff, and is likely to increase over time. Societal impact affects CVs since it is allegedly part of hiring decisions or will be so in the future. Likewise, societal impact increasingly affects research projects and research questions, academic and other collaborators and other activities at the Institute as witnessed for instance by the activities of the Leiden Leadership Centre.

The output produced as part of the Institute's activities to create societal relevance are many. For a university department, publications are a core output. The Leiden Institute produces a significant number of academic, professional, and popular publications, in total 179 over the years 2014-2019. This is produced by a staff around 13 in 2014 increased to almost 24 in 2019. The publication list has a number of publications which focus on improving existing policies, establishing a policy problem, and contributing to changing the societal discourse and practices. Other direct outputs are public lectures and blog entries. Societal relevance is also pursued through special professorships and PhD candidates sponsored by public or private partners, research projects financed by external sponsors or research projects performed as co-production with external partners, organizer of or contributing to conferences, workshops or meetings with public and private collaborators. The Leiden Leadership Centre is closely involved with practitioners and is in this way a prominent example of the creation of societal value.

One of the motivations for the move to the Hague was to establish closer collaboration with central government actors of different kinds and also actors related to EU and other international relations. The move is reported to be a success. Relocating to the Hague is mentioned as one of the opportunities in the SWOT analysis because it gives access to knowledge and improved opportunities to transfer knowledge to societal actors. The SWOT analysis at the same time acknowledge that the complexity of the landscape of social partners requires considerable effort from staff members.

The interviews with the stakeholders revealed a close cooperation between public and private actors external to the Institute on research projects inclusive of externally funded PhD candidates and professors.

The stakeholders emphasized that they cooperate with the Leiden Institute because it accommodated their specific interests, and they believe the Institute to be particularly relevant for them compared to other Dutch universities. Within their respective fields, the stakeholders find cooperation mutual in the sense that the initiative is taken from the Institute as well as from the societal partners. There are examples of very close and engaging cooperation, such as publishing a book with academics as well as practitioners as authors. The



stakeholders are aware of the importance of protecting the independence on the Institute. “Independence is key”, as one of the stakeholders said. Asked about areas where cooperation could be improved, one stakeholder mentioned that the university’s back office sometimes appears to lack capabilities to support cooperation, e.g., organizing and hosting events.

The Leiden Institute of Public Administration has taken many initiatives and reports many activities aimed at increasing the societal impact of its research. There is no simple way to measure the societal impact of research, and there is no reason to believe that this will ever be possible in a precise way. This, however, should not keep the Leiden Institute away from working to further develop measures of societal impact.

3.5 Viability

The Leiden Institute in many respects appears to be a viable Institute. It has an engaged staff-group, it has shown the capacity to significantly grow during the latter years, it has a strong reputation, it delivers quality research, has a strong record of external funding in the second stream, although less in the third stream, and it has strong connections with Dutch and international universities and the surrounding society. The Institute also appears to be an open and flexible organisation ready for adjustment to changing external conditions. Nevertheless, there are issues that the Institute is advised to consider for the future such as research strategy, future finances and talent management.

The Institute appears to be very aware of future challenges. It has recently changed one of the basic organizing elements of the department by dissolving the chair groups and transforming them into theme groups. The theme groups are believed to improve the ability to cope with some of the developments in the public sector such as changing political decision-making processes, the complexity of public sector organisations, rapid technological change, and more active citizens and citizen groups. The Institute anticipates a strengthened focus on societal challenges such as four of the themes of Leiden University’s strategic research plan: artificial intelligence, sustainability, population health, and global migration. The institute is encouraged to hold open discussions on the possible trade-offs involved in an increasing focus on interdisciplinary research.

Direct government funding is expected to shrink due to the Covid-19 pandemic. It is possible that external funding could mitigate and even surpass predicted cuts. For the future the Institute primarily appears to aim for increased contract research, which currently is at a relatively modest level. Of course, external funding comes at price: Good proposals take time, lots of time. If many departments react to fiscal austerity by increasing application activities, success rates will go down, and may put increasing stress on staff. Careful planning and support are necessary if the Institute is to increase the level of external funding.

A university department’s most important asset is its staff. Consequently, hiring and promotion are among the most important decisions to take in order to sustain long term viability. The Leiden Institute appear to have a very talented and relatively young staff group. The promotion system is a “moving target” as it was put by one of the young staff members. Increasingly, promotion is to be based on more varied pathways than previously - of teaching, administration, societal impact of research, and of course traditional scientific publication record. However, so far the younger academics say that a traditional research quality conception is still the most important criterion. This implies that hiring and promotion are not perceived to be fully transparent. Hiring and promotion ambiguity/insecurity is recognized as an issue by senior staff and senior management. In addition, a new hiring and promotion scheme is being promoted top down at Leiden University. It is important that the Institute on



an ongoing basis discusses and disseminates the concept of research quality in order to foster transparency and fairness for young researchers, not least in a situation, due to the age profile, where not all young researchers can expect promotion.

3.6 PhD programme

During the review period, the number of PhD candidates within the research staff increased from 10 in 2014 to 16 in 2019. Candidates are recruited through an open competition and they are integrated in the Institute's academic program. Most graduates have attained subsequent jobs at Leiden or at other universities.

The Institute deploys structures to foster a shared understanding of quality research in public administration. Its PhD candidates are also encouraged to take up specialized courses in public administration offered by the NIG doctoral school, in addition to the mandatory postgraduate courses offered by the faculty's own Graduate School. The candidates are also trained at the Institute-level, through workshops, regular PhD seminars, and working lunches with other members of staff. These additional events prove important in the PhD candidates' training and professional development. In particular, the PhD candidates value the opportunity to discuss practices and suggestions about the application of new research methods, or suggestions that help the PhDs tailor their applied research into publishable scientific articles. As a result, the candidates' considerations about conducting quality research reflect the principles of the Institute, namely that what is published matters over how much is published; and that societal relevance also counts.

The Institute has strengthened its supervision policies and practices through more extensive coaching. The PhD candidates do not appear to be impacted too strongly by the pressure of a competitive work environment. The PhD candidates consider the Institute as young and innovative where collaborations with other researchers as well as between other disciplines are highly valued. They view positively the opportunities to combine applied research with a doctoral dissertation and teaching activities. The candidates' workload is managed in a number of ways. There are regular follow-up meetings with the supervisor and the PhD candidates each have a personal Training and Supervision Plan. The Committee positively perceives the policy to extend the PhD candidates' contracts because of the coronavirus pandemic and the separate measures to avoid delay in the final year of the research.

In the talks with the PhD candidates about the supervision they receive, the Committee found that the time and availability of supervisors varied and that some PhD candidates consider it challenging to work with multiple supervisors. Although these different views can also help the PhD candidates deal with real life situations (e.g. conferences where they will receive input from different people), the Committee invites the Institute to reflect upon these challenges for the PhD candidates. The Committee also suggests that the Institute consider setting up extensive future career talks. The PhD candidates expressed a clear interest in this in their talk with the Committee, especially as regards academic job opportunities. Finally, the PhD candidates wanted to further develop the skills to apply research in practical ways through engagement with policy professionals and public servants. Such skills are especially important to those PhD candidates who aspire a professional career outside of academia. The Institute may wish to reflect upon ways to develop those skills and integrate them in the professional profile of its PhD candidates.



3.7 Research integrity

The Institute appears to have a sound policy on research integrity, inclusive of data management and Open Access. The Institute complies with the Leiden University's Data management Regulation, and has its own data management policy in addition. This implies a data management plan for all externally funded projects, and all empirical publications are underpinned by a description of data analysis filed on an Institute server. Staff members report yearly on their data saving actions. The Institute's data management plan appears well conceived and sufficiently detailed to function as precise guidelines for staff members. Collection and storage of data with multiple ownership and qualitative data continues to be a challenge – and not only for the Leiden Institute. 58 % of the Institute's publications are accessible for open access. For the two last years of the assessment period Open Access was 72 and 87 % respectively, showing an increase over time.

PhD candidates take part in a mandatory workshop on data management plans and they are also offered specialized workshops on aspects of research integrity. Since 2019, a faculty level ethics committee assesses all research proposals.

Research integrity has to go beyond data management and open access publishing. More broadly defined, research integrity has to support responsible research practices in all stages of the research cycle. With the formal building blocks of an integrity policy in place, the committee suggests that the Institute devotes full attention to the day-to-day practices of research integrity. In order to make sure that any questionable research practices are kept away from the Institute, it is important that research integrity is part of the daily conversation on the Institute's research.

3.8 Diversity

Female staff constitute around 40 percent of scientific staff, however distributed somewhat unevenly between categories with 25 % among full professors and 45 % among assistant professors. In 2020 female professors went up to 50 % due to the appointment of two female full professors. A number of staff members do research on diversity and inclusion.

A third of the scientific staff is international. The self-evaluation holds no information of ethnic diversity although ethnic diversity is mentioned as part of the strategy. During the interviews, the management team expressed a hope for the recruitment of more students and staff with varied ethnic backgrounds.

In 2019, a Staff Alliance for Equity (SAfE) was established as a bottom-up initiative in order to discuss issues related to personal security and diversity.

3.9 Conclusions

The Leiden Institute of Public Administration is a high performing research institution. It contributes with quality research in a number of fields, it delivers a broad palette of societal impact, and it contributes with innovation and rigor. The Institute is highly viable and is likely for many years to benefit from the large pool of young, ambitious, and bright staff. It has a lively and strongly committed group of PhDs with good job possibilities. The Institute's management group – as well as the broader staff group – appears very well aware of strengths and the opportunities confronting the Institute.

The Institute has increased its academic publishing significantly during the period under assessment. The Committee finds that the Institute can do even better, e.g. in terms of aiming



for more publications in the absolute top-journals of Public Administration and Political Science. The Institute could also do more in relation to NWO, ERC or other Horizon Europe funding, not least because many of the Institute's brilliant scholars will have the capacity to get such grants. More second stream funding could also be a good balance to the planned increase in contract research.

The Institute's decision to include societal impact into the concept of research quality is welcome and timely. Societal impact is however difficult to measure in practice, because real world changes – including changes in administrative structures, processes, and outputs – are caused by many factors and over long periods of time. The committee therefore recommend that the discussions about societal impact are kept alive at the management level as well as at broader institute level.

The Committee also welcome a more inclusive promotion system that gives higher weight to teaching, societal relevance, and administration. As pointed out, the new promotion system is not fully implemented. At a lively and dynamic university, promotion will always come with some ambiguity and uncertainty. However, transparency and fairness of hiring and promotion are important organisational qualities, not least in an academic setting where there are more highly qualified scholars than there are promotion opportunities. The Committee recommends an ongoing and explicit Institute wide discussion on criteria for hiring, promotion and professional development.

The Institute complies with the formal rules to protect research integrity. On top of that, the committee recommends that the Institute devotes attention to the day-to-day practice of research integrity in order to make sure that any questionable research practices are kept away from the Institute.

The Institute runs a strong PhD program with many engaged PhD candidates enrolled. There are issues raised about the availability of supervisors and difference of opinions among supervisors. The Committee invites the Institute to reflect upon these challenges. Future job possibilities are of course a major theme for PhD candidates. The Committee suggests that the Institute consider setting up extensive future career talks students with academic ambitions. For candidates who aspire for a professional career outside of academia the Institute may reflect upon ways to further develop the skills to apply research to real life cases and integrate them in the professional profile of its PhD students.

In sum, the Leiden Institute appears to be a high-quality research institution with substantive societal relevance and high viability with the capacity to develop into a world class Institute.



4. Research group Public Administration, Erasmus University Rotterdam

4.1 Quantitative assessment

The Committee assessed the quality, societal relevance and viability of the research group Public Administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its PhD programme, research integrity and diversity are assessed qualitatively. For the quantitative assessment a four-point scale is used, according to the standard evaluation protocol 2015-2021. The explanation of the criteria underlying the scores can be found in appendix C. The qualitative assessment of the Institute can be found in the next sections.

Given the standards laid down in the SEP, the Committee has awarded the following scores to the Institute:

Research quality:	1
Relevance to society:	1
Viability:	1

4.2 Organisation, strategy and targets

Public Administration at the Erasmus University Rotterdam is part of the Department of Public Administration and Sociology (DPAS), which in turn is part of the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences (ESSB). Within the Public Administration grouping there are five research clusters that cover the main thematic foci of the research programme. In 2019, the research group has 73 research staff, which equals to 33,1 fte (research time). The scientific staff is 37 (11,5 fte), post-docs are 10 (5,1 fte) and PhD candidates are 28 (16,5 fte). These numbers position Public Administration at Erasmus as one of the larger PA groups internationally. The research themes are outlined in the next section.

Generic research policy on issues such as interdisciplinarity, quality and fundraising are developed at the level of the ESSB. The graduate school for PhD candidates is a joint venture of ESSB with Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication (ESHCC), Erasmus School of Philosophy (ESPhil), International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management (ESHPM), Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS) and The Dutch Research Institute For Transitions (DRIFT). Public Administration specific policy is in the hands of the programme director of research. DPAS has programme directors of research for Public Administration and for Sociology. Critical scrutiny of the research programme is organized both at the level of the ESSB and the level of the programme. The organisation of the ESSB and the programme seems to strike a good balance between centralised economies of scale and decentralised responsibilities for PA-specific choices. Public Administration in Erasmus has gone through several reforms in the last decade. A period of stability is now advised to fully reap the benefits of the new organisational structure.

The strategy of Erasmus for the period 2014 -2019 was to jump over an already high bar. The 2014 research assessment already noted that the quality, reputation and outputs of the programme were excellent. For the 2014-2019 period, the programme aspired to improve internationalisation, innovation and rigour in research even further. Additionally, the research programme aimed at strengthening societal relevance, integrity, and diversity. Overall, as is



evident from this report, the Committee believes that the programme achieved these ambitious goals.

In 2014, the Public Administration merged with Sociology into one department. That merger was based on financial motives, with a focus on education. Today, it seems that both disciplines have found their place in the new department; each with a distinct identity. Some initial research collaboration is set up, mainly through the joint supervision of PhDs. The Committee wonders if there is more to be gained from a research collaboration between sociology and Public Administration beyond the supervision of PhDs. For example, can there be any gains from grant-writing, given that Sociology has a higher performance in attracting second stream research grants, while Public Administration has a higher performance in contract research. The collaboration with sociology also seems a good thematic fit with several themes in the research programme: such as complexity, innovation and self-organisation of citizens.

4.3 Research quality

The research group is built around the concept of governance capacity. The programme asks how good processes can contribute to resolving societal problems effectively and legitimately. Five different angles are presented: 1) self-organisation of citizens, 2) new governance approaches, 3) managing public performance, 4) policy dynamics, innovation and learning, and 5) European and international governance. The five themes offer coherent research programmes in themselves, but the overarching integration of the programme appears to be limited. The Committee invites the programme to reflect on the costs and benefits of programme integration. The outcome of integration could lead to a distinct Rotterdam profile of Public Administration that is recognized in scholarly and practitioner communities. Such a profile could further improve visibility and reputation as a coherent whole. At the same time, an integrated profile may be at the expense of the diversity of topics, theories and methods that currently are part of what the programme describes as the entrepreneurial culture. As an alternative to an integrated programme, the group can proceed with the current situation of a portfolio of themes. A middle road would be to strive for some degree of integration to strengthen the overall profile while retaining respect for the autonomy and initiative in various themes.

Quality, as evidenced by peer assessment of many successful publications, is excellent. The group publishes in the best journals in the field and holds a top position in the Shanghai ranking of Universities for public administration. Academics in the research group received several best paper awards and other recognitions, including an honorary professorship at the University of Ghent. Several researchers of the department have developed into academic agenda-setters: most notably in the field of new approaches to governance (e.g. PPP's and network governance). In the coming years, the programme could consider developing strategies to play a similar programmatic role in other themes.

The research group believes that the threat of a trade-off between scientific and societal relevance can be turned into a powerful synergy. The relation between rigour and relevance is well understood in the organisation. The exact nature of the so-called threat remains ambiguous. From conversations, the Committee infers that in order to be societally relevant, research needs to be timely (which may lead to time pressures) and responsive (which may lead to issues of independence). Further period discussion of the concepts of team science and the range of projects in the research portfolio's may help to tease out these issues in order to try to ensure the combining of the demands of both relevance and rigour.



The conversation on research quality was often, but not always, held in terms of publications in high-impact journals. While publications in top journals undoubtedly are important, the conversation should not stop there. The Committee encourages the programme to further engage in a substantive dialogue on what quality entails, asking questions about innovation in research, quality standards, ethical dilemmas and responsible research practices.

The programme has a balanced funding stream. Roughly sixty per cent of the funding has been provided by the University as direct funding, about twenty-five per cent is contract research including EU funding, and slightly less than fifteen per cent are research grants obtained in national scientific competition. The total income by research grants and contract research is around 1,53 million euros annually. The group has been less successful in personal grants of the NWO or the European Research Council. The department supports junior staff in preparing grants. With new hires of promising junior researchers and the sharing of the experiences of sociology, the department should be able to obtain personal grants in future calls. The provision of sufficient research time for junior staff is an important precondition for research grant success.

The programme is strong in high-quality contract research that enables the building of long-term research programmes. The interface with practice that contract research provides was particularly valued by PhD researchers. For early-career researchers, the link with practice seems to provide additional direction and meaning to their research efforts. The Committee, therefore, recommends the department and the ESSB are cautious in assessing the prestige of research funding based on the funding agency. Funding should be assessed based on the quality of research the funding enables.

The Erasmus programme is very productive. For each full-time equivalent of research staff, the department publishes 2,06 academic, non-Dutch publications in peer reviewed journals and one book chapter per year. The publication strategy is oriented towards an international academic audience. A total of 116 articles were published in the top 20 public policy and administration publications, of which 50 were published in the google-scholar top 4 of PA journals (Public Administration Review, Public Management Review, Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory and Public Administration). The field weighted citation impact in the Scopus database (i.e. the ratio of citations received relative to the expected world average for the subject field, publication type and publication year) is 2,07, which suggests that the Erasmus articles are cited twice as much as the average article.

The number of Dutch Academic publications has declined in recent years (from 15 in 2014 and 25 in 2015 till 12 in 2019). One Dutch monograph, a co-authorship of a longstanding handbook Public Administration, has been produced. Finally, the programme publishes research reports, mostly deliverables of contract research. Given the importance that the programme attributes to societal relevance within the Netherlands, the number of Dutch publications should, in all probability not be lower. The translation of valorisation results into scientific publications is a challenge for junior staff. Dutch language publications could be an option in these cases. Another opportunity to increase local, Dutch publication exposure could be to team up with practitioners involved in contract research, though the value of collaborative writing has to be weighed against the extra work which may be involved.

4.4 Societal relevance

The societal relevance of research is at the core of the mission of the programme. The department strives towards robust collaborations with practitioners, with a special mention of the City of Rotterdam. Stakeholders confirmed that the staff of the programme are



approachable and have a good understanding of practical concerns. The stakeholders also stressed the importance of good personal relationships of trust and respect for mutual knowledge. In recent years, the department has developed an outstanding strategy to manage the interface between research and society.

The programme has a well-structured approach to valorisation. The organisation of the science-practice interface in the professional incubator GovernEUR and the Erasmus Governance Design Studio stands out as a dynamic and practice-oriented environment. GovernEUR has 20 projects annually in the last three years, using the knowledge and frameworks of the research group. The incubator acts as an autonomous entity that creates economies of scale in the management of practice-oriented research. The projects also feed back into the research with more than 30 professional and academic publications. The Erasmus Governance Design Studio applies design methods in research, which is a methodology for co-creation of knowledge with practice. Research by design takes a prominent spot in future strategic plans as one of the unique qualities of the group. At the same time, the programme has a good critical awareness of the barriers that research by design faces (notably having sufficient room for design in a politico-administrative context). Too much emphasis on research by design in future research strategies may, therefore, carry some risk but we note that this is only one of several PA themes in the future strategy.

The programme takes various other initiatives to achieve societal relevance. The PA researchers that study migration policies maintain a network (Migration Research Hub by International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe, IMISCOE) that brings together experts on migration within the Netherlands and across Europe. In addition, the group uses a multi-channel strategy of science communication towards the Dutch professional community. With declining numbers of Dutch publications, science communication as a foundation of societal relevance may benefit from some attention (see above). Science communication seems to target the professional community primarily. The appearance of staff in the print and audio-visual media does not seem to have a high priority of the strategy.

The attainment of societal relevance seems to depend to a great extent on personal networks. For stakeholders, personal relations are important for engaging in the research-policy interface. Stakeholders expect an understanding of the political sensitivities from the researchers with whom they collaborate. Yet, the personal approach can make strategies vulnerable to changes in personal commitments. Yet, the Committee suggests there could be value in a strategic effort to bring broader groups of practitioners into contact with broader groups of researchers. The Committee noted that PhD candidates also saw great value in being involved in societal relevance. This can also be an opportunity for reinforced cooperation.

4.5 Viability

The PA programme at Erasmus has succeeded in creating a sound and stable funding basis. The size of the group (73 persons, 33,1 fte research time) is large both in the Netherlands and in international perspective. The Committee therefore assesses the viability of the programme on these accounts to be excellent.

The programme is transforming. During the period under evaluation, there has been considerable staff mobility at senior level. In the years to come, several top scholars of the programme are retiring. The programme has already proactively made several new hires at all levels to prepare for this transformation. The programme is therefore at a useful juncture for a refresh of its research strategy. The programme has started with a series of workshops to prepare this new research strategy. The self-assessment reports on the first ideas.



The self-assessment report suggests a variety of topics covered by the group and the Committee noted that the themes mostly suggest a portfolio of themes, rather than an integrated, unified programme. This may be intentional but is worth reflecting on.

The programme places considerable emphasis on interdisciplinarity. This is similar to other programmes and in line with university policy. Interdisciplinarity allows for applying insights from public administration and governance to various other fields. It can increase the relevance of the discipline for society and the relevance of society for the discipline. Yet, there is also a risk. In order to bring insights to other disciplines, the discipline of PA needs to build and consolidate a knowledge base. Especially for junior researchers and PhD's, it can be challenging to build simultaneously on a career within the discipline of Public Administration (needed for international scientific impact) and apply PA knowledge in interdisciplinary contexts. The Committee invites the programme to reflect on feasibility of interdisciplinarity as well as on criteria for high-quality, interdisciplinary research (see also general remarks earlier).

The department seems to be successful in managing its talent. The 2014 assessment noted that Erasmus had a relatively hard, metric-driven approach to evaluation and promotion. Today, the management strongly encourages staff to publish in top journals, but the approach is also more supportive. From our conversations, the Committee infers that the pressure to publish has softened and that also societal relevance can be part of the performance review. There is more pragmatism, and staff say that they feel empowered to take their work into their hands. Yet, the inclusion of more and often also softer criteria in evaluation and promotion decisions also has the risk of being less transparent. Fairness and transparency may be two opposing values here. In the next step, the development of diversified career paths is a promising way forward.

Work pressure is the main viability concern. The programme has ambitions in all fields. It wants to be a world-leading programme in research as well as a point of reference within the Netherlands for societal relevance. At the same time, the staff of the programme have to run teaching programmes. In teaching, demands seem to be increasing too. Especially for teaching, the COVID crisis has further increased work pressure. This pressure is mainly felt amongst the junior staff. Initiatives to provide extra time and resources for the developing courses are important for this group. To alleviate some of the pressure, the programme will need to consider how to strategically redesign research and education to free up resources. Alternatively, the programme will have to lower its research ambitions.

4.6 PhD programme

Public Administration at Erasmus University Rotterdam employs a large number of PhD candidates i.e. about 28 per year. The number of PhDs has remained stable over time. Most PhD candidates are students from the Master programme recruited through an open procedure and during their PhD candidacy trained via the NIG doctoral program and the Erasmus Graduate School of Social Sciences and the Humanities (EGSH). The supervision of PhD candidates is well structured in an effort to avoid delays in completing the PhD and in order to maintain a high level of performance. The department has indeed managed to reduce the completion time of the PhD. Since 2011, ten out of 25 PhD candidates completed their PhD after five years. Just over half of the graduated PhDs develop a career in academia.

The Committee finds that the research group stimulates high standards for its PhDs. Publishing in high-ranking journals is considered part of the culture. Each PhD candidate has one daily supervisor and one promotor, and there are annual development meetings where the performance and publishing record of the PhD candidate is reviewed. Moreover, the



candidates are critically assessed after one year through a 'go/no go' moment. The PhD candidates corroborate that they are mentored well by their supervisors to handle publication pressure. The Committee would like to underscore the importance of the attention for the pressures of a highly demanding work environment.

As to research integrity, the PhD candidates indicate that they participate in such discussions, for instance with regard to open science and data management. The PhD candidates also observe variation between supervisors regarding what is required for a successful PhD. Variations naturally occur within a large research group. The Committee invites the research group to continue its discussions on research integrity in order to increase transparency.

The Committee equally invites the research group to consider developing the applied-research profile of its candidates in the same way it has developed the candidates' teaching profile. PhD candidates now combine their doctoral research with teaching obligations during the first three years of their PhD trajectory. That workload is planned carefully in coordination with the educational office. The PhD candidates may also combine the dissertation with practical work and advice to stakeholders. In that regard, not all PhD candidates feel comfortable or sufficiently skilled to manage stakeholders and their demands. The development of outreach skills may be useful in the professional development of the PhD candidates.

PA EUR is viewed as a community by PhD candidates. The candidates have set up online channels to continue informal discussions on their life and work during the COVID-19 pandemic. They also appreciate the follow-up by management to adjust and reorganize some of their workload during the pandemic. At the same time, it has proved difficult, even without COVID-19, for some of the PhD candidates to integrate into the group. Some PhD candidates do not collaborate with other researchers within and across DPAS, for instance. The embedding of international internal PhD candidates brings additional challenges in that some candidates lack networking opportunities due to the focus on Dutch advisory work. Others wish to learn Dutch in order to conduct more applied research in the Netherlands. The Committee invites PA EUR to consider supporting the learning of the Dutch language for international PhD candidates, and more systematic ways for encouraging networking. This could complement existing efforts to promote future career options to the PhD candidates inside and outside academia. Currently, the department brings academic jobs to the attention of the PhD candidates, while the NIG doctoral program organizes a career day and external internships for jobs outside of academia.

4.7 Research integrity

In the last years, the programme has been working on the formalization of processes to uphold research integrity. The formal initiatives are mainly taken at the level of the ESSB. Data management, privacy and legal assessments are undertaken for externally funded research. PhD's are trained in research integrity by the graduate school and there is an ethical assessment committee. Researchers have to sign code of conducts. A data steward helps researchers with the data management plan as part of doing the ethical reviews. Publications are mostly open access. The formalisation of integrity policies seems to be on track.

In the coming years, the programme will need to embed further the formal procedures into practical action to strengthen a culture of research integrity. Today, the efforts seem to be mainly focused on the contractual relationship when preparing external research. The procedures are still new, but in the coming years, it will be important to evaluate whether the data, privacy and ethical standards of the policy proposals are also upheld in implementation. Furthermore, it will be important to extend the discussion on research integrity to cover



understanding of questionable research practices and minor shortcomings in research. Formal procedures are important to avoid major breaches of integrity but may provide less guidance when researchers enter the grey zone of questionable research practice. The open, supportive culture of the programme should allow for such critical scrutiny of the work, but more could be done to have those discussions in practice. This discussion should include senior staff, who may have been socialized in an era when there was less emphasis on open science and research integrity. Finally, the efforts to fully publish open access is laudable. As a world-leading public administration department that held and will hold several leadership positions in the PA community, the programme could also consider going beyond paying for open access and make efforts to support open-source journals.

4.8 Diversity

The programme has made substantive progress towards a better gender balance. In 2014, 56,9 % of the staff was male, with a strong overrepresentation of men at the senior level (around 90%). In 2019, overall gender representation seems to be much better (51,3% male and 48,7% female). The overall balance obscures the bias towards men at the senior level. Women are slightly in the majority at the PhD, post-doc and assistant professor level, while men are still overrepresented at the senior levels. With the diversity measures that are in place and the commitments that are expressed, the Committee believe that there is more work to be done but that efforts are underway, and will be strengthened further in future recruitment processes.

In the SWOT analysis, the programme notes that low ethnic diversity is a weakness. The research staff are not representative either of the Rotterdam demographic or of the student population. The Committee supports the measures that are planned at the ESSB level. Universities are only one link in the chain which is the education system so the responsibility for diversity is shared by many actors in society.

4.9 Conclusions

Public Administration at Erasmus is an internationally leading research programme. It develops high-quality research in several fields and is setting the international agenda in the field of network governance. The institute has a well-structured approach to societal impact. The Institute is highly viable after the organisational reforms of the years immediately before the review period. The hiring of new staff is a good preparation for the impending retirement of several of the most senior staff. The programme has a strongly committed group of PhDs. The management of the programme seems to have a good understanding of the strategic directions and organisational challenges.

The programme has an impressive track record during the period under assessment, with many publications in top Public Administration journals. The Committee notes that the Dutch publication market should not be forgotten, especially given the focus on societal relevance. The programme could pursue a stronger focus on personal grants from NWO or ERC funding. Further collaboration with the sociology department and support at the level of the ESSB may be helpful in this regard.

The Committee welcomes the more inclusive promotion system with a better balance of research with teaching, societal relevance, and administration. While an inclusive assessment increases fairness, inclusiveness will also add more and softer criteria to the evaluation decisions. Therefore, the system may be perceived to be less transparent. An open dialogue



with good argumentation of evaluation decisions may help to overcome the dilemma of juggling fairness and transparency. The implementation of career trajectories will also be helpful to combine transparency and inclusiveness in promotion systems.

The programme complies with the formal rules to protect research integrity. In the coming years, the programme will do well to reinforce the dialogue on to the day-to-day practice of research integrity. As a leading institution in Public Administration, the programme should aspire not only to follow, but to lead the agenda on open science.

The programme has a strong PhD program with a solid number of engaged PhD candidates in a supportive environment. The Committee notes the opportunities to further develop the integration of PhD candidates in the Dutch professional networks. In this way, PhDs can strengthen their skills as applied researchers and build bridges to practice. For international PhD candidates, more support in learning Dutch would also be useful to contribute to societal impact in Dutch society.

Overall, the Erasmus PA programme is a world class research institution with strong scientific outputs and contribution, and with substantive societal relevance and high viability.



5. Research programme Public Matters, Utrecht University

5.1 Quantitative assessment

The Committee assessed the quality, societal relevance and viability of the research programme Public Matters of Utrecht University both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its PhD programme, research integrity and diversity are assessed qualitatively. For the quantitative assessment a four-point scale is used, according to the standard evaluation protocol 2015-2021. The explanation of the criteria underlying the scores can be found in appendix C. The qualitative assessment of the Institute can be found in the next sections.

Given the standards laid down in the SEP, the Committee has awarded the following scores to the Institute:

Research quality:	1
Relevance to society:	1
Viability:	1

5.2 Organisation, strategy and targets

The Utrecht University School of Governance (USG) is a department of Utrecht University's Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance (LEG). Founded in 2000, USG serves as one distinct research unit consisting of two formal research groups: Public Governance & Management (PGM) and Organisation & Management (O&M). USG research is overseen by the Head of Department and Research Director. General research policy for the Faculty is established by its Board of Research formed by the three researcher directors of the Faculty's departments, the Dean, and representatives from both PhD candidates and research masters' students. In addition, USG has a Research Board who advises on research strategy and policy and monitors quality of research.

USG continues to strengthen its position as a leading program in public administration in the country and internationally. During the assessment period, USG experienced a significant increase in its staff, its budget, and its research programs. It has grown from 23.71 fte in 2014 to 37.92 fte in 2019, becoming one of the largest PA research institutes in the Netherlands. Its leadership team has been guiding the transition from a smaller cohesive unit to a larger, more professionalized and formalized organisation. This transition has included the incorporation of innovative operational approaches (for example, to staff performance assessment, emphasizing quality and impact over quantity) and new multi-disciplinary and multi-sector research strategies (for example, through impact hubs, focus areas and co-production networks with societal partners). With these changes and while still working through this transition, USG has continued to be a highly productive institution in terms of both academic research and societal relevance and impact.

USG has been implementing a research strategy, "Public Matters: Co-Creating Public Value," that integrates its two research groups as disciplinary pillars, Public Governance & Management and Organisation & Management, through six research themes or program clusters: accountable governance; managing performance; collaboration, innovation and leadership; public service performance and HRM; organisational culture and change; and sport



and society. This strategy is well articulated and coherent. Staff and PhD candidates report that they understand their disciplinary focus and their cross-disciplinary capabilities.

USG is an active contributor to Dutch PA research community and is currently taking its turn in leading the Netherlands Institute of Governance (NIG) and coordinating the Research Master in Public Administration and Organisation Science.

5.3 Research quality

The increasing quality of the research is reflected in the rise in USG's Shanghai rankings from 7 in 2017 to 3 in 2019 and 2020. During the assessment period, publications in refereed international academic journals increased from 54 in 2014 to 76 in 2019 (many of them high impact journals and a significant number in the very top journals of PA); academic book chapters increased from 20 to 43. The growth in publications in high quality journals and academic books among other strong showing in output measures admittedly reflects the increased staff but these remain very impressive indicators of USG research productivity and quality.

One of USG's goals based on the previous assessment report was to increase its international visibility and profile. USG has continued to strengthen its international recognition as a leader in public administration and particularly in a number of subfields of public administration, including behavioural administration, governance of digital society, and successful public governance. USG researchers have also contributed to methodological advances in experimental research, QCA, multi-methods, and cognitive mapping. Their faculty include internationally recognized leading scholars in accountability and urban governances, among other areas. The USG faculty actively participates in national and international academic and professional organisations.

During the assessment period, the relative proportion of USG's funding sources has remained reasonably stable with over half of its revenues still coming from direct sources, and the other half split evenly between contracts and grants. The size of the school's budget however has grown close to 60%, commensurate with its enlarged staff. Increasing indirect funding was one of the school's objectives after the last assessment report. This was accomplished in part by the school's success in securing several significant research grants (two VENI grants, three VIDI grants, an ERC Starting Grant and an ERC Advanced Grant as well as a number of H2020 Societal Challenges grants).

5.4 Societal relevance

USG expresses a strong commitment to social relevance and impact alongside its high expectations for research quality through publications. As one senior staff member put it, "We want to be societally relevant on the basis of the scientific rigour of our research." In USG's six research themes/specializations noted above are explicitly relevant to society and the co-creation of public value. They have provided a platform for a broad array of innovative and relevant research into behavioural public administration, governing the digital society; successful public governance; governance and management by hybrid and private organisations, sports organisation, open society issues such as migration, diversity and security, as well as employer engagement. The commitment to societal relevance is further supported by a Vice Dean for Societal Impact at the Faculty.



USG has articulated four important pathways for their staff and PhD candidates to create societal impact: societal learning, advice, interaction and co-production. In their assessment report, they provide evidence of their public outreach and education efforts, the extent of their research-related consultancy work, the array of stakeholder engagement programs and activities, and major initiatives to co-produce socially-engaged research. A strong effort is made to embed staff and PhD candidates in societal partner organisations and in joint research efforts, and to assure, where relevant, their contributions are directly connecting to daily practice. USG has also chosen to focus on two major high societal impact areas in the future: governance of sustainability and digitization. In addition, the school has established a specific objective to develop more meaningful measures of the societal impact of its research programs.

USG faculty disseminates research findings through many avenues - publications, public workshops and open lectures, as well as their active consultancy role. Their commitment to USG encourages publications for general audiences, for example Trappenburg's Montessori Democrats and Tummers' Nudging. Many staff serve on public and community boards and councils. Public outreach and media coverage also assist in generating their consultancy work that constitutes some 40% of USG's revenues.

Based on recognition of their expertise and social commitment, USG staff have participated in multiple engaged research hubs and inter-disciplinary collaborations generating direct societal benefits, among them: 1) Security in Open Societies that co-produces research on terrorism, radicalization and counterterrorism; 2) Vitality Academy that has connected research on physical activity and sports to strategies for public health through education and public policy interventions; and 3) USG-UMC Alliance that promotes professional performance in connection with the medical center.

5.5 Viability

USG is aware of the pressures on direct funding across Dutch universities and is planning for more targeted applications for future grants as well as for focused efforts to secure contracts with societal partners. Investments in initial short-term contracts and consultancies have also led to longer term funding commitments. USG leaders anticipate that national and EU funds for social science research in general and for public administration in particular are likely to diminish. That said, a school of USG's class should have good possibilities to earn more ERC or other Horizon Europe grants in the future. USG leaders have also noted the potential of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) funding through an emerging inter-university alliance as well as for contracts co-produced with stakeholders. The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on future funding is uncertain. However, the school's research contracts have not diminished during this period.

With its growth and specialization, there is more complexity in the work and the organisation of USG. Their strategy is to continue to advance their core values: academic independence, multi-dimensionality and societal impact. They intend to increase their research focus on two areas: governance of sustainability and digitization and algorithms and the governance of the digital society, while also continuing with existing themes and groups. They also want to improve "demonstrable public engagement" with their partners and practices.

The University and USG have fostered multiple formal and informal research networks across campus and with other universities as well as with societal partners. These networks create valuable opportunities for interdisciplinary and cross-boundary research, consultancy, and co-production, but these networks can appear opaque and inaccessible to junior staff and PhD



candidates. This “complex and fragmented landscape for collaborative research” is noted in the SWOT analysis and suggests the need for more active mentoring on the part of senior staff to introduce early career staff to and help them navigate valuable academic, professional and societal networks.

The size and stature of USG has enabled its staff to focus on “team science” and attempt to reduce its prior reliance on individual success which should contribute to future stability in research production. A major challenge to their continued growth, however, is a physical one: its current building no longer can contain the growing staff and students and associated needs for more office and classroom space, as well as research facilities. How these facilities needs are met will directly affect the management burdens and the organisational culture of the school in the future. It makes eminent sense to search for one building to house all the current and projected spatial needs of USG, in order to continue to foster the collaborative culture and community which is so characteristic of USG.

In the face of its significant growth in the last period, USG leaders have planned and managed the attendant organisational demands. They are clear-eyed in their thinking about the need for, and the effects of, additional formalization and specialization on their staff and PhD candidates as well as the challenges of preserving the best aspects of their smaller more integrated and cohesive former school. The staff and PhD candidates reflect confidence in their leadership and appreciation for the current state of transition, in spite of the exacerbating challenges of the current pandemic situation.

USG emphasizes team science and was one of the early adopters of the ‘Rewards and Recognition’ principles along with the MERIT (Management, Education, Research, Impact and Team Spirit) system to broaden criteria for performance evaluation and support the diversification of career paths. While encouragement of different paths to success has been formally articulated by the school, this policy is still being put in place. It appears that promotion based primarily on avenues outside research intensive performance still must be negotiated and remains uncertain.

While creating more professionalization and formalization of its organisation due to its recent growth, USG is striving to provide events, forums, and gatherings and other support to try to maintain its previous collegial and open environment. As noted in the SWOT analysis, there has been a “weakening coherence and community as a result of growing size.” Transitioning from the school’s previous tight knit “tribalism” to a larger, more formal and outward-facing institution without losing the internal cohesion will continue to be a challenging balancing act for the school in the future.

5.6 PhD programme

As the number of staff at the Utrecht University School of Governance has grown, so too has the number of PhD candidates. During the review period, the number of PhD candidates increased from 9.28 in 2014 to 14,5 in 2019. The candidates are in part recruited from the Research Master, which is considered a ‘talent pool’ to USG (SER, p.8). Some successful candidates have already been able to develop a career in academia. The PhDs at USG are funded internally, or through grants or funds provided by partners of the department such as the Utrecht local government, the Dutch Royal Football Organisation (KNVB), and ministerial departments. Nearly half of the PhD candidates are external PhDs, i.e. late career public professionals. The internal PhDs are embedded more strongly within the organisation compared to external PhD candidates.



The Committee observed that PhD candidates appreciate opportunities to teach and to conduct applied research in addition to working on their doctoral dissertation. The candidates consider these activities a valuable part of their development as professionals, and they appreciate that the time spent on teaching and consultancy work can lead to an extension of their contract so as to complete the PhD. Of course, this implies a tradeoff with the overall completion rate of PhD candidates at USG. The Committee finds that the average completion of the PhD track is low (i.e. 21% average after five years).

At the faculty level, the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, the PhD Quality Plan offers a solid framework for the PhD track at USG, and PhD candidates receive training via the faculty's graduate school and the NIG doctoral program. At the program level, there is the USG guideline for dissertations. PhD candidates are supervised by at least two supervisors with whom they can collaborate closely. They also have a PhD platform and hold several (in)formal meetings to discuss the research and quality of supervision. The PhD candidates appreciate their work environment and the support and encouragement they receive from supervisor and staff. Despite the overall positive views on their work environment, PhD trajectory, supervision and training, the candidates have also highlighted some challenges for USG in their talk with the Committee. At the basis of these challenges, lies the recent growth of the department resulting in an increasing and internally diverse number of PhDs so that it has become harder for PhDs to all know each other.

The Committee invites USG to think about ways to reduce the level of uncertainty among the PhD candidates about the implicit norms and rules about what constitutes quality research at the department. PhD candidates view this as a result of the different research traditions within USG's research groups and indicate that the informal way of supervising and the varying expectations between supervisors and research groups are at times difficult to navigate. Similarly, the combination of tasks for PhDs appears to lead to uncertainty among some PhD candidates about how to balance societal relevance with academic rigor. Based on this, the Committee finds that the faculty-level and program-level frameworks on the PhD program have not as yet established a shared understanding on the trajectory between all PhD candidates, their supervisors and the research groups at USG.

PhD candidates also note that the varying research traditions at the department divide the PhD candidates into smaller groups. As a result, new and international PhD candidates may have few colleagues to turn to, to help them manage what is expected from them. PhD candidates reported they may receive trainings that do not always fit well with their academic field of specialization. The Committee invites USG to reflect on the challenges to embed and train all PhD candidates across its research groups. The Committee is convinced that these 'growing pains' at USG can be overcome by continuing the professionalization and structural embedding of its PhD program and by looking for a stronger integration and community feeling between PhDs in the two research groups.

5.7 Research integrity

USG reports that it takes research integrity very seriously. The program has asserted the importance of "multi-dimensionality" in its research culture, fostering diversity of views and inclusive theoretical approaches and methodological practices. The faculty and USG have taken several steps to assure research integrity:

- The establishment of an Ethics Assessment Board at faculty level;
- The appointment of scientific integrity counsellors at faculty level and the appointment of a USG Confidential Advisor;



- Holding staff meetings on integrity and ethics and discussions on the USG culture;
- Followed Utrecht University procedures to safeguard research integrity and ethical practices;
- Conducted staff and PhD candidate meetings, roundtable discussions on ethics and how to maintain an open research community; and
- Established systems for storing personal data, data management and Open Science practices.

5.8 Diversity

USG's diversity strategy focused on gender balance and internationalization of staff. Since its last assessment and the adoption of a new USG strategy, the school accomplished its goal of increasing the number of women in senior positions. The new USG board achieved 50/50 balance of male and female members. Five female full professors have been appointed and, as of 2019, 35% of full professors are female and 40% associate professors are female. The future goal is to continue to improve gender balance across all staff levels through open recruitment and attention to appointment committees, such as monitoring of gender balance in appointments. They are also seeking to attract more diverse undergraduate students to the field of public administration, which will help the pipeline longer-term.

USG has increased the internationalization of its staff at all levels, including PhDs, though it acknowledges that the cultural and ethnic diversity of its staff is still limited. The School recognizes the challenges for international staff and PhD candidates who must teach or conduct research in Dutch and supports language training. Inclusion requires attention to implicit cultural and institutional barriers as well.

5.9 Conclusions

USG continues to be a strong leader in public administration research in the Netherlands and internationally. Building on its prior strengths, it has launched a significant expansion of its program during this assessment period. The growth in staff and scope has contributed to corresponding increases in aggregate research productivity and societal impact, increased diversification of its scholarship and research capacities, and commendable outreach and meaningful collaboration with academic and societal partners.

By all accounts, the school is managing its growth well. It has necessitated internal restructuring and greater formalization of administrative policies and procedures. The staff and PhD candidates are confident in the school's leadership team to guide this transition, even in the light of acknowledged uncertainties and occasional lack of transparency. This can be attributed in large part to the culture of candour and general openness to dialogue and inclusion fostered in the school's leaders and senior staff. Although the school's development, indeed transformation, is still "a work in progress," all signals bode well for its continued success.

As USG completes its transition to a larger, more formalized institution, it will continue to face the tensions between the need for more standardization and bureaucratic routinization school and the desire for more transparency and flexibility. Clarity and consistency in rules must be juxtaposed with flexibility and responsiveness to special circumstances. Sustainable growth depends on the successful balancing of the two. The Committee encourages USG to remain mindful of the critical counterpoise of these pressures.



The Committee further encourages USG to continue to engage with all levels of the staff and PhD candidates openly as new policies and procedures are under consideration. Involving junior staff and PhD candidates early on and consistently can contribute to better informed decisions and provide a stronger sense of ownership and confidence in USG leadership.

Given USG's commitment to programmatic coherence, the integration of interdisciplinary research, and cohesion among staff and PhD candidates, the Committee supports the school's desire to relocate to one building right-sized to meet its current and projected facilities needs. As USG continues to strengthen its research capacity, it could be more ambitious and efficient in seeking Horizon Europe funds.

USG is managing a major transition to more formal promotion criteria and processes through the new MERIT system and it is understandable that many issues remain to be worked out. The committee encourages USG leadership to continue to improve on the transparency of the promotion system and the workings of the promotion committee. More harmonization and commitment in the promotion committee to new MERIT system appears warranted.

As USG continues to manage the impacts of its growth and increasing specialization on staff and PhD candidates, the Committee encourages USG to make sustained efforts at community-building among PhD candidates who might otherwise become isolated in their particular field, sub-discipline or research methodology.

As noted in the observations above, USG faculty participate in a multiplicity of cross-departmental, cross-campus, and cross-sector networks promoting collaborative research opportunities. Navigating those networks can be "bewildering" for new staff and PhD candidates and yet are essential for their success in accessing research partners and potential funding. The Committee encourages senior staff to take on a more explicit role as mentors to help translate the various pathways and connections within and across these networks and introduce young scholars to potential research opportunities.

USG is a very ambitious, forward-leaning program, intent on excellence and impact. At the same time, it emphasizes openness and inclusion as departmental norms. As noted in its report, there is concern about the potential for "creating a performance-oriented culture, where generally only admiration is voiced, rather than constructive and sometimes critical dialogue ensuing." The Committee applauds the school's acknowledgement of this concern and encourage continuous efforts to keep USG an open academic community, promote team science and foster contributions of intellectual diversity and debate. Regular opportunities for candid conversation and self-reflection around these issues is warranted.

As one of its specific workplace objectives, the school acknowledges the need to develop more meaningful measures of the societal impact of its research programs. The Committee encourages such efforts on this objective, not only for the school's own edification but for its value to all Dutch PA research institutes, as the demonstration of direct and indirect societal impacts attributable to PA research will become increasingly important.

Given its commitment co-produced research and socially engaged research, the school has noted the need for more effective public engagement in its scholarship in order to "co-create public value." Such research requires new repertoires for scholars in their relationship with the community and careful balancing of scientific neutrality and normative values. The Committee encourages continued discussion within the school on the new skills, roles and responsibilities needed to engage diverse stakeholder groups and the public at large in robust social science research.



6. Research programme New Public Governance, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

6.1 Quantitative assessment

The Committee assessed the quality, societal relevance and viability of the research programme New Public Governance both quantitatively and qualitatively. Its PhD programme, research integrity and diversity are assessed qualitatively. For the quantitative assessment a four-point scale is used, according to the standard evaluation protocol 2015-2021. The explanation of the criteria underlying the scores can be found in appendix C. The qualitative assessment of the Institute can be found in the next sections.

Given the standards laid down in the SEP, the Committee has awarded the following scores to the research programme.

Research quality:	2
Relevance to society:	2
Viability:	3

6.2 Organisation, strategy and targets

New Public Governance (NPG) is one of the research programs in the Department of Political Sciences (PS) and Public Administration (PA) at the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS). FSS at VU consists of five departments (communication science, organisation science, political science and public administration, social and cultural anthropology, sociology), each of which running its own research programme. After the merger of PS and PA into one department in 2013, the two separate research programmes (new public governance or NPG which is the focus of this report and Multi Level Governance which occupies the political science researchers and is outside the scope of this report) and two Teaching Directors were retained, though efforts to create synergies between them have been taken since with some success (see below). In the meantime, PA and PS share one management team which is responsible for finance and personnel. NPG's management team consists of a Head of Department, a Research Manager and two Teaching Directors (PS and PA). In 2019, the NPG research group was composed of 23 total research staff (8,77 fte), out of which 12 scientific staff (3,45 fte), 3 Postdocs (2,00 fte) and 8 PhD candidates (3,32 fte). In total research time has increased from 5,9 (2014) to 8,8 (2019).

Compared to other PA departments in the Netherlands, NPG is thus a fairly small PA group. NPG is affiliated to the Netherlands Institute for Government (NIG). NPG contributes to the Institute for Societal Resilience (ISR) established in 2015 as part of the faculty's strategy to foster interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary collaboration, strengthen external partnerships and improve capacity to acquire funding.

Researchers in NPG are organized in three sub-groups, each of which focuses on specific areas of the overarching research profile (security, welfare and care, quality of governance). The Quality of Governance (QuGo) group specializes in research on governance processes, including (ethical) leadership, the involvement of public and private actors in policy making, and public professionals' dilemmas. The Welfare, Care, and Social Participation (WCSP) group researches decentralization and transitions of the welfare state and public health systems; while the Security and Resilience (SR) group studies security networks, police practices, and



public-private collaborations in community safety. The latter two sub-groups come together under the umbrella of Governance of Quality (GoQu).

NPG puts a collaborative/networked approach in the centre of its research. NPG is distinguished by its normative and critical approach to PA. It puts major emphasis on public values, aims to contribute to societal debates and strives to critically reflect on power relations, policy instruments, and professional practices. Strong connections to stakeholders and contacts with public and private institutions are key to NPG's identity which is also reflected by the high share of third-stream funding and the predominance of contract research in the overall portfolio of funding.

Internal communication is organized through regular collective meetings and individual consultations. Exchange on NPG research is based on the format of strategically oriented research days, monthly research seminars with paper presentations, and a study group on academic action research.

6.3 Research quality

The NPG strives for high research quality and reputation measured by scientific publications, the acquisition of research grants as well as marks of recognition by the academic community and societal relevance. NPG researchers are internationally visible and recognized figures in the field (e.g. as EGPA, IIAS and ESA co-chairs, editorial board members), have published in high-ranking international journals (e.g. PAR, IRAS, European Journal of Criminology, Policing and Society) and received prestigious academic awards (e.g. Best article award in Public Integrity, Christopher Pollitt award). There is strong third-stream funding but fewer second stream research grants (e.g. NWO-ORA, NWA). There had been a decline since the last assessment period in the quantity of academic output due to fluctuations in research staff, but since 2018 the output of international refereed articles has increased again. With the total fte research time increasing from 6.09 (2014) to 8.70 (2019), the academic productivity climbed again, too. Encouragingly, for 2020 (outside the review period but an indication of future success), there are already 15 refereed articles accepted for publication. In addition, in the review period, the share of international (English language) publications out of the total publication outcome has increased. There are fewer non-refereed (professional and popular) publications. The NPG group publishes between one and four books and between 7 and 17 academic book chapters per year. While some staff members regularly publish in PA journals, such as Public Administration Review, International Review of Administrative Sciences, others focus more on specific topical journals, e.g. European Journal of Criminology or Policing and Society. The recent increase in publication output also reflects a climate of collaboration, particularly between senior and junior staff.

Research quality and quantity are promoted by a new provision for early career researchers in the new tenure track system 2.0 whose research time was extended from 30% to 50% during the first two years. This new system has encouraged applications for grants, e.g. VENI (one was successful, submitted by a new assistant professor from political sciences). The new approach provides more time for publishing, which is showing benefits in terms of increasing international publications outputs. Furthermore, the research group places a major focus on team science and open science. Contract research constitutes the major share of NPG's funding (64% in 2019) and has substantially increased over the evaluation period, particularly in the last two years (third stream funding was 20% in 2014 and is now 64%). This is also critically reflected in the SWOT analysis. The increase in third stream funding was undertaken to partially compensate for the significant cuts in direct funding due to nationwide austerity policies and also to secure research time for staff members. Prestigious second stream



research grants (EU, NWO, NWA) have remained at modest but stable levels (2% in 2019). The group acknowledged that it remains important for NPG to attract additional second stream funding. A number of measures have been taken for this: First, capacity for grant application has been increased by hiring five new assistant professors within the new tenure track system who are expected to use a proportion of their research time to apply for grants, and whose CVs indicate that they have the potential to gain a grant at starting level (e.g. a VENI award). Second, some third stream funding is used to feed into fundamental research and thus to create synergies between contractual research to second stream applications. Third, senior staff outside the department (e.g. in other universities) have been approached to join forces to acquire grants, and if successful those staff will work with NPG. These actions are yet to reach fruition but it shows a proactive approach to second stream funding. The Committee endorses this approach to investing in grant applications and to further enhance the capacities for second stream research proposals.

Multi- and interdisciplinary work is highly valued in NPG. Junior researchers particularly appreciate the opportunities to collaborate with different disciplines, such as political science, anthropology and sociology. The Institute for Societal Resilience (ISR) provides a valuable institutional vehicle to enhance the interdisciplinary perspective of NPG research and especially to link junior staff and PhDs to other disciplinary fields. Besides the faculty's ISR, the TALMA Institute provides opportunities for junior staff to get involved in interdisciplinary work, specifically on the research themes of work and income and care and welfare. Furthermore, there are various additional (interfaculty) networks and platforms, labs and hubs. Junior staff and PhDs reported that it was not always obvious to them how to connect to these various networks and institutes, how they are interrelated and whether they are expected to present their work in one or more of them. The institutional landscape appears to be rich and multi-faceted, but that also created some degree of opaqueness and confusion for junior staff. NPG could consider how to make clearer the various networking opportunities, and those can be built on strategically.

Six years after the merger of PA and Political Sciences into one department, synergies and more interdisciplinary collaboration are increasing. Examples are a joint PhD supervision, a summer school on security studies organized by younger staff, and staff employment combining PA and Political Sciences. However, there are still cultural differences, such as a more national orientation in PA as contrasted to a more international one in Political Sciences, which makes a fuller integration of NPG and MLG more demanding than previously expected. There is an opportunity with recent staff changes in research management to consider whether and how to encourage further integration.

6.4 Societal relevance

Work with stakeholders, interaction with practice, and the societal impact of research are key objectives of NPG. Researchers perceive rigor and relevance as inter-twined components of research quality. The combination of high academic quality and societal relevance is key to NPG's self-perceptions and identity. Applied research is seen as fundamentally influenced by academic knowledge. Stakeholder involvement, bottom-up development of research projects and collaboration with public and private institutions and contributions to major public debates (e.g. media talks) are thus crucial components of NPG's activities. Researchers strive to achieve a strong societal impact which is also mirrored by the high share of third-stream funding (see above). Junior researchers and PhDs in particular appreciate the links to organisations like ministries and working with academic issues derived from practitioners which help them to connect big societal challenges to "smaller issues" that relate to practice. This forms part of



NPG's core-identity. The rich exchange with society and the regular external outreach to the police, municipalities, private companies etc. are also seen as ways to strengthen viability and impact by compensating for the comparatively small size of the NPG research group because external collaboration contribute to enhance the overall impact of NPG. NPG's success and creativity in attracting external funds and thereby substantially increasing third stream funding are remarkable. The ISR knowledge hubs and other expertise labs which facilitated the setting up of joint research projects with public and private stakeholders (e.g. on governance of security, de-radicalization, decentralization of welfare policies etc.) and to build from smaller to bigger projects were reported to be key to this success. There are many examples of highly visible societally relevant research projects which can be interpreted as a distinctive mark of NPG's profile: Short-term projects about policing led, for instance, to the new large and long term (5 million euro) project with the Ministry of Justice and Safety and the Netherlands Institute for the Study of Crime and Law Enforcement (Nederlands Studiecentrum Criminaliteit en Rechtshandhaving; NSCR in Dutch). As a result of this grant NPG's research capacity was significantly enhanced, with an additional PhD researcher. Another example is the various ISR research labs where real world problems are brought in by stakeholders and research projects are jointly developed with practitioners. A challenge arises from the conversion of practically relevant research outcomes into publications in renowned international PA journals, requiring considerable additional effort.

6.5 Viability

NPG is a relatively small research group with only (in 2019) 23 research staff (8.8 fte), of whom 12 are in permanent positions (a decline from 16 permanent ones in 2014). Research time allocated to staff members had come under pressure due to relative financial austerity (growing numbers of students, growing teaching burdens and declining direct funding). The workload and pressure creates particular tensions for junior staff. They report getting support from their supervisors and in addition, coaching was introduced to guide junior staff managing multiple tasks. During the evaluation period, several measures have been taken to address these pressures (and these have already been covered earlier as ways to increase research capacity and apply for second stream funding).

Protecting and even extending research time is clearly a priority for NPG and it should reap many benefits from its productive high-quality researchers. Furthermore, converting contract research into second stream projects appears to be a promising approach to enhance NPG's viability and to achieve a better balancing in terms of funding. The envisaged new Chair in Collaborative Governance (intention to appoint in 2021) may be expected to further consolidate and enhance NPG's capacities and viability.

As noted earlier, NPG has become more reliant on external (third stream) funds, particularly in the last couple of years. These external funds help to compensate for declines in direct funding and the modest second stream funding. However, the high proportion of third stream funding does have implications for the management of funds and research time, due to higher transactions costs and management of this income compared with other sources funding, partly due to the shorter-term nature of such funding and the shorter lead-in time (many such contracts though not all are a year long). Generally, only longer-term contract funding enables the appointment of PhD researchers for example. Furthermore, positions based on short-term contracts also create uncertainties for staff members and entail the risk of precarious employment. Therefore, the Committee strongly encourages NPG to balance its third stream funding with continuing its current strategy to intensify applications for second stream funding, including with larger (international) consortia.



NPG researchers acknowledge the advantages of the small size of the group (“small is beautiful”) which facilitates an intense collaboration amongst staff members, keeping an own identity and profile and avoiding too burdensome formal and bureaucratic coordination structures. Despite its “smallness” NPG has achieved high external visibility and reputation in the practitioners’ community based on its societally impactful research and its creative use of external networks to enhance third stream funding. There are also efforts and projects aiming at institutional growth, such as new recruitments and extended research time through bigger projects with external contract-partners (e.g. ministries, police projects). There are also plans to create an international Master of PA. The Committee appreciates these activities to stimulate growth and expand research time since they help enhance the overall viability of NPG. However, NPG has limited organisational slack which makes the situation more precarious if there are additional cutbacks and austerity measures in the aftermath of the coronavirus pandemic. Taking the cuts in direct funding over the last years and the decreased number of permanent staff into account, the Committee therefore has concerns that additional cutback measures could seriously harm. Given the huge strides which have been made in recent years to recover levels of publications, increase funding, have societal impact and carve out additional research time, this would be a waste and so the University is urged to value and protect the efforts and institutional arrangements of this group. The still increasing competitiveness of external funding (particularly NWO, EU) is another threat which might – in view of the already limited amount of grants – cause additional constraints to NPG’s future funding strategy. From the Committee’s point of view all possible efforts should be taken therefore to strengthen financial support to NPG and to enhance its institutional robustness, even more in the upcoming situation of financial uncertainties and crisis-related cutbacks.

6.6 PhD programme

The NPG institute has a sizeable number of PhD’s. In 2019, a total of 22 PhD’s were enrolled in the programme: eight internal and fourteen external PhD’s. The external candidates combine a job outside of academia with a doctoral dissertation and have been attracted during the review period to compensate for the declining number of major external grants for internal PhDs and to strengthen the societal embeddedness of the research programme. The PhD candidates have various disciplinary backgrounds. Most PhD candidates go on, after their PhD, to work in academia or universities of applied sciences. The HR department and the Graduate School offer workshops on career development and the PhD candidates can also take up personal coaching sessions to help them decide upon their future careers.

The supervisors are responsible for maintaining shared standards of quality control for the PhD candidates. The PhD candidates also take courses in the Graduate School at the faculty-level and at the NIG doctoral program. The PhD candidates note that research quality is related to outputs and publishing in quality journals – in addition to scientific rigor.

The PhD candidates’ progress is formally monitored through an eight-month go-no go paper, and there are also beyond that yearly supervision reports and a PhD plan where the candidates’ priorities are determined. The expectations for the PhD candidates are formalized, and there is frequent discussion about publishing academic papers. Such meetings are regarded as important especially by the international PhD candidates who have not been socialized at Dutch universities and who value the introduction to the research program and to the functioning of the university in general.

Further, the Committee observed that the number of PhD graduates at NPG is very low during the assessment period. The PhD completion rate is 25%: during 2011-2015 a total of 4 internal



PhD candidates started, of which only one graduated. The Committee suggests that NPG devise a strategy to increase the completion rate.

The internal PhD candidates combine their dissertation with other activities at NPG. They particularly appreciate the opportunities to establish collaborations with ministries and other institutes outside of university, such as societal stakeholders. In addition to conducting research that is societally relevant, PhD candidates also take up teaching activities in cooperation with their supervisor. In all, they report that they experience a substantial degree of freedom in their professional development. PhD candidates suggested that improvement could be made at NPG in the size and -particularly- diversity of its academic staff. For instance, the PhD candidates missed having female lead figures. They would also like to draw more on the extensive network for international cooperation, and want to collaborate more with researchers in the other departments in the faculty. Lastly, new PhDs report that they work in a complex department and faculty. They are part of different structures and institutions at the same time. The PhD buddy system appears to be a valuable mechanism for new candidates to get acquainted with the complexity of their work environment.

The number of (new) PhD candidates is rather limited and the possibilities of employing internally funded PhDs have remained small. However, the Committee appreciates NPG's ability to recruit external PhDs through social networks of staff members. It encourages NPG to use the master's program still more systematically for talent management and to extend the efforts of recruiting new PhD candidates from this talent pool.

6.7 Research integrity

NPG has developed its own research code of conduct and organized various discussions to raise awareness of good academic behaviour. The self-assessment report also documents three key measures which have been adopted by FSS to ensure research integrity: Research Ethics Review Committee (RERC; offering an online self-check followed, if needed, by a full ethical review); policy on data management and storage of information (requirement of data management plans and storage for each project); network of confidential counsellors for providing advice regarding academic integrity. Regarding research culture, increasing emphasis is given to team science and collaboration between seniors and juniors (e.g. for publications). Outreach to external stakeholders, interaction with practice and co-creation are also key elements of NPG's research culture which is well reflected in the third stream funding as well as in the establishment of knowledge hubs and other expertise labs used as platforms for collaboratively generating new projects. The Committee assesses these characteristics of research culture as fertile, innovative and promising for the future.

6.8 Diversity

The lack of diversity is recognized in the SWOT analysis as a weakness of NPG and is perceived by staff as a challenge, particularly the representation of women at senior level (full professors). Until 2019, there were no female full professors or assistant professors in NPG. At the associate professor level there was one (out of 3) and only 1 in 4 among research associates. Overall the percentage of female research staff (excl. PhDs) amounted to only 13%. However, NPG (together with Political Science) have taken some steps to remedy this situation, e.g. by hiring five new assistant professors, four of whom are female. The faculty and department management has expressed a strong commitment to use the appointment of a new chair in Collaborative Governance as an opportunity to increase (gender) diversity. Ethnic diversity could be increased with a new recruitment succeeding the departing endowed



professor. The Committee encourages NPG to further intensify its efforts to diversify the composition of its team, particularly at the senior level, perhaps through future recruitment and talent development policies.

6.9 Conclusions

The Committee points out that NPG with its three sub-groups QuGo, WCSP, and SR, NPG is a strong and viable program with a good reputation and pronounced external visibility that combines high-quality interdisciplinary research with impactful outreach to society, valorisation, and stakeholder involvement. The creativity and enthusiasm of researchers in attracting external funding, collaborating with stakeholders and generating new formats of project acquisition are remarkable, particularly given the financial and administrative pressure they are experiencing. NPG has succeeded in consolidating and strengthening its institutional base by way of hiring new research staff and considerably extending third stream funding. Six years after the merger with PS, clear synergies have been created and the interdisciplinary collaboration of NPG with other colleagues of the FSS and beyond has been considerably enhanced. Congruent with the long-standing publishing strategy aimed at international publications at FSS, the number of publications in internationally renowned journals has – though slowly and only recently – increased. The Committee encourages NPG to pursue this trajectory further and to intensify its attention to international publications in peer reviewed journals without devaluing the important research and publications in other formats. NPG was very successful in extending research time through more external (third stream) funds and PhD candidates. However, the decreased number of permanent staff, the decline in direct funding, the low share of second stream funding and the reliance on contract research as the major source of income mark considerable organisational challenges for NPG. Work pressure for research staff has grown and junior staff in particular perceive teaching loads and numbers of students as increasingly onerous. The Committee acknowledges that NPG has taken a number of measures to remedy these problems, such as a new tenure model with more research time, additional positions and strategies for enhancing grant applications, and reworking the financial model for teaching. To guarantee an academic environment that fosters productivity and to uphold staff members' motivation the balancing of research time, teaching load and outreach to society and other activities need continued attention, especially taking junior staff's situation into account. Furthermore, efforts should be intensified to attract prestigious grants and to convert successful contract research experience and contacts into second stream grant applications, which has considerable potential.

Concerning the interaction with stakeholders and the creative use of knowledge hubs, labs, and different institutes (ISR, TALMA), the Committee suggests junior staff be involved more systematically, e.g. by increasing the institutional clarity about these different collaboration formats. The further improvement of NPG's overall coherence, its organisational and conceptual consolidation as a research group striving for an integrated approach, bridging sub-groups, creating synergies with PS and intensifying the interdisciplinary collaboration within ISR merit continued efforts in the future. It is in the interest of the university to maintain the institutional resilience and viability of NPG as an important international PA research centre, given the relatively small size of the group while at the same time tensions regarding resource allocation increase and it is in everyone's interest that high performance levels are maintained or strengthened further. Finally, increasing the staff diversity appears to be another key challenge to be addressed by NPG. The Committee assesses NPG's capacities as strong to cope with the challenges ahead, though recognising that austerity measures from the coronavirus pandemic may create pressures. But it would be a false economy to cut the group financially,



as they have the talent and the imagination to further enhance research quality and productivity. Strong endorsement and recognition from the faculty and the university are important conditions for maintaining high performance and viability of NPG in the long run.



Appendix A - Programme of the site visit (on-line using either Teams or Zoom)

Sunday November 15 2020

Time	Part
15.00 – 19.00	General preparation committee

Monday November 16 2020

Time	Part
Leiden university	
14.00 – 14.30	Preparatory meeting
14.30 – 15.10	Management
15.20 – 15.55	PhD candidates
15.55 – 16.10	Evaluation and break
16.10 – 16.45	Junior staff
16.55 – 17.35	Senior staff
17.35 – 18.30	Break
18.30 – 19.00	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
19.00 – 20.00	Management
20.00 – 20.30	Evaluation

Tuesday November 17 2020

Time	Part
Erasmus University Rotterdam	
14.00 – 14.30	Preparatory meeting
14.30 – 15.10	Management
15.20 – 15.55	PhD candidates
15.55 – 16.10	Evaluation and break
16.10 – 16.45	Junior staff
16.55 – 17.35	Senior staff
17.35 – 18.30	Break
18.30 – 19.00	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
19.00 – 20.00	Management
20.00 – 20.30	Evaluation

Wednesday November 18

Time	Part
Utrecht University	
14.00 – 14.30	Preparatory meeting
14.30 – 15.10	Management



15.20 – 15.55	PhD candidates
15.55 – 16.10	Evaluation and break
16.10 – 16.45	Junior staff
16.55 – 17.35	Senior staff
17.35 – 18.30	Break
18.30 – 19.00	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
19.00 – 20.00	Management
20.00 – 20.30	Evaluation

Thursday November 19 2020

Time	Part
Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam	
14.00 – 14.30	Preparatory meeting
14.30 – 15.10	Management
15.20 – 15.55	PhD candidates
15.55 – 16.10	Evaluation and break
16.10 – 16.45	Junior staff
16.55 – 17.35	Senior staff
17.35 – 18.30	Break
18.30 – 19.00	Reflections and preparing questions for the management
19.00 – 20.00	Management
20.00 – 20.30	Evaluation

Friday November 20 2020

Time	Part
9.30 – 10.05	Stakeholders Leiden University
10.15 – 10.50	Stakeholders Erasmus University Rotterdam
11.00 – 11.35	Stakeholders Utrecht University
11.45 – 12.20	Stakeholders Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam
12.20 – 12.50	Evaluation

Monday November 23 2020

Time	Part
12.00 -17.00	General evaluation
17.00	Presentation all institutes



Appendix B.1 - Quantitative data Leiden University

Table 1 Research staff in fte Leiden

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scientific staff	7.14	9.15	10.61	10.52	11.67	11.94
Post-docs	0.27	0.70	1	1.23	0.48	0.88
PhD candidates	5.4	6.23	8.29	8.59	9.52	10.83
Total research staff	12.81	16.08	19.9	20.34	21.67	23.65

Table 2 Funding – Leiden

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Funding in fte and %</i>						
Direct funding	43.2 (85.5%)	46.6 (81.9%)	47.0 (79.9%)	53.0 (78.9%)	51.8 (77.6%)	52.4 (76.8%)
Research grants	5.2 (10.3%)	7.8 (13.7%)	7.5 (12.8%)	8.3 (12.4%)	6.0 (9.0%)	8.2 (12.1%)
Contract research	2.1 (4.2%)	1.7 (3.0%)	1.3 (2.2%)	2.7 (4.0%)	2.5 (3.8%)	4.3 (6.3%)
Other	0.0 (0%)	0.8 (1.4%)	3.0 (5.1%)	3.1 (4.7%)	6.4 (9.6%)	3.3 (4.8%)
Total funding	50.5 (100%)	56.9 (100%)	58.8 (100%)	67.2 (100%)	66.7 (100%)	68.2 (100%)

Table 3 PhD completion – Leiden University

Enrolment															
Starting year				Graduated after (≤) 4 years		Graduated after (≤) 5 years		Graduated after (≤) 6 years		Graduated after (≤) 7 years		Not yet finished		Discontinued	
	M	F	M+F	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2011	2	3	5	1	20%	4	80%	4	80%	4	80%	-	-	-	-
2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2013	-	2	2	0	-	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	1	50%	-	-
2014	2	1	3	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%			2	66%	-	-
2015	2	2	4	0	-	1	25%					3	75%	-	-
Total	6	8	14	2	14%	7	50%					6	43%	-	-



Appendix B.2 - Quantitative data Erasmus University Rotterdam

Table 1 Research staff in fte - Erasmus University Rotterdam

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scientific staff	12.9	11.3	10.6	10.0	10.4	11.5
Post-docs	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.4	4.0	5.1
PhD candidates	20.6	18.5	19.3	16.7	17.7	16.5
Total research staff	35.5	31.7	31.8	29.1	32.1	33.1

Table 2 Funding – Erasmus University Rotterdam

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Funding in fte</i>						
Direct funding	19.2 (54%)	20.0 (63%)	19.9 (63%)	19.5 (67%)	19.5 (61%)	20.9 (63%)
Research grants	4.8 (14%)	4.4 (14%)	4.5 (14%)	4.4 (15%)	4.8 (15%)	3.9 (12%)
Contract research	11.5 (32%)	7.3 (23%)	7.4 (23%)	5.2 (18%)	7.8 (24%)	8.3 (25%)
Total funding	35.5 (100%)	31.7 (100%)	31.8 (100%)	29.1 (100%)	32.1 (100%)	33.1 (100%)

Table 3 PhD completion – Erasmus University Rotterdam

Enrolment																	
Starting year				Graduated after (<=) 4 years		Graduated after (<=) 5 years		Graduated after (<=) 6 years		Graduated after (<=) 7 years		Total graduated		Not yet finished		Discontinued	
	M	F	M+F	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2011	2	2	4	0	0%	2	50%	2	50%	2	50%	3	75%	1	25%	0	0%
2012	2	4	6	0	0%	2	33%	4	67%	4	67%	5	83%	0	0%	1	17%
2013	2	4	6	0	0%	2	33%	5	83%	5	83%	5	83%	1	17%	0	0%
2014	0	3	3	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%			1	33%	1	33%	1	33%
2015	2	4	6	0	0%	3	50%					3	50%	3	50%	0	0%
Total	8	17	25	0	0%							17	68%	6	24%	2	8%



Appendix B.3 - Quantitative data Utrecht University

Table 1 Research staff in fte - Utrecht University

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scientific staff	14.37	15.10	19.57	25.26	26.95	23.86
Post-docs	0.85	0.91	0.40	1.93	2.77	2.43
PhD candidates	8.49	8.53	9.54	14.58	12.97	11.64
Total research staff	23.71	24.54	29.51	41.78	42.68	37.92

Table 2 Funding – Utrecht University

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Funding in fte</i>						
Direct funding	13.45 (56.7%)	14.20 (57.9%)	15.51 (52.6%)	19.49 (46.6%)	22.64 (53.0%)	20.88 (55.0%)
Research grants	4.57 (19.3%)	6.33 (25.8%)	8.43 (28.6%)	11.44 (27.4%)	9.90 (23.2%)	8.08 (21.3%)
Contract research	5.69 (24.0%)	4.01 (16.3%)	5.57 (18.9%)	10.86 (26.0%)	10.15 (23.8%)	8.97 (23.7%)
Total funding	23.71 (100%)	24.54 (100%)	29.51 (100%)	41.78 (100%)	42.68 (100%)	37.92 (100%)

Table 3 PhD completion – Utrecht University

Enrolment															
Starting year				Graduated after (<=) 4 years		Graduated after (<=) 5 years		Graduated after (<=) 6 years		Graduated after (<=) 7 years		Not yet finished		Discontinued	
	M	F	M+F	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2011	4	3	7	0	0%	2	29%	2	29%	4	57%	2	29%	1	14%
2012	-	1	1	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2013	1	2	3	0	0%	0	0%	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%	1	33%
2014	2	1	3	0	0%	1	33%	2	67%			0	0%	1	33%
2015	3	2	5	0	0%							5	100%	0	0%
Total	10	9	19	0	0%							8	42%	3	16%



Appendix B.4 - Quantitative data Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Table 1 Research staff in fte- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scientific staff	3.86	3.96	3.64	3.59	3.07	3.45
Post-docs	0.90	2.36	1.63	0.90	2.39	2.00
PhD candidates	1.33	1.61	2.05	2.20	3.40	3.32
Total research staff	6.09	7.93	7.32	6.69	8.86	8.77

Table 2 Funding – Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>Funding in fte</i>						
Direct funding	4.34 (73.4%)	4.59 (57.9%)	4.35 (59.4%)	4.64 (69.4%)	3.79 (42.8%)	2.98 (34.0%)
Research grants	0.40 (6.8%)	0.60 (7.6%)	0.60 (8.2%)	0.06 (0.9%)	-	0.21 (2.4%)
Contract research	1.17 (19.8%)	2.74 (34.6%)	2.37 (32.4%)	1.99 (29.8%)	5.07 (57.2%)	5.58 (63.6%)
Total funding	5.91 (100%)	7.93 (100%)	7.32 (100%)	6.69 (100%)	8.86 (100%)	8.77 (100%)

Table 3 PhD completion – Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

Enrolment															
Starting year				Graduated after (\leq) 4 years		Graduated after (\leq) 5 years		Graduated after (\leq) 6 years		Graduated after (\leq) 7 years		Not yet finished		Discontinued	
	M	F	M+F	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2011	1	-	1	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	1	100%	0	0%	0	0%
2012	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2013		1	1	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%	1	100%	0	0%
2014	1	1	2	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%			2	100%	0	0%
2015	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	2	2	4									3	75%		



Appendix C – Meaning of the scores

Category	Meaning	Research quality	Relevance to society	Viability
1	World leading/ excellent	The research unit has been shown to be one of the few most influential research groups in the world in its particular field	The research unit makes an outstanding contribution to society	The research unit is excellently equipped for the future
2	Very good	The research unit conducts very good, internationally recognised research	The research unit makes a very good contribution to society	The research unit is very well equipped for the future
3	Good	The research unit conducts good research	The research unit makes a good contribution to society	The research unit makes responsible strategic decisions and is therefore well equipped for the future
4	Unsatisfactory	The research unit does not achieve satisfactory results in its field	The research unit does not make a satisfactory contribution to society	The research unit is not adequately equipped for the future

