Academia in Motion:
Recognition & Rewards at Leiden University

Universiteit Leiden

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How can we ensure that Leiden University becomes the best possible work environment and how can we improve the quality of education, research, societal relevance[1] and leadership? 'Academia in Motion: Recognition & Rewards' has been produced by Leiden University as a contribution to the national initiative for a new approach to Recognition & Rewards in the academic community.

The **position paper 'Room for everyone's talent'** of the Dutch public knowledge institutions and funders (VSNU, NFU, KNAW, NWO and ZonMw) argues for a culture change, with the goals: a better balance between education, research and societal relevance; better methods of Recognition & Rewards; an open academic community; and more emphasis on teamwork. The VSNU is currently working on a framework for assessment, development and promotion that will form the basis for a new University Job Classification System (UFO). NWO and ZonMw are creating more diversity in their funding instruments, and the application forms now have a more narrative character. The Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP) for assessing research units will further implement the new Recognition & Rewards principles.

'Academia in Motion' shows that Leiden University takes Recognition & Rewards seriously. Our aim is to engage in dialogue with the academic community so that together we can create a better form of Recognition & Rewards. We also want to keep everyone informed about the latest developments in the academic world in the area of Recognition & Rewards. This document sets out what the basic principles are, what we aim to work on, what is already happening at Leiden University, and where the challenges lie in.

[1] The terms 'impact', 'societal relevance' and 'valorisation' are used interchangeably in the Dutch debate on academic research. 'Impact' suggests a linear relationship between research and society, in which the source, target and content can be clearly delineated and identified. 'Valorisation' is seen by many as having largely economic connotations, while other ways of applying knowledge (social, cultural, technological) should also be assessed. We have therefore chosen the more neutral term 'societal relevance' here.

2 Leiden University: Diversity in unity

Leiden University has a long tradition as a broad-based university with a wide diversity of academic domains in which research and education are strongly linked. The University's motto is Praesidium Libertatis – Bastion of Liberty. This core value is expressed in many ways, including the high degree of freedom of the research community to choose the focus of what it studies.

The emphasis on individual academic freedom is also evident in the space allowed for developing cutting-edge research and the individual excellence displayed by our scholars. At the same time, there is discussion: does individuality prevail at the expense of teamwork, and does the societal relevance of academic research and education receive enough attention and appreciation?

Staff and student participation is well established within the University, yet people often have the impression that decisions are primarily made by professors, academic directors and deans. Is it clear enough for all members of staff how decision-making takes place? Do they feel that the process is sufficiently transparent and that they have adequate input? An open academic culture is an important condition for an inclusive university and is one of the focus areas in our 'Academia in Motion: Recognition & Rewards at Leiden University'.

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3 Recognition & Rewards: Why is a change in this necessary?

In recent years a discussion has arisen in academic communities at both the national and international level about how academics work and how their work is assessed, rewarded and recognised. The immediate impetus for of the discussion about Recognition & Rewards includes the heavy workload, lack of transparency in career policy, quality of assessment and leadership. The concerns can be grouped into three main points:

- Academics feel that too much emphasis is placed on research performance, and that education, societal relevance, leadership and academic patient care in university medical centres are undervalued. Although the importance and value of strong links between research, education and societal relevance are generally recognised, this finds very little expression in everyday practice. (see: Teaching Cultures Survey; Statement | Recognition and Rewards of Academics)

[2] We follow the European Commission (EC) here in using the term 'open science'. The EC started to use this term after a public consultation in 2015 (European Commission (2015). **Validation of the Results of the Public Consultation on Science 2.0: Science in Transition.**) However, our principles also focus explicitly on 'open scholarship', which additionally covers the humanities, law and social sciences, or parts thereof.

- Since the Declaration of Research Asessment (DORA) was issued in 2012 and Science in Transition was launched in the Netherlands in 2013, academics have been arguing for better assessment of research results by research funders, publishers and academic institutions. Research assessment places too much emphasis on simplistic quantitative metrics (number of publications, h-index and journal impact factors) and too little on quality and creativity. This results in a heavy workload and unequal assessment of the various research domains, and also forms an obstacle to diversity, knowledge utilisation and open science.[2] (see: Leiden Manifesto; CWTS: Responsible Evaluation)

- The assessment of education and research strongly emphasises individual performance, while complex academic and societal issues call for teamwork, often of a multidisciplinary nature. It is also insufficiently acknowledged that academic performance in education and research is the outcome not only of individual performance but also of teamwork. This means there is often an imbalance between individual ambitions and collective interests. (see: The Royal Society: Changing expectations)

4 Our ambitions:
Diversification of careers, transparency and leadership

Leiden University's ambition in the coming years is to bring about a change in the academic environment, focusing on diversification of academic careers, transparency and leadership. We will draw inspiration from existing initiatives and 'good practices' in these areas.[3]

Diversification of academic careers

A better balance is needed in the Recognition & Rewards for talents and performance in the different domains (research, education, societal relevance and leadership). We need to enable diversification in career paths, so that performance in all of these domains is incentivised. Achieving a better balance requires greater focus on assessment, inclusivity and teamwork.

Assessment
Teaching is among the most important tasks of the majority of academics, yet the emphasis in appointments, promotions and grant applications is often on research performance.

Academics are additionally expected to conduct research with societal relevance and undertake administrative duties. This results in certain tasks being undervalued. There is also a heavy workload because academics feel they have to perform well in all domains. The Recognition & Rewards initiative is an attempt to create more room for everyone's talents and a better balance between research, education, societal relevance and leadership.

Several projects are already ongoing: the University Teaching Qualification (BKO) and Senior Teaching Qualification (SKO), which were introduced in recent years, have focused more attention on education, and promotion can now take place on the basis of teaching performance; Leiden University is one of the participants in the Teaching Cultures Survey; a Teacher Development Taskforce, led by Kristiaan van der Heijden (Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Social & Behavioural

[3] Definition of good practices: 'not only a practice that is good, but a practice that has been proven to work well and produce good results, and is therefore recommended as a model' (europa.eu).

Sciences), is working on ways to assess professional development as a teacher and educational leadership; and the LUMC has produced a plan for diversity in career paths.

Our aim is to achieve a better balance not only in **what** is assessed, but also in **how** the assessment is made. Greater emphasis must be placed on the quality of the work (content, academic integrity, creativity and contribution to scholarship and society) and less on quantitative results and metrics.

We intend to focus more on the quality of work when making assessments for appointments, promotions, P&D interviews and grant applications. A number of Leiden University scholars and international colleagues produced the Leiden Manifesto, which formulates 10 principles for appropriate research evaluation and how to prevent improper use of quantitative indicators. In the context of greater emphasis on quality, NWO en ZonMW and the Strategy Evaluation Protocol have introduced quality narratives.

A good work environment with scope for differentiation is also an inclusive work environment that takes account of differences between staff members and between disciplines. Leiden University is a participant in the national diversity and inclusiveness action plan and Aya Ezawa, the University's Diversity Officer, has drawn up a concrete Diversity and Inclusion Work Plan.

Teamwork

We need a better balance in assessment of individual and collective performance, so that researchers are assessed not only on their individual performance but also on their contribution to collaborations. The assessment must therefore do justice to both the individual qualities and ambitions of researchers and the importance of cooperation within and between institutes, research units, organisations and teams. We will try to find a good balance between these elements, while also taking account of the different disciplines.

Transparency

All aspects of open science need to be stimulated more, such as sharing scholarly results with society and promoting the accessibility of research results. This will enable valuable knowledge to be used by researchers, companies and public organisations.

The NWO's **Open Science policy** stipulates that all publications based on NWO-funded research must be immediately available via open access, and open science is now on the agenda of all universities. The Leiden University **'Open Science'** steering group, led by Paul Wouters (Dean of the Faculty of Social & Behavioural Sciences), is developing a vision on open science to encourage researchers to put open science into practice and to commit to the **national** and **European** open science policies.

An open academic culture also involves transparency in career options, appointments, remunerations, promotions and the right to supervise PhDs. There must be more clarity about career prospects, conditions for permanent appointment and criteria for promotion. It is also important here that individual ambitions and goals should be aligned with the institution's overarching goals. Good examples of the kind of transparency we hope to achieve include the possibility of choosing between career paths and the promotion of associate professors on the basis of teaching performance.

Leadership

Good leadership is an important key to accomplishing a culture change in Recognition & Rewards. Leadership is essential for many factors: a sense of being valued, actual recognition, work assessment, work-life balance, the endeavour for inclusiveness and transparency in appointments and promotions.
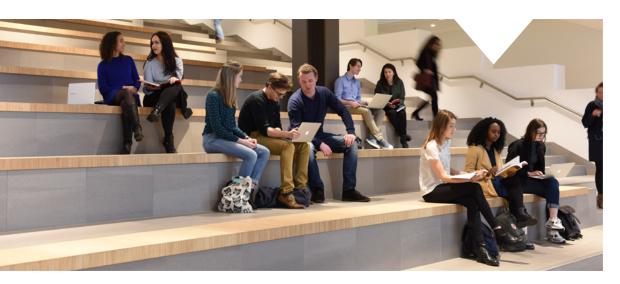
The development of leadership and coaching courses has proven to be successful, and they lead to greater understanding of one another's responsibilities and help to create an 'appreciative work culture'. The Leiden University 'Leadership' steering group, led by Joanne van der Leun (Dean of Leiden Law School), recommended that we should develop leadership with more emphasis on collaboration and social safety. The focus on collaborative leadership and a culture change 'from I to we' should also have implications for policy relating to remuneration, promotion and careers.

A change in the Recognition & Rewards culture is only successful if it enjoys broad-based and bottom-up support (Rewards need to change, but we must recognise the difficulties). A few of the points requiring attention are listed below:

• There are large cultural differences between institutions and academic domains, and they also differ in their willingness to change. How can we ensure that on the one hand institutions are willing to learn from experiences and 'good practices' elsewhere, but on the other retain their own specific characteristics?

• Although everyone emphasises the importance of the societal relevance of research, the question is whether it is desirable and/or possible to enforce this by means of grant applications (NWO or ERC). And here again, there are differences between the various academic domains in terms of opportunities and options for the societal relevance of research.

• Switching from quantitative to qualitative criteria for assessment creates uncertainty in the researchers (especially young researchers) who are being assessed and also in those who are assessing them: how are criteria for promotion determined and on what basis are they assessed? How competitive is your CV at the international level if you concentrate on teaching and societal relevance? How should committee members assess a narrative CV? This culture change can also create uncertainty for established researchers: are the criteria used for their appointment now less valid, and will they be expected to change their career path in line with the new culture?

5 Dilemmas
Points for attention at a glance

- It is not evident for all academic domains how the focus on teams and consortia will work, and it may also not be desirable. In some disciplines in the Social Sciences and Humanities domain, the type of research is more suited to individual research than teamwork, or the collaboration is mainly grant-driven (through NWO and ERC criteria).

- We must be careful that a new balance in Recognition & Rewards does not result in guidelines and procedures that on the one hand take insufficient account of disciplinary differences and on the other lose sight of the core values.

- How can we ensure that we retain a good balance between the interests of the collective (institutes, universities) and the interests of the individual?

- We need to take into account the diversity of academic positions, especially the distinction between academics with permanent and temporary appointments.

- Recognition & Rewards relate to everyone in the academic world: both academic staff and administrative and support staff.

6 How are we going to do it?

Leiden University's Executive Board has set up a Recognition & Rewards steering group, consisting of a broad representation of staff from all faculties and a variety of positions and roles.

The steering group was launched in April 2020 with the following goals, formulated by the Executive Board:

• To redefine the balance in the rewards for research, education, societal relevance and 'service to the organisation', at both the individual level and the group level;

• To place less emphasis on individual performance and more on team performance when assessing societal performance;

• To find a new way to use metrics & rankings (norms, values, trust in the open science perspective) in policy-making and in decision-making about the careers of academics;

• To strengthen academic leadership.

The steering group was appointed for a period of 18 months and its tasks are:

• To formulate a vision on Recognition & Rewards for Leiden University, based on national and international developments and incorporating the expertise available in the faculties;

• To translate the formulated vision into concrete and practicable goals;

• To formulate a clearly delineated plan of approach for the Recognition & Rewards programme, based on the vision and the goals;

• After discussing the programme plan with the faculties and obtaining the Executive Board's consent, to coordinate the implementation and execution of this plan.

The steering group's chairs and project leader represent the University in the national committee, comprising the chairs of the university steering groups and organised by the VSNU. They also participate in an international group, which shares experiences, plans and good practices in the area of Recognition & Rewards.

7 Members of the Leiden University Recognition & Rewards steering group

Chairs:

Manon van der Heijden (Professor of Comparative Urban History, Academic Director of the Institute for History, Faculty of Humanities)

Sarah de Rijcke (Professor of Science and Evaluation Studies, Academic Director of the Centre for Science & Technology Studies (CWTS), Faculty of Social & Behavioural Sciences)

Project leader:

Vincent Wolters (Senior Policy Adviser, Administration & Central Services/Administration/HRM)

Other members:

Albert Dahan (Professor of Anesthesiology, LUMC)

Vacancy (Director of Human Resource Management)

Frank den Hollander (Professor of Probability, Mathematical Institute, Faculty of Science; chair of WeCo (Committee for Academic Practice))

Karin Horsman (Director of Strategy & Academic Affairs, Administration & Central Services/Strategy & Academic Affairs)

Sanneke Kuipers (Associate Professor in Crisis Management, ISGA, Director of Education, FGGA)

Aukje Nauta (Professor by Special Appointment, Institute of Psychology, Faculty of Social & Behavioural Sciences)

Helen Pluut (Associate Professor in Business Studies, Leiden Law School; chair of Young Academy Leiden)

Jasper van der Steen (Postdoc, Faculty of Social & Behavioural Sciences)

Mirjam Sombroek (Director of Operational Management, Associate Professor in Health Law, Leiden Law School)

Kees Tensen (Programme Director of BSc Biomedical Sciences, LUMC)

Principles of the steering group
- To do justice to the diversity and variety of faculties and staff
- To create broad-based support for plans
- To provide transparent communication about the plan of approach

7 Plan of approach steering group

Orientation
April – September 2020
- Recognition & Rewards memo and presentation: for information
- Inventory of practices and good practices in P&D interviews, appointment and promotion
- Dialogue:
  - Information round of faculties and administrative bodies
  - Interviews by steering group members with broad representation of staff

Study
September 2020 – February 2021
- Dialogue:
  - Publication of 'Academia in Motion: Recognition & Rewards at Leiden University' and website
  - Plan for focus groups
- Designing and conducting targeted survey

Analysis
September 2020 – February 2021
- Analysis of collected data and survey results
- Dialogue:
  - Focus groups in faculties
  - Information round of faculties and administrative bodies

Setting priorities
March – May 2021
- Setting priorities on the basis of data analysis, survey results and information round
- Dialogue: round of faculties and administrative bodies
- Translating vision into concrete goals

Implementation – proposals
From summer 2021
- Plan of approach for implementing the vision
- Dialogue: round of faculties and administrative bodies
- Implementation and execution