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**Statement Executive Board
regarding the research review of Psychology**

DATE	OUR REFERENCE	
18.03.2024	RdW/ys/2024/143	
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Subject: statement Executive Board regarding the research review of Psychology

The Executive Board received and considered the final report of the research evaluation of Psychology. This evaluation of psychological research programs of eight Dutch universities was coordinated by Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam and covered the period 2017-2022. It was conducted in the context of the national Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP). An external evaluation committee received a written self-evaluation report written by the unit. During a site visit in October 2023 the committee had meetings and held interviews with different categories of staff involved in psychological research at the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences. Together, this formed the basis for the assessment report.

On the national level the review committee confirms the strong reputation of Dutch psychological research. According to the committee the citation scores reflect the high scientific impact of the Dutch psychological research, also internationally when compared to reference countries. As for Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, the committee concludes that the psychological research is of a very high level, both quantitatively and qualitatively, and it is technically and methodically innovative. In addition, the quality of the infrastructure and instruments is judged to be admirable. Open science and scientific integrity are well put into practice and are the norm at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. The committee sees a very solid basis when it comes to funding, personnel and infrastructure. Moreover, management and leadership is praised by the committee. The assessment of the viability of the research is very positive.

The committee notes that a lot of the research is of a fundamental nature, the topic areas and questions are significant and cutting-edge in the field. At the same time, social relevance has been demonstrated in the self-evaluation report and in the committee's discussions during the visit. The committee emphasizes outreach through the involvement of external stakeholders, presence in the media and policy advice for, among others, the Health Council of the Netherlands (Gezondheidsraad), World Health Organization, UNESCO and the Ministry of Justice & Security. The development and implementation of e-health apps in collaboration with mental health providers is also noted.

Recommendations were also made by the committee, they can be found in the published report. Among these are:

- Make quantitative self-evaluation part of the ongoing culture by building in formal empirical evaluation plans for new policies, practices, research endeavours, and initiatives.
- Consider and evaluate the Vrije Universiteit's stance toward post-doctoral research staff.

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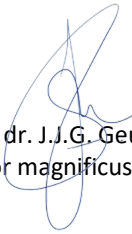
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- Facilitate equal opportunities, as far as is practically possible, for both employed PhD candidates and PhD candidates on other contracts, such as research budget and community participation.
- Increase communication across teams to share the best practices and standard operating procedures of individual research teams at the Vrije Universiteit, which could benefit other teams.
- Prepare associate professors for future senior management roles, with the aim to achieve greater diversity among leaders at the top.
- Conduct a formal long-term horizon scanning and risk assessment.

The Executive Board received a written response to the assessment report from the faculty which is enclosed in this document. Together with the report and recommendations this was discussed in a meeting on 13 March with the faculty board within the regular quality assurance cycle. The Executive Board is proud of the unit's research and will continue to support the faculty in further enhancing the quality and relevance of the research.

Finally, the Executive Board appreciates the thorough and careful assessment by the committee and wishes to express its gratitude to the committee for the considerable time and effort invested in the evaluation and to the people involved at the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences for the diligent preparation.

Yours sincerely,
On behalf of the Executive Board


prof. dr. J.J.G. Geurts,
rector magnificus

Enclosure: Response letter, board of the Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences

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Vrije Universiteit
Prof. dr. J.G. Geurts – Rector Magnificus
Via: rectormagnificus@vu.nl
cc: r.dewaard@vu.nl

DATE	OUR REFERENCE	YOUR LETTER OF	YOUR REFERENCE
07-02-2024	2024_013.IP		
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Onderwerp: Bestuurlijke reactie op commissierapport onderzoeksevaluatie Psychologie 2023

Geachte rector magnificus, beste Jeroen,

Naar aanleiding van het definitieve adviesrapport, in het kader van de door de VU gecoördineerde landelijke visitatie psychologie, vind je bijgesloten een schriftelijke reactie op de conclusies en aanbevelingen die door de commissie zijn gedaan. In lijn met de handreiking onderzoeksevaluaties VU 2020-2027 wil ik je vragen zowel onze facultaire reactie, afgestemd met de afdelingshoofden psychologie en geaccordeerd door het faculteitsbestuur, samen met het definitieve rapport ter advisering voor te leggen aan de Universitaire Toetsingscommissie.

Het rapport en onze facultaire reactie bespreken wij graag op 13 maart 2024 tijdens het portefeuillehouderoverleg in meer detail om te zien of er eventueel aanvullende afspraken dienen te worden gemaakt. Pas nadat het CvB haar standpunt heeft bepaald en het UTC haar advies heeft gegeven zullen wij het adviesrapport, een samenvatting van de zelfevaluatie en het standpunt van het CvB via de website publiceren.

Vriendelijke groet,



Prof.dr. M.W. van Tulder
Decaan VU-FGB

Research Review – Psychology 2017-2022: Administrative Response

We first would like to express our sincere gratitude and appreciation for the review committee's efforts in assessing our research units in psychology. We are delighted to read the positive and constructive report and are particularly pleased that the review committee identified "the Netherlands Twin Register [and the many other outstanding research projects] as a national point[s] of scientific pride" that we will surely continue to support in the years to come. The committee expressed detailed recommendations that we briefly address below.

- *Make quantitative self-evaluation part of the ongoing culture by building in formal empirical evaluation plans for new policies, practices, research endeavours, and initiatives.*

We already initiated several steps along this line. For instance, the launch of starters- and stimulation-grants and the SSH sector plan call for a close monitoring of the accompanying activities. We will implement this in (the evaluation of) our annual plans, aligning with university-wide activities across SSH-domains.

- *Conduct a formal long-term horizon scanning and risk assessment.*

There are (at least) two steps to take. (1) In line with the faculty's annual plan, we will extend the departmental annual plans with a formal SWOT-analysis, formulated by the respective management teams, and shared with department members. Note that a SWOT-analysis has already been integral part of the multi-annual plans, but we agree that the speed of current developments calls for updating and sharing it on a yearly basis. (2) The general focus on team science and present increase in cross-departmental endeavours renders shared strategic personnel planning beneficial. We will hence align this across departments.

- *Consider and evaluate the Vrije Universiteit's stance toward post-doctoral research staff.*

The committee's concerns about the support for post-doctoral fellows is understandable. We have several measures in place to improve the career prospects of junior researchers. For example, we provide them with the opportunity to obtain a University Teaching Qualification. We do that since many years and appreciate the corresponding addition to the recent [Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities](#) (Appendix M).

- *Facilitate equal opportunities, as far as is practically possible, for both employed PhD candidates and PhD candidates on other contracts, such as research budget and community participation.*

FBMS-support for PhD candidates currently does not discriminate between employment status; employed PhD candidates and those on other contracts have equal access to facilities and receive a similar budget for training and travelling. And PhD candidates on external scholarships receive a top-up to at least minimum wage levels. Despite having formalised this stance on several occasions including the formal training and supervision plan for PhDs, there appears a lingering belief with some of the PhD candidates on other contracts that they cannot benefit from financial support to customise their training and to cover conference visits. This clearly calls for improving the information flow towards PhD candidates and their supervisors.

- *Increase communication across teams to share the best practices and standard operating procedures of individual research teams at the Vrije Universiteit, which could benefit other teams.*

In fall 2023 the VU installed a [Research & Impact Support Portal](#), a central link to find regulations and standard procedures as well as university-wide and faculty-specific policies and contacts. Next to this, the FBMS seeks to update the research-related content at the departmental webpages based on [research.vu.nl](#) and highlighting teams of researchers.

- *Prepare associate professors for future senior management roles, with the aim to achieve greater diversity among leaders at the top.*

This is an important point as it targets the viability of our research (units) at its heart. In 2022 the VU updated its [management framework](#) that we use as a starting point for identifying talents, selection of future leaders, training, staff review, appointment, and career promotion. FBMS embraces these activities. The VU [diversity office](#) (DO) reviews our vacancy texts and supports the selection process. The Diversity Office launched several [projects](#) to facilitate the university's inclusivity – see, e.g., the '[Colourful Staff Action Plan](#)'.

Of note, some of the recommendations are also being addressed at university level. The current attention for improving the recognition-and-reward system will pave new career paths for junior researchers and increase

diversity among the future leaders. We trust that the VU will continue to be a solid base for research in psychology to flourish further.