

# Change vision for Recognition & Rewards at Leiden University

Academia in Motion



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# 1

## Introduction steering group Recognition & Rewards

‘Connecting, innovative, responsible, free’ are the core values expressed in the Leiden University Strategic Plan 2022-2027. Recognition & Rewards (R&R) is an important element in the Strategic Plan, and Leiden University has produced the document [Academia in Motion](#) as a contribution to the national initiative for a new approach to Recognition & Rewards in academic scholarship. 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 and leadership?

In April 2020 the Executive Board of Leiden University set up the Recognition & Rewards steering group, consisting of a broad representation of staff from all faculties and a variety of positions and roles. The Recognition & Rewards steering group was given the following remit:

- 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 defined plan of approach for the Recognition & Rewards programme, based on the vision and the goals.



# 1

# Introduction steering group Recognition & Rewards

This assignment has now been completed and we have issued our advice to the Executive Board. In this document, 'Change Vision on Recognition & Rewards at Leiden University', we are pleased to share the results with our colleagues and anyone else who may be interested. We begin with a brief explanation of the basic principles of Recognition & Rewards. We then present the most important findings of studies and initiatives in the Leiden University context, also linking these with the Strategic Plan 2022-2027. Finally, we formulate our change vision: the goals we want to achieve, the key elements of change, the way in which change can be organised, the stakeholders involved, the uncertainties and risks, and the budget that will be required. Recognition & Rewards represents a culture change in the longer term, and the timeline of our change vision is 2022-2026.

Leiden, April, 2022

## Steering group Recognition & Rewards Leiden University

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# 2

## What is Recognition & Rewards?

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.

Recurrent aspects in this national and international discussion on Recognition & Rewards include the heavy workload, lack of transparency in career policy, integrity issues, lack of research reproducibility and the quality of assessment and leadership. Research funders around the world are reflecting on their role and looking for alternative approaches to assessment.<sup>1</sup>

The European Commission positions itself as an important player in promoting responsible assessment systems.<sup>2</sup> [ScienceEurope recently published a number of policy recommendations](#), addressed to research organisations, to ensure that assessments are effective, efficient, fair and transparent. [LERU also endorses this aim, giving a vision on the future of Recognition & Rewards of academics.](#)

In the Netherlands, the public knowledge institutions and research funders (UNL (formerly VSNU), NFWO, KNAW, NWO and ZonMw) published the position paper [Room for everyone's talent](#), which argues for more balance in academics' careers; more emphasis on quality and less on quantity; stimulation of all aspects of open science; and encouragement of high-quality academic leadership.



*Academia in Motion* shows that Leiden University takes Recognition & Rewards seriously and is committed to engaging in dialogue with the academic community and creating a better form of Recognition & Rewards.

<sup>1</sup> [Global Research Council: Responsible Research Assessment](#)

<sup>2</sup> [European Commission: Towards a reform of the research assessment system](#)

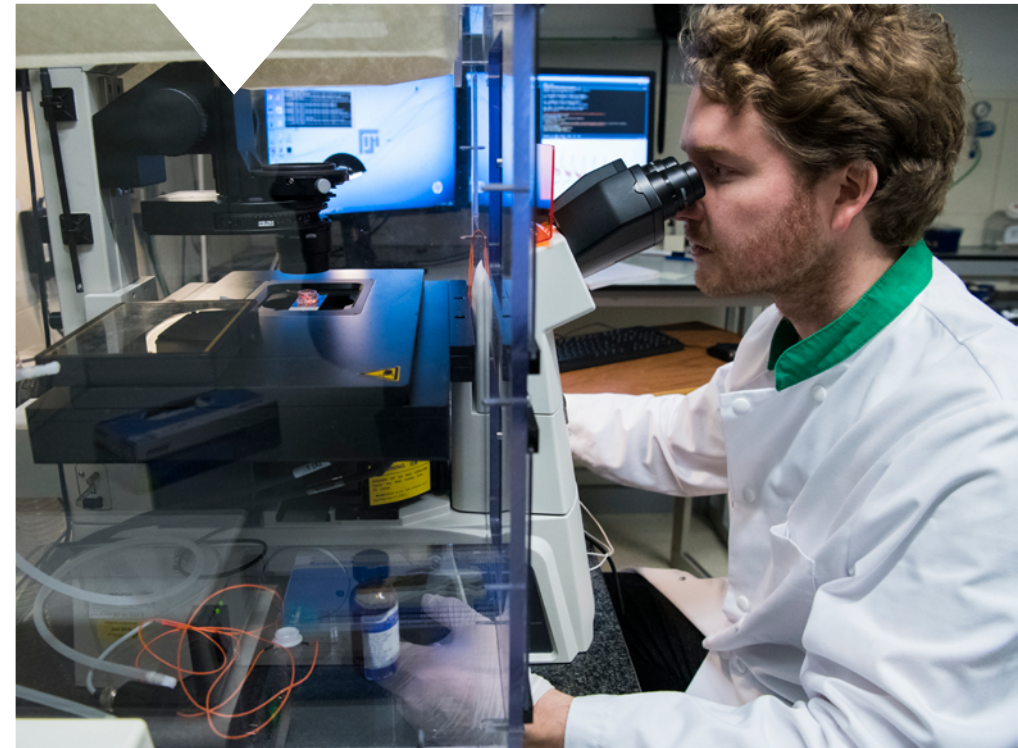
# 2

## What is Recognition & Rewards?

### Concerns about Recognition & Rewards

The concerns relate to three points:

- Academics feel that too much emphasis is placed on research performance, and that education, societal relevance, leadership and patient care are undervalued.
- Since the *Declaration of Research Assessment* (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. 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.
- The assessment of education and research strongly emphasises individual performance, while complex academic and societal issues call for collaboration, often of an inter- and 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, which can result in imbalance between individual ambitions and collective interests.

# 2

## What is Recognition & Rewards?

### Ambitions Recognition & Rewards Leiden University

In *Academia in Motion* the following ambitions were formulated by Leiden University:

#### Balance in 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). Achieving a better balance requires greater focus on assessment, inclusiveness and teamwork.

The 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). We intend to include more focus on the quality of work in assessments relating to appointments, promotions, P&D interviews and grant applications.



A better balance is also needed in the assessment of individual and collective performance, so that academics are assessed not only on their individual performance but also

# 2

## What is Recognition & Rewards?

on their contribution to collaborations. 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 (or open scholarship) need to be stimulated and developed more. An open academic culture involves not only greater openness in creating and disseminating academic knowledge, but also transparency in quality assessment, career options, remuneration, appointments, promotions and permanent appointments. There must be more transparency about career prospects, conditions for appointment and criteria for assessment and promotion.

### Leadership

Good academic leadership is an important key to accomplishing a culture change in Recognition & Rewards. Academic leadership is essential for creating and maintaining a shared vision on education, research and societal



relevance. It is also essential for a sense of being valued, actual recognition, work assessment, work-life balance and the endeavour for inclusiveness and transparency in appointments and promotions. A Leiden University steering group on Leadership 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, careers and the appointment of professors.

# 3

## Reasons for Recognition & Rewards: the Leiden University context

The specific context of Leiden University is important in developing a change vision for Recognition & Rewards. We will explain in the following subsections how the Recognition & Rewards (R&R) Advice relates to the Strategic Plan 2022-2027 and the work groups that are already looking at various aspects of Recognition & Rewards.

### Strategic Plan 2022-2027

Leiden University's new strategic plan will come into effect

in 2022. This Strategic Plan provides a crucial framework for the change vision and implementation proposals in the area of Recognition & Rewards. Conversely, the proposals are important building blocks for achieving the ambitions set out in the Strategic Plan. ([see page 10](#)).

### Relation to other Leiden University work groups and findings

A wide range of initiatives took place in advance of the new Leiden University Strategic Plan. Here we will briefly discuss the initiatives that directly influenced our advice. We will also discuss the study of the University's practices relating to balance in academic careers, transparency and leadership, conducted at the request of the Executive Board and on the initiative of the R&R steering group.

The Executive Board asked the Leadership steering group, led by Joanne van der Leun, and the Open Science work group, led by Paul Wouters, to formulate recommendations for better leadership and a more open academic culture;





# 3

## Reasons for Recognition & Rewards: the Leiden University context

Leiden University participated in the Teaching Cultures Survey; and the Executive Board asked the Teacher Development taskforce, led by Kristiaan van der Heijden, to formulate concrete recommendations for teacher development. The R&R steering group endorses the recommendations on Leadership, Open Science and Teacher Development, and in this advice will focus on the elements of relevance for Recognition & Rewards.

The R&R steering group interviewed staff members at all levels and in all parts of the organisation, collected and analysed information on practices relating to career policy for academic staff, and conducted a Recognition & Rewards survey on balance in academic careers, transparency and leadership.



# 3

## Reasons for Recognition & Rewards: Strategic Plan 2022-2027

### Ambitions of Strategic Plan

### Priorities of Strategic Plan

### Link with R&R Advice

Pioneering interdisciplinary research and education

- Creating havens for interdisciplinary collaboration
- Further development of interdisciplinary research programmes
- Increasing the range of interdisciplinary education
- Integrating an interdisciplinary focus within the organisation
- Integrating conditions for broad-based academic practice

Develop appropriate quality criteria for assessing interdisciplinary collaboration at the team level and individual level

Central focus on broad development of students

- Integrated support for educational innovation
- Strengthening the connection between education and society

Develop quality assessment of education and societal relevance at the team level and individual level; develop a portfolio model for annual interview

Healthy, adaptive, engaged community

- Integrated support for educational innovation
- Strengthening the connection between education and society
- Dialogue for raising awareness
- Effective support (in e.g. valorisation, education)

Develop a portfolio model; a substantiated CV; adjust the profile of managers; dialogue is core value

More value through strategic collaboration

- Intensifying regional ecosystems (for e.g. public-private partnership on societal challenges, innovation R&D, talent development of staff)

Develop quality assessment for societal relevance; develop a portfolio model

Ample scope for talent and development

- Broader definition of excellence
- Reward a wider range of performance, including education, leadership, societal relevance
- Diversity of careers
- Integrated talent policy
- More clarity about careers and contracts

Develop integrated quality assessment of education, research, societal relevance and teamwork; a portfolio model; a substantiated CV; transparent policy on appointing and promoting academic staff; adjust the profile of managers

# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

### Basic principles

- Culture change based on dialogue, good practices and scientific findings.
- Do justice to the diversity and differences of faculties and staff members.
- Create broad-based support for plans.
- Transparent communication about plan of approach.
- Ambitions and goals of individuals should align with overarching institutional goals.

#### Dialogue

In the R&R Advice, engaging in dialogue is regarded as a core value of R&R:

- Open discussion between managers and staff members, and within the institution in general, is an important element of culture change.
- Dialogue is an important instrument in the process of culture change.



# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

### Focus areas

The steering group formulated five focus areas aimed at realising the vision on R&R in the period covered by the new Strategic Plan (2022-2027):

**FOCUS AREA 1** Develop quality assessment of education, research, societal relevance and teamwork;

**FOCUS AREA 2** Develop a portfolio model as the basis for the annual interview or P&D interview;

**FOCUS AREA 3** Develop a substantiated CV for appointments and promotions;

**FOCUS AREA 4** Develop a transparent policy for appointments, permanent appointments and promotions for all academic staff positions;

**FOCUS AREA 5** Adjust the profile of managers (focused more on connecting, social competences and collaboration).



# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

### FOCUS AREA 1 Develop quality assessment of education, research, societal relevance, teamwork and leadership.

- The definition of quality should be a topic of discussion in dialogue sessions in faculties and institutes.
- Develop criteria for quality of education, research, societal relevance, teamwork and leadership, giving attention to the various aspects (appropriate for the goal, content and target group(s); with factual substantiation; taking account of a wide range of possible outcomes and outputs; prioritising quality, reliability and integrity; appropriate for the (inter- and/or trans ) disciplinary nature of the work).

- Develop methods for assessing the quality of education, research, societal relevance, teamwork and leadership.
- Sign the *Declaration on Research Assessment* (DORA) as a university. The University has committed to making its career policy DORA-proof, which is congruent with the fact that the UNL (formerly VSNU) and LERU have signed the declaration. Signing the declaration sends out an important message. For comparison: LERU is a signatory and many of the LERU universities have also signed it themselves.<sup>3</sup>
- Also develop explicit policy on responsible use of indicators, in line with international examples.<sup>4</sup>
- Use a portfolio model and the teacher development model (see Advice of the Teacher Development Taskforce) for the discussion about quality of education, research, societal relevance, teamwork and leadership in the P&D interviews.

<sup>3</sup> University of Cambridge, University of Edinburgh (EDINA), University of Geneva, University of Helsinki, Imperial College London, University College London (UCL), University of Oxford, Sorbonne University, Universiteit Utrecht, University of Zurich.

<sup>4</sup> Examples (not an exhaustive list): [Loughborough University: Responsible use of research metrics](#); [University of York: Policy for research evaluation using quantitative data](#).



# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

### **FOCUS AREA 2** Develop a portfolio model for the P&D interview.

- Develop a portfolio model, in which the different domains and the balance between them (research, education, teamwork, societal relevance, leadership) are the starting point in the P&D interview about present and future tasks, career choices and development, assessment and development of competences.
- Implement the teacher development model (see Advice of the Teacher Development Taskforce).
- The balance and alignment between individual ambitions and overarching institutional goals should be an element of the P&D interview.
- In relation to the recognition and rewards in the P&D interview, take account of the staff member's actual tasks (avoid emphasis on excellent research if 80% of the work consists of teaching).
- Managers should give a reasoned assessment in the P&D report, not an assessment expressed in numbers.
- Place more emphasis on open discussion between the manager and staff member throughout the year.

<sup>5</sup> Strinzel et al. (2021). [Ten ways to improve academic CVs for fairer research assessment](#).

### **FOCUS AREA 3** Develop a substantiated CV for appointments, permanent appointments and promotions.

- Make it possible for career choices, development in the different domains and competences to be explained by academic staff in job applications, appointments, promotions and permanent appointments.
- Produce a model and examples of a substantiated CV, which can be used in job applications, promotions and permanent appointments.<sup>5</sup>

### **FOCUS AREA 4** Develop a transparent policy for appointments, permanent appointments and promotions for all academic staff positions.

- The procedures and criteria for appointment, permanent appointment and promotion should be made more transparent.
- Develop clear job criteria for education, research, societal relevance and leadership (taking account of differences between faculties).
- Develop University-wide behavioural competence policy in the guidelines for appointing staff and regulations on filling job vacancies, in accordance with the advice on leadership and leadership competences.

# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

- Base the assessment criteria on the new models that are to be developed (see the previous points) and place less focus on excellent research alone.
  - For each faculty, show transparently the limiting conditions (financial frameworks, staffing plans etc.) for appointment, permanent appointment and promotion.
  - Develop guidelines (possibly for each faculty) for the composition of committees and the procedures for appointment, permanent appointment and promotion, and ensure that these are visible (e.g. on the website).
  - The practice of using a shortened procedure for appointing full professors more often than the regular procedure should be made a topic of discussion in the faculties.
- FOCUS AREA 5 Adjust the profile of managers.**
- Describe what is expected of a manager in that role, giving attention not only to the managerial tasks and responsibilities (what) but also to the leadership competences (how).
  - Include the leadership competences (connecting, collaborative, extending boundaries, responsible) in internal and external recruitment profiles.
- Provide an onboarding programme for new managers, using the profile as the basis for informing, training and supporting managers in their new role.
  - Integrate the leadership competences in training programmes and other learning and development courses for (future) managers.
  - Give attention in the training programmes for managers and other staff to making individualised agreements (known as ‘idiosyncratic deals’ or ‘i-deals’), in which staff members and managers can make arrangements with each other about non-standard work content and career pathways, which are good for both the staff member and the team.
  - In due course, make further adjustments to the policies on professorial appointments, based on the changes outlined in focus areas 1 to 5.
  - Make use of ‘good practices’ relating to forms of academic leadership (disciplinary; interdisciplinary; education; administration; size and format of teams).

# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

### Organising the change vision

The steering group sees the development and implementation of Recognition & Rewards as a culture change in which dialogue and experiments in the University must form the basis for choices and changes. There are already many good practices available, which can serve as the example or starting point for the development of P&D interviews, quality assessment and career policy. Further, the steering group considers it important that the development of the focus areas should not only be based on dialogue, experience and good practices, but also on scientific conclusions. In addition to good practices and the desire to change, relevant scientific research on quality assessment must form the basis for choices and the development of models. Leiden University's Centre for Science and Technology Studies (CWTS) is a pioneer in the national and international movement towards Recognition & Rewards and has expertise in the area of assessment practices and quality measurement. The CWTS can provide information on the limitations of the current metrics and can advise on new forms of quality assessment and evaluation practices.



The steering group therefore advises that the development and implementation of the five focus areas should be based on:

- Dialogue sessions;
- Good practices;
- Experiments;
- Involvement of CWTS.



# 4

## How to implement Recognition & Rewards: change vision

### Implementing the change vision

Recognition & Rewards relates to many different aspects of academic work and there are many initiatives at the international and national level and within Leiden University that have connections with R&R. The R&R steering group therefore considers it important to have good coordination and integration between the various initiatives. For the development and implementation of the five focus areas, it is also important that there is sufficient interconnection between dialogue, experiments, good practices and scientific input from the CWTS. In order for a change process of this kind to succeed, there must be openness, flexibility and awareness of diversity within the University, but also close coordination to ensure oversight, integration and coherence. A further important requirement is that managers in all parts of the institution have a sense of 'ownership' of the change process. New approaches to Recognition & Rewards must be supported by the Executive Board, deans, academic directors, study programme directors and other managers in the University. What are the best ways to organise and coordinate this?

The steering group advises that R&R should be implemented as follows:

- Appoint a coordinator to stimulate, support and facilitate the primary change process in all parts of the organisation;
- Work groups per focus area;
- Ownership by Executive Board, deans, academic directors, study programme directors and team leaders;
- Involve HR, Policy Affairs, Young Academy and Teachers' Academy in all steps;
- Feedback group/advisory council for coordinator (including members of existing steering group – chairs and project leader);
- Continue contact with national R&R and other universities (e.g. Utrecht as a benchmark partner).

# 5

## Risks

*Academia in Motion* includes a list of the challenges relating to R&R. Here we identify the three greatest risks:

- **Lack of coordination and integration** of activities of the coordinator, work groups, advisory council and other initiatives within Leiden University that have connections with R&R.

**Solutions: strong role for coordinator; clear, regular communication from the Executive Board, HR, Strategic & Academic Affairs and Operational Management to the coordinator and advisory council, and vice versa.**

- **Polarisation and concern** about the consequences of R&R. Developing different forms of assessment will create concern in some staff members, who may not agree with the principles of R&R and are worried about adverse consequences for their career options or for Leiden University's academic position in international rankings. ScienceGuide has published various articles by scholars both for and against R&R in the discussion..

**Solutions: dialogue sessions; individualised approach per faculty; organise Tough Questions – Honest Answers on the website; provide clear communication about R&R and rectify misunderstandings.**

- **Uncertainty of both young generation and established scholars.** Young academics may see R&R as an opportunity and possibility for improvement, but the transition may also represent a risk. Less emphasis on existing quantitative criteria for assessments creates uncertainty in the (young) scholars who are being assessed and also in those who are assessing them: how competitive is your CV at the international level? How should managers and committee members assess a substantiated CV? This culture change can also create uncertainty for established scholars: are the criteria used



# 5

## Risks

for their appointment now less valid, and will they be expected to change their career path in line with the new culture?

**Solution: culture change goes hand-in-hand with uncertainty and there are no ready-made answers to the concern about this. However, we can communicate clearly that this is a long-term development with gradual adjustments in the years ahead, that the changes will take place on the basis of dialogue and involvement of scholars themselves, that account will be taken of differences between academic domains, and that this culture change is a development with broad-based support at both the national and international level, which has the backing of the UNL (formerly VSNU), NFU, KNAW, NWO and ZonMw. At the international level, an important leader of the culture change in research assessment is the highly renowned Cambridge University.**

- **Bureaucratic change instead of culture change.** The proposals in the advice are aimed at concrete changes that will perhaps result in bureaucratic adjustments but not in actual culture change.

**Solution: engage in continuous and effective process evaluation of R&R. Allow at least two months from the start for**

**development of an R&R evaluation framework by the coordinator of the R&R programme, in consultation with the Executive Board and deans. A possibility here is to use existing frameworks for evaluation of culture change. Consideration could also be given to developing a second survey, and using the annual staff survey (*Personnelmonitor*) to check the extent to which open discussion is taking place. ‘Learning by doing’ is crucial. Culture change can be realised effectively, for instance, by looking for good examples and supporting and highlighting them. The coordinator therefore also has a role in facilitating, and not only in analysing and evaluating.**

<sup>8</sup> Wenger, E., Trayner, B., & de Laat, M. (2011). Promoting and assessing value creation in communities and networks: a conceptual framework. Report 18, Ruud de Moor Centrum, Open University of the Netherlands; H. Clark & D. Taplin (2012). *Theory of Change Basics: A Primer on Theory of Change*. New York: Actknowledge.