



Utrecht University

Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance
Utrecht University School of Governance



Self Assessment
Research Programme
Public Matters
2014-2019

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1

INTRODUCTION

Utrecht University School of Governance is celebrating its twentieth anniversary in 2020. We have developed into one of the largest and strongest departments in Public Administration and Organisation Studies, both in the Netherlands as well as in the world. We have firmly established a reputation of ‘excellence through impact’, as is demonstrated by our 3d position in the Shanghai Global Ranking of Academic Subjects in 2019 and 2020. Our research strategy provides a basis to connect with societal challenges, emerging societal themes and academic and societal stakeholders, such as local government bodies, ministries, University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU) and the National Police. We are known as an innovative and connected *network* organisation. This assessment provides an opportunity to look back and to look ahead.¹

Utrecht University School of Governance (USG) conducts multidisciplinary research on governance of public matters, aiming to contribute to public values. USG research stands for meaningful and valuable research with societal and academic impact. Our philosophy is based on integrating and mutually reinforcing research, education and societal impact.

The previous assessment committee (2008–2013) that evaluated USG’s research considered it to be excellent in terms of quality and productivity, to be making impressive strides in the international forum, and to have high relevance. The research was seen as viable and robust, with a research quality strategy evidently in place. As points for improvement, the committee noted: the number of PhDs; the share of indirect funding (*tweede geldstroom*, i.e. NWO, EU) in the budget; the international visibility and profile of USG; and the number of women in senior academic positions. This assessment will show how we have made progress in all these domains.

Over the past five years, we have consolidated the quality and impact of our research by way of an updated 2016–2020 Research Strategy entitled ‘Public Matters: Co-Creating Public Value’ (Appendix 1). We have also: strengthened multidisciplinary collaboration within UU; introduced new, societally relevant research themes; broadened and strengthened ties with societal partners; strengthened our international profile by organising the EGPA conference in 2016; created a more international staff; and published in reputable international journals. In terms of our organisation, we have grown from 60 research staff in 2013 to 90 in 2019, while professionalising management without losing our sense of community. Overall, we maintained excellence in research and used the growth of our organisation to expand our academic and societal impact.

1 This self-assessment report was written in conformity with the Standard Evaluation Protocol by professors Boselie (Research Director, 2012–2018) and Van Erp (Research Director, 2018–2023), with input from the chairs and Boards of Research of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance and USG. The Dean of the Faculty and the Executive Board of Utrecht University have approved this report.

2

STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES 2014-2019

The objective of the 2016–2020 Research Strategy was to be a leading vibrant and viable academic hub for national and international research, education and consultancy in public administration and organisational science, with impact on academic and social practices.² The 2016–2020 Research Strategy's overall mission is 'co-creating public value'. Public value encompasses both the outcome and process of public value creation. 'Value' includes effective, but also legitimate and sustainable governance of issues with a public dimension in society and organisations. Public value is created and co-created in interaction processes by a plurality of societal stakeholders, with distinct interests and capacities. To focus research efforts, we designated six specific research areas related to public value: Accountable Governance; Managing Professionalism; Public Service Performance & HRM; Sport & Society; Collaboration, Innovation and Leadership; and Organizational Culture & Change (see Appendix 1).

Co-creation of public value is not only the object of study, but also defines our approach to research. We aim to *create* value through collaborative research strategies. This is in line with Utrecht Universities' mission to be a catalyst for change, and strategy of researching complex issues across disciplinary borders, and by connecting thinkers and doers. This is expressed in frequent interdisciplinary collaborations in our Faculty (with colleagues from Law and Economics) and University (primarily with Social Sciences, Humanities and Innovation Studies). We actively participate in Utrecht Universities' strategic themes: Institutions for Open Societies, Dynamics of Youth, and Pathways to Sustainability (Appendix 2). These are vibrant multidisciplinary research communities, which include 'impact hubs', such as Security in Open Societies and the Future of Work. We also make leading contributions in University 'focus areas' for emerging themes: Sports & Society, Professional Performance and Governing the Digital Society. This is facilitated by our affinity with multiple philosophies of science, pluriform research methodologies and mixed methods approaches. We value positivist, interpretative and critical research.

Impact hubs and focus areas are also venues for co-creation *with* societal partners: ministries; local governments; police; courts; inspectorates; hospitals; education institutions; and sport organisations (specific examples are given in in section 5). We connect our research through teaching (in undergraduate as well as executive programmes), consultancy practices, and governance and practitioner networks, and by engaging with the general public. Generating societal impact is essential to our strategy.

2 The 2013-2018 research assessment, in conjunction with USG's general strategy entitled 'Impact through Connection' (2014), laid the foundations for the 2016-2020 Research Strategy (Appendix 1). This strategy updates the Public Matters research programme and formulates specific targets in response to the recommendations of the research assessment.

Multidisciplinary research requires a strong disciplinary basis. USG research remains anchored in public administration and organisational studies. This is reflected in the research groups Public Governance & Management (PGM) and Organisation & Management (O&M). A specific objective of the research strategy 'Co-creating Public Value' was to improve cross-fertilisation between PGM and O&M. These groups operated relatively independently until 2014, both in terms of content and management. Collaboration was stimulated by concentrating research in the six specific areas mentioned before. These topics provided common ground for joint PhD supervision and joint publications, while helping to realise a more integrated programme. Efforts to increase collaboration between PGM and O&M were combined with the appointment of chairs in Organisation Studies and Politics & Governance to maintain strong disciplinary bases in our core fields.

Specific targets in our research strategy from 2014 onwards were to: (1) strengthen indirect funding; (2) increase the number of PhD positions; (3) increase the number of women in senior academic and management positions; and (4) promote the further internationalisation and recruitment of new talent to strengthen our profile. We have achieved these (interrelated) goals; in 2019, we had 21% indirect funding, 15 PhD candidates, six female full professors (35%) and a more international profile.

3 ORGANISATION

Utrecht University School of Governance (USG) is part of Utrecht University (UU), one of the largest Dutch research universities, and is a department of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance (LEG). USG is led by an executive board consisting of four chairs, the Department Manager, a Consultancy Manager and a student (organisation chart in Appendix 3). USG comprises a single research unit and has one research programme, 'Public Matters'. The department consists of two research groups: Public Governance & Management (PGM) and Organisation & Management (O&M), each with sub-groups. The separate consultancy unit, USBO Consultancy, is financially self-sufficient without university funding, and is formally excluded from this review in accordance with the SEP protocol. USG provides Bachelor's programmes characterised by 'small-scale and intensive teaching', Master's programmes, as well as several executive programmes, including three accredited Executive Master's programmes (Appendix 4).

The formal responsibility for research lies with the Dean of the Faculty. In practice, this responsibility is delegated to USG's Head of Department and Research Director. General research policy for the Faculty is established by its Board of Research, formed by the three research directors of the Faculty's departments, the Dean, a PhD candidates' representative and a Research Master students' representative. USG has a Research Board to advise on research strategy and policy and monitor quality of research, composed of senior researchers, mid-career researchers and PhD researchers. The Research Support Office, finance team and other administrative support staff are gathered together in a Faculty Service Organisation (FSO) for the Faculty, creating a well-organised support structure.

We are continuously improving the way in which we manage and lead our department. The previous USG executive board ended its term in 2018, to be replaced by a new one with a 50/50 gender balance. In response to the increasing size of the department, the PGM and O&M research groups have been sub-divided into five research groups: PGM into Public Governance (PG) and Public Management (PM); and O&M into Strategic HRM, Organisation Studies and Sport & Society. The professors managing these research groups coordinate on HRM matters. In line with our Faculty's frameworks, we have formalised routings for grant proposals, set up data management policies, refined integrity procedures and innovated USG research meetings (Appendix 5).

USG actively participates in the Netherlands Institute of Governance (NIG) research school and has been leading the NIG as of 2020. We also coordinate the Research Master in Public Administration and Organisational Science. Both the Research Master and the NIG have been evaluated separately (Appendix 6 and Appendix 7).

A study by the UU Real Estate Division in 2018 concluded that our building no longer suited the current activities and was impeding innovation and growth. We welcome the opportunity provided by UU's accommodation strategy to relocate USG to newly developed premises at an inner-city campus. The new building's character will be vital to our community and identity.

4

COMPOSITION OF STAFF AND TALENT MANAGEMENT

Research unit FTE	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scientific	14.37	15.10	19.57	25.26	26.95	23.86
Postdoc	0.85	0.91	0.40	1.93	2.77	2.43
PhD	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

Research unit Headcount ³	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Scientific	50.29	50.50	48.19	56.10	67.10	69.63
Postdoc	2.33	1.95	0.50	2.33	3.50	5.64
PhD	9.28	10.74	10.78	16.32	15.39	14.50
Total research staff	61.89	63.19	59.48	74.76	85.99	89.77

Table 1: Research Staff (SEP Table D3A)

The previous assessment characterised USG as a medium-size academic institute with 20.7 research FTEs in 2013. USG has grown considerably over the past five years, thanks to successful recruitment and career development at all levels of staff. Appendix 8 contains an overview of staff members. The appointment of a series of new full professors from other universities (Vis, female, VU; Van de Wende, female, UvA; Van Erp, female, EUR; Tummers, male, EUR; Zanoni, female, Hasselt) ensures innovation and improved the gender balance at full professor level. The internal appointment of four professors (Meijer, male; Bakker, male; Knies, female; Schillemans, male) ensures mobility from associate to full professor level. At associate and assistant professor levels, we have been able to appoint talented staff members from both Dutch universities and abroad. Again, internal mobility has been secured by promotions of four assistant professors to associate professor (two female and two male), and of postdocs and PhDs to assistant professor. In terms of external mobility, five staff members (Boin, Yesilkagit, Kuipers, Braun and Ridderbos), have successfully transferred to Leiden to become full professors and associate professors, as well as one becoming a member of Leiden University's Executive Board, while Koster began work in Nijmegen as an associate professor. Our staff has a healthy age balance, with a mix of associate and full professors aged between 30+ and 60+.

3 Headcount refers to the average number of people employed in a year, corrected for the duration but regardless of the size of their appointment in FTE (*Definitieafspraken Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek*, p. 10, VSNU, 17 April 2019).

Talent management

We cherish the pluriform composition of our research staff. The Open Science movement not only allows research performance to be valued and recognised, but also educational performance, impact performance, team science and academic citizenship, when we are assessing colleagues or teams of them. The Faculty has adopted the MERIT system for evaluation of individual performance (Appendix 9). MERIT stands for 'Management, Education, Research, Impact, and Team Spirit', enabling a much broader interpretation of 'performance' than just by looking at academic publications and research grants. Each staff member is expected to have an excellent score on at least two of these aspects, which allows for a diversity in professional development opportunities: research excellence, educational excellence and impact excellence. This has allowed the promotion of teaching-oriented and impact-oriented staff members, in addition to research-oriented staff. At this juncture, we should also mention career opportunities in university governance, as demonstrated through appointments of USG staff members as Vice Dean for societal impact at the Faculty, as chair of the University Council, as UU Dean of Lifelong Learning, as scientific director of the NIG, and as chair of the UU 'Reward and Recognition' committee. The MERIT model is fully in line with the 2021–2027 SEP protocol.

USG has been a close-knit community since its establishment. Over the years it has retained a high level of informality, commitment and personal recognition. Our growth over the past five years has generated the need for more formal and transparent personnel policy, in particular with regard to appointment and promotion criteria. We have created an Appointment & Promotion Committee (BBC) that advises the Head of Department and Dean on the appointment of assistant and associate professors twice a year, since 2019. This committee will be informed by a systematic survey of staff composition in 2020.

USG coordinates the joint Research Master in Public Administration and Organisational Science. The Research Master is our talent pool, with students frequently collaborating with staff in research projects, preparing the students for an academic career. We have been able to recruit graduates as PhD candidates, while two of our current full professors are Research Master graduates. USG considers Research Masters to be the key to the viability of its research programme and to the field of Public Administration in Europe in general. See Appendix 10 for career tracks of Research Master students.

Last, talent is stimulated by various funding and seed money schemes for developing (research) grant applications as well as international travel.

5

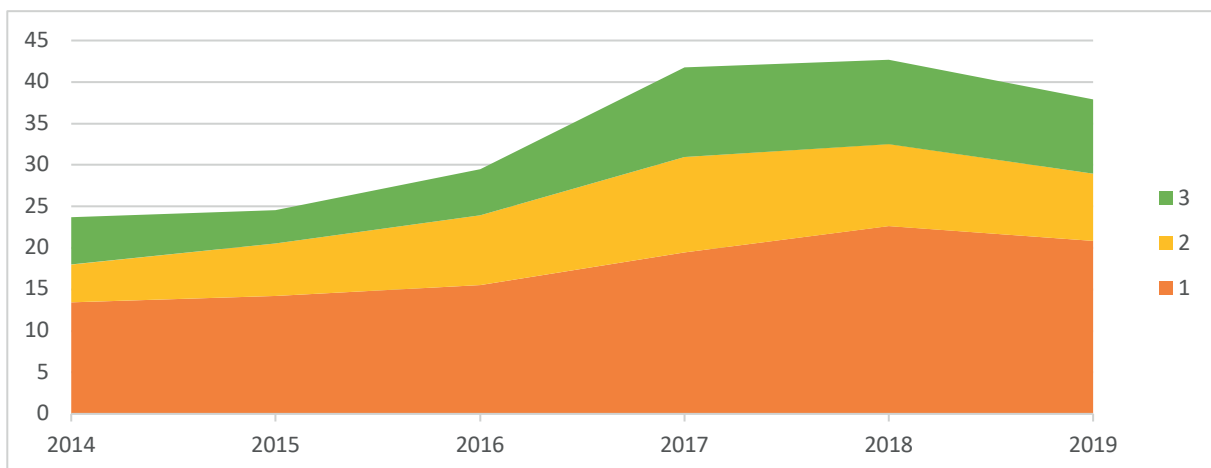
FUNDING

Funding	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%	FTE	%
Direct funding	13.45	56.72%	14.20	57.87%	15.51	52.57%	19.49	46.64%	22.64	53.04%	20.88	55.04%
Research grants	4.57	19.26%	6.33	25.81%	8.43	28.56%	11.44	27.37%	9.90	23.19%	8.08	21.31%
Contract research	5.69	24.02%	4.01	16.32%	5.57	18.87%	10.86	25.98%	10.15	23.77%	8.97	23.65%
Total	23.71	100.00%	24.54	100.00%	29.51	100.00%	41.78	100.00%	42.68	100.00%	37.92	100.00%

Expenditure	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Personnel costs	€ 2,917,318	€ 2,940,760	€ 3,189,229	€ 3,993,652	€ 4,322,292	€ 4,649,175
% personnel	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%	90.00%
Other costs	€ 324,146	€ 326,751	€ 354,359	€ 443,739	€ 480,255	€ 516,575
% other	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%	10.00%
Total expenditure	€ 3,241,464	€ 3,267,512	€ 3,543,589	€ 4,437,392	€ 4,802,547	€ 5,165,750

Table 2: Funding, SEP Table D3C

Graph 1: Direct, indirect and contract funding for research (%)



In the period under review, we managed to significantly increase research funding through acquisition of indirect research grants and contract research grants (Dutch NWO & ZonMW; KNAW; ERC; H2020). The strategic objective of increasing success in acquiring indirect funding was realised thanks to a strategy of selecting qualified candidates and providing intensive support (i.e. RSO, peer feedback and mock interviews). This resulted in two VENI

grants, two VIDI grants, an ERC Starting Grant, an ERC Advanced Grant, an Open Competition Grant and numerous collaborative grants (Appendix 11).

We have also successfully increased contract funding in the assessment period. The table above includes contract funding for purely academic research and excludes consultancy; our total portfolio including USG consultancy projects is around 40% of our total budget. Academic projects with contract funding relate to our research agendas and often form the basis for later indirect funding (See the 'societal relevance' section). Contract funding was also attracted for PhD research through strategic alliances with external partners such as UMCU, the Utrecht local government, the Council for Public Health and Society, the KNVB (Royal Dutch Football Association), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations.

A variety of financial incentives for interdisciplinary research is provided at Faculty and University level. The Faculty has directly invested in research through the appointment of nine interdisciplinary postdocs in 2017 to work on the project 'Resilient Society' (three at USG), and an additional USG postdoc and PhD candidate in 2019. UU's official strategic themes and focus areas provide seed money for new research initiatives and public engagement, as well as a wealth of networking opportunities. The participation in UU interdisciplinary research consortia (hubs) extends our scope to compete for major funding. Our strategy in the past period was primarily directed towards the strategic theme 'Institutions for Open Societies'. For the next period, we aim to further strengthen links with the strategic theme 'Pathways to Sustainability' to position us at the frontier of funding directed to grand societal challenges.

6

QUALITY AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

SEP output type	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
A Academic publications						
A1a Refereed academic articles (international)	54	62	69	59	70	76
A1b Refereed academic articles (Dutch)	11	12	13	12	7	8
A2a Non-refereed academic articles (international)	1	2	1	2	2	1
A2b Non-refereed academic articles (Dutch)	1	5	1	4	1	1
A3a1 Academic books (monograph, international)	2	3	2	4	2	4
A3b1 Academic books (monograph, Dutch)	0	2	2	1	2	2
A3a2 Academic books (edited volume, international)	2	1	1	0	0	2
A3b2 Academic books (edited volume, Dutch)	1	0	0	0	0	0
A4a Academic book chapters (international)	20	28	28	37	30	43
A4b Academic book chapters (Dutch)	5	4	6	4	12	10
A5a PhD theses (international)	6	4	8	2	5	4
A5b PhD theses (Dutch)	2	1	4	1	1	3
B Professional publications and products						
B1 Professional publications	18	29	14	38	34	27
B2 Reports	23	15	21	21	24	24
C Publications aimed at the general public						
D Other research output	6	9	1	8	17	8
D1 Inaugural speeches	1	1	3	0	0	3
D2 Editorials, columns, introductions, special issues	1	0	9	1	2	3
D3 Book review	6	1	2	0	1	0
D4 Web publications	2	2	0	10	5	3
Total Publications	162	181	185	204	215	222

Table 3: Quantitative overview of research output 2014-2019, SEP Table D3B

Quality and impact of publications

USG has established a strong national and international reputation on the topics of: accountability and transparency of governance; hybrid and organising professionalism; public innovation; behavioural public administration; European governance; HRM and public sector performance; diversity and inequality in organisations; and sport and society. For these topics, our colleagues have successfully published in high-impact journals such as the *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, *Public Administration*, *Public Administration Review*, *Regulation & Governance*, *Organization and Organization Studies*, as well as with high-quality academic publishers (e.g. Oxford University Press (OUP) and Cambridge University Press). This is reflected in our position in the Shanghai Rankings (2017: 7; 2018: 6; 2019: 3; 2020: 3).

We value the quality of research and academic impact above the number of publications. The baseline publication norm (the NIG+ norm, Appendix 12) values international peer-reviewed articles as well as Dutch and professional publications to stimulate a diversity of outputs. This is reflected in the overview of outputs. There is also a significant number of special journal issues guest edited by USG researchers (see Appendix 13).

Publication highlights include:⁴

Bovens, M.A.P., Goodin, R.E., & Schillemans, T. (2014). *The Oxford handbook of public accountability*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Jilke, S., & Tummers, L. (2018). Which clients are deserving of help? A theoretical model and experimental test. *JPART*, 28(2): 226–238.

Meijer, A., & Bolívar, M.P.R. (2016). Governing the smart city: a review of the literature on smart urban governance. *International review of administrative sciences*, 82(2): 392–408.

Knies, E., & Leisink, P.L.M. (2014). Linking people management and extra-role behaviour: results of a longitudinal study. *Human resource management journal*, 24(1): 57–76.

De Hon, O., Kuipers, H. & Van Bottenburg, M. (2015). Prevalence of doping use in elite sports: a review of numbers and methods. *Sports medicine*, 45(1): 57–69.

Bovens and colleagues (2014) is a standard work and the fruit of our research tradition in governance accountability. Jilkes and Tummers (2018) received the Beryl Radin Award for Best Article in JPART in 2019. Meijers and Bolivar (2016) provided the theoretical basis for the emerging critical smart city research tradition and is highly cited. Knies and Leisink's 2014 article was the result of a research project which received contract funding, and was the first of several publications on the role of line managers in policy implementation and value creation. De Hon and colleagues' 2015 article is a prime example of research on public issues in sport, which formed part of a larger study into effectiveness of global anti-doping policy.

Research innovation

USG colleagues are global leaders in the emerging field of *Behavioural Public Administration*, a multidisciplinary approach linking Public Administration and Psychology. This has resulted in the adoption of more experimental research methods; trans-disciplinary collaborations with societal organisations; and critical assessments of the 'behavioural state'. Our research on *governing the digital society* includes research on smart cities, open government, algorithmic governance and fintech, and involves collaboration within the Utrecht Data School. The introduction of the theme *successful public governance* as counterweight to fatalism about government failure and crises, has resulted in an ERC Advanced Grant and a book series with OUP; the concept has been very well received among practitioners and has generated traction in the public debate. USG research also more explicitly addresses *governance and management*

4 Fulfills SEP protocol Appendix D under E, p.24: list five most important scientific outputs.

of public issues by and in hybrid and private organisations in response to the marketisation and commodification of public tasks. This development entails that public values are increasingly realised in private organisations, and is reflected in interdisciplinary scholarship on *regulatory governance*, but also research in *sports organisations*. Our Sport & Society research also contributes to questions concerning vitality in urbanised areas. Our research on issues of *migration, diversity and security in the open society*, in response to globalisation, provides a governance perspective on the rule of law. A new theme, *employer engagement* (the role of employers in shaping HRM and social policies for vulnerable workers), has generated indirect funding, two PhD positions, a special issue in a leading HRM journal, and practitioner seminars with a network of employers.

From a methodological perspective, besides a stronger focus on experimental research, USG staff have contributed to the further development of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA), mixed methods and cognitive mapping, and have also published datasets. Scales were developed for agency reputation, people management, employee red tape, public leadership and citizen trust in government organisations. Methodological rigor is facilitated by an advanced research infrastructure, for example by ensuring that all researchers have access to Qualtrix. This is supported by Open Access and data-management facilities such as YoDa – see below.

Innovation is also sought in transdisciplinary research approaches, co-creating research with societal stakeholders. We collaborate with practitioners in the Utrecht Governance Lab and in living labs, as well as with University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU). We also appoint practitioners as research fellows, such as the City Manager of Gouda, and conduct experimental research with regulatory authorities. In Utrecht, we initiated a teaching and research project with marginalised citizens (including refugees), in collaboration with the City of Utrecht and Oxford University. Research on employer engagement is carried out with ‘De Normaalste Zaak’, the Dutch national network for employment of disabled workers.

These projects combine innovative research with public engagement and thus generate both academic and societal impact. To enable these forms of co-creation with external partners, we have developed a physical Governance Lab: a room and facilities for innovative collaborative research at the USG building (Appendix 14).

Academic reputation

The academic reputation of our staff is demonstrated by the positions and recognition outlined below (selection).

Membership of esteemed societies and awards	
Royal Dutch Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), KNAW Young Academy and KNAW Social Sciences Council	Bovens, 't Hart, Van Erp, Vis
Fellow National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), USA	Bovens
Francqui chair, Vrije Universiteit Brussel	Van Bottenburg (2017)
L.P. van de Spiegel Prize, awarded every three years for outstanding contributions in Public Administration by the Dutch Public Administration Association (VB)	Bovens (2019)
MGr. Boymans Prize for best dissertation in physical education	Van der Roest (2016) Dortants (2018)
Van Poelje Award for best Dutch/Flemish dissertation	Grimmelikhuijsen (2014)
Els Witte Dissertation Prize	Damhuis (2019)
Beryl Radin Award for Best Article in JPART, 2019	Tummers (with Jilke)
Mayer prize for Best Book in Australian Political Science	't Hart (2019)
IRAS Best Article Award	Brandsma (2016)
Best paper published in PMR	Overmans (2016, with Van Thiel)
Research networks and editorial positions	
EGPA Steering Committee	Noordegraaf
Chairs EGPA Permanent Study Groups	Meijer, Brandsma, Douglas, Leisink, Knies, Vandenabeele, Heres, Schillemans, Noordegraaf, Tummers
Chair of European Society Criminology Working Group White-Collar and Organisational Crime	Van Erp (2014-2018)
Editors-in-chief/editors of Journal of Professions and Organisation; Information Polity; Organisation; International Journal of HRM	Noordegraaf; Meijer; Zanoni; Knies; Boselie
Academic service	
Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR)	Bovens
Transition Advisor WODC (research unit at Ministry of Justice & Security)	't Hart
Chair of Vereniging Bestuurskunde (Association for Public Administration)	Noordegraaf
Board member of LOWI (Dutch National Board Academic Integrity)	Van Erp
Co-Dean of NSOB (Netherlands School Public Administration)	't Hart; Schillemans
Chair of Dutch HRM Network Board	Boselie (2014-2016)
Academic service at Utrecht University	
Chair of University Council	Binnema
Vice Dean for Impact, Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance (LEG)	Van Bottenburg (2015-2018) Noordegraaf (2018-present)
LEG Scientific Integrity Counsellor	Claringbould
Chair of LEG Ethics Board	Trappenburg
Members of Utrecht Young Academy	Tummers, Douglas
Project leader for Rewards and Recognition in Open Science UU	Boselie

Our academic reputation and leadership are also demonstrated by the organisation of a number of international conferences and workshops, with the organisation of EGPA 2016 in Utrecht forming a highlight. For an overview of all workshops, see Appendix 15.

7

RELEVANCE TO SOCIETY

USG aims to be academically and societally meaningful. Since its establishment, our school has consciously and systematically connected with stakeholders (including members of the general public). This happens in our educational programmes, which are linked with practice through skills programmes, internships, guest lectures, community service learning, study visits, societal research projects, honours courses, executive programmes and lifelong learning. We have also linked our research strategy to societal issues and challenges in multiple ways.

In the first place, our 2016–2020 research strategy focused our research on six *societally relevant core research themes*. Once firmly established, we have incorporated flexibility to respond to urgent societal challenges, such as safety and security, migration, health, inclusion and the future of work. Digitisation and sustainability are emerging topics that demand active investment. Secondly, we *co-create research* with societal partners in active collaborations. We have established a governance lab, a research panel for experiments and living labs as facilities. Visiting practitioners and external PhD candidates form a personalised link between research and practice. ‘Hybrid’ PhD candidates are ones who work full-time under an employment contract, with their salary funded by societal partners. For example, a PhD in civil servant leadership is ‘embedded’ in the Dutch Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, while PhD candidates working on medical professionalism work at UMCU. We initiated two science agendas in collaboration with societal organisations: the National Science Agenda Sports and Movement (2016) and the Science Agenda ‘Innovation of Enforcement’ (2018). Both have been adopted by funding agencies.

Thirdly, *commissioned* (i.e. contract funded) research addresses pressing societal questions. This research includes both academic research in commission and consultancy in our USG Consultancy unit. Commissioned research leads to published academic reports with direct effects in political, policy and organisational practice. They also lead to cases which are used in our executive programmes and Master’s programmes, including Research Masters.

We actively *disseminate* research outcomes through participation in public debates, in public lectures and media appearances, and with our digital presence. In addition to academic publications, we value books for a general audience. Highlights are Trappenburg’s *Montessori Democracy* and De Ridder and Tummers’ book on ‘nudging’. Books by Vollaard and Binnema on municipal councils and provincial government were distributed among all newly elected members of local and provincial councils in 2018 and 2019. Van Eekeren’s dissertation, entitled *De waardenvolle club* (The value/valuable club), on the public value of football clubs was disseminated in a YouTube video.⁵ He also gave over twenty related public lectures, as

5 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G2rFaJnd9J4>; 2,500 views [April 2020].

well as workshops and masterclasses, and received extensive media coverage, with all this leading to several consultancy assignments.

In addition to the various forms of academic service and recognition, our expertise is valued by societal organisations. Colleagues are prominent *members* of councils, expert groups, review committees, et cetera. Schillemans is member of the advisory board of the public prosecution service, Noordegraaf served as member of the ‘Redesign of the Judiciary’ evaluation committee, Van Bottenburg was a member of the Dutch anti-doping commission, while Binnema was a member of the Dutch Senate (see Appendix 16 for an overview).

This shows that our impact activities are not separate activities, independent from education and research. On the contrary, they actively *interrelate* education and research with society (as a two-way street) *and* they enhance *knowledge circulation*. Research fuels contacts with societal partners, which lead to consultancy projects, which lead to new insights which are academically translated, which lead to cases used in education, which lead to guest speakers, leading to new research, and so on. We illustrate the synergy between research, impact and education in the following cases (see Appendix 17 for two more cases).⁶

Security in Open Societies

The ‘Security in Open Societies’ (SOS) hub is part of the UU strategic theme ‘Institutions for Open Societies’ (IOS). Many colleagues from USG, as well as from other disciplines and faculties, work closely together. We focus – amongst other things – on radicalisation, terrorism, counterterrorism, the crime-terror nexus and resilience. This has led to multiple academic consultancy projects, publications, and multidisciplinary PhD projects. We published the reports: ‘Evaluation of the Dutch counterterrorism strategy’ (2016); ‘Terrorism and Emergency State’ (2018); and ‘Resilient Open Society’ (2019). We advised the municipalities of Amsterdam and Arnhem on radicalisation. We held practitioner meetings with the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV). With the NCTV, security and safety professionals and the local police.

Vitality Academy

The Vitality Academy is a collaboration between research groups at UU (Healthy Urban Living, USG, Occupational Health), Eindhoven University of Technology (Human Vitality and Technology) and UMCU (Sports Medicine, Public Health, Child Development, Exercise Centre). Closely connected to the UU focus area ‘Sport & Society’, the Vitality Academy aims to increase academic knowledge on how physical activity and sports can contribute to public health and resilience, and under what circumstances. Since 2016, the Vitality Academy has generated €1.5 million to develop teaching activities (Global Sports Master Programme, PhD

6 Fulfil SEP protocol Appendix D under F, p. 24: list five most important societal outputs.

Hackaton, Summer Schools), a Vitality Data Centre, and a postdoc project in three living labs. The aim of this project is to develop successful, innovative interventions that encourage active lifestyles, focusing on vulnerable groups in underprivileged urban neighbourhoods. The Vitality Academy also acted as a catalyst for the successful application of the ZonMW-funded project (€750,000) 'Calibrating Inclusive Sporting Encounters'.

USG-UMCU Alliance

Since 2014, USG and University Medical Center Utrecht (UMCU) have a strategic alliance, linked to the UU focus area 'Professional Performance'. This alliance resulted in multiple PhD research projects; three PhD candidates have already successfully defended their thesis while a fourth is scheduled for 2020, and a fifth has started. In addition, with UMCU there are multiple Master's thesis projects and joint scientific publications, internships and USG consultancy projects on public management and HRM issues. This contributed to UMCU's strategic turnaround. We write papers together (e.g. Noordegraaf, Schneider, Van Rensen and Boselie, PMR 2015). PhD supervision is multidisciplinary, with supervisors from various faculties with different backgrounds on topics such as leadership, professionalism, well-being and sustained employability. The focus area organised many 'carrousel' (rota) meetings; lectures, dialogues, conferences and project meetings. This led to (seed money) projects, such as on sustainable employment, and publications, for example on private equity in the veterinarian and healthcare sectors (Bos and Hesselink 2018). In 2019, we produced and presented a multidisciplinary MOOC.⁷

In sum, *creating* impact clearly fits the modern era of Open Science, linked to open access, team science, public engagement and new forms of reward and recognition in academia. As USG, we play a leading role in these developments, given that our academic activities and impact activities, and the ways in which we hire, assign and assess our colleagues, directly reflects an Open Science philosophy. This is supported by a Vice Dean for Societal Impact at our Faculty, who has initiated an impact strategy for 2019–2024 (Appendix 18), societal impact awards and the MERIT HR framework for making this work.

7 <https://www.coursera.org/learn/professionalism-in-an-era-of-change/home/welcome>.



PHD PROGRAMMES

Start year				Graduated after (≤) 4 years		Graduated after (≤) 5 years		Graduated after (≤) 6 years		Graduated after (≤) 7 years		To be completed		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%	0	0%					5	100%	0	0%
Total	10	9	19	0	0%	4	21%	6	32%	8	42%	8	42%	3	16%

Table 4: Successful PhD defences in 2014-2019 (employed 'internal' PhD candidates), SEP Table D3d

One of the ambitions formulated in the 2008–2013 research evaluation was to increase the number of PhDs. Through the acquisition of grants with indirect and contract funding, we have been able to realise this goal. Several PhDs are funded in collaborative interdisciplinary PhD projects.

USG's philosophy with regard to PhD supervision is based on a 'learning on the job' model with a strong reliance on PhD supervisors as inspiring 'coaches'. PhD candidates are an integral part of the research community and participate actively in all USG activities. USG PhD candidates also form a supportive PhD community – the PhD Platform – with monthly meetings and informal activities. Discipline-related PhD education takes place within the NIG research school, with additional training provided in the Graduate School of Law, Economics and Governance on aspects such as data management, professional skills and career skills. Graduated PhDs equally find careers in academia or as professional staff, for an overview see appendix 19.

The Faculty's Graduate School forms the institutional context for quality assurance of PhD supervision. The 2018 Faculty PhD Quality Plan (Appendix 20) sets criteria for admission and end terms. The PhD Quality Plan requires the assignment of a minimum of two supervisors to all PhD candidates. This makes the PhD candidates less dependent on an individual supervisor. In addition to the PhD Quality Plan, USG has further clarified the criteria for different dissertation formats (article-based or monograph; see Appendix 21). In addition to USG's PhD Ombudsman ('t Hart), an assistant PhD Dean was appointed in 2018 who conducts annual conversations with all PhD candidates (Dekker). Since 2020, 'peer review lunches' (*interviewlunch*) for professors and junior co-supervisors enable us to informally discuss the quality of supervision. UU introduced a digital tool (MyPhD) for monitoring formal aspects of PhD tracks in 2019.

External PhD candidates (practitioners, senior public servants and staff from universities of applied science) are significant, acting as bridges between academia and practice and as sources of research impact. To improve the success rate of external PhD candidates and the fit with the research programme, we reviewed our acceptance policy of external PhD candidates (Appendix 22). USG waives the fee for external PhD candidates to ensure that making a substantial contribution to the research programme is a leading motivation. In addition to individual supervision, we organise bi-annual meetings for external PhD candidates on academic matters and peer support.

9

DIVERSITY

Our HRM strategy since 2014 has been to improve the gender balance at the senior level. USG has appointed five female full professors, while the new USG Board has a 50/50 male-female complement. In 2019 the share of female full professors at USG was 35% and of associate professors 40%. It is our ambition to optimise the gender balance of staff composition at all levels. We want to achieve this by open recruitment for all vacancies, working with an international recruitment agency (Perrett Laver) for our chair in Organisation Studies. We will also be monitoring the gender balance in appointment committees and providing 'bias awareness training' for staff participating in appointment committees.

A second diversity goal was the internationalisation of staff, while adhering to the condition that the majority of our teaching occurs in Dutch education programmes. Partly through indirect funding successes, we have realised the internationalisation of research staff at all levels and throughout all research groups; this has contributed to a much more diverse and international research community than in 2014. There are new international staff members (originally) from the USA, Canada, Australia, Turkey, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Bulgaria, Macedonia and Morocco. USG has also attracted external PhD candidates with a full scholarship from their home country. We also appointed a USG board member for internationalisation. We encourage international colleagues (including PhD candidates) to learn the basics of Dutch, for which we reimburse costs. We aim to facilitate the integration of international staff in our research community in both research and social activities. Nevertheless, we recognise that international colleagues do face implicit barriers, in particular with regard to the complex informal hierarchy in Dutch culture. A growing and more diverse organisation requires greater effort to become more inclusive.

Internationalisation also benefits from the Faculty's incentives for international research stays and travel budgets. Appendix 23 provides an overview of international appointments and research stays of our staff. All PhD candidates and Research Master students are offered opportunities for stays abroad. In addition, we welcome visitors and Research Fellows, although space limitations in our building inhibit an active invitation policy.

10

RESEARCH INTEGRITY, ACADEMIC CULTURE AND OPEN SCIENCE

The Dutch Code of Conduct for Academic Integrity imposes a duty of care on research institutions to establish an open, safe and inclusive research culture. ‘Multi-dimensionality’ is the core of our philosophy and the basis for an intellectual climate in which diversity leads to fruitful exchanges, richer perspectives and more valuable collaboration. We welcome multiple scientific perspectives, disciplines and outputs. We continuously work to maintain and improve such a culture, both through formal institutions within our Faculty, as well as through ‘soft controls’ within USG. This is evidenced by the following specific steps in the assessment period.

The Faculty has established an Ethics Assessment Board (Appendix 24), which takes a constructive advisory approach. This has increased awareness among researchers of the impact of research on participants, especially on vulnerable groups such as migrants.

Scientific integrity counsellors at Faculty and University level are available for confidential consultation on academic integrity, including concerns of violations. We also appointed a USG Confidential Advisor (Sebastiaan Princen) in 2019, who – in addition to the University Ombudsman – can provide low-threshold confidential advice on issues concerning social safety for academic and support staff. As indicated, PhD candidates can also consult the PhD Dean and the Associate Dean.

UU has clear procedures to assess the ethical and integrity risks of research conducted for or together with third parties. The importance of adhering to the KNAW and UU’s declaration of independence has been reaffirmed by recent integrity issues concerning the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Ministry of Justice and Security, one of our most important clients. A standard declaration of independence was added to our research proposals, specifying how we embed principles of independence and transparency in our contract research (Appendix 25).

To engrain academic integrity and ethics in the research culture, we have stimulated awareness by organising USG and Faculty staff meetings where integrity and ethical dilemmas are discussed. The USG culture has also been the topic of a series of open roundtable discussions marking the transition to a new board. USG’s sense of community was identified as a source of collegial support and loyalty, although we are aware that this may also create a closed organisation in which problems remain tacit. The successful acquisition of prestigious research grants carries the risk of creating a performance-oriented culture, where generally only admiration is voiced, rather than constructive and sometimes critical dialogue ensuing. It takes continuous efforts to maintain an open academic community in which collegial feedback is normal against the backdrop of work and publication pressure.

For data management and GDPR compliance, both the University and Faculty have installed a number of procedures and a support structure. UU has developed a state-of-the-art user-friendly digital vault for personal data, called YoDa (Your Data). The Faculty adopted a research data management policy in 2019 (Appendix 26). USG began clarifying the consequences of the GDPR for researchers in early 2018. Despite these basic facilities, as everywhere, researchers struggle with the GDPR and are in the process of developing good data management and Open Science research practices. Lastly, the GDPR and ethics guidelines for *student* research projects in Bachelor's, Master's and Research Master programmes have been adopted.

11

SWOT ANALYSIS

Strengths

- Academic and societal research impact through collaboration and partnerships in hubs and focus areas
- Strong community, identity and reputation
- Innovative and high-quality research
- Integration of teaching, research and impact
- Strong interdisciplinary collaboration in Faculty and UU strategic themes
- Significant contract funding
- Professional research support organisation
- MERIT model for HRM (diversity in career profiles)

Opportunities

- Strong relations with societal partners, including willingness to financially contribute to research
- 'Rewards & Recognition' developments and new SEP protocol 2021-2027
- Netherlands Institute of Governance (NIG) coordination
- PMRC 2023 conference at USG
- Newly formed knowledge alliance with universities in Wageningen and Eindhoven

Weaknesses

- Less visible profile on sustainability and digitisation research
- Limited cultural and ethnic diversity of staff
- Weakening coherence and community as result of growing size
- Limited and inflexible space in the current building
- Complex and fragmented landscape for collaborative research appears inaccessible for junior researchers

Threats

- Tight labour market for academics, in combination with insecurity in academic careers for early-career scholars
- Declining direct and indirect funding for Dutch Social Sciences
- Impact of the coronavirus crisis on research, funding and internationalisation

12

REFLECTION ON RESULTS AND VIABILITY

The objective for 2020 is to be a leading vibrant and viable scientific hub for national and international research in public administration and organisational science, for education and for consultancy exchange, with impact in academic and societal practices in relation to societal challenges, such as security, growing inequality, migration and sustainability. We believe we have realised this objective. We are a strong and innovative department that is well recognised and approached for collaborations, both within the University and by external stakeholders.

The quality of individuals, groups and the organisation make our department viable, while our growth over the past five years makes us more resilient. This has been due to strategy, but also due to enthusiasm, bottom-up initiatives, entrepreneurship and commitment to the organisation. Our strengths and leading position mean we are able to transcend individual success, while strengthening team science. Our growth has facilitated this, and although we may perhaps have lost the flexibility of a small-scale school, we have managed to maintain a collegial, informal and open culture. We realise, however, that a growing, more international and diverse organisation risks becoming less inclusive. Challenges present themselves with regard to the content of the research programme (coordination vs fragmentation), our organisation (procedural transparency and formalisation vs the desire to maintain an informal and flexible culture) and housing (an outdated building that is no longer fit for purpose).

Whereas several researchers have contributed to and benefited from the multitude of collaborative opportunities, these networks also represent growing complexity that limits accessibility, especially for newer staff. In the longer run, the viability of interdisciplinary science and societal impact also depends on our ability to provide fair and transparent assessment and recognition of interdisciplinary and societal impact activities. Therefore, we want to establish more differentiated career tracks (including impact-related careers) and focus less on individual performance and more on 'team science'.

Research profile: Increase the academic and public impact of our research

We aim to consolidate our current strategy of conducting sound and rigorous, high-impact and societally relevant research on public matters, continuously realising synergies between research, impact and education. Acknowledging that public outcomes are (increasingly) realised in public, hybrid and private settings, we define the scope of our research as the governance and organisation of public issues. Our substantive focus is broad, ranging from regulatory governance of markets and accountable governance to people management and identity in organisations, reflecting the multidimensionality of public value and its construction in a variety of public and private governance arrangements. We see Public Administration as inspired by multiple disciplines. Our *networked* approach goes beyond a fixed thematic research programme, and we cherish flexibility with regard to societal issues. The distinctive character of our research lies more in its academically grounded yet open approach, with research conducted in connection with academic and societal partners. In this manner, we aim to contribute to the values of a civic university in an open society. This is expressed in our core values: academic independence, multi-dimensionality and societal impact.

We will further innovate and improve the quality of research regarding our major (established and new) research themes, which have contributed to our strength, visibility and impact: accountability, EU governance, public governance, public professionalism, behavioural public administration, employer engagement, and vitality. We will invest in two themes that stand out in providing opportunities for academic contributions: societal impact and funding. First and foremost, we aim to strengthen USG-wide research and visibility with regard to the governance of *sustainability*. Collaborations in/with the UU strategic theme 'Sustainability', the UU Copernicus Institute and Wageningen University & Research (WUR) will be intensified. Secondly, we will strengthen USG-wide research on digitisation and algorithms and the governance of the digital society. Collaborations in/with the 'Governing the digital society' hub, practice-based platforms and Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) will be intensified.

Specific objectives

- Ensuring demonstrable public engagement, in relation to external partners and practices.
- Engaging in intensified USG-wide research on governance of sustainability.
- Engaging in intensified USG-wide research on governance of digitisation, with an emphasis on big data, algorithms, and machine learning.

Viability and innovation through multidisciplinary partnerships

We expect direct funding to decrease, given that Dutch science funding is under pressure. We aim to consolidate the proportion of indirect funding in a very competitive environment, by developing a more targeted application policy to increase our success rate, rather increasing than the number of applications. Stronger engagement with the UU strategic theme 'Sustainability' is a major ambition for 2020 onwards, which will also increase opportunities for research grants. Related to this, the emerging knowledge alliance between UU, Eindhoven University of Technology (TU/e) and Wageningen University & Research (WUR) positions us for funding for STEM (*betawetenschappen*) research.⁸

We see great potential in intensifying contract funding through intensive collaborations with societal partners (also part of the broader societal impact agenda, including public engagement). This will not only benefit us financially, but also in terms of impact. Among our ambitions for the next period is strengthening such contract funding through strategic, long-term research alliances with societal stakeholders suited to our research and impact agendas.

In addition to strengthening contract funding, we will further develop the business model for academic co-created research and consortia. We will conceptually and methodologically develop and refine the organisation, designs and methods for transdisciplinary research, with the ambition of becoming a globally recognised centre of expertise on transdisciplinary governance research.

Specific objectives

- Consolidating indirect funding, with both national and international research funds.
- Increasing contract funding by forming co-creation alliances with public, non-profit and private organisations/networks for transdisciplinary knowledge.
- Engaging in collaborative projects with WUR and Tu/e, linked to research themes.

Organisation: Academic workplace

We aim for a strong organisation and academic community with good facilities – dynamic, inclusive and diverse. Accommodation is crucial to our identity and community, so we need a building suited to our size and networked activities. We will grasp accommodation opportunities which enable outstanding innovative and integrated research, education and impact activities.

Societal challenges require collaboration with other disciplines and with societal partners, as part of the wider societal impact agenda, including public engagement. This does not call for

⁸ <https://www.uu.nl/en/collaborate/utrecht-eindhoven-wageningen-alliance>.

a culture and reward structure primarily recognising leading individual academics. We will be encouraging team science, by diversifying career opportunities that provide opportunity for everyone's talent in various core domains: academic leadership, education, research and societal impact. We aim to improve the cultural diversity of our organisation, given that diverse and societally representative teams are more responsive to societal developments.

In a full-size and diverse department, an open and inclusive academic community is not self-evident and does not always benefit from informality. We will further professionalise our organisation and provide more transparency about incentives, opportunities and expectations. Our Research Days and Meetings, research unit meetings and social events serve to maintain a spirit of collegiality, curiosity and open-mindedness.

Specific objectives

- Ensuring the tangible application of the 'Rewards and Recognition' principles for team science set out by VSNU.⁹
- Enabling the demonstrable recognition of the 'Impact' domain in addition to 'Education, Research and Leadership', pursuant to the 2021–2027 SEP protocol, including a format for measuring impact in a meaningful way.
- Using diversity as an explicit criterion in recruitment, backed by specific targets for gender balance and employee inclusion and procedural safeguards.

These objectives will be further developed in a more elaborate research strategy for 2021–2027.

⁹ <https://vsnu.nl/recognitionandrewards/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Position-paper-Room-for-everyone%E2%80%99s-talent.pdf>.

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Photo by Robert Oosterbroek

Design by vanklaartje.nl

Picture of the Skyscraper by StudioKCA (Jason Klimoski and Lesley Chang)

A huge whale, made of five tons of plastic from the Pacific Ocean, jumps out of the Catharijnesingel in Utrecht, in front of TivoliVredenburg. The Skyscraper serves as a statement against the huge volumes of plastic waste polluting the world's rivers, seas and oceans. At the initiative of Utrecht University's Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance, the Skyscraper was brought to Utrecht and during the first half of 2020 events and lectures were organized to draw attention to this topic.

