

## **Response to research assessment**

### **Utrecht University School of Economics**

#### ***Introduction***

The board of Utrecht University School of Economics (U.S.E.) has received the report *Research Review Economics & Business 2008 – 2014*. The report includes the assessment of the research programme Multidisciplinary Economics from the Tjalling C. Koopmans Research Institute (TKI), in addition to that of the research programmes of Erasmus University Rotterdam, Maastricht University, University of Amsterdam, University of Groningen, and VU University Amsterdam. Based on the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP, 2015-2021), the evaluation was held in the fall of 2015. We are very grateful to the international committee of assessment chaired by professor Arie Kapteyn. It has been an impressive and enormous task to systematically review the research output of Economics and Business at six universities.

#### ***The scores for U.S.E.***

We are proud of the overall scores for U.S.E., which summarize the assessment of our research programme: research quality “very good”, social relevance “very good”, viability “good”. For U.S.E., it was a very important and memorable occasion, because U.S.E. participated in a research assessment at the national level for the first time. We consider the scores as gratifying appraisal, given the current stage of development of U.S.E. It encourages us to further build on the research programme, using the recommendations of the committee.

#### ***General remarks, all research units***

Overall, the committee believes the research in economics and business administration in the Netherlands to be of high quality (which merits a rating of ‘very good’). In general, the goals of the departments are similar in terms of internationally agreed standards of research quality. However, there is a substantial variation in terms of management instruments (incentives, facilities, etc.). Furthermore, the committee notes that in general, the research units should have a critical look at their administrative structures and whether streamlining and simplification are possible. Finally, there are some remarks on further attention of the research units to recruitment and retention, diversity, PhD training, research integrity, and strategies of social relevance.

#### ***Specific assessment, U.S.E.***

The committee mentions that U.S.E./TKI has had a clear focus on multidisciplinary research in economics for a long time, and that it has thereby established in a special position in economics research. It mentions that the unit has been able to achieve an excellent number of scientific publications and citations. Furthermore, the committee argues that a strong focus and relevance to society are manifested through publications and conferences aimed at a general audience, as well as having an important part of the research budget made up by contract research. Finally, the

committee concludes that U.S.E./TKI is aware of the pros and cons of doing multidisciplinary research, which will guide the unit in further advancing the multidisciplinary nature of its research strategy. In our academic research strategy we have systematically maintained a multidisciplinary profile, and hence we take the outcomes with respect to quality and relevance as a confirmation of the success of this strategy. Also taking into account the current strong growth of staff members at U.S.E., we are confident that there will be sufficient room for improving the score of viability in the coming years.

### ***The further process***

In the coming years, U.S.E. will systematically work out the committee's recommendations for further improvement. In particular, we will pursue on the committee's recommendations regarding the rules for promotion (included system of tenure track and the hiring of strong researchers), publications in general top journals in addition to top field journals, the organisational structure, attracting external financial resources, and the further internationalisation of the PhD-programme.

In terms of the management of the process, we are cautious to implement changes that are broadly supported by the staff members of U.S.E. In addition, the changes will be part of the strategic plan of U.S.E. for the period 2016-2020, which is currently in the process of development, and which is embedded in the upcoming strategic plans of UU and the REBO faculty.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. dr. Annetje Ottow

Dean of REBO