Assessment Report INTEGON 2006

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Title:
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Utrecht University

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Content

Introduction

The Research Institute for Theology and Religious Studies (Integon) is an institute which is jointly operated by the Sub-faculty of Theology of Utrecht University and the Catholic Theological University (CTU) in Utrecht. Integon was last reviewed in 1999. The review period of that assessment was 1994-1998. The period under review of this evaluation is therefore 1999-2004.

The evaluation procedure to be followed is described in the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) of the three main Dutch organisations responsible for publicly funded research: Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO).

The evaluation system has three objectives with regard to research and research management:

- improvement of the quality of research through an assessment carried out according to international standards of quality and relevance;
- improvement of research management and leadership;
- accountability to higher levels of research organisations and funding agencies, government and the society at large.

1.1. Evaluation Protocol

The Board of Utrecht University and the Board of the Catholic Theological University in Utrecht determined in more detail the guidelines for the present research assessment in the 'Protocol theology' (appendix 1). The previous evaluation in 1999 was carried out in combination with the other Dutch theological faculties and research programmes. The current assessment focuses exclusively on Integon.

This report describes the findings of the Review Committee appointed by the University Boards. The committee has considered the questions raised in the protocol. According to the evaluation protocol the programmes of Integon to be assessed are:

1. Religion and Modernity
2. The Old Testament: Exile and Return
3. Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism in interaction
4. Identity in the Making
5. Intercultural Theology
6. God's Hidden Presence
7. Modernity from a Systematic Perspective
8. Interdisciplinary Research Group Relation Judaism Christianity
9. Interdisciplinary Research Group Women's & Gender Studies in Religion

In addition to the evaluation protocol the Board of Integon formulated the following questions for consideration by the evaluation committee:

1. Which direction does the committee advise for the integration of the theological research in the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities? Would the committee advise to maintain Integon as an independent institute in the Faculty; to seek cooperation with social sciences; and/or integration with the research programmes of the churches?
2. What is the opinion of the Committee with regard to the opportunities for research cooperation between the Sub-faculty of Theology and the CTU?
3. What is the vision of the committee concerning the research orientations of the current research programme, with regard to the changing position of the Sub-faculty of Theology in the Faculty Arts and the Humanities?

1.2. Evaluation Committee

The University Boards appointed Professor M.B. Pranger as chair of the committee. It was decided to limit the size of the committee to four. The committee consisted of:

- Prof. M.B. Pranger, Universiteit van Amsterdam
- Prof. W.Zwanenburg, emeritus Universiteit Utrecht
- Prof. L.Boeve, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven
- Prof. C.Steel, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven.

More detailed information about the committee members can be found in appendix 2.
The University Boards appointed Dr. B.M. van Balen as secretary of the committee.

1.3. Input to the Assessment Process

The input to the evaluation comprised of

- a self-evaluation report submitted by Integon;
- key publications of the research programs under review;
- interviews with the Board of the Sub-faculty, the rector of the CTU, the Board of Integon representatives of the church programmes, representatives of the research programmes and representatives of the PhD-students during the site visit.

The self-evaluation report submitted by Integon contained all necessary information as required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol. In this assessment report there are some remarks about gaps in the information. These shortcomings are therefore due to the Standard Evaluation Protocol which, in the committee's view, needs to be adjusted.

1.4. Site Visit

The site visit was scheduled for the 16th and 17th of January 2006.
During the site visit the evaluation committee interviewed:

- the Board of the Sub-faculty: the dean Prof. W.Otten; the vice dean Prof. M. Sarot director of the Sub-faculty Drs. H.C. Jamin, W.C.van Schaik, student member and the dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities, Prof. H. Bertens as well as the rector of the Catholic Theological University, Prof. P.H.A.I. Jonkers.
- the Board of Integon: the director Prof. H.Tieleman, the president Prof. G.A.M. Rouwhorst and members Prof. D.M. Grube, Prof. K. Steenbrink, M. Faber, Prof. M.J.J. Menken, Prof. G.A.F. Hellemans, Dr. J.W.Spaans
- Research Program Leaders: Prof. G.A.F. Hellemans, Prof. B.E.J.H. Becking, Prof. P.C. Beentjes, Prof. M.J.J. Menken, Prof. W. Otten, Prof. G.A.M. Rouwhorst, Prof. K. Steenbrink, Prof. H. Rikhof, Prof. D.M. Grube, Prof. P.H.A.I. Jonkers, Prof. A.M. Korte, Dr. M.J.H.M. Poorthuis.
- PhD-students: Wiersma, Ruf, de Hulster, Timmerman, Faber.
- Management of the Research Institute for History and Culture (OGC) and the Research Institute of Philosophy (ZENO): Prof. M.R. Prak and Prof. T.H.M. Verbeek.
- Representatives of the church programmes: Prof. F.G. Immink, Prof. M. Barnard, Prof. A. Berlis, Prof. O.H. de Vries, Drs. L. Mietus

The committee had an additional informative conversation with Prof. Otten and Drs. Jamin about the plans concerning a Utrecht Theological Centre - working title: Divinity School - and additional questions for the director of Integon and the dean of the Sub-faculty, as well as with the rector of the CTU and the president of Integon.
All interviews and conversations were conducted in the presence of the full evaluation committee.
The visit ended with an oral report to the Board of Utrecht University, represented by the Rector Magnificus of the UU, the rector of the CTU, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities, the Sub-faculty board, and the board and management of Integon in the presence of members of the Sub-faculty and CTU.

2. Review of the Institute

2.1. Introduction

The aim of the research institute Integon is to improve the quality, coherence and output of theological research of the CTU and the Sub-faculty of Theology. Integon considers theological research as the scholarly study of religion in its cultural context. The primary object of theological reflection in Integon is the discourse about God, including the way this has been expressed in religious writings, - both canonical and noncanonical -, cultural movements and religious and societal institutions.
The research of Integon is organised in programmes. Within these programmes researchers from CTU and from the Sub-faculty cooperate. Members of Integon participate almost without exception in the national research school Noster (Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion) of which Utrecht University is the co-ordinating university (penvoerder).
The evaluation committee considers the assessment of Integon's research as its primary task. In the second place the committee was asked to advise the management of Integon, Sub-faculty and CTU about the viability of the institute in the near future in view of other developments.

The following five developments may influence the position of Integon:

- The integration of the Sub-faculty of Theology into the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities.
- The merger of the Catholic Theological University with Tilburg University.
- The foundation of a Protestant Theological University, a merger between the church programmes TWI and ELS located in Utrecht and the Protestant Theological University of Kampen.
- The university policy 'Focus en massa' with regard to finance and organisation of research projects within University Utrecht. As a consequence of this policy a limited number of focus areas in research will be privileged over others.
- From 2006 on Integon will also have to relate to the recently founded Utrecht Graduate School for Arts and the Humanities. This school will officially take responsibility for the research master programmes.

Formally Integon has no staff of its own. Researchers and supporting staff are part-time assigned to Integon by the CTU and the Sub-faculty. Integon therefore has no autonomous personnel policy.

2.2. Assessment of the Entire Institute

Quality	3 to 4
Productivity	4 +
Relevance	4

The quality of the research programmes varies from 3 to 4. In the opinion of the committee the variety is too big to average the rating. The programmes differ in focus, size, seniority and relevance. Some of the groups are traditionally academic. These groups have an international focus but are relatively small and have little 'nachwuchs' (junior researchers, interested in the subject and preparing to take the lead when the senior researchers retire). Other groups are more practically oriented, publish regionally, have a high societal relevance and attract young researchers, but sometimes miss focus and coherence. More explanation about the quality rating can be found in chapter 3.

The productivity of the entire institute is very high. The undifferentiated presentation of the publications and results in the self-evaluation report made it difficult for the committee to give a more precise assessment of the quality of the production. In the presentation no distinction was made between international and regional publications, nor between reviewed and not reviewed.

Some researchers seem to publish mainly in Dutch journals and through Dutch publishing houses. The committee is aware of the fact that the evaluation protocol only makes a distinction between academic and professional publications. However, the same remark was made in the last external evaluation of Integon. The committee advises to be more selective with regard to the choice of publishers. There seems to be a tendency in the more practically oriented programmes to publish with a limited review procedure, in Dutch journals and through non-academic publishing houses.

The international profile of the institute and its research can be improved. On the one hand, there are some programmes, rooted in the old academic tradition of theological research, that have an entirely international focus. On the other hand, the number of international publications in other programmes of the institute is limited. An incentive for researchers participating in those programmes to publish internationally is needed.

The societal relevance of the research carried out by the institute is high. This is also demonstrated by the number of professional publications produced in the institute. The academic relevance within the theological disciplines is also high. However, external research funding was in the period of review limited to three projects and did not add to a high rating in this respect.

2.3. Management and Structure

The management and board of the institute have made every effort to build a unity out of the divergent groups and individual researchers. The committee appreciates those efforts, but still perceives a lack of coherence in the institute and in several programmes, as will be described in chapter 3.
The co-operation between the Sub-faculty with its roots in the protestant academic tradition, and the Catholic Theological University is not only unique but has also proven to be successful. The surplus value of co-operation between the Sub-faculty and CTU within the institute is, among other things, demonstrated by the quantity and the quality of the research output.

However, the present management structure makes the institute somewhat inflexible and it seems to tie the researchers to their discipline instead of stimulating them to co-operate with others.

The reason behind the allocation of individual research projects and researchers to the programmes was not always clear to the committee

For a relatively small institute there are a lot of research programmes. The programmes the committee came across were mostly a continuation of previous research programmes. The committee appreciates the efforts the institute made to implement the recommendations of the previous evaluation concerning this aspect, which resulted in the present programme structure. The committee advises nevertheless to reduce the number of programmes. To make real innovation possible, the programme structure needs rethinking. The committee supports the policy of the Sub-faculty to establish a simpler structure of discipline groups (leerstoelgroepen) within the Faculty. This reorganisation may also serve as a tool to clarify the structure of the research institute. The three current discipline groups are:

- Thought and Inheritance of Christianity
- The Bible
- Interreligious Communication

On the basis of these or similar units the researchers could co-operate in flexible, interdisciplinary and more temporary research projects.
and to loosen the programme structure in favour of more temporary, flexible and smaller interdisciplinary and disciplinary research projects
The committee would like to suggest building programme groups along the lines of the basic disciplines and transforming the more thematic interdisciplinary programmes into projects. Internal expansion will probably increase the external decisiveness.

2.4 PhD-students

One of the aims of the institute is to improve the training and supervision of PhD-students. Part of the PhD-training programme is carried out under the wings of Noster, the National Research School for Theology.
The present 'aio' (assistant in training)-system for PhD-students is expensive and is one of the reasons that this institute has too few PhD-students. Along with the implementation of the Bachelor/Master-structure and the research Master programme the Sub-faculty has changed the PhD-policy. In order to reduce the costs and to stimulate the progress of the PhD-projects, the appointments of PhD-students are reduced from four to three years. The idea underlying this policy is that students need less time for their PhD's because they start writing their dissertation after finishing a research Master programme. They are therefore trained in research skills and have written a research outline as a master thesis, so they need less time for their PhD than before the implementation of the Bachelor/Master- structure in the Sub-faculty.
In the next years the PhD-training programmes will gradually become part of the graduate schools of the respective universities.
Integon attracts a lot of external PhD-students (buiten promovendi). That fact is in itself promising. But the number of dissertations defended in the period under review is not really impressive. The committee subscribes to the concern expressed by Integon regarding the fact that it takes PhD-students too long to finish their projects.
The institute has installed an 'aio-dean', a kind of ombudsman especially for the PhD-students. The PhD-students may consult this dean when they have personal problems. They appreciate the possibility. The aio-dean is not, however, responsible for the progress of the PhD-projects. The monitoring of the progress of the PhD-projects may become a problem. 'Promotores' are often focussed on the content and that focus contradicts with a timely completion of the project. The committee advises to urge the 'promotores' to pay more attention to the fact that PhD-projects should be finished on time.
The quality plan, a format designed by the Sub-faculty to improve the quality and progress of PhD-projects, offers a framework for PhD-students to lean on. In addition to this plan it is advisable to mandate one of the participating researchers to monitor the 'promotores' on the time schedule and progress of their PhD-students.

2.5. Quality of Resources, Funding Policies and Facilities

In the period under review the success in obtaining external research funding was limited – aside from the 'breedtestrategie'. A similar remark was made by Integon in its self-evaluation report. The report was not very clear about the sources and the beneficiaries of the funds that had been acquired in this period. These funds concerned three projects, one of which has meanwhile been terminated (Philosophy of Religion), whereas another project was carried out by a researcher (Leonard Rutgers) who has left Integon recently (i.e. after the period under review). The third project Gods Hidden Presence is still running. This information arrived separately and is reason for concern. Generally speaking it would have been desirable to have more structured information about the sources and beneficiaries of project funding in the self-evaluation report. Researchers of Integon were however successful in obtaining research funds from the 'breedtestrategie', an internal university fund for interdisciplinary co-operation. These funds were not counted by the external funding. The institute should stimulate the researchers more to write applications for NWO-funding and for establishing commissioned research.

The committee saw no reason for concern regarding the provision of other facilities. In spite of remarks in the report with regard to library arrangements, the committee regards these sufficient, although not abundant.

2.6. Strengths and Weaknesses

Integon is managed by a broad board and an academic director with limited authority. With the unique co-operation between the Sub-faculty and CTU in mind the committee sees the logic of the present compilation of the board of the institute. The size of the board may, however, hinder the ability of the institute to anticipate and respond to new developments. The committee would like to advise giving the director of the institute a more extensive mandate to exercise his duties within the MUB.

2.7. Future Plans

The management of the Sub-faculty and CTU have presented their future plans to the committee. The research activities of the Sub-faculty will be organised in a research institute based on the MUB. After the merger with Tilburg University, the CTU will continue as the main location of the Faculty for Catholic Theology in the Netherlands (FKTN) and plans to establish its own research institute that intends to co-operate with the successor of Integon in the UU. The church programmes as described in 2.1. intend to merge with the Theological University Kampen into the Protestant Theological University. That development will create the possibility for the church programmes to set up their own research institute, based on an independent legal position.

In the view of the committee the prospects of the institute depend strongly on external circumstances and the degree in which policy decisions can be effectuated.
The committee is of the opinion that Integon has demonstrated its viability as an independent institute in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, in particular with regard to the international profile of the traditional theological programmes of the Institute.
The perspective that the management of Integon, Sub-faculty and CTU has described in the self-assessment report and in the internal memo of 19-12-2005, as well as in the discussions with the evaluation committee, is promising. The committee appreciates the managerial and administrative effort and vision of the Board of the Sub-faculty and the CTU.

The committee subscribes to the plan of establishing a 'MUB'-based research institute as the successor of Integon in the Utrecht University. This move will create the possibility to form a federation with other research institutes, such as the future research institute of the FKTN and of the Protestant Theological University (PTU).
The committee sees this future perspective as realistic and challenging. This perspective opens up opportunities for establishing a strong theological centre in Utrecht in which theological research will be stimulated and co-ordinated. The perspective also brings clarity in the administrative structure which, in the present situation, seems to be a bit top-heavy.
The willingness to acquire an independent research position looks like a good starting point for further co-operation after the merger. Moreover, the proposed structure will create opportunities to co-operate with other programmes, like those of the protestant church. The committee subscribes to the described policy wholeheartedly.

3. Review of the Research Programmes

As discussed in chapter 2, a general conclusion to be drawn from the assessment of the research programmes concerns the great variety between the programmes in focus, size, seniority and relevance. Some of the groups are traditionally academic. These groups have an international focus but are relatively small and have little 'nachwuchs' (junior researchers, interested in the subject and preparing to take the lead when the senior researchers retire). Other groups are more practically oriented, publish regionally, have high societal relevance and attract young researchers. However, they often miss focus and coherence.

3.1. Religion and Modernity

Quality	3
Productivity	4
Relevance	3,5
Viability	3

The research group is divergent with respect to disciplines and origin. Some of the participants in this group are more research oriented and others are more socially oriented. It is the ambition of the programme leaders to connect these two orientations and to stimulate the whole group to meet higher academic levels. The committee appreciates this. In the period under review the publications of this group are mainly limited to Dutch journals and books, and to publishing houses which are not primarily academic. The key publications presented to the committee were in Dutch. The committee evaluated these key publications as valuable but the programme misses an international profile. The societal relevance of this programme is high. The committee assessed the academic relevance of this programme as sufficient, but perceived a lack of coherence in the theoretical focus. This programme needs an international focus and platform. The committee would like to stimulate this group to explore the possibilities of co-operation with the social sciences.

3.2. The Old Testament: Exile and Return

Quality	4
Productivity	4
Relevance	3,5
Viability	3

The focus of this group is historical and academic. It is however a relatively small group. The committee perceived a discrepancy between the quality of the 'senior' research and the proportion of 'junior' research. The fact that this group did not obtain any NWO-funds is worrisome. The programme leaders expect to profit from co-operation with the Culture of Classical Antiquity group chaired by Prof. Josine Blok of the Research Institute for History and Culture. The committee is of the opinion that the size of this programme is too small to survive, and shares the view of the programme leaders that the research in this group will profit from a matrix structure in the institute, i.e. a combination of a limited number of discipline-based programme groups and temporary interdisciplinary projects.

3.3. Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism in Interaction

Quality	4
Productivity	5
Relevance	4
Viability	4

The quality of the research of this group is good and the productivity is excellent. This group has also been successful in attracting research funds. The committee appreciates the international publications highly. The scope and quality of the programme are very well reflected in the key publications. This group may form the nucleus for a new programme or project group. It is feared that the poor influx of young researchers may become a problem. The committee also wishes to express its concern with regard to the effect of the retirement of one of the most productive researchers in this group. Restructuring of the programme groups will probably solve part of these problems.

3.4. Identity in the Making

Quality	4
Productivity	5
Relevance	4
Viability	4

The integral approach and the ambition to incorporate the entire history of Christianity in this programme are highly appreciated by the committee, but it also foresees a problem. The ambition can easily overreach itself. The cross-pollination between the different traditions in catholic and protestant theology is fascinating and promising. The co-operation and the size of the group create excellent opportunities for reflection and experiments. This group has enough volume in fulltime equivalents. The number of dissertations defended in this period, however, is rather low, which is cause for concern.
Some of the key publications are characterized by the committee as fascinating.
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3.5. Intercultural Theology

Quality	3,5
Productivity	4
Relevance	4
Viability	2,5

The past performance of this group is very good. This group has produced an enormous number of publications. For a large part these publications were instigated by a former programme leader, who is now retired. The committee was surprised by the choice of key publications for this group. The publications presented in the report are not internationally visible. According to the programme leader, these publications represent the diversity in the research orientation of the group. However, the committee missed a clear vision and policy. The coherence in this group needs attention. The choice for mainly Dutch-oriented publishers is a problem.

3.6. God's hidden presence

Quality	4
Productivity	3,5
Relevance	3
Viability	3

Despite efforts to develop more coherence in this group, the focus is not entirely clear. The core of this group remains the Thomas Institute, an interuniversity institute with a good international reputation, which focuses on the work of Thomas of Aquino. It is, however, not always clear how the research in this group fits in the broader context of theological theory and philosophy.

3.7. Modernity from a Systematic Perspective

Quality	3,5
Productivity	4,5
Relevance	3
Viability	3

This disciplinary group engages itself with the philosophy of religion. The focus of the group has improved, but it still needs more coherence. The committee sees more opportunities for theological philosophy than described in the self-evaluation report. The fact that 'Modernity' also figures in the title of the programme Religion and Modernity suggests a possible overlap between the programmes. Although the programme leaders emphasize the differences, the committee thinks both groups will probably benefit from co-operation: the Religion and Modernity group probably with respect to a methodological and theoretical basis and this group from the more practical approach and co-operation with the social sciences.
During the period under review this group has been successful in creating more volume.

3.8. Interdisciplinary Research Group Relation Judaism and Christianity

The publications of the interdisciplinary groups are not separated from the publications of the programme groups. The committee was therefore not able to rate the productivity of these groups. The committee perceives these groups as temporary projects as a result of the recommendations in the previous assessment report. In the view of the committee the groups have achieved their goals and completed their mission. Following the restructuring of the programmes these groups can become part of bigger units.

As to the programme Relation Judaism Christianity the committee's marks are as follows:

Quality	4
Relevance	4
Viability	2

The performance of this group is very good. However, the committee is of the opinion that it is not advisable to continue operating the group in this way. The results and advantages of the interdisciplinary co-operation can be put to use in new projects. The committee suggests integration of this project in the research programme of the institute.

3.9. Interdisciplinary Research Group Women & Gender Studies in Religion

Quality	4
Relevance	4
Viability	2

The conclusion of paragraph 3.8 also applies to this group. The group can benefit from a closer co-operation with gender studies within the Faculty of Humanities and Arts.

4. Summarized Recommendations

- The committee subscribes to the plan of establishing a 'MUB'-based research institute as the successor of Integon in the Utrecht University.

- The programme structure needs rethinking to make innovation possible. The committee supports the policy of the Sub-faculty to establish a simpler structure of discipline groups (leerstoelgroepen) within the Faculty.

- The committee advises to reduce the number of programmes and to loosen the programme structure in favour of more temporary, flexible and smaller interdisciplinary and disciplinary research projects. The committee would like to suggest building programme groups along the lines of the basic disciplines and transforming the more thematic interdisciplinary programmes into projects.

- The committee would like to advise giving the director of the institute a more extensive mandate to exercise his duties within the MUB.

- It is advisable to mandate one of the participating researchers to monitor the 'promotores' on the time schedule and progress of their PhD-students.

APPENDIX 1

Protocol Theology

Evaluation protocol 2005 for the review of the
Research Institute of Theology (Integon) of Utrecht University and Catholic Theological University Utrecht
Period under review 1999 – 2004

1. Introduction
This evaluation protocol is an elaboration of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP) 2003 –2009 for public research organisations in The Netherlands. The SEP stipulates the requirements for research assessments of institutes of the Dutch universities and of the NWO and KNAW as agreed by governing boards of the association of universities VSNU and of the NWO and KNAW. For items not covered in this protocol the provisions of the SEP apply.
The Governing Boards of Utrecht University and Catholic Theological University Utrecht are responsible for the present evaluation. They appoint the chair and members of the committee. They determine the protocol for the evaluation. They are responsible for the publication of the report of the committee and for the conclusions to be drawn from it.

2. Units to be assessed
This research assessment concerns the Research Institute of Theology (Integon) and its eight research programs and two interdisciplinary research groups (no. 9 and 10):
1. Philosophy of Religion
2. The Old Testament: Context and Interpretation
3. Identity in the Making
4. Judaism, Christianity and Hellenism in Interaction
5. Discussing Modernity
6. Religion and Modernity
7. Gods Hidden Presence
8. Intercultural Theology
9. Relation Judaism Christianity
10. Interdisciplinary Research Program Women's & Genderstudies in Religion

3. External Evaluation Committee: profile and expertise
An independent external evaluation committee will perform the assessment. The evaluation committee consists of four members, including the chair.

The committee members are well-established researchers with an international reputation, and a majority of them has a background in interdisciplinary research. The committee members are fully independent of the research institute under review. Together they will be able to give a well-considered judgment and advise on the possible and desirable future development of the Institute's programmes, in view of its emerging position as

a) part of the Department of Arts and Humanities of Utrecht University
b) a more conventional theological setting at the national and international level

Members of the committee have experience with the organization and management of research at academic levels. They are especially familiar with interdisciplinary research cooperation in the fields of humanities and social sciences.

The merger of the departments of Arts, Philosophy and Theology of Utrecht University, brings along specific challenges and possibilities for the Institute's future. Therefore the committee will be asked to formulate their views and advice on the way the Institute can serve modern society with relevant research in the field of modern religious and theological developments.

4. Assignment

To assess against international scientific standards the quality, productivity, relevance and viability of the research of the Research Institute of Theology (Integon) and its research programs in the period 1999 up to and including 2004.

The committee is asked to formulate its assessment in a report, which is to be made public by the Board of Utrecht University and the Board of the Catholic Theological University Utrecht, specifying:

1. A review of the ***entire Institute***, containing:
1.1. A reflection on the leadership, strategy and policy of the Institute
1.2. An assessment of the quality of the resources, funding policies and facilities
1.3. An assessment of the academic reputation of the Institute
1.4. An assessment of the societal relevance of the Institute
1.5 A reflection on the strengths and weaknesses the Institute has formulated in the self-assessment

2. A review of ***each research program*** of the Institute, containing:
2.1 A quantified assessment of the quality, productivity, relevance and prospects of the research program (according to a five-point scale specified in appendix 2 of the SEP)
2.2 An explanation for this quantified assessment, containing:
2.2.1. A reflection on the leadership, strategy and policy of/for the research program
2.2.2. An assessment of the quality of the research staff, (human) resources, funding policies and facilities
2.2.3. An assessment of the quality and quantity of the publications and of the publication strategies
2.2.4. An assessment of the academic reputation of the program
2.2.5. An assessment of the relevance of the program from an academic perspective and from a broader social perspective
2.2.6. An assessment of the future perspectives of the program

Note: Apart from these disciplinary programs two interdisciplinary research groups will be evaluated. Since (all of the) researchers taking part in these interdisciplinary groups are members of the disciplinary programs as well, the assessment will not be primarily directed towards questions regarding the productivity, but mainly to the quality, the relevance and the added- value to the Institute as a whole.

In preparing the report the following questions are to be taken into consideration:
For past performance:
1. What are the quality and relevance of the Institute?
2. What is the quality of the leadership, management, strategy and research programs of the Institute, its (human) resources, organisation and infrastructure and how can they be improved?
3. To what extent has the Institute/research program achieved its mission?

For future plans:
1. Is the mission of the Institute/research program well chosen and phrased in view of the actual developments in the relevant research field(s)?
2. How do you assess the institute's research plans and is there sufficient coherence in the research portfolio of the Institute?
3. What is the quality of the leadership, management and strategy of the Institute, its (human) resources, organisation and infrastructure and how can they be improved?
4. On which of these aspects is there room for improvement and how could that be accomplished?

Management letter

The committee is asked to formulate in a management letter to the University Boards of Utrecht University and Catholic Theological University at Utrecht its assessment of the role, function and

viability of the Interuniversity Research Institute Integon during the past six years (1999-2004). The committee is asked to assess explicitly the human resources management and the research quality management (planning and control) of the Institute.

The committee is further asked to evaluate in general terms the coherence and the value of the totality of the research that at this moment is conducted at the Institute. It is moreover asked to assess the quality – taking into account national and international standards used in the field of theology and religious studies - and creditworthiness of the existing research groups and their members. The assessment should include the validity of the now existing division in research programs and interdisciplinary research groups as well as the choice of the spearheads selected during the last six years and those envisioned for the nearby future. Whether the disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups are sufficiently focused and viable for the next assessment period is a matter that deserves particular attention and assessment.

The committee is asked to take into account the specific situation in which the Sub-faculty of Theology finds itself at this moment in view of the fact that it will become integrated in a Graduate School for the Humanities. Given this situation the committee is asked to evaluate the effectiveness of the organization of the institute and the viability of both the institute and its research programs in

a) a Graduate School for the Humanities (Sub-faculty; at a local level) and
b) a more conventional theological setting at the national and international level (Catholic Theological University and Sub-faculty).

Procedure

The Evaluation Committee will have a two-day visit to the Institute. The program for the visit will be agreed between the chair and the director of the Institute. The Evaluation Committee receives all relevant material (key publications, self-evaluation document, this protocol and the visiting program) at least four weeks in advance of their site visit. The chairman may ask, possibly after consulting the other committee members, for additional information from the Institute or the two Boards.

At the beginning of the visit (representatives of) the Utrecht University Board and (of) the Catholic Theological University Board will install and brief the Committee in the presence of the leadership of the faculty. Subsequently, the committee will meet with (a representative of) the two Boards. Thereafter the committee decides on their working procedure for the visit and for writing the draft report.

During the visit, the Committee meets with:

- The Director of the Institute
- The Dean of the Sub-faculty Theology and the Rector of the Catholic Theological University Utrecht
- The program leaders of the Institute
- Any (group of) person(s) of the Institute asking to be heard by the Committee

Before each meeting the committee will indicate with whom and about what the interview will be conducted.

At the end of the visit the committee will meet with the Utrecht University (UU) Board and the Catholic Theological University (CTU) Board to present a first, oral, report.

After the visit the committee will draw up a report. In order to avoid any factual errors or mistakes, the chair asks the director of the Institute to comment on the draft evaluation report. After having received these comments, the Committee concludes its evaluation by formulating the evaluation report and the management letter and by presenting it to the UU Board and CTU Board. The two Boards will together publish the report. They will discuss the report and the management letter with the dean of the Sub-faculty, the Rector of CTU and the director of the Institute and the consequences to be drawn from them.

Information
The Institute provides a self-evaluation document according to the format specified in annex 1. The UU Board and the CTU, ultimately responsible for both the Institute and for the evaluation, approve the document as an input document for the evaluation.

Annex 1
(to Evaluation protocol 2005 for the review of the Research Institute of Theology (Integon) of Utrecht University and Catholic Theological University Utrecht)

To prepare for an evaluation – self-evaluation and external evaluation - the Institute is asked to provide a set of documents containing all the relevant information. This documentation reflects both the level of the Institute as a whole (A) and the research programs (B) that work within the jurisdiction of the Institute. Research conducted outside the scope of a program and other work within the Institute may be added separately. Both the level of the Institute and the level of the programs are specified comprehensively in annual units, which means that the factual data of the research programs and other research add up to the total of the Institute's data.

A. Documentation regarding the level of the Institute
A short characterisation of the Institute is provided, including:
Name of the Institute
Date of establishment
Institutional affiliations and formal responsibilities
Research area and mission
Formal co-operations and relations with other national and international research establishments

1. Evaluation of the research organisation

1.1. Strategy
Mission statement.

1.2. Leadership
On the basis of an organisation chart, including the names of the program leaders, the formal leadership and steering mechanisms of the Institute are explained.
A description is provided of the decision-making procedures, management style, means of motivation, communication and control and processes of improvement and innovation.

1.3. Strategy and policy
The research area is repeated and together with the mission explained in a historical and future context: changes in research subjects and strategies and plans for the short and long term. If applicable, strategy and policy within the wider organisational context of the Institute, such as university, research school, national body, etc.

1.4. Researchers and other personnel
The actual personnel policy is explained, including recruitment, selection, training, personal development opportunities, mobility and exchange policies.

Table 1
Research staff at institutional level

Name and present title		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Institutional level							
Tenured staff staff	Entire institute	fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
Non-tenured staff	Entire institute	fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
Ph.D. students	Entire institute	fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
Total research staff	Entire institute	Sum	sum	sum	sum	sum	Sum
Supporting staff	Entire institute	fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
Total staff	Entire institute	Sum	sum	sum	sum	sum	sum

Research program level (add for each program)

Name and present title	Program no.	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Program	1						
Tenured staff		fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
Non-tenured staff		fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
Ph.D. students		fte	fte	fte	fte	fte	Fte
(sub) Total research staff	-	Sum	sum	sum	sum	sum	Sum
Program	2						
…..							
Total staff	-	Sum	sum	sum	sum	sum	sum

(Researchers may (have) participate(d) in more than one research program- all fulltime equivalents in this table represent the actual fraction of the fte available for research i.e. appointment times agreed research fraction)

1.5. Resources, funding and facilities
The financial situation and policy of the Institute are explained both in terms of funding and expenditure. The future funding situation and consequences are discussed. The research facilities and/or substantial capital investments (installations, equipment, computers, library, etc.) are described with their budget and their conditions evaluated. Funding trends (see data table) are explained. Future funding targets are specified.
The data are provided in two sets: in k? and in percentages.

Table 2
Funding and expenditure at institutional level
Institutional level

Funding:	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Direct funding	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %
Research funds	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %
Contracts	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %
Total	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum
Expenditure	Year-5	Year-4	Year-3	Year-2	Year-1	Year now
Personnel costs[1]	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %
Other costs	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %	€ / %
Total	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum

Research program level

Funding	Program no.	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
	1	%	%	%	%	%	%
	1 + x	%	%	%	%	%	%
	…..	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total		100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Explanation:
Direct funding: *funds provided directly by the university for research and exploitation*
Research funds: *funds received in competition from national and European science foundations (NWO, KNAW, ESF)*
Contracts: *funds from third parties for specific research activities, including funds from EU framework programs and other EU funding*

1.6. Processes in research, internal and external collaboration

To the extent to which they can be described at the level of the Institute, current research processes and the research culture at the Institute are described and evaluated. Attention will be paid to teamwork vs. individual research activities; processes in which research strategies are redirected; the communication and exchange channels; supervision of junior researchers; quality control and methodological safeguarding.
Objectives and results of internal and external collaboration are analysed and form the basis for the external validation below.

1.7. Academic reputation

The specific reputations of the programs will be described. The academic reputation can be indicated in several ways: external reviews, external funding, assessment, international cooperation programmes, etc. (For the humanities bibliometric analysis of the citations of the scientific results are not available. For most of disciplines in Theology 'prizes' for scientific work are not common).

[1] Personnel costs: all wages, salaries of the personnel including the social security charges, the donation to the provision "wachtgelden" (=reduced pay in case of unemployment), the cost of temporary workers or agency staff and other personnel costs like allowances for child care, commuter traffic etc.

1.8. Internal evaluation and analysis, perspectives and expectations for the research[2]

An evaluation by the Institute's community itself of its management, support, research climate and culture, and facilities. This evaluation will take the character of a SWOT analysis as proposed in the SEP.

1.9. External validation

To the extend to which this is possible for the Institute as a whole: evaluation of the effects of collaboration and dissemination of research results outside the scientific community. A methodical analysis of the Institute's environment and its appreciation of the Institute's conduct and results may be added.

1.10. Overview of the results

The aggregated results of the Institute are presented in the following tables and listings. The full results are reported in the research program documentation. It should be stressed that all relevant results and outcomes of the Institute's activities, in particular all results that contribute to the mission and goals of the Institute, will be reported to the review committee and thereby taken into account in the assessment. However, for some of these results, especially academic publications that by their nature must result from original research work, numerical information makes sense.

In Table 6 similar figures are provided at the level of the research program. In Table 7 the research groups are requested tot list all research results, including awards etc.

Table 3
Aggregated results of the Institute

		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
1. Academic	a. in journals							Sum
publications	b. book chapters							Sum
Total		Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum
2. Monographs								Sum
3. Ph.D. theses								Sum
4. Professional publications and products								
								Sum

Explanation: (no distinction is made between paper and electronic information bearers)

1. Academic publications: scientific papers aimed at an audience of scientists and researchers.

a. Journals: papers in all academic journals.

b. Book chapters are included here if they fall within the definition of academic publications (books are listed separately).

2. Monographs: books are written for a learned audience, reporting results of scientific research.

3. Ph.D. theses are listed that are predominantly (>50%) the result of research carried out within the institute / program.

4. Professional publications and products: scientific papers aimed at a broader professional audience, chapters, books and reports aiming at the dissemination of scientific knowledge, software, CD-ROM's, etc.

[2] In SEP two separate sets of documentation: A8 and A11.

B. Documentation regarding the level of the program

A short characterisation of each of the nine research programs listed above is provided, including:
Title of the program
Research area and mission
Program leader(s) during the review period
Starting date of the program
Formal affiliations outside the Institute (e.g. research school) and other structural co-operations and relations with national and international research groups

2. Evaluation of the research programs

The documentation must indicate in what phase a research program is at the moment of evaluation. In this evaluation also the relevant research of the preceding program is included. Programs in the start up phase will have minimum output in comparison with finished programs that will have reached their maximum. In evaluating recent/future research evaluators will focus on input and plans. In finished programs focus will be more on outcome and performance.

2.1. Leadership

A description of the responsibilities of the program leader, in relation to the management of the institute is required. The description may include management style, means of motivation, communication and control and processes of improvement and innovation.

2.2. Strategy and policy

The research area and mission are repeated and explained in their historical and future context: changes in research subjects of the program and strategies and plans for the short and long term. The actions taken on the basis of the conclusions of the previous research assessment will be evaluated. If applicable, the strategy and policy are also explained within the wider organisational context of the program, such as teaching obligations, research school, national affiliations, etc.

2.3. Processes in research, internal and external collaboration

When complementary to the level of the Institute, current research processes and the research culture within the group are described and evaluated. Attention will be paid to teamwork vs. individual research activities; processes in which research strategies are redirected; the communication and exchange channels; supervision of junior researchers; quality control and methodological safeguarding.

Objectives and results of internal and external collaboration are analysed and form the basis for the external validation below.

2.4. Academic reputation

The evaluation of the academic reputation of the program will meet the approach taken at the level of the Institute as a whole.

2.5. Internal evaluation

The evaluation by the members of the program will meet the approach taken at the level of the Institute as a whole.

2.6. External validation

Here the effects of collaboration and dissemination of research results outside the scientific community is evaluated.

2.7. Researchers and other personnel

The program personnel policy is explained, including recruitment, selection, training, personal development opportunities, mobility and exchange policies. In the case that (parts of) this policy is situated at the level of the institute, make clear what the responsibilities and tasks are at the program level.

Table 4
Research staff at program level

Name and present title		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Full professors	Name 1	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
	Name 2	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
Associate professors[3]	Name 1	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
	Name 2	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
Assistant professors[4]	Name 1	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
	Name 2	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
Other tenured staff	Name 1	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
	Name 2	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
Total tenured staff		Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum
Non tenured staff	Name 1	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
	Name 2	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
Ph.D. students	Name 1	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
	Name 2	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte	Fte
Total non-tenured staff		Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum
Total research staff		Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum

NB: the fte's in the last column, last row will become the reference for the group's size in the assessment procedure.

2.8. Resources, funding and facilities

The research facilities (installations, equipment, computers, library, etc.) are described and their condition evaluated. Personnel funding trends (see data table) are explained. Future funding targets are specified.

Table 5
Funding at program level

Funding	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Six year average
Direct funding fte's	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Research funds	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Contracts	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

For an explanation see Institute documentation. In the documentation per program only the proportional funding of fte's is specified. If applicable, a list of external funds to the program for facilities or equipment may be added.

3 Also: senior lecturer (UDH) or senior researcher

4 Also: lecturer (UD) or researcher

2.9.Overview of the results

The research outcomes of the group are presented as follows:

1. A selection of five key publications that represent the quality and impact of the research
2. A numerical overview of the results in a fixed format of categories
3. A full list of the publications and other outcomes using that fixed format

Ad 1. The key publications are selected to demonstrate the quality and impact of the research in the given period. They are listed in the self-evaluation report as below. The chair of the committee will decide about the format in which (full text, hyperlink) the key publications will be included to the documentation that is provided to the Evaluation Committee.

Key publications:

1.
2.
3.
4. (not be added in full text)
5. (not be added in full text)

Ad 2. In the same way as the results of the Institute as a whole are presented, the program results are presented in a comprehensive list.

Table 6
Program results: outcome numbers

		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
1. Academic publications	a. in journals							Sum
	b. book chapters							Sum
Total Sum		Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	Sum	
2. Monographs								Sum
3. Ph.D. theses								Sum
4. Professional publications and products								Sum

Explanation: see Table 3.

Ad 3. A full list of the results of the program is provided per year and category.

Table 7
Program results: full outcome list

2.10. Analysis, perspectives and expectations for the research program

An analysis according to chapter 4 of SEP is given for the research program under consideration.

APPENDIX 2

The Review Committee

Prof. L. Boeve
Professor of fundamental theology at the Faculty of Theology, K.U.Leuven (Belgium), and co-ordinator of the Research Group Theology in a Postmodern Context. Currently he is also the international president of the European Society for Catholic Theology.

Prof. M.B. Pranger
Professor of the History of Christianity and Academic Director of The Institute of Culture and History, University of Amsterdam.

Prof. C.Steel
Professor of Ancient and Medieval Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, University of Leuven (Belgium)

Prof. W. Zwanenburg
Former professor of French linguistics and former dean of the Faculty of Arts Utrecht University

APPENDIX 3

Assessment Criteria and Rating

The committee acted upon the description of the protocol, concerning the interpretation of the four main assessment criteria.

Quality is to be seen as a measure of excellence and excitement. It refers to the eminence of a group's research activities, its abilities to perform at the highest level and its achievements in the international scientific community. It rests on the proficiency and rigour of research concepts and conduct; it shows in the success of the group at the forefront of scientific development. As a rule, experts in the field - the peers - judge this. They rely on their own knowledge and expertise, on discussions with the group leaders and other members, and on various kinds of systematic information. When an institute provides high quality state of the art facilities to the research community this can be considered as a measure of excellence.

Productivity refers to the total output of the group; that is, the variegated ways in which results of research and knowledge development are publicized. Usually, quantitative indicators measure this. In most cases this will be bibliometrics, which are indicators concerned with publications and citations of publications. The output needs to be reviewed in relation to the input in terms of human resources.

Relevance is a criterion that covers both the scientific and the technical and socio-economic impact of the work. Here in particular research choices are assessed in relation to developments in the international scientific community or, in the case of technical and socio-economic impact, in relation to important developments or questions in society at large.

Vitality and feasibility refers to the internal and external dynamics of the group in relation to the choices made and the success rate of projects. On the one hand, this criterion measures the flexibility of a group, which appears in its ability to close research lines that have no future and to initiate new venture projects. On the other hand, it measures the capacity of the management to run projects in a professional way. Assessment of policy decisions is at stake, as well as assessment of project management, including cost-benefit analysis.

The review committee presents its assessment on quality, productivity, relevance and vitality according to a five-point scale, specified in the SEP:

Excellent = 5
Work that is at the forefront internationally, and which most likely will have an important and substantial impact in the field. Institute is considered an international leader.

Very good = 4
Work that is internationally competitive and is expected to make a significant contribution; nationally speaking at the forefront in the field. Institute is considered international player, national leader.

Good = 3
Work that competitive at the national level and will probably make a valuable contribution in the international field. Institute is considered internationally visible and a national player.

Satisfactory = 2
Work that is solid but not exciting, will add to our understanding and is in principle worthy of support. It is considered of less priority than work in the above categories. Institute is nationally visible.

Unsatisfactory = 1
Work that is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc. Work not worthy of pursuing.

Appendix 4

Frequently Used Abbreviations

CTU	Catholic Theological University
ELS	Evangelical Lutheran Seminary, the Evangelical Lutheran church programme
FKTN	Netherlands Faculty of Catholic Theology
INTEGON	Research Institute for Theology and Religious Studies
KNAW	Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences
MUB	Modernising University Government, the actual law concerning university management structures
Noster	Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religion
NWO	Netherlands Organisation of Scientific Research
PTU	Protestant Theological University
SEP	Standard Evaluation Protocol
TWI	Theological Academic Institute, the reformed church programme
UU	University Utrecht
VSNU	Association of Universities in the Netherlands

Comment of the Board of the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities / Theology

To the University Board of Utrecht University,
Professor Willem Hendrik Gispen, Rector

To the University Board of the Catholic Theological University Utrecht,
Professor Ernst Hirsch Ballin, president

Dear Professor Gispen,
Dear Professor Hirsch Ballin,

We welcome the opportunity offered by the University Boards to react to the recent assessment of Integon, the joint research institute of the Subfaculty of Theology and the Catholic Theological University Utrecht (KTU).

First and foremost we want to express our appreciation for the review the Committee has produced, along with our gratitude for all the work involved.

We are pleased with the Committee's overall judgment, which we consider to be a realistic evaluation of the institute's work and situation. Likewise, we appreciate the advices the Committee has formulated as helpful, and we will certainly find benefit in the various considerations and recommendations the Committee has formulated.

Meanwhile, the Committee's main recommendations have been taken up by Integon, in a round of internal and external consultations, alongside with the rearrangement of the institute's programmes and working procedures that are under way in view of the changing situations of the constituent partners of the institute, i.e., the Subfaculty of Theology and the Catholic Theological University.

The points raised by the Committee with regard to the rearrangement of the Integon programmes, the desirability of their reduced number, the preference for temporary, flexible and smaller research projects alongside the programmes, are clearly in line with the institute's own intentions. Some of these intentions have been expressed to the committee during the site visit and were evidently met with approval.

At present the face of religion in the Netherlands but also internationally is thoroughly changing in character and at the same time remarkably growing in societal importance. As a matter of course we currently witness a period of corresponding reorientation of research in the field of religion. The outcome of this timely evaluation will unquestionably help us in further reconsidering and redefining the best research orientation for the institute and its members.

In conclusion, we see the Committee's report as a realistic evaluation of our work and as a statement of support for the new directions we are elaborating at this very time. We look forward to discussing the various thematic and strategic aspects of the report over the next few months, both within the Subfaculty and the Catholic Theological University, and with our various partners, including the Board of Utrecht University, the Board of the Catholic Theological University Utrecht and/or Tilburg University.

Sincerely,

Professor Peter Jonkers, Rector of the Catholic Theological University Utrecht
Professor Willemien Otten, Dean of the Subfaculty of Theology, Utrecht University

cc. prof.dr. W.J. van den Akker, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and the Humanities

Points of attention

Questions (to the research/programme director or the faculty board)