



K O N I N K L I J K E N E D E R L A N D S E  
A K A D E M I E V A N W E T E N S C H A P P E N

**ACADEMY INSTITUTES**  
**Recognition & Rewards Agenda 2022-2025**

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# SUMMARY

*Recognition & Rewards* (R&R) is a national programme involving all the universities of the Netherlands, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) and the university hospitals. The stakes in this programme are high: each of these organisations has set up committees to work towards a broader system of recognition and rewards in academia and for academic staff. They coordinate their efforts regularly at the national level to ensure a common pathway.

There is a widely shared desire to move forward with the *Recognition & Rewards Programme*, an ambition that will become evident across academia in the coming years, for example in changes in grant application procedures, in team evaluations, and in individual employee appraisals. These efforts have not gone unnoticed in other countries, and the international academic world is keeping close track of the developments in the Netherlands.

This report is the product of the work that the Academy's Recognition & Rewards Committee has performed over the past 18 months. It has based that work on the following guiding principles:

- *R&R* must result from the strategy of the individual institutes on the one hand and the values that the Academy stands for on the other. *R&R* therefore categorically does not mean 'one size fits all'. The question as to which academic quality should be recognised and rewarded is closely related to the individual institute's objectives and strategy and the Academy's values in terms of good employment practices, diversity, social safety, independence and integrity, social relevance and engagement, among other factors. Our belief is that if this relationship is properly established, it will not only benefit the institute but also enable both academic and support staff to perform to the best of their abilities.
- Unless we make a number of general improvements, the aim of introducing a broader system of recognition and rewards in academia and for academics will not succeed. First of all, there is the importance of leadership in the academic context. It is crucial to have an open mind regarding the breadth of the concept of 'talent', to be capable of ensuring a good working environment, and to be aware that one serves as a role model for others. Second, there is the realisation that research today is a team effort and that every team member has a role to play and deserves to be recognised and rewarded for their contribution. And finally, there must be room for diversification of career paths and for employees' personal development, in particular those who are in the early phases of their careers.

Chapter 6 outlines a large number of specific actions that the Committee recommends the Academy should undertake starting in 2022 to ensure that the Recognition & Rewards system is implemented within each of the Academy's institutes. It will take considerable effort to accomplish all of these actions. The Committee therefore recommends not taking this matter lightly and making the necessary time and energy available for it. It will be worth the effort!

# 1 INTRODUCTION

In November 2019, the Dutch universities as represented by the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), along with the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Dutch Research Council (NWO), the Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) and the Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres (NFU) published the *position paper* [Room for everyone's talent](#) – thereby launching the national Recognition & Rewards Programme (R&R). All the institutions involved, including the Academy, committed to the following guiding principles:

- Diversification and vitalisation of career paths, thereby promoting excellence in each of the key areas of academia;
- Acknowledgement of both the independence and individual talents and aspirations of academics and team performance;
- An emphasis on quality of work over output metrics (such as number of publications);
- Encouragement of all aspects of open science;
- Encouragement of high-quality academic leadership.

## ***National programme***

Recognition & Rewards is a national programme that has a steering committee, a committee of chairpersons and committee of project managers from the various participating institutions.<sup>1</sup> Many of those institutions have now published reports setting out their strategic agendas and guiding principles. Other institutions are expanding on the initial joint position paper. There have also been discussions in various forums and in the media on such topics as narrative CVs and metric indices such as the H-index, for example the recent online discussion (Summer 2021) that began with the statement: ['Nieuwe Erkennen en waarderen schaadt Nederlandse wetenschap'](#) (New system of Recognition & Rewards is damaging to Dutch academia), followed immediately by the counterargument ['We moeten af van telzucht in de wetenschap'](#) (We need to abandon our obsession with metrics in academia). Some of these documents have been used as sources for the Academy's R&R Agenda.

A number of inspiring reports and statements have also been published, including by [The Young Academy](#) and the [Amsterdam Young Academy](#). These documents echo the urgency felt by young academics in particular and mentioned in the Academy's Strategic Agenda for 2021-2025, an urgency that demands a firm response because it is about their future and about the future of academia.

## ***Academy R&R committee<sup>2</sup>***

The Academy R&R committee consists of Jeroen den Hertog (managing director of the Hubrecht Institute), Marieke Klein Breteler (Academy P&O), Irene van Houten (Academy communication), Ammeke Kateman (Forum, advice and research), Afelonne Doek (until July 2021, IISH director of collections and digital infrastructure) and from September 2021 Menno Rasch (HuC director of digital infrastructure) with Marjan van Hunnik as project manager and Frank van Vree as chair (former director of NIOD).

In addition to the committee members, several employees joined one of the three theme groups, i.e. Teamwork, Leadership, and Diversity in Career Paths, each of which met twice: Sabine Rummens (HuC

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<sup>1</sup> There is a programme office that organises activities, collects material, arranges meetings and acts as a catalyst for this national movement, which is attracting interest from abroad. The Academy participates at each of the three levels, i.e. in the steering committee (Ineke Sluiter), the chairpersons' committee (Frank van Vree) and the project managers' committee (Marjan van Hunnik).

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 2 for a description of the committee's working methods.

director of operations), Bart Engelen and Nahymja Nijhuis (both P&O policy advisers), Helga de Valk (director of NIDI), Valeria Gazzola (researcher at NIN), Kim Laband (researcher at the Hubrecht Institute), Auke de Jong (PhD at the Westerdijk Institute), Marjan Grootveld (Research Data Experts coordinator at DANS), Roxana Kooijmans (researcher at NIN) and Suzanne Vogelezang (researcher at the Rathenau Instituut).

The committee began its activities in June 2020 and set itself the task of producing an Agenda for the coming years, based on a number of guiding principles and focused on making recommendations and taking specific steps to achieve its goals. The committee based its work on the aforementioned position paper and the new Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP).

### ***Approach, scope and nature of this Agenda***

The committee decided early on to focus on (1) a set of more general recommendations and action points, and two more significant and critical elements of the R&R Programme, i.e. (2) the diversity of career paths and job profiles (for PhD students as well), including in terms of diversification and personal development, and (3) leadership in an academic context.

We consider that the other objectives of the R&R Programme, i.e. a sharper focus on quality and on identifying the appropriate indicators for 'measuring' quality, societal impact and open science, are sufficiently embedded in the SEP and in the Academy's signing of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) on the one hand and in the Academy's Strategic Agenda for 2021-2025 and current policy and objectives on the other. That is why we do not address these policy issues separately in the present Agenda.

In addition to the younger generation of academics mentioned above (PhD students and postdocs), we specifically consider employees who make a direct and material contribution to research output, and whose work is therefore subject to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, but who are categorised as other than academic staff ('WP' under the Dutch University Job Classification System or UFO), for example analysts, research information specialists and IT professionals who create and program databases. Their contributions may consist of various products, ranging from databases and software code to exhibitions, internal and external reports and independent publications. The nature of their tasks distinguishes them from employees whose work is equally important but is more content-neutral or administrative in nature and who do not make a straightforward contribution to research.

Largely for administrative reasons, the Academy categorises many of the positions held by content-oriented employees as research support staff or 'OWP' (and therefore as academic staff), but there are also positions categorised as support and management staff or 'OBP' (non-academic). While this makes it difficult to establish the precise scope, it is important to mention this here because the dividing line between academic and support staff may be more fluid than the classification system suggests. The Academy's R&R project therefore addresses the position of:

- academic staff (WP) – i.e. those who define a research question and work to answer it, and who must therefore comply with the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity;
- research support staff (some academic, some non-academic) who make a material contribution by carrying out their own tasks within the context of a research project, and are therefore also expected to adhere to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.

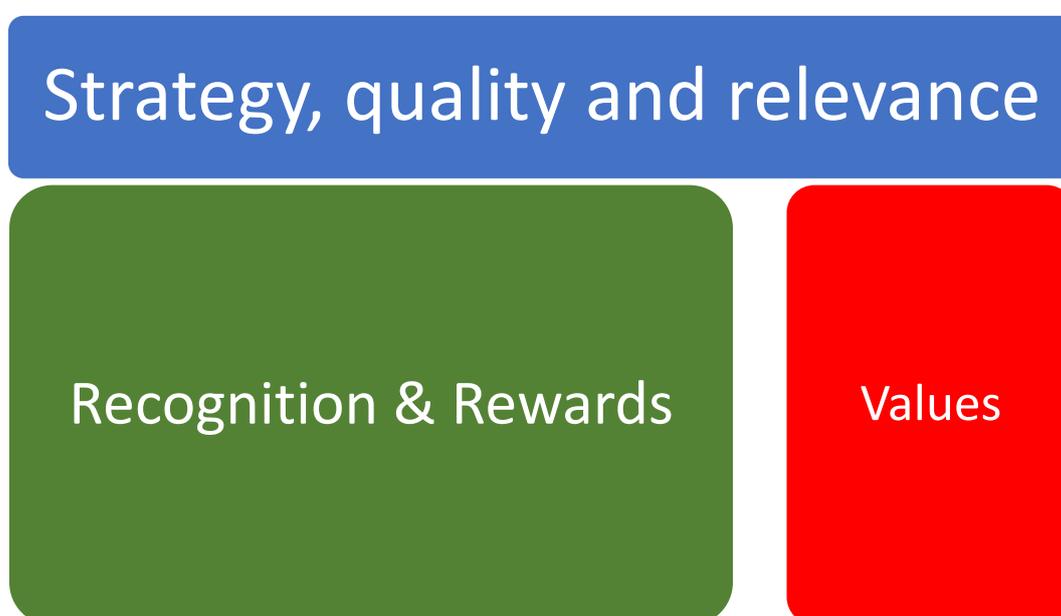
Several of the issues raised in the Recognition & Rewards Programme may therefore also be pertinent to some of the Academy's research support staff and support and management staff, not only because their contribution to a team's research should be recognised but also because their careers appear to be circumscribed by the categorisation of their position as academic or as research support and support and management staff.

Although it would be going beyond the scope of this Agenda to upend the Academy's current administrative classification system of academic, research support, and support and management staff,

this Agenda refers to the aforementioned categories where possible and relevant and makes recommendations concerning these categories.

## 2 RECOGNITION & REWARDS: THE ACADEMY'S POSITION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Recognition & Rewards Programme is not a stand-alone programme, and it is also not something that has been 'tacked on' as an extra job or obligation. The intention of the programme is to respond to the changing and evolving nature of academic practice in which academics do more than 'simply' investigate a research topic with peer-reviewed articles as their output. Given these changing notions of sound academic practice, we therefore see the programme as an attempt to flesh out each institute's mission, objectives and strategy in terms of its research quality, societal relevance and viability, and, consequently, as a logical continuation of the new SEP. After all, the SEP evaluations address the quality and relevance (mission, objective) that we, as individual Academy institutes, strive to achieve, making it a highly appropriate tool for institutes that have research as their core activity.



In addition to good employment practices, the Academy is committed to the following values<sup>3</sup>:

- Connection with society by emphasising the role of science and scholarship at the heart of society, with outstanding research also encompassing relevance, commitment and societal impact;
- Diversity, social safety, independence and integrity, with the Academy committing itself to a high ethical standard of research integrity and monitoring compliance with that standard;
- Knowledge as the basis, with an enquiring attitude and scientific and scholarly knowledge and insight forming a solid foundation for the whole of society;
- And leadership, with the Academy stressing the value of its leadership role as the guardian and interpreter of science and scholarship in an open society. Its leadership is based on excellence and on recognising that diversity and inclusiveness play a significant role in attaining excellence.

An appropriate balance between these core values and strategy is beneficial for research and for the institute and its staff. Having the right person in the right job means matching the talents and

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<sup>3</sup> See Chapter 3 of the Academy's Strategic Agenda for 2021-2025, which describes the core values.

competences that the institute needs to implement its strategy with the employees' own requirements and aspirations.

Nevertheless, values, interests, ambitions and goals can sometimes clash, especially in the short term. For example, a project manager may have an interest in getting a PhD student to spend as much time and energy as possible on research, whereas good employership or personnel policy requires giving that student the opportunity to cultivate other skills, for example in teaching, management or valorisation, for the sake of their future career.

The pursuit of sound academic practice – a practice that meets standards of quality and relevance, that encompasses basic research while being connected to society – is also mirrored by the importance assigned to forms of research output other than journal articles, and in the mutually beneficial effects of different types of academic practice within the same organisation. It is an additional plea (beyond DORA) to deal responsibly with output metrics, and to look in earnest for alternative, often discipline-specific, indicators of quality (both qualitative and quantitative). These must then also be incorporated into institution-wide systems such as the PURE research information management system, so that an institute, team or individual evaluation can be prepared using the right information.

A 'streetlight effect'<sup>4</sup> must be avoided.



### ***Culture and structure***

A recurring point in R&R discussions is the question of why change is so difficult, even though we know that academia is about research *and* impact and engagement *and* teaching, about working in teams, about complex processes, and that there is no point in looking for a needle in a haystack.

There are several factors that perpetuate the existing relationships, including the current system of competitive research funding, the need for seemingly objective measures of quality and – conversely – deeply rooted notions of the brilliant researcher, or the tendency to stick with old habits.

Why do we not take these factors into account when recruiting staff, in annual consultations where we discuss individual performance and professional development goals, in process design, and in the other ways in which we recognise these different talents? A quote from the [AYA magazine \(20 September 2020\)](#):

*'The mindset has to change at all levels. Not driving everyone towards the same limited set of output metrics, but recognising and rewarding multiple types of academic careers.'*

On the other hand, more is possible than many people think. The current human resources policy already offers plenty of scope for diversifying career paths, and it is perfectly possible, for example, to set skill and

<sup>4</sup> See the front cover illustration. Also known as the 'drunkard's search' principle, the expression refers to the human propensity to search for something 'where the light is better'. Anything that falls outside the set framework, the prevailing paradigm or the established standards is likely to go unnoticed.

personality requirements for academics who take on leadership roles. There is therefore a widely shared feeling that a *cultural transformation* must take place so that all the members of the academic community understand that the changes sought in the Recognition & Rewards Programme will benefit us all as individuals and academia as a whole.

Cultural transformation is about behaviour. 'Structure follows culture' sounds reasonable, but the fact is that we can sometimes use the structure itself – the systems and criteria – to initiate envisaged changes. A change in rules and structures is not meant to generate new 'checklists' but rather to launch a discussion of new, alternative standards and values, thus initiating the transformation.

In fact, trust and clarity depend on taking firm and transparent steps of this kind (both large and small). We must show that we are really serious about this, and we cannot afford to keep early and mid-career academics in the dark for long. We cannot continue debating changes in values and standards while leaving all kinds of systems unaltered, in every area – from personnel policy and funding systems to research assessments.

### **Coherence**

We argued above that the institutes should take the *Recognition & Rewards* Programme to heart. As illustrated in the figure on page [6], in essence the programme is about fleshing out, as diligently and productively as possible, an institute's mission, objectives and strategy on the one hand and about the values that we, as Academy institutes, aspire to uphold on the other.

More awareness and appreciation for the value of varied talents, the significance of teamwork and other research outputs – both in academia and in society – entails several things. For the institutes, it means allowing these aspects to play a (bigger) role in their organisation, their research and HR policy, in their management style, in how they train young researchers, and in how they reward types of knowledge output and knowledge transfer that differ from the traditional ones. This can be broken down into a host of specific and less specific guiding principles in a variety of different arenas.

We cannot emphasise enough how closely related the various elements of the Recognition & Rewards Programme are:

- Daily interaction in a socially safe, inclusive environment;
- Recognition of the contributions made by all relevant employees to the results or to teamwork;
- Recognition and rewards for the diverse roles and contributions of employees to the institute's general operations, including the many activities that can be described as 'academic citizenship' or 'academic duties';
- Offering scope for or actively supporting individual employees, especially younger ones, in their personal and talent development;
- Offering scope for talent diversity, in keeping with the institute's objectives and strategy;
- The importance of managers serving as role models regarding the above points;
- And, therefore, the importance of leadership quality at *all* levels of the organisation, from small teams to the boardroom.

If we can strike the right balance as we uphold these principles, both the institutes and individual employees will benefit. Last, the *Recognition & Rewards* Programme is also – or mainly – about delivering on the values that we pursue as the Academy and as institutes by contributing to excellence in academic practice, by being respectful in our interpersonal interactions in a healthy, diverse and safe working environment, and by devoting attention to personal development.

This Agenda elaborates on two priorities, as they form the basis for many of the above elements of the *Recognition & Rewards* Programme: (1) Diversification and personal development and (2) Leadership in an academic context. A few more general guiding themes will be elaborated below.

### **Noticing and recognising**

Delft University of Technology has broken down the concepts of recognition and rewards into a number of attitudes and actions, the main idea being to recognise employees for the way in which they do their jobs:

- To perceive
- To acknowledge
- To value
- To appreciate
- To reward

The importance of all these aspects also became evident in the Academy employees' survey responses. They felt good when their work was *noticed*. They felt acknowledged when they received a compliment from a colleague for the work they had done; this was true for academic staff and equally true, if not more so, for research support staff. They felt appreciated when the institute's director highlighted their work in the newsletter, or proud when someone won a grant and there was praise for the whole team. On the other hand, some of the responses revealed an acute sense of having been misjudged, for example when cooperating researchers or database developers were not mentioned at all, even when they undeniably should have been.

Being noticed, acknowledged and appreciated – these are the starting points, not only of this programme, but of decent working relationships as such. They are values that should underpin HR policy, the annual consultations and internal and external communication. They are also difficult to enforce – but what we can do is to create the right conditions for their actualisation, for example by devoting more attention to leadership.

### 3 TRANSPARANCY, TEAMWORK AND EVALUATION

The Academy and the Academy institutes form one and the same employer. They share a common understanding of the law and regulatory framework, their image as an employer, and their HR policy. The Academy also advocates good employment practices. Concepts such as diligence, uniformity and transparency about what is and is not possible are essential in this context, with due regard for diversity in team composition and for differences between employees in terms of their knowledge, skills and aspirations. These concepts are important in the conversation between managers and team members, but also in the way in which the Academy communicates basic principles, schemes and options to its staff.

Good employment practices apply to *all* employees, regardless of their employment status. The employer must also act with transparency, uniformity and diligence when considering the prospects and professional development of employees on temporary contracts. In other words, temporary staff are also given the opportunity to prepare for their next career move. This requires the institute to be prompt, informative and transparent about internal job opportunities, to discuss the employee's aspirations in due time, and to offer career development courses and training so that employees can improve their job prospects. There should be no discussion as to whether the Academy, as a good employer, should make time and resources available for this purpose.

The Academy expects its employees to take control of their careers, but this calls on it, as the employer, to create a context in which employees can in fact take control, but also to be aware of the limits of that control (for example in the case of employees who have a specific job to do under their temporary employment contract, such as PhDs). To create this context, the employer should offer facilities (time and resources) and cultivate an organisational culture in which professional development and the associated support are perceived as routine. While there may be a potential conflict of interest between the manager's aims and the employee's aspirations, the notion of good employment practices must always prevail.

This means:

- that the manager communicates and acts with transparency, uniformity and diligence about what is and is not possible,
- on which basis employees can take control of their own careers,
- so that the best person ends up in the right place and can achieve their full potential,
- and the manager facilitates the employee's ongoing professional development.

Generally speaking, then, the Academy, as a good employer, supports and facilitates all employees in their wish to grow as professionals and to improve their expertise in their own field, even if this means making their next career move outside their team or institute.

Transparency in human resource policy appears to be a key element in R&R-related matters and covers the entire spectrum, from staffing plans and appointment policies to the managers and committees that appraise performance and decide on promotions.

Some of these matters will need to be resolved at the national level, for example in sector-wide agreements<sup>5</sup> or in the collective agreement and related HR schemes.

But much of the responsibility for these matters lies with the institutes:

- Multi-year strategic departmental and staffing plans, allowing employees to see what lies ahead and what their position might be going forward;

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<sup>5</sup> As has also been the case for the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and the new Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP) for research.

- On the individual level: clear communication about the employee's prospects;
- Transparent recruitment, appointment and promotion, and transparent evaluation and appraisal of both individual and team performance (see 3.4).

#### Specific actions:

- Take the institute's **objective** as a guiding principle and make staffing plans for the department, institute or team. Use these plans for recruitment, selection, promotion and employee evaluation;
- Be **transparent** about whether academic, research support and support and management staff will be able to advance towards a horizontal or vertical move to another position by connecting the institute's objectives, the specific job criteria and the employee's aspirations and talents.

### 3.1 Teamwork and each person's contribution

Changes in research practice are also reflected in the R&R Programme's plea to devote more attention to and show more appreciation for teamwork.<sup>6</sup> As teamwork has become more important, along with the ability to operate in a complex – and often global environment, other talents and competences have grown more critical. In today's academic world, certain skills and attitudes are essential, including the capacity to collaborate with colleagues and to manage (interdisciplinary) teams, but also the ability to engage others as well as digital, communicative and organisational skills and attitudes.

Although the reality has long been otherwise in the academic world, so far the emphasis there has been very much on individual performance, in terms of both image and rewards and recognition. In this sense, the *Recognition & Rewards* Programme can also be viewed as an attempt to do justice to the radically altered context in which research, teaching and the associated activities take place. You can also flip the picture: denying that academia is primarily a team effort can be obstructive and disruptive.

Recognising that different competences are needed to achieve common objectives and an institute's strategy in terms of research, management, teaching, impact and science communication has an impact at various levels:

- a. Being aware that teamwork can help an institute make progress on achieving its objectives and implementing its strategy. That is why there is an emphasis on teamwork, on leadership training, but also on enabling employees to perform their role in the team, on close cooperation between academic and research support/support and management staff, and on fostering a team-driven attitude.
- b. Identifying the knowledge and skills (competences<sup>7</sup>) required to achieve some or all of the institute's objectives and strategy in:
  - staffing plans (academic/research support/support and management), including an overview of each team member's aspirations, strengths and competences to promote diversification on that basis;
  - recruitment policy and application procedures;
  - staff development and training opportunities (see also chapter 4);
  - team appraisals and, within that context, what individual staff members contribute to the team (see below and chapter 4);
- c. Recognising the contributions made by all the team members involved in publications and other forms of communication, by taking the following specific actions.

#### Specific actions:

- Always credit the entire team for contributing to a success, both in internal and external communications and in evaluations and self-evaluations. Avoid making recognition contingent on an individual researcher or manager;

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<sup>6</sup> Teams at the institutes often consist of academic staff and research support staff. There are 'permanent' teams whose members all report to the same manager, and project and research teams whose members do not all report to the same manager because they may work for more than one institute. The job structure at some institutes differs fundamentally from those at others (e.g. at DANS, which does not employ any academics). There, too, research support staff make significant contributions to and participate in research projects.

<sup>7</sup> As elaborated in the UFO competence instrument (UFO is the Dutch University Job Classification System).

- Take a critical look at (sometimes subconscious) framing in the Academy's own communication (such as the Academy website and annual report) and align this with the R&R ambitions;
- Implement Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) for all Academy publications and other output, to do justice to the efforts of all those involved (see <https://credit.niso.org/> – and also: <https://www.elsevier.com/authors/policies-and-guidelines/credit-author-statement>).

### 3.2 Recruitment and selection

It seems a bit strange to apply the *Recognition & Rewards* Agenda in the case of individuals who are not yet employed by the Academy. Yet the opportunity for diversification both within teams and in individual career paths in fact begins during the recruitment and selection process. The key questions arise as soon as a vacancy is advertised: what kind of person do we need, given the institute's objectives and strategy, its staffing plan and its commitment to diversity? Is there a need for specific expertise and capabilities within a team, not only in terms of publications but also in terms of impact, communication, leadership, academic citizenship, and so on? To answer these questions, we need proper procedures and a well-equipped appointments advisory committee that also has enough expertise regarding recruitment, selection, and how to evaluate a candidate's talents. At the same time, the institutes/Academy must allow enough scope to supervise and prepare staff for their role and duties after their appointment.

### 3.3 Evaluation

One of the most obvious and important ways to achieve the goals of the *Recognition & Rewards* Programme, and to ensure that employees feel their talent, contributions and aspirations are noticed, is to talk to them regularly and see that they talk to one another regularly as well. Apart from the PhD students, who are discussed elsewhere, there are the regularly scheduled interviews within the annual interview cycle:

- Annual consultation – for all employees;
- Comprehensive (development) assessment – basically meant for all employees, but in any case for all those whose careers are clearly in a developmental phase;
- Promotion procedures;
- Performance review – to be conducted in specific situations.

#### 3.3.1 Annual consultation

The annual consultation<sup>8</sup> between manager and employee is intended to discuss the individual employee's activities and aspirations, to strike the right balance between the employee's development goals and opportunities for the same, to evaluate teamwork and to discuss the manager's and employee's mutual expectations. The annual consultation is also the ideal occasion to clarify an employee's career prospects. This means that managers must be familiar with the institute's and the Academy's policy on appointments, promotions and careers.

The importance of conducting annual consultations with all staff members is enshrined in the Academy's policy and in the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities. The forms used by the Academy and the modified forms used by the institutes are a critical component of the annual consultation, because they serve as a starting point for the conversation.

*The Recognition & Rewards* Programme requires a thorough reconsideration of the way in which the annual consultations are prepared and recorded, with the aim being to strike a better balance between the various goals. Once it is clear (or becomes clearer) that a different procedure will be instituted to address underperformance on the part of a staff member, there will be more scope to accommodate the other goals of the annual consultation.

#### Specific actions:

- Introduce a new **annual interview cycle** and system with an accompanying annual consultation form that focuses more on professional development and the importance of teamwork and that

<sup>8</sup> Article 6.7 of the Collective Labour Agreement (CLA) for Dutch Universities stipulates that an annual consultation should be held with the employee at least once a year. The annual consultation forms part of the annual interview cycle, which also includes progress interviews, interviews concerning work arrangements, and, where necessary, performance reviews.

includes feedback on the manager and 360° feedback, so that the consultation also covers such topics as team contribution, contribution to projects and relationship with colleagues. Make clear (or clearer) that the annual consultation is distinct from performance (i.e. underperformance) procedures;

- Ensure that the **annual consultation form** is also attractive and useful for early-career staff (both academic and research support) (see chapter 4);
- Give every employee the opportunity to take part in a forward-looking, **comprehensive assessment** once every four years (see below).

### 3.3.2. Comprehensive (development) assessment<sup>9</sup>

We strongly recommend that all employees undergo a comprehensive (development) assessment at least once every four years, i.e. a 360° discussion of their performance and wishes and expectations going forward. These interviews are in any event meant for all employees whose careers are clearly in the developmental phase, for example

- PhD students
- Postdocs
- Mid-career staff with permanent appointments
- Staff members who say they would like to make a career change during their annual consultation or other interview.

The purpose of the comprehensive assessment interview is to gain a better understanding of employees' talents, pitfalls, activities and aspirations and what they contribute to the team, to clarify how their professional and personal objectives relate to departmental objectives, and to boost their career and development opportunities. An external assessment that tests potential talents and aspirations is also an option.

The aim of the comprehensive assessment is to make meaningful connections between the ways in which the manager, the team members and the employee view the latter's activities.

It should be a positive dialogue that focuses on the future. The procedure is designed to examine the employee's talents, aspirations, viewpoints and activities as a whole.

The main purpose of the assessment is to make (development) agreements with the employee within the context of the team covering the subsequent years. These agreements should therefore be regarded as binding for the team, the manager and the employee, and must be discussed regularly. A report on the comprehensive assessment must be prepared recording the agreements made.

### 3.3.3. Promotion procedures

Whenever a formal employee appraisal is required with possible labour law implications, e.g. when a temporary contract is upgraded to a permanent contract or an employee is being promoted, there is an appraisal interview. The interview forms part of a legal-administrative procedure and it is therefore fundamentally different from the annual consultation and the comprehensive assessment.

### 3.3.4. Performance appraisal

In addition to annual consultations and (formal) appraisal interviews associated with promotions, there are performance appraisals geared to specific employee circumstances or organisational circumstances involving the employee. This type of appraisal is used to analyse problems, for example in the case of underperformance by an employee.

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<sup>9</sup> In the first instance, this would be an internal assessment and not (immediately) an assessment that has been outsourced to or contracted from an external agency.

## 4 DIVERSIFICATION AND PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

In the world of academia, academic staff conduct research and teach. That is how they make an impact. They make advances in scientific research, supervise PhD candidates and teach students, and take part in discussions of and help solve society's problems. Research support staff who work in IT, manage collections, retrieve data and perform laboratory work are crucial to this endeavour.

We argued in the previous section that academia today is a team effort, with a variety of talents coming into play. But such diversification does not go far enough, according to the young authors of the [AYA magazine](#) article of September 2020:

There should be a stronger interest in diversification of competences. One person may have excellent theoretical skills, another may be good at articulating practical value, and yet another may be adept at connecting people. Put them together in a team and you've found the needle in the haystack.

Their position was endorsed by [383 researchers](#) in comments directed towards the [171 academics](#) who had critiqued the *Recognition & Rewards* Programme in the summer of 2021:

Academia is not what it used to be; academics have a broader set of tasks today encompassing much more than simply doing research. That's why publication metrics are no longer a valid measure of quality, since they do not represent everything that today's academics do. Academics take the stage to share research findings or to advise policymakers about social and medical issues, for example. They get involved in, coordinate and organise interaction with the non-academic world. They need to play all these roles and take on all these responsibilities in order to address current and complex scientific issues and challenges, and that calls for a broader understanding of what talent and excellence entail.

A commonly agreed policy is needed to achieve such diversification and personal development. It may be that staff feel less constricted by disparities in the recognition and rewards accorded to the various activities carried out at the Academy institutes because of the (near) absence of teaching there, but that disparity nevertheless makes itself felt in all kinds of ways. For example, the survey and subsequent interviews show that activities other than research are underappreciated at a number of institutes, and that the interests of the individual staff member – in terms of broader or continuous professional development – must often yield to the interests of the institute, the research group or the research group's PI. Finally, the disparity in academia is also felt *indirectly* at the Academy institutes, as one survey respondent pointed out:

'The survey focuses entirely on "your institute". But that isn't the only environment that counts. We have careers in academia, not just "at your institute", especially those of us on fixed-term contracts.'

In short, a proactive policy aimed at diversification and personal development is in the interests of both the institutes as a group and individual members of their staff.

### Guiding principles

The foregoing gives rise to the following three, interrelated, guiding principles:

1. The early-career academics commit to us – despite their temporary employment contracts – and we commit to them – again, despite their temporary employment contracts – by offering them training and professional development in support of their careers;

2. We can make full use of HR and other systems to recognise and reward output beyond peer-reviewed articles and use opportunities to (help) shape careers by taking a personalised approach within the broad frameworks;
3. The aim is to strike the right balance between the goals, strategy and interests of the institute on the one hand, and those of employees with varying talents and personal development paths on the other.

#### 4.1. Early-career academics<sup>10</sup>

The Rathenau Instituut's study [The impact of a doctorate](#) (2018) shows that virtually all PhDs find employment, regardless of their field of research, and that 70% work in public and private non-academic sectors. Many are still engaged in research in their jobs, or are responsible for supervising research.

At the same time, a recent [report on a survey](#) by the PhD Network Netherlands (PNN) shows that PhDs are mainly judged on their research and receive little career guidance, in their perception. For example, more than half the PhDs surveyed for this report<sup>11</sup> would like teaching to be taken into account in the assessment of their PhD project.

A similar picture emerged from our interviews with early-career academics *and* from our survey. Most of the Academy institutes do not have teaching as one of their tasks and are not considering making teaching part of their portfolio, making it difficult for staff to move on to a university job. That is particularly the case for PhD students; although they must mainly demonstrate their ability to conduct research independently, of course, any future in academia will also involve teaching and they will preferably possess the appropriate teaching credentials.<sup>12</sup>

*'Until teaching is added to staff duties at the Academy, my career will not be as diverse as I would like it to be,' says one of them.*

This calls for a **reorientation of the PhD track**: do we want PhD candidates to produce 'four articles stapled together', or, as a good employer, do we (also) want to use the four-year track for social impact purposes by asking young academics, early on in their PhD programme, which competencies they would like to acquire in addition to research (and teaching) – but without implying that they should be or become the sought-for 'needle in a haystack'.

#### Specific actions:

- Consider the **future prospects** of staff on temporary contracts. Ensure that the end result of a PhD programme is not merely a doctoral thesis but an academic who has been able to develop their talent as they had envisaged (even if that means a future outside the Academy). Work with the universities to investigate whether current doctoral criteria can be amended for this purpose, if so required;
- Offer postdocs broad training, appropriate to their talents and aspirations, to prepare them for their next job;
- Have all **PhDs and postdocs** hold an assessment<sup>13</sup> interview with their PI/manager or PhD supervisor, either in their first year or at the start of their second year; this would be in addition to and separate from their project progress review. The assessment should focus on their ambitions, their competences, and what they aspire to do after completing the programme. This may mean that the PhD or postdoc will then undertake training or gain experience during the (PhD) programme that ultimately offers them a variety of career options. Asking which training courses or programmes the PhD or postdoc would like to attend would thus be a standard part of the interview;

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<sup>10</sup> We also want to draw attention to early-career research support staff and intend to use the instruments described in this document for research support staff and for support and management staff who have a designated research task.

<sup>11</sup> PhD candidates at the Academy say that it is difficult for them to gain teaching experience as Academy staff because the institutes are primarily dedicated to research.

<sup>12</sup> i.e. the *Basis Kwalificatie Onderwijs* (BKO) or University Teaching Qualification.

<sup>13</sup> See also chapter 3.3.b.

- Organise teaching opportunities (within the institute or at a university) for PhD candidates who aspire to teach, for example in cooperation with professors or other staff members who teach at a university;
- On that basis, offer PhDs and postdocs the opportunity to **broaden their horizons**<sup>14</sup> with a view to their future, whether or not in cooperation with universities.

#### 4.2 Diversified development in the current systems and according to the current criteria

As we saw above, academia today requires diversification in career paths. It is important, however, to consider how well the talents and expertise required by the team in the various key areas complement one another, in accordance with the goals of the team, the research group, the department or the institute.

What is essential for career diversification and for ensuring recognition for the various positions, even for staff beyond the early-career phase, is to follow through on the intentions and measures described in chapters 3 and 4 regarding teamwork, strategic staffing plans, annual consultations and assessments – and to relate all this to the institute’s goals and strategies, as we have emphasised several times.

One issue closely associated with that of diversification is the system of job profiles (i.e. brief job descriptions) as laid down in the Dutch University Job Classification System (UFO). The job profiles for academic staff were updated on 1 August 2021 in accordance with the *Recognition & Rewards* project. The job profiles now include descriptions of activities that involve social impact, open science, university-level teaching, contributions to teams and academic leadership, all in a bid to highlight these types of duties. These changes are intended to spark discussion about personalisation (within the frameworks), and thus to better reflect the goals of the institute, the knowledge and skills desired and the aspirations of staff members.

When it comes to diversified development within the current systems and criteria, the position of research support staff demands special attention. Much of the above also applies to this category, but it is worth mentioning that the evaluation cycle, starting with the annual consultations, should not only address their role and their position in teams, but also their future prospects and how they can achieve their aspirations. Consideration should also be given to opportunities for development or transfers to other positions in research or within the research organisation, partly in the light of a heightened diversification of roles.

#### Specific actions:

- The current narrow job categories ignore the fact that the dividing line between academic, research support and support and management job categories may be more fluid than the classification system suggests. Offer **research support and support and management staff** who independently define a research question the opportunity to obtain a doctorate if that is what they aspire to. There should also be scope to participate in the research process, with activities such as co-authoring an academic publication or giving presentations at conferences;
- Allow employees in certain positions to specialise in, for example, creating impact or in management (provided that this is compatible with the department’s strategic ambitions and the composition of the team), with research remaining part of their job description;
- Examine what our institutes mean by **quality** of academic/research output and which institute- or discipline-specific indicators they would like to apply in addition to peer-reviewed articles and the award of research grants, and incorporate the corresponding quantitative and qualitative criteria in the PURE research information system.

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<sup>14</sup> Broadening one’s horizons does not mean being able to do absolutely everything.

## 5 LEADERSHIP IN AN ACADEMIC CONTEXT

In our academic context, leadership<sup>15</sup> is an important prerequisite for achieving the goals of the *Recognition and Rewards* project. Our ability to

- recognise the diverse aspirations and talents within a team
- and in doing so, implement career path diversification and specialisation;
- acknowledge everyone's contribution to the team;
- create a socially safe working environment and promoting cooperation (including across disciplines);
- and strike the right balance between the department's goal and the employee's short-term and long-term aspirations

all depends on how managers are able to assemble and develop their teams.

We do not always make (sufficient) use of existing opportunities for diversification, perhaps because we are not familiar with them. The emphasis is often unilaterally on rules, rights, obligations and procedures, leaving little leeway for a personalised approach that benefits both the employee and the team. If we want to change this, then we must start by raising awareness among managers and offering them tools and examples of how to do things differently.

Good leadership in an academic context does not happen automatically and requires vision, solid support, diligent recruitment and selection processes, training opportunities, and giving staff enough time to actually perform their leadership tasks. It calls for leadership to be recognised as a skilled craft.

Good leadership does not happen automatically – but we often assume that it does. Successful researchers are now often assigned a managerial role, almost as a matter of course, for example as a project or team manager or department head. On the one hand, the (implicit) assumption – one that we also see in the UFO criteria for academic positions – is that a professional with a good grasp of the subject matter is (or must be) equipped to be a manager and indeed has an obligation to assume that role. The question then is what to do about employees who end up in a managerial role because, for example, their job involves acquiring research projects. On the other hand, it would be worthwhile to consider not *automatically* associating leadership with senior (academic) positions but to assign such roles only to staff who have the motivation and talent to lead.

### **What do we mean by 'leadership'?**

Good leadership begins by developing *personal leadership* in the early stages of an academic career: the individual knows their capabilities and talents, strengths and weaknesses, motivations, and why they make certain choices. Once they have assumed a leadership role, they ask themselves: am I the leader I want to be, and what can I do to become an even better leader? What are the values that I wish to convey and how do they correspond with the goals of my team / department / institute / the Academy? What are my employees' motivations and aspirations and how can I support them in achieving their own (short- and long-term) goals?

We therefore expect a leader at the Academy to:

- serve as a role model (and set a good example);
- give employees room for manoeuvre, responsibility and trust;
- ensure a good atmosphere by creating a safe working environment and encouraging cooperation;

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<sup>15</sup> We see 'team leadership' in the broadest possible terms, everything from small project teams and larger research groups whose composition depends on project funding to 'permanent' departments, laboratory groups or institutes. Whether we're talking about a researcher supervising a PhD, a Principal Investigator, the head of a laboratory or an institute's director, they all have a leadership role.

- point the way for the team (in terms of overall vision, purpose, and shared goal as a team / department).

### Guiding principles

1. Good leadership requires crucial social skills, such as empathy, interest in others, decisiveness, openness, vision, and the (strategic) ability to connect goals and values at a personal level. Recruitment, selection and evaluation policies should therefore focus more on task diversification: some people become researchers because they are good at research, whereas others become managers because they are good at managing;
2. Communicate that outstanding researchers who do not wish to (or cannot) become managers can also build their careers without assuming a leadership role. That too is career path diversification;
3. Leadership is not possible without proper training to develop the above skills and learn to reflect on them. After all, almost everyone has had professional training in their chosen field, but very few have had management training. Personalised training and coaching are a useful way to help managers reach their full potential. Novice managers in fact need training;
4. The relevant policy should also filter through to evaluation and recognition processes. Evaluations should therefore become more diversified, with recognition being extended not only to outstanding researchers but also to those who have managerial and organisational talent, regardless of the level, i.e. from committee work, peer support and the organisational activities that underpin research to leadership roles, whether in a formal or informal capacity. Hold on to such talents as valuable additions to the team and as prospective managers.

### Underlying conditions

- Support and management staff must offer effective professional support to those who take on managerial duties, for example by assisting in the recruitment and selection of staff and by providing financial and other information;
- Instead of the current (and at times rather unilateral) emphasis on monitoring processes and accountability both within and outside the organisation, which results in a heavy administrative burden, focus on offering clarity and more mutual trust;
- A pleasant working environment is crucial; teams cannot perform to the best of their ability in the many roles that they encompass, and employees cannot properly discuss what they would really like (aspirations) or what they are capable of doing (talents) without a positive and open atmosphere. That is why it is important to make the working environment (even) safer. Bearing in mind that half the PhDs and postdocs at some institutes are non-Dutch-speaking, we might consider offering training in dealing with multicultural teams, implicit bias, and cultural sensitivities.

### Specific actions:

- Start by establishing a shared vision of leadership;
- Select new managers primarily on the basis of proven leadership skills. Offer them a personalised approach to improving their skills (interview, education and training, mentoring, etc.);
- Ensure that managers can free up the necessary **time** for their management tasks – leadership is not something to be ‘tacked on’. Organise a wide range of **interview** mechanisms that involve peer consultation. Make ‘interview’ as a compulsory component of the Academy leadership programme;
- Institutes: ensure that everyone who takes on a (new) leadership position, regardless of the level, receives **personalised** training, coaching or support;
- Develop an institute-wide policy on how to deal with conflicts of interest and discuss this regularly with **supervisors**. Offer novice managers training or organise interview for them.

## 6 2022 AND BEYOND

The preceding chapters have outlined a number of specific actions. Below, we sort them into main topics:

### 6.1 Transparency in recruitment, selection and evaluation

- Take the institute's **objective** as a guiding principle and make strategic staffing plans for the department, institute or team. Use these plans for recruitment, selection, promotion and employee evaluations;
- Introduce a new **annual interview cycle** and system with an accompanying annual consultation form that focuses more on professional development and the importance of teamwork and that includes feedback on the manager and 360° feedback, so that the consultation also covers such topics as team contribution, contribution to projects and relationship with colleagues. Make clear (or clearer) that the annual consultation is distinct from performance (i.e. underperformance) procedures;
- Ensure that the **annual consultation form** is also attractive and useful for early-career staff (both academic and research support);
- Give every employee the opportunity to take part in a forward-looking, **comprehensive assessment** once every four years.
- Be **transparent** about whether academic, research support and non-academic staff will be able to grow into another position by connecting the specific job criteria, the institute's objectives, and the employee's aspirations and talents.

*How do we move forward with this in 2022 and beyond?*

- Some institutes have already worked with the new SEP and have drafted a staffing plan, for example using the Strategic Staff Planning tool. Use that knowledge and run a pilot in an institute that is open to doing so (*action point for HR project manager*), and scale up the pilot if the outcome is positive;
- Work with staff members on designing a new **interview format** for all the various types of interviews (including the annual consultation), based in part on lessons learned at the universities. Do the same for the comprehensive assessment interview (*action point for HR project manager in cooperation with HR policy adviser*);
- Describe several distinct career paths based on the Recognition and Rewards Programme and in line with the recently updated UFO job profiles (*action point for HR policy adviser and HR project manager*);
- See that these are easy to find in every institute's intranet, so that employees know the requirements they must meet to advance to another position (*action point for communication adviser and HR project manager*).

### 6.2. Early career

- Consider the **future prospects** of staff on temporary contracts. Ensure that the end result of a PhD programme is not merely a doctoral thesis but an academic who has been able to develop their talent as they had envisaged (even if that means a future outside the Academy). If necessary, amend the existing doctoral criteria accordingly;
- Offer postdocs broad training, appropriate to their talents and aspirations, to prepare them for their next job;
- Organise teaching opportunities (within the institute or at a university) for PhD candidates who aspire to teach, for example in cooperation with professors or other staff members who teach at a university;
- Have all **PhDs and postdocs** hold an assessment interview with their PI/manager or PhD supervisor, either in their first year or at the start of their second year. The assessment should focus on their ambitions and what they aspire to do after completing the programme;

- On that basis, offer PhDs and postdocs the opportunity to **broaden their horizons** with a view to their future, whether or not in cooperation with universities.

*How do we move forward with this in 2022 and beyond?*

- Work with a delegation of PhDs and postdocs on examining what they need and what can be done to address their needs (*action point for Centre for Career and Development and HR project manager*);
- From mid-2022, offer the option of an assessment to a number of institutes and scale up if the outcomes are positive (*action point for Centre for Career and Development and HR project manager*);
- Investigate on a national scale (in cooperation with the universities) whether the PhD track can be more flexibly organised without compromising the quality requirements (*action point for Forum, Advisory and Research Department and HR project manager / liaison*).

### **6.3. Recognising diverse talents among academic, research support, and support and management staff**

- The current narrow job categories ignore the fact that the dividing line between academic, research support and support and management job categories may be more fluid than the classification system suggests. Offer **research support and support and management staff** who independently define a research question the opportunity to obtain a doctorate if that is what they aspire to. There should also be scope to participate in the research process, with activities such as co-authoring an academic publication or giving presentations at conferences;
- Examine what our institutes mean by **quality** of academic/research output and which institute- or discipline-specific indicators they would like to apply in addition to peer-reviewed articles and the award of research grants, and incorporate these in the PURE research information system;
- Always credit the entire team for contributing to a success, both in internal and external communications. Avoid making recognition contingent on an individual researcher or manager;
- Take a critical look at (sometimes subconscious) framing in the Academy's own communication (such as the Academy website and annual report) and align this with the R&R ambitions;
- Allow employees in certain positions to specialise in, for example, creating impact or in management (provided that this is compatible with the department's strategic ambitions and the composition of the team), with research remaining part of their job description.

*How do we move forward with this in 2022 and beyond?*

- Join an initiative by various universities to define qualitative and quantitative indicators (discipline- and institute-specific) for research, valorisation and team performance, in line with the R&R Programme (*action point for Forum, Advisory and Research Department and HR project manager / liaison in collaboration with Academy institutes*);
- Incorporate these indicators into institution-wide systems such as PURE, so that an institute, team or individual assessment can prepare an SEP evaluation using the right information (*action point for Forum, Advisory and Research Department and HR project manager / liaison in collaboration with Academy institutes*);
- Implement Contributor Roles Taxonomy (CRediT) for all Academy publications and other output, to do justice to the efforts of all those involved (see <https://credit.niso.org/> – and also: <https://www.elsevier.com/authors/policies-and-guidelines/credit-author-statement>);
- As the Academy, take a leading role in elaborating the national R&R Programme with a view to addressing the 'rigid' dividing line between academic and non-academic staff (*action point for HR project manager / liaison*).

### **6.4. Leadership in an academic context**

- Select new managers primarily on the basis of proven leadership skills. Offer them a personalised approach to improving their skills (interview, education and training, mentoring, etc.);
- Ensure that managers can free up the necessary **time** for their management tasks – leadership is not something to be 'tacked on'. Organise a wide range of **interview** mechanisms that involve

peer consultation. Make ‘intervision’ a compulsory component of the Academy leadership programme;

- Institutes: ensure that everyone who takes on a (new) leadership position, regardless of the level, receives personalised **training**, coaching or support;
- Develop an institute-wide policy on how to deal with conflicts of interest and discuss this regularly with **supervisors**. Offer novice managers training or organise intervision for them.

*How do we move forward with this in 2022 and beyond?*

- Leadership in an academic context is high on the Academy’s list of priorities. P&O is already tackling many aspects of this. Include the other points in the Academy’s Leadership Programme (*action point for Centre for Career and Development and HR project manager*).

#### **6.5. Set up a project organisation to commence on 1 January 2022**

- Set up a project organisation and free up people to work on R&R for the next two years.

The proposal below estimates the necessary resources, based in part on a comparison with the universities, each of which will free up an average of 2.0 FTEs for 2022 and beyond (but which are generally considerably larger than the Academy).

Proposal concerning dedicated staff for R&R project at the Academy in 2022-2023:

0.4 FTE HR project manager (includes 0.1 FTE for liaising with national programme team)

0.4 FTE HR policy adviser / Centre for Career and Development (in kind)

0.1 FTE policy adviser for Forum, Advisory and Research Department (in kind)

0.2 FTE communication adviser (in kind)

0.1 FTE secretarial/administrative project assistance

0.1 FTE project committee chair: national representative and R&R advocate at Academy institutes

## 7 APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. [Room for everyone's talent](#). Recognition and Rewards Position Paper 2019

#### Appendix 2. Summary report on the activities of the Academy Committee 2020-2021

##### *What we have accomplished*

After an initial survey of good practices at the institutes, the committee decided early on to conduct a broad, exploratory survey among all academic staff, including those in research support roles. The underlying idea was that it would be good to know what is at stake and which issues staff perceive as urgent, but also to raise awareness of the Recognition and Rewards Programme and avoid its being viewed as a unilateral top-down operation.

163 staff members completed the survey, accounting for less than 20% of the questionnaires distributed. That is too few to reach any firm conclusions, as we cannot tell how representative the outcomes are. The outcomes are therefore primarily heuristic: they indicate whether certain problems do or do not exist, but may also identify recurring issues and even patterns.

##### *Follow-up*

Based on the outcomes of the survey and written comments submitted in that connection, the committee held a number of focused discussions with representatives of various institutes from February to April 2021. It also set up three theme groups that explicitly included representatives of the latest generation of researchers who are at the start of their academic careers (PhDs, postdocs). After all, a future-ready academia is not only the goal of the *Recognition and Rewards* Programme but also an explicit focus of concern in the Academy's Strategic Agenda for 2021-2025. All meetings were held online.

For example, there were a number of meetings with representatives of NIDI and the Rathenau Instituut, two institutes that stood out by comparison in the survey, and with the Meertens Institute and NIOO. There was also a meeting with a representative of the Hubrecht Institute's Career Development Committee and with analysts at the same institute, because so few staff there had completed the survey.

##### *Iterative phase*

Between April and October 2021, the committee built on the outcomes of the previous phases by holding further meetings in an iterative and increasingly focused process aimed at exploring the earlier information in greater depth. Here, too, it explicitly sought to connect with the latest generation of researchers. Some of these meetings were held online. During this phase, the committee also went in active search of valuable insights, practices and recommendations developed by the universities, NWO and ZonMW over the course of the national programme. These examples can serve as building blocks for the Academy.

The input from the meetings, combined with the experience, knowledge and insight gained elsewhere in the Netherlands, have formed the basis for the recommendations made in this final report.