



**Universiteit  
Leiden**

# **Manual for Programme Committees**

**Faculty of Science**

Adopted by the Faculty Board on 4 March 2019, slight revisions on 5 October 2020

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For this Manual, the Faculty made use of the Manual for Programme Committees of the Faculty of Humanities, and would like to express its gratitude for this.

## Introduction

The Programme Committees (PCs, OC's in Dutch) of the Faculty of Science (FWN in Dutch) have an important role in quality assurance of the teaching. Teaching quality assurance means briefly that the Faculty and the study programmes work systematically on improving the quality of teaching. In this context, we ask two elementary questions: 1) Are we doing the right things in our teaching? And: 2) Are we doing those things right?

A PC is a legally required co-participation body. It is established for a single programme or a group of programmes. A PC asks the two aforesaid elementary questions at the programme level, and tries to formulate answers to them. To make this possible, the PC has two important tasks: firstly, evaluating the courses and curricula, and secondly, assessing the implementation of the Course and Examination Regulations (CER, OER in Dutch) and the curricula that they specify. A PC therefore keeps a finger on the pulse, must consent to certain issues and makes recommendations for improvement. If necessary, the PC is also a 'thorn in the side'. It makes a constructive contribution to improving courses, but also plays a part in developing the broad outlines of the curriculum, both now and in the more distant future.

Quality assurance of teaching is based on the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle. This cycle means that you first plan things (P), then you do them (D), check whether they went well (C) and finally draw conclusions and formulate improvement actions (A). Then you start the cycle again. The PC mainly operates in the Check and Act stages. The FWN [Guide to Quality Assurance of Teaching](#) gives more information about our Faculty's system of teaching quality assurance, how this system is structured, the tasks and roles of the various actors, and the instruments for measuring quality and transparently monitoring improvement plans.

This Manual offers information, guidelines, tips and examples that will help your Programme Committee to perform its important tasks correctly. Where relevant, this Manual refers to information, legislation and regulations that are available online elsewhere. It is also coordinated with the content of the Small Private Online Course (SPOC) that is offered by Leiden University to all (new) PC members.

If teaching staff members or student members of a PC have any questions or recommendations concerning the tasks and responsibilities of the Programme Committee, they are welcome to contact the Faculty's Policy Advisor on Quality Assurance: [onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl)

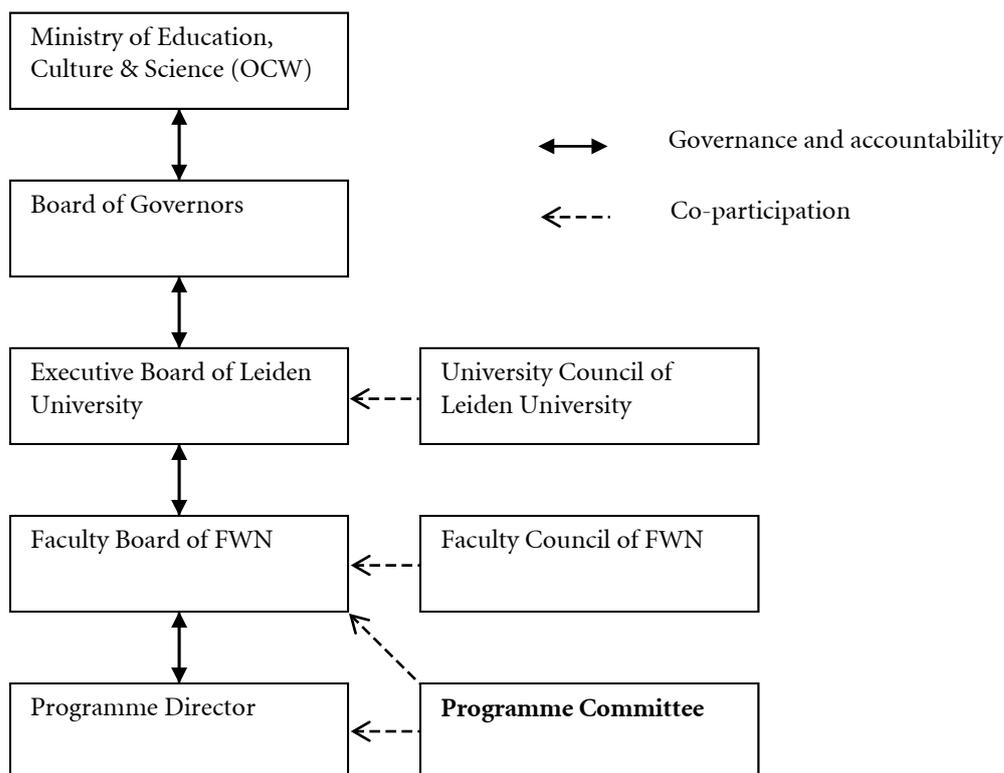
Our Faculty offers three Joint Degree programmes in collaboration with Delft University of Technology (*Technische Universiteit Delft*; TUD): BSc Life Science & Technology, BSc Molecular Science & Technology and MSc Industrial Ecology. The shared responsibility of these two institutions has some consequences for how certain aspects of these study programmes are organised. A brief outline of the main differences compared with the Leiden University situation described in this Manual is given in Appendix 8.

## 1. Position of the Programme Committee in the organisation

### 1.1 Co-participation body

The PC is primarily a co-participation body at the study programme level. By giving consent to certain plans and regulations and by issuing advice, the PC has an important influence on the quality of the study programme. The right of consent granted to the Programme Committee (PC) regarding parts of the Course and Examination Regulations (CER) means that the PC's effective consent is required for these parts. Also, the PC's additional 'advisory' right is actually more binding than the term might suggest. Right of prior consultation means that the PC *must* be consulted about the respective subjects in the CER. After receiving an advice from the PC, the Programme Director must inform the PC within two months what the response to it will be. If the Programme Director decides not to follow the advice, he/she must 'give reasons' for this.

## 1.2 Organisation structure



To function well as the PC, it is important to know the organisation structure of the study programme, the Faculty and the University. A brief explanation will now be given of some aspects of the structure.

A PC is a legally required co-participation body, established for a single programme or a group of programmes. The activities of the PC therefore mainly take place at the programme level, and the most important interaction with the administrative organisation takes place with the Programme Director (see also the figure above). In practice, the Programme Director often forms a team with the Programme Coordinator; this team is known as the *Programme Management*.

Programme Directors make sure that the offered education actually takes place and that it adheres to the quality assurance standards. Programme Directors have the scope to take decisions for their programmes about the content and delivery of the teaching. However, a number of matters are decided and adopted at higher levels in the organisation and must also be implemented in the programmes, within the agreed frameworks. For example, there are the Faculty Regulations and the Course and Examination Regulations. Other teaching policy is adopted at a yet higher level, that of the University. This policy applies to all the faculties and all the study programmes; examples of this are the Student Charter and the Binding Study Advice of Leiden University. Finally, the University in turn must implement policy of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW).

The Faculty Council and University Council are important co-participation bodies at the Faculty and University level respectively. To a certain extent, the role they play at those levels is similar to that of the PC at the programme level. It is recommended that the PC and Faculty Council cooperate, because they can complement each other with regards to knowledge and their rights. However, because Faculty policy can also have important consequences for individual programmes, a PC can also give advice directly to the Faculty Board, and it is important that the Faculty Board and the Faculty Council know what issues are currently relevant within the programmes. The University Council and Faculty Council also have a role in relation to the Course and Examination Regulations (CER), which is described in more detail in 2.1.1.

In addition to Programme Directors and PCs, there are also Boards of Admissions and Boards of Examiners operating at the programme level. Boards of Admissions are responsible for implementing the programme's admissions policy. They check whether candidates can be admitted to the study programme. Boards of Examiners are the most important of the bodies bearing responsibility for ensuring that all diplomas that are awarded represent a sufficient final level of the graduates. For this, the Board of Examiners checks, among other things, whether the programme's entire assessment system guarantees that the learning outcomes are attained and also, for instance, whether the quality and level of examinations, internships and theses are sufficient. The

responsibilities of these Boards are clearly distinct from those of the PC. More information about the relationship between the PC's work and that of the Board of Examiners is given in 4.4.

The Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) stipulates that the PC must be given the opportunity to hold discussions with the Board / Director about a proposed decision or a matter of current relevance on which the PC wishes to issue advice. In addition, the PC has the statutory right to inspect all relevant documents relating to teaching evaluation and teaching quality. The Act also stipulates that the Programme Director or the Faculty Board must inform the PC within two months regarding the way in which the PC's advice is being followed. If the advice is not being followed, the Board / Programme Director must inform the PC in writing of its/his/her reasons for not – or not yet - complying with the advice.

### 1.3 Other co-participation and advisory bodies

PCs are not the only bodies that represent a group of students and/or teaching staff, and provide the programme or Faculty with advice. Contact with other co-participation bodies, study association(s) and the assessor can help the PC to do its work better or to have more influence.

#### *Assessor*

The assessor is the student member of the Faculty Board, and must ensure that the student perspective is taken into account during the Board's policy making and decision making. The assessor's tasks include, among other things, the professionalisation of the PCs by organising training courses or meetings, in consultation with the PC trainer and the policy adviser quality assurance (see also Chapter 10).

The assessor is also the point of contact for the student members of the PC if they want to issue advice to the Faculty Board: [assessor@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:assessor@science.leidenuniv.nl)

#### *Faculty Council*

Contact with the Faculty Council can be important, for instance regarding matters for which the Council has the right of consent and the PC has the right of prior consultation (advisory powers), or vice versa. The PCs can help to ensure that the Faculty Council is well-informed and knows what issues are currently relevant within the programmes. The PC has a statutory obligation to inform the Faculty Council about the advice that it issues. This is described in more detail in section 4.7.

## 2. Tasks and responsibilities of the Programme Committee

### 2.1 Statutory tasks

The formal tasks of the Programme Committee are set down in the [Higher Education and Research Act](#) (WHW, Article 9.18). The central task of programme committees is to advise degree programmes on improving and maintaining their quality. Moreover the PC has:

1. Right of consent and right of prior consultation with respect to parts of the programme's Course and Examination Regulations (CER).
2. The task of annually evaluating the method of implementing the CER.
3. The task of issuing advice and proposals, on its own initiative or on request, to the Programme Director and the Faculty Board about all matters concerning the programme's teaching.
4. The task of discussing the advisory report of the assessment panel (*visitatiecommissie*).

These statutory tasks will now be explained in more detail.

#### 2.1.1 *Right of consent and right of prior consultation with respect to the programme's CER*

##### *University's model CER, Faculty part of the CER, and programme-specific appendix of the CER*

In the CER, the applicable procedures, rights and obligations with regards to the teaching and examinations are laid down per individual study programme. The CERs of Leiden University have been formulated according to a central format adopted by the University Council (the 'model CER'). Some specific articles in this are adopted in the same way for the whole University. The right of consent of the University Council also applies to these articles.

For other articles, which are not determined at the University level, text proposals are offered in the model CER for the faculties and study programmes. This means there is scope for individual interpretation of those points.

In our Faculty, the model CER is converted into two parts, namely:

1. A Faculty part, which applies for all the bachelor's programmes or all the master's programmes of the Faculty;
2. An appendix, which applies specifically for the programme.

The Faculty part sets down, among other things, general rules for freedom of choice, examination opportunities, period of validity of examination components, judicia and study advice. The programme-specific appendix contains e.g. the programme's curriculum and the admission requirements. Much of the programme information in the prospectus is regarded as an appendix too, and hence also as an integral part of the (programme-specific) CER.

The draft version of the Faculty parts of the bachelor's and master's CER are prepared each year by the Faculty Board and are submitted for advice and consent to the PCs. Together with the advice of the PCs, the Faculty CERs are then submitted to the Faculty Council, which has the right of consent regarding important elements of the Faculty part of the CER. The Faculty Council must first give its consent to those elements, before the CERs can be adopted by the Faculty Board.

The draft version of the programme-specific appendix of the CER is prepared each year by the Programme Director (usually assisted by the Programme Coordinator) and submitted to the PC. It is helpful if the Programme Director indicates clearly any changes from the previous year's CER. The PC has the right of consent regarding some elements of the CER, and the right of prior consultation regarding other elements. The PC gives its consent and advice around February-March about the CER that will come into effect in the September of that year.

For an overview of the statutory right of consent and consultation rights of the Faculty Council (FC) and the PC, please refer to Appendix 3. When one looks closely at how these rights are divided between the FC and the PC, it is evident that in some cases this legislation is not based on an entirely logical choice. For instance, the FC has the formal right of consent regarding some topics for which it would be much more logical to ask the PC for consent. The Faculty therefore requests both the FC and the PCs to work mainly *in the spirit* of the act, rather than adhering 100% to the formal rights of prior consultation and consent, a small proportion of which appear to be counterintuitive. More information about this will be provided in further communication relating to the process of establishing the CER.

#### *Amendments to the CER*

Some elements of the programme-specific CER appendix, such as the learning outcomes (also called achievement levels) or admission requirements, should preferably remain unchanged for several years. Changes in the curriculum, on the other hand, occur quite frequently. However, nearly all changes in the CER do not suddenly come 'out of the blue'. Many proposals for change in the study programme are also previously known to the Programme Management. It is highly recommended that these proposed changes should already be discussed in the PC as soon as they have become crystallised to some extent, which can sometimes be early in the academic year, before the definitive consent or advice on the new CER has been placed on the agenda. By doing this, it is possible to avoid the PC and the Programme Management having insufficient time in the spring to look carefully at specific matters and attempt to reach further agreement with each other about them. Topics and proposed changes that have been reviewed earlier in the year then only need to be 'confirmed' when the advice on the CER is given in the spring. The PC and the Programme Director can therefore agree to put specific topics on the PC's agenda as soon as possible.

The CERs are valid for one year, which means that a new version has to be adopted until the next CER enters into effect. Sometimes this means that transitional provisions must be included, for example to ensure that students who started the programme earlier are not confronted with regulations or a curriculum that cannot reasonably be declared applicable to them.

The Prospectus is an appendix of the CER. As part of the statutory tasks, the PC can therefore also reflect on the information supplied via the Prospectus. The Prospectus will be fleshed out on the basis of the 'curriculum description' for the degree programme (see CER appendix). In this curriculum description, the content of the examination programme is established and also what the study load of the individual courses is. The PC is contacted for consent and/or advice on the various components of the study programme for which it has consent or consultation rights. The PC may then also issue recommendations to further enhance the clarity, accuracy and completeness of the information provided in the Prospectus.

#### *Written consent and advice*

The PC's consent and advice on the CER is provided to the Programme Director in writing. In accordance with the Act, such written advice is also made available to the Faculty Council. This is described in more detail in section 4.7.

#### *Further information*

More information about the contents of a CER and the status of a CER is given in Leiden University's Small Private Online Course (SPOC) for PCs. The approach that the PC must take to the CER is also covered in the Faculty training course that is offered to (student) members of PCs (see also Chapter 9).

### 2.1.2 *Annually evaluating the method of implementing the CER*

The second task assigned to the PC by the Act is evaluating the *method of implementing the CER*. This task can perhaps best be translated into the following sub-tasks:

1. Evaluating whether the regulations of the CER (Faculty part + programme-specific appendix) have indeed been (correctly) applied in the programme, but also evaluating whether certain regulations perhaps have unintended or undesirable effects on the programme, or on the students or teaching staff.
2. Evaluating whether the programme curriculum is indeed being delivered as set down in the CER (and the e-Prospectus) and evaluating whether the quality of the offered teaching and the learning environment / facilities meet the requirements that may be imposed for them.

Teaching evaluations are an important instrument for obtaining information – and hence reaching an opinion – about the matters listed above. You can think of course evaluations, internship evaluations, but also e.g. periodically evaluating the entire curriculum. More information about teaching evaluation in our Faculty is given in section 2.2 of this Manual and in the Guide to Quality Assurance of Teaching.

In addition, there are all kinds of other ways in which the PC can keep a finger on the pulse, in order to form a judgement about the 'ups and downs' of the programme. Good contact with the represented groups, both students and teaching staff, is essential for this. More details about this are given in Chapter 5.

Evaluating the implementation of the CER and the quality of the teaching is not necessarily restricted to a specific time period of the year. The PC conducts activities in this area throughout the year. However, when a new CER and Prospectus become available in spring / summer, it is a good idea to reflect on this statutory task, and to evaluate whether, on the basis of collected information, the PC can formulate further advice for the Programme Management or Faculty Board, or formulate plans for itself to give closer scrutiny to specific topics in the future.

### 2.1.3 *Issuing advice to the Programme Director and/or Faculty Board on the programme's teaching*

The PC has the task of issuing advice, on its own initiative or on request, to the Programme Director and the Faculty Board about all matters concerning the programme's teaching.

In addition to issuing advice on the content of the CER (2.1.1) and on the method of implementing the CER (2.1.2), the PC is free to issue advice on the basis of its own investigations or serious opinions expressed by the represented groups. If the advice relates to matters specifically concerning the programme, then it is addressed to the Programme Director. If the advice relates to the quality of assessment or grading, it is advisable to also send that advice to the responsible Board of Examiners.

If the advice relates to matters above the programme level, it is addressed to the Faculty Board. Where applicable, the Faculty Board will discuss advice that it receives from the PC with any relevant Academic Directors and Programme Directors.

### 2.1.4 *Discussing the report of the assessment panel*

The last task of the PC specified in the Act relates to discussing the report of the assessment panel (*visitatiecommissie*). Once every 6 years, on average, a study programme is assessed by an independent committee of experts, which then sets down its judgments and recommendations in an assessment report. The PC must discuss this report and advise the Programme Director on the improvement plan initiated by the study programme in response to this assessment. More information on this can be found in 2.5

## 2.2 Teaching evaluation

Teaching evaluation is an important instrument for revealing, monitoring and improving the quality of the teaching. The PC plays a central role in this. The purpose of evaluation is to improve the quality of our teaching on the basis of collected information. More information is given in the [Guide to Quality Assurance of Teaching](#).

For course evaluations, use is made within the Faculty of standardised questionnaires, which are then processed by the EvaSys software to produce reports. The Policy Advisor on Quality Assurance ([onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl)) can advise the PC or the Programme Management on different types of teaching evaluation (internship, research project, programme evaluation), for which model questionnaires are also available.

### 2.2.1 *Analysing evaluation results, reporting and formulating recommendations*

It is important for the PC to realise that the benefits of teaching quality assurance are mainly to be found in the *follow-up* of teaching evaluation. To exaggerate somewhat, you could even say that making a large number of evaluations is not, in itself, particularly useful: the important point is what is then done with those evaluations. The PC plays an important role in this, by giving good advice. 'Good advice' is usually also nuanced advice, which takes account of the context in which the teaching and the teaching staff are located. However, it is also important that the PC should check what has been done about PC advice from the past, and should notify the Programme Director if previously observed improvement points have received insufficient attention (especially if these points have been going on for some time and/or work on improvement has repeatedly been absent or insufficient). When planning evaluations, you should therefore be aware that evaluating *all* courses, or *a large number* of courses is not necessarily good. You should be particularly careful to also ensure that the PC gives attention to the subsequent trajectory, even if this means that fewer courses are evaluated.

When assessing evaluation results, the PC must always consider whether those results are sufficiently valid and reliable. Have enough students filled in the evaluation to give a reliable picture? Has a specific question elicited unintended specific responses, because of the way it was formulated? And do specific critical expressions not represent the opinion of just one or a few student(s), while the vast majority of students perhaps had a different opinion? It is also worth noting that regular course evaluations (using closed questions) can provide an indication *that* something is going well or is not going well, but often cannot exactly specify *what* is or is not going well. If desired, this requires further investigation, for example in the form of (interim) evaluation interviews.

#### *Reporting and recommendations arising from course evaluations*

When formulating advice, it is good to first look in a *structural* manner at the quality of a course. It is helpful here to use a structured format. A format for reporting / advice makes it possible, on the basis of a number of fixed aspects that determine the quality of teaching, to briefly formulate what its strengths and weaknesses are, and what advice the PC gives to make further improvements. The PC fills in a format of this kind partly on the basis of the results of the teaching evaluations (e.g. the EvaSys report) and any additional information that is available. Please refer to appendix 4 for a (non-mandatory) format for reporting / advice.

A format for both reporting and advice simultaneously is not only handy for the PC itself, but also quickly gives others (Programme Management, teaching staff, Faculty Council) a clear picture of the PC's opinion and advice. If the PC reaches the conclusion, on the basis of a course evaluation, that a specific course is 'good to excellent', and no appreciable improvement points and recommendations are to be noted, then the format is also a good way to send positive feedback to the teaching staff.

When formulating a definitive report + advice, it is desirable that the teaching staff member him/herself is given the opportunity to respond to it, and possibly to give additional interpretation of the results of evaluations and/or the PC's judgement of them. This can be done in writing or in a personal interview. This feedback from the teaching staff member, via the Programme Director or otherwise, will perhaps not always take place or can take time. The PC can therefore also decide to provisionally issue a report + advice, to which an addendum with feedback from the teaching staff member can be added later, if necessary. In the most ideal case, the definitive version of the evaluation documentation will contain a clear agreement in which the teaching staff and the Programme Director agree what must be retained in the teaching and what will be given further attention.

#### *Interim evaluation of ongoing courses*

In some study programmes, the PC discusses whether there are questions or problems relating to courses that are currently still ongoing. This discussion can take place in the PC meeting or during an open evaluation session with students (and teaching staff), and it means that adjustments can be made on specific issues while the course is still taking place, in consultation with the member of teaching staff.

#### *Reporting and recommendations arising from curriculum and other evaluations*

In a similar way to the above-mentioned format for reporting and advice arising from teaching evaluations, it can also be helpful to use a fixed format / structure for reporting and advice arising from curriculum evaluations or other evaluations conducted by the PC (or external parties).

The most important external curriculum evaluation is the National Student Survey (NSE in Dutch). The PC therefore discusses the NSE results every year, and formulates advice on the basis of these. The NSE results that are provided each year also include the average scores in the country as a whole and the scores of similar programmes in the Netherlands. You can compare the scores of your own programme(s) with these to gain a clearer picture of the satisfaction level of your students compared with those averages.

## 2.3 Annual Programme Report

All programmes write an Annual Programme Report (*Opleidingsjaarverslag*) each year. This is a report of an academic year, which is written during the fall. The report falls under the responsibility of the Programme Director, who produces the report in conjunction with the Programme Coordinator and the PC. The Annual Report gives information about the activities of the Programme Management and the PC, and reflects on the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum (partly on the basis of teaching evaluations and the data on the Annual Programme Card ['programme metrics']), the delivered teaching and the effects of recent changes in the programme. It also describes intended improvements. Every Annual Programme Report gives attention not only to new evaluation results but also to the (follow-up of) action points and intentions from the previous Annual Report. The Annual Report is also used to report about the Quality Agreements.

The Annual Programme Reports also form an important starting point for the programme's self-evaluation in preparation for the programme assessment and midterm review (see section 2.5).

## 2.4 Quality Agreements

For the period 2019-2024, so-called Quality Agreements were made with the universities. Through the Quality Agreements, additional funding has been made available because the loan system was introduced (ie the former grant system for students was abolished) in 2015. Because the funds are no longer paid to the students, but to the institutions, it is extra important that students are involved in the investment plans and monitoring the realization of these plans. Each study program at our faculty has made its own plans about how they will spend the quality resources in the coming years. The quality resources must be monitored and reported separately and the employee participation has an important task in this regard.

The most important role of the PCs is to ensure that the resources are spent on the agreed upon investments and that the goals set are achieved through the use of quality resources. In order to be able to do this, the PC is involved in the monitoring and possible adjustment (implementation) of the plans. Study programmes state in their annual programme report which specific measures have been paid for from quality resources in the relevant reporting year. In addition to reporting on the measures taken, monitoring can take place on the basis of the following instruments and parameters:

- Existing monitoring information: BKO / SKO numbers, staff-student ratio, number of FTEs, study advisers, etc.
- Existing teaching evaluations: course evaluations, NSE, etc.
- New teaching evaluations: program evaluations, panel discussions

It should be noted here that the quality resources represent only a small part of the total education budget. Partly for this reason, it is not easy to measure the effect of investments made from the quality resources.

The program committee is involved in the annual reporting of the program and also keeps an eye on the other evaluations / monitoring parameters. Where necessary, the OC can ask questions or provide (solicited or unsolicited) advice. The Faculty Council has right of consent with regards to the quality agreements.

## 2.5 Programme assessment and midterm review

### *Programme assessment*

Every six years, our programmes are assessed in terms of their quality and content by an independent assessment panel (*visitatiecommissie*). On the basis of this committee's advisory report, the Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders (NVAO), on behalf of the government, extends the *accreditation* of the programme for six years. This accreditation is required for issuing recognised diplomas and is a condition for student grants to be awarded to students.

Before the visit of the assessment panel, an information dossier is sent to it, including in most cases the *self-evaluation report*, in which the programme describes the current situation, strengths and weaknesses, and its ambitions. A chapter on behalf of the students or an advice provided by the PC itself is included as an appendix or separate chapter in this self-evaluation report. In this appendix, students can say how they experience the programme and what they see as possible development points and opportunities for the programme's future. Use must be made here, if possible, of valid and representative student evaluations (e.g. the NSE, curriculum evaluations, etc.). Preferably, the student members of the PC coordinate the production of this chapter. In addition, input and feedback is requested from the PC as a whole for the other chapters of the self-evaluation report.

During the visit, the assessment panel often speaks with members of the PC about the content and quality of the programme and the role played by the PC in the programme's improvement policy. The PC's most important preparation for a programme assessment is that it should function properly over the years and constantly monitor the programme's content, quality and quality assurance.

After the programme assessment, the programme writes an *action plan* based on the assessment panel's recommendations, placing the emphasis on what improvements and developments will be continued or introduced. The PC must discuss the advisory report of the visitation committee and its input and advice is also required for producing the action plan.

Finally, the PC plays an important role if the assessment panel attaches conditions to a positive assessment, which means that the study programme does not or only partially meets the accreditation standards. In such a case, the study programme is asked to draw up an action plan, stating how the shortcomings will be remedied within two years (or earlier). This "recovery plan" is submitted to the PC for advice. The recovery plan and the PC's advice are then sent to the assessment panel for review. Both documents play an important role in whether or not to grant conditional accreditation.

#### *Midterm review*

Three years after the assessment, the programme is again visited by a committee of experts, for a *midterm review*. On this occasion, the programme is assessed again by the experts, although in less depth than for a formal programme assessment. A midterm review is not required by law, but is conducted as standard by many universities as part of the internal quality assurance cycle. The purpose of the midterm review is partly to see how and to what extent the programme is complying with the recommendations made three years earlier by the assessment panel. In addition, it can involve discussion of other, e.g. more current, topics.

The preparations of the midterm review committee include reading Annual Programme Reports, Annual Reports of the Board of Examiners, the CER and numerical data on intake, success rate and student satisfaction. The review committee also takes a random sample of theses from recent years, grades them and then compares this grade with the one given earlier by the programme itself. Finally, the programme also submits a number of specific questions to the review committee. Therefore no separate self-evaluation is written in advance, and the PC does not have any specific tasks in relation to preparing for the midterm review. However, the midterm review committee will often speak with members of the PC during its visit.

After the midterm review, another action plan is written, or the existing action plan is supplemented and updated. For this, the PC's advice and input is again requested.

Further information about the programme assessment and midterm reviews can also be found in the [Guide to Quality Assurance of Teaching](#).

## 2.6 Contact point

Apart from the organised teaching evaluations, a PC also functions as a contact point for teachers and students. It must be possible for them to report any complaints, suggestions and problems about courses, examinations and teachers to the members of the PC. You should therefore inform them very clearly about how you can be contacted for this purpose (e.g. consultation hours, Brightspace, email address, etc.).

However, you should also be aware that there can be better routes for many complaints or objections. The [University website](#) explains clearly what route must be taken for the various kinds of complaints or objections.

## 3. Composition and functions

### 3.1 Composition

A PC always has an equal number of students and teaching staff from the programme(s) for which it is responsible. The Faculty Regulations specify the minimum and maximum number of members a PC can comprise.

### 3.2 Functions and their associated tasks and responsibilities

The PC elects a chair (and sometimes a secretary) from among its members. The chair is elected from among the staff members. Preferably, the PC is supported by an (official) secretary who is not a member of the PC. If the PC

elects a secretary from among its members, preference should be given to one of the student members, so that shared responsibility and co-participation can also be manifested in this form.

An *example* will be given below of how the tasks and responsibilities of the various functions within a PC can be divided. This is just an example, therefore your PC can make different agreements about the division of tasks. The agreements are laid down in the Rules of Procedure of your PC.

### 3.2.1 *Chair*

The chair:

- is responsible for ensuring that the PC functions well;
- monitors the appointment of members by the Faculty Board;
- encourages the knowledge and training of the members;
- occasionally holds preparatory discussions with the secretary;
- prepares the content of the meeting and produces an agenda;
- chairs the meetings (asks people to speak, summarises actions and decisions, and can have the deciding vote in a decision of the PC);
- holds periodic discussions with the Programme Director and, if necessary, occasional discussions with the Board of Examiners and other co-participation and advisory bodies of the Faculty about teaching matters.

It is recommended that a deputy chair should also be appointed within the PC, who will take over the chair's tasks and responsibilities in the event of his/her absence, or who can take over if the education of the chair is discussed.

### 3.2.2 *(Official) secretary*

The secretary:

- monitors and deals with incoming post / email;
- schedules the meetings and reserves the meeting room;
- prepares meetings, together with the chair, and sends out the agenda in good time;
- takes minutes of every meeting, or at least records a list of actions and decisions, and sends this out soon after the meeting;
- promotes efficient discussion and ensures that information is supplied to the PC members;
- draws attention to relevant frameworks and regulations;
- coordinates the production of an Annual Plan (and a PC Annual Report, if applicable);
- sends the advice on behalf of the PC.

### 3.2.3 *Other members*

The other members:

- ensure that they are aware of the PC's vision of the programme, the CER, the curriculum, the teaching quality;
- analyse teaching evaluations and other information and, on the basis of this, contribute to the formulation of advice;
- contribute to the practical organisation of teaching evaluations;
- implement and report on project-based activities of the PC;
- provide input for the Annual Plan; the Annual Programme Report; action plans and other relevant (quality assurance) documents.
- follow-up of action points arising from committee meetings;
- maintain contact with supporters.

## 3.3 Recruitment of student members

Before the appointment of student members of the PC, it is important to recruit motivated students. The current PC can play an important role in this each year. The more visible the PC is to students during the year, the more new students will stand as candidates each year. Experience shows that recruitment by email is not effective. Recruitment during lectures (by the Programme Director, Programme Coordinator, a student ambassador

and/or current student members of the PC) is usually much more effective, preferably in the first or second week of lectures in September.

### 3.4 Appointment of members

#### *Teaching staff members*

The PC teaching staff members are appointed by the Faculty Board for three years from among the staff who deliver the teaching of the relevant programme(s). The Faculty Board appoints teaching staff members on the recommendation of the authorised Programme Director.

#### *Student members*

The law stipulates that elections are organised for the student delegation of a PC, unless the faculty agrees on a different method of composition. Our faculty chooses to compose the student section of a PC by means of a recruitment and selection procedure. The Faculty Board and the Faculty Council discuss annually whether it is desirable to maintain this alternative method of composition.

After candidates for the PC have been recruited in September, the month of October is used for selection of student members. Student members are nominated by the chair of the Programme Committee, and are appointed for one year by the Faculty Board. The term of office of student members normally starts on 1 November.

The method for appointing teaching staff members and student members is regulated in the [Faculty Regulations](#) (in Dutch, Article 14). Therefore for more information on this, please see this document.

### 3.5 Practical aspects after the appointment of members

Given the short term of a PC membership, it is important that newly appointed members can participate as quickly as possible. A number of things to consider:

- Sending important documents, such as this manual and the faculty regulations and, if made, the PC annual report;
- Taking care of a good handover (see also 4.6);
- Provide access to the functional mailbox of the PC;
- Passing on the names and email addresses of the members to the PC trainer, for the purpose of the training.

## 4. Cooperation, meetings and reporting

### 4.1 Rules of Procedure of the Programme Committee

PCs must have established Rules of Procedure (a so-called *Huishoudelijk Reglement*). The Rules of Procedure are statutorily prescribed regulations for matters of a procedural nature. The PC describes its internal agreements with respect to e.g. the division of tasks within the PC, meetings and reporting. The Faculty has developed a format for these Rules of Procedure. All PCs implement this format in their own way, establish their rules and send them to the responsible Programme Directors and the Faculty Board (email address of Faculty Board: [bestuur@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:bestuur@science.leidenuniv.nl)). If a PC decides to change its Rules of Procedure in the interim, the new version must again be sent to the respective Programme Director and Faculty Board.

### 4.2 Annual Plan and Annual Calendar

#### *Annual Plan / Annual Calendar*

It is important to produce an Annual Plan or work schedule at the start of an academic year. This can take the form of an Annual Calendar, as attached in Appendix 6. An Annual Plan is handy for a variety of reasons:

- the PC sets down concisely but clearly in advance what it explicitly wants to work on and what it wants to achieve;
- it is clear to every member what will be worked on when, and how the tasks will be divided;
- the Annual Plan can help to spread the workload over the year, or to make choices for what will and will not be done (e.g. with respect to which evaluations will be executed during the upcoming year);

- the Annual Plan makes clear when specific topics, quality assurance documents, or survey results can be expected to appear on the PC's agenda. The PC can therefore also notify relevant parties if it does not receive specific information or documents (in time), in order to give advice on them;
- the Annual Plan helps with handover or induction of new PC members;
- the Annual Plan can be published, so that everyone knows what the PC is working on.

### 4.3 Meetings and their preparation

Holding meetings is an art in itself, and many books have been written about it. Just a few tips are given here:

#### *Preparation*

- Produce an Annual Plan and follow it, unless there are good reasons to diverge from it (see also section 4.2).
- You should preferably choose a fixed time to hold meetings and/or schedule several meetings a long time in advance.
- You could consider having certain topics thoroughly prepared by just a few members of the Committee. This can save a lot of time for the Committee as a whole.
- Ask people to submit agenda items in advance, so that an invitation and the relevant documents can be sent in good time.
- Ensure that topics of importance for students are at the top of the agenda.
- If relevant, organise a preliminary meeting for only the student members. It often helps with creating good understanding and opinion formation if students have already discussed something in advance among themselves.

#### *During the meeting*

- A good decision stands or falls with a good discussion. This does not necessarily have to be a long discussion, but it has to be thorough. A good method is the 3-phase model of decision-making: Definition, Judgement, Decision (in Dutch, 'BOB': *Beeldvorming, Oordeelsvorming, Besluitvorming*). The first phase involves brainstorming, and collecting as much information as possible. In the second phase, the various standpoints are inventorised, and connections are made between them. Finally, a decision is made.
- The chair should ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak, and that repetitions are avoided.
- Members should allow each other to finish speaking and should take each other seriously.
- Consensus decision-making (the 'polder model') is part of Dutch culture, but sometimes (if necessary) allow a decision to be made by voting, instead of too readily assuming that consensus has already been reached and hence a decision has been made.

The PC must be able to collectively give sufficient attention to the results and follow-up of the different types of evaluations that it has organised itself. In addition, it must also give attention to the results of 'external' surveys (e.g. the NSE), to evaluating the method of implementing the CER, and to advising on Annual Programme Reports, action plans, and so on. This means that a PC will hold regular meetings. On average, PCs in the Netherlands have seven or eight meetings a year.

### 4.4 Cooperation within and outside the PC

#### *One single committee*

Although the PC consists of student members and teaching staff members, it is primarily one single committee with a shared goal: to improve the teaching. Interests of students and teaching staff are certainly not always conflicting, and there is no reason to unnecessarily cultivate the distinction between teaching staff members on the one hand and student members on the other. It is also important to make good use of the diversity within the PC; multiple viewpoints can often result in a clearer picture of the situation and hence in better advice. The strength of the PC depends mainly on the extent to which all members feel free to provide input from their own perspectives and on the extent to which student and staff members cooperate inclusively and constructively with each other. Good cooperation also makes the PC's work more informative, enjoyable, efficient and effective.

Some topics that must be considered by PCs should first be thoroughly researched, and the results of this research analysed, before they can usefully and efficiently be discussed in a meeting. It is advisable to take a somewhat project-based approach to these activities. For example, two members can be designed to carry out a

project together, and the topic can be put on the agenda of the whole PC later. These pairs could, for example, consist of one teaching staff member and one student member.

#### *Programme Director, Board of Examiners, Board of Admissions*

The Programme Director has the final responsibility for what happens in the programme. In this, he/she is assisted and checked by, among others, the PC, the Board of Examiners and the Board of Admissions. It is important that the Programme Director and these bodies know what one another are doing, and that they coordinate their activities, where necessary. A periodic 'triangular meeting' between the Programme Director, PC and Board of Examiners offers good opportunities for that coordination. This meeting does not need to be attended by all the members of the bodies, but by at least one or a few representatives of each. Obviously, PC minutes and reports are also sent to the Programme Management.

The Faculty Board and the Programme Director are required to provide information to the PC. They must provide timely information that the PC needs for the performance of its task and/or any information the PC may request to fulfil its task, in accordance with the principles of reasonableness and fairness. The PC is authorised to invite the Programme Director (or the Faculty Board) at least twice a year to discuss the proposed policy, following an agenda prepared by the PC.

The responsibilities of Boards of Examiners and PCs are strictly separate, but nonetheless PCs can assist Boards of Examiners in their tasks, for instance by passing on complaints and/or evaluation results with regard to (setting of) examinations and final examinations to the Board of Examiners. If PC advice relates to the quality of assessment or grading, it is advisable to also send that advice to the responsible Board of Examiners.

In practice, the PC will have little if any interaction with a Board of Admissions.

#### *Programme Coordinator/ study advisor*

The work of the Programme Coordinator or study advisor includes tasks in the area of the programme's organisation and information supply. He/she is also the study advisor for individual students. Programme Coordinators and study advisors can therefore be an important source of information for the PC, not only about how the programme is organised but also about e.g. the problems encountered by individual students or groups of students.

The Programme Coordinator or study advisor is therefore regarded as a permanent advisor of the PC. In this capacity, he/she can attend meetings of the PC either as standard practice or only when the PC requests this. However, the Programme Coordinator or study advisor does not perform any tasks that are included in the PC's designated tasks, unless he/she is also explicitly appointed as the PC's official secretary.

#### *Study association(s)*

A study association is affiliated with a specific programme and organises various study-related activities. Given that the study associations represent many members, it is important that the student members of the PC are in close contact with the board of the relevant study association. This will make it possible for complaints, questions or comments to be passed on immediately to the PC. In addition, close cooperation increases the visibility of the PC.

#### *Faculty advisors*

Within the Faculty, staff have been appointed with expertise in the area of teaching evaluation, ICT & teaching, quality assurance of assessment, student recruitment, internship and career guidance, internationalisation, and so on. You should not hesitate to ask their advice for important topics on which the PC works and issues advice. The assessor or the Policy Advisor on Quality Assurance can refer you to the appropriate section or staff member.

#### *Other PCs*

PCs will sometimes need to have contact with each other, or give each other information, for instance regarding evaluation of courses that are included in different programmes.

In addition, PCs can learn from each other and adopt each other's 'good practices' in order to do their own work better or more efficiently. Leiden University organises an annual themed meeting in which PC members from the whole University can exchange ideas with each other, and the Faculty also sometimes organises meetings to promote this exchange between PCs. Meanwhile, of course, any PC is free to contact another PC of our Faculty for advice about a specific topic.

#### *Email address*

The members who comprise PCs change regularly. Moreover, it is often not clear for students, staff or the Board of the Faculty who is a member of the PC and what function they fulfil within the PC. For them, it is important to be able to communicate with the PC via a permanent email address, i.e. the functional mailbox of the PC. The PC is therefore requested, where possible, to make use of a PC functional mailbox and to ensure that it is also properly managed for 12 months of the year.

#### 4.5 Minutes, reports and other communication

It is important that minutes are taken of PC meetings, or that reporting takes place in another way, stating the most important topics discussed and the decisions or advice arising from the meetings. Minutes or reports are not only important for the functioning of the PC itself, but can also be requested by e.g. assessment panels. In general, it is advised: minutes or reports should not be longer than is strictly necessary.

In programmes where the lines are very short, and coordination and feedback are easy to arrange informally ‘in the corridors’, there is a risk that certain PC matters will not be written down, but settled orally. However, it is emphatically recommended that the PC’s decisions or advice should always be concisely recorded in writing and then archived. This can perhaps be in the form of a short email message, confirming an oral discussion or otherwise, which is sent later to e.g. a teaching staff member or the Programme Director.

#### 4.6 Annual Report and handover

There is no obligation for the PC to write an Annual Report of its own, but it is always involved in, and makes a contribution to the Annual Programme Report (*Opleidingsjaarverslag*) (see 2.3). Nonetheless, it is recommended that a separate PC Annual Report is written. A concise Annual Report, containing an outline description of what activities the PC has performed and what its intentions are for the coming year, is helpful with e.g. the induction of new (student) members and in general offers the whole Committee more guidance for continuing to function well. A PC Annual Report is not so much a reflection on the current situation or quality of the programme (this is the function of the Annual Programme Report) but more a reflection on the work of the PC and the functioning of quality assurance and teaching evaluation, and it offers e.g. the basis for formulating a plan for the following year(s). In addition, a PC Annual Report can be used in the feedback to your represented group(s) (the students in the programme(s)) and for demonstrating to e.g. a midterm review or accreditation committee how the PC functions. It can be handy to write not only a confidential version (which remains internal and is used in the handover) but also a (summarised) public version to be published (e.g. in Brightspace).

If the PC does not choose to make an annual report, it is important to consider how the PC work can be properly transferred at the end of the academic year. A good handover ensures the continuity of the PC, despite the fact that the composition of the OC changes every year. The transfer can be organised in various ways: in writing (for example, the annual report or another transfer document), by means of a transfer meeting once the new PC members have been appointed, or by means of an informal meeting between old and new PC members. The following could be addressed during the transfer:

- Problems and signals that the PC has received from the study programme and about which they have meetings. It must also be indicated which steps the PC has taken and whether the cases have been completed or still require attention in the new academic year.
- Points for attention that emerged from the teaching evaluations.
- Advice that the PC has given to the programme director (solicited or unsolicited) regarding matters that also deserve attention in the new academic year.
- Which steps have been taken with regard to improving the visibility of the PC within the program and which steps the PC foresees for the coming academic year.
- Other matters that the PC deems relevant to meet again at a later time.

#### 4.7 Reporting to Faculty Council

The Act (WHW, Art. 9.18) stipulates that the PC sends the advice on the CER, and advice issued to the Programme Director or the Faculty Board on matters relating to the programme, to the Faculty Council for perusal. This advice can also be sent, for example, in the form of the PC minutes. Especially with regard to advice relating to the CER, it is important that the Faculty Council knows what topics are currently under discussion within the study programmes. This is one reason why, as from 2018-19, we have introduced ‘response forms’, on which the most important discussion points and (PC) advice regarding the CER are recorded for each study programme.

#### 4.8 Good functioning of the PC

Several years ago, a survey was conducted among PCs and programme managers in the Netherlands to find out the preconditions for good functioning of PCs in higher education. The participants were also asked about possible measures to improve the functioning. For information, a few results from this survey are presented briefly below:

*Five essential preconditions for good functioning*

1. Proper communication / argumentation of the director's or board's decisions based on the Committee's advice
2. Composition and membership of the Committee
3. Good cooperation between teaching staff and students in the Committee
4. Good attendance at meetings
5. Knowledge and understanding of the Committee members

*Five measures that can improve the functioning*

1. The programme director must respond adequately to the Committee's advice
2. Structured, well prepared and frequent meetings
3. Good coordination with other consultative bodies, by e.g. specifying its own tasks more precisely
4. Good induction and sufficient training of new members
5. Good publicity for the content and importance of the PC's tasks

The above preconditions and measures can also serve well as self-evaluation criteria on which the PC can base the periodic evaluation of its own functioning.

If problems arise with regard to the functioning of the Programme Committee, the faculty's policy advisor on quality assurance may be able to support the OC. In that case, please contact [Onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:Onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl).

A national online platform provides information, news and best practices for PCs. PCs are invited to share their valuable knowledge and good practices with each other on this web platform. You should therefore regularly take a look at: [www.opleidingscommissies.nl](http://www.opleidingscommissies.nl)

Further information and tips can also be found in the [PC Guide \(OC-wijzer\) of the Dutch Student Union](#) (LSVb).

## 5. Visibility of the PC and contact with the represented groups

The PC must be well informed about what is currently happening in the programme(s), which means that you must maintain good contact with the represented groups. This is naturally done to a large extent via teaching evaluations, but it can also be achieved by e.g. actively contacting people. In addition, the PC must especially be visible and approachable, so that students and teaching staff know where to find the PC when necessary.

Presented below are a number of 'good practices' that primarily can help to increase the visibility and approachability of the PC, and can also contribute to the PC's good functioning and sometimes to better communication, quality and satisfaction within the programme in general. With all types of communication, you should be particularly careful with regard to privacy-sensitive information (see also section 6).

### *Brightspace*

Create a Brightspace page for which all students (and teaching staff) in the programme can register. On this page you can not only make announcements and requests but also, for instance, present the results of the National Student Survey, publish short reports of the PC's activities, or give feedback on what has been done with the results of evaluations. You can also create folders within the course that are only visible to PC members, e.g. for posting all meeting documents.

### *Programme webpage*

Make sure that a webpage of the programme gives concise information about, for instance, what a PC is and what its work entails. Also list the members of the PC and explain how students can keep informed in other ways (e.g. give references to the means of communication listed below) and how they can contact the PC, if they wish.

### *Email*

Consider sending out an email in the first semester via the Programme Coordinator to students in the programme, in which the PC student members introduce themselves, and you give references to more detailed online information and share any other relevant information. One of the findings from a student conference in December 2018 was that most Leiden University students by far prefer to receive feedback on important evaluation results (e.g. of the NSE) in the form of an email from the study programme; they do not feel that social media, for instance, are appropriate for this.

### *Walk-in consultation hours / discussion meeting*

Walk-in consultation hours, whether or not combined with a pre-announced discussion meeting, can allow students to give their opinion on specific themes or issues that are currently relevant in the programme.

*Facebook (and possibly other social media)*

If the PC has its own Facebook group, this gives the PC direct contact with students (and teaching staff) for collecting feedback and providing information about the PC's work in general.

*Presentation during lectures / meetings*

PC members can personally introduce themselves, e.g. at the beginning of each academic year, to the students of the various cohorts within the programme. You can take this opportunity to briefly explain what the tasks and responsibilities of the PC are, what the PC's main points for attention will be during the coming year, and say that the PC is accessible and open for different forms of feedback. This PC presentation will preferably be planned as a part of, or following a lecture that a large number of students are expected to attend.

*Administering teaching evaluations*

PC members can (occasionally) be involved in administering teaching evaluations (handing out and/or collecting paper evaluation forms). If possible, the students can also ask the PC a few questions, or the PC can make short announcements or requests.

*Evaluation discussions*

When students and teaching staff attend evaluation discussions organised by the PC (e.g. in the context of a curriculum evaluation), this makes a direct contribution to (personal) contact between the represented groups and the PC, and to familiarity with the agenda / work of the PC.

*Year representatives*

The PC can consider designating one or a few students in each year of the programme, who will act as the primary contact person for the PC to give information about the most important issues that are currently relevant in a specific cohort.

*Social media*

Via social media, the PC can be in direct contact with students (and lecturers) to collect feedback and provide information about the PC's work in general.

*Letterbox*

A physical letterbox or complaints box can give students the opportunity to also bring specific topics to the attention of the PC anonymously.

*Collecting and also supplying information*

It is important to realise that the good contact with the represented groups consists not only of the PC collecting sufficient information on which to base its advice, but also of the PC giving sufficient attention to providing students (and teaching staff) with information about e.g. the results and follow-up of teaching evaluations and about the activities of the PC in general.

More information about supplying the represented groups with documents relating to teaching evaluation or the PC's work in general can be found in Chapter 2 of this Manual (Annual Plan / Calendar, Annual Report).

## 6. Privacy and data protection

Staff and student members of PCs have access to information that is sometimes privacy-sensitive, for example in relation to teaching evaluations. PC members must respect the privacy of students and staff, and must always regard personal data, or sensitive information that can be traced back to an individual, as confidential (even after their PC membership has ended). To protect personal and other data as effectively as possible, the University applies an information security policy. Further information on privacy, data protection and how to work securely online (e.g. email communication, archive management, online file sharing) can be found on the [University website](#).

Because of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), no private email addresses should be used for communication. The u-mail addresses should be used instead.

## 7. Official language

In principle, PCs that are responsible for a programme in which a language other than Dutch is the language of instruction should be accessible for both Dutch and international students. The University realises that the language of its administrative communication – which is predominantly Dutch – can form an obstacle in this

context. If this is the case, a solution should be found at the correct level. This can be e.g. holding meetings in two languages, adding an English summary to documents, offering Dutch or English language courses or, in the most extreme case, switching completely to documents and information in English. International staff and students who wish to participate in a PC are encouraged and facilitated to obtain at least passive skills in the Dutch language.

You could consider laying down which language is used for communication within the PC (in meetings, email correspondence, minutes) in the Rules of Procedure of the PC.

If your PC encounters problems regarding the University's use of two languages, or you would like advice on how best to handle this, please contact the assessor or the Policy Advisor on Quality Assurance. The Faculty can unfortunately not promise that all administrative communication (some of which can also come from e.g. the Ministry) can be translated into English for PCs.

## 8. Disputes

If there is a profound disagreement between the PC and the Programme Director or the Faculty Board regarding a subject for which legal consent or consultation rights apply, the Director / Board will ensure that the PC is given ample opportunity to conduct further consultation.

### *Issues related to right of consent*

If, after extensive consultation, the PC does not give its consent, the Faculty Board / Programme Director may opt to adjust its/her/his plan so that it can count on the PC's consent. The Faculty Board / Programme Director may also withdraw its/her/his plan or ask for mediation with a higher body within the Faculty / institution, for instance the Executive Board of Leiden University. If the mediation fails to resolve the difference and the Faculty Board / Programme Director still wishes to implement its plan, the Faculty Board / Programme Director may file a petition with the National Committee for Disputes in Co-participation in Higher Education (*Landelijke Commissie voor Geschillen medezeggenschap Hoger Onderwijs*). This Committee will first attempt to settle the dispute between the two parties in an amicable manner. If this fails, the Committee will issue a binding decision. In so doing, the Committee will determine whether the law has been followed and whether considerations and actions were reasoned and measured.

### *Issues related to the right of prior consultation*

If the profound difference concerns a matter for which the PC's consultation right applies, the PC may decide, after extensive consultation and mediation, to file a petition with the National Committee if the Programme Director / Faculty Board does not follow the PC's proposal or recommendation.

Recourse to the National Committee for Disputes should preferably be avoided by both the Programme Director/Faculty Board and the PCs. If a concrete dispute arises in your PC, you may seek legal advice elsewhere (outside the University). In consultation with the PC, the Faculty Board will provide financial means for legal support.

## 9. Facilities, support and training

The PC has legal rights to facilities, support and training. The PCs of our Faculty are provided with at least the following facilities and support:

- their own email address (see also 4.4);
- a pigeonhole in (the teaching administration of) the programme;
- space on the programme page (via the Faculty's web editor) and possibly also in the Prospectus;
- a Brightspace module in the name of the PC or access to a programme page on Brightspace (if available) for posting messages;
- meeting space, to be reserved via the teaching administration;
- training via a University SPOC (Small Private Online Course) and (for the student members) via additional Faculty training sessions (see Chapter 10);
- this written Manual;
- committee membership grant for students (see Chapter 11).
- support from the Secretary to the Faculty Board, including in the appointment of PC members and providing relevant documents and manuals to newly appointed PC members;
- the assessor and PC trainer from our Faculty function as facilitators for student members of PCs;

- the Policy Advisor on Quality Assurance is available for general questions and advice regarding the operations of PCs, education evaluations and any other matters. He/she can also act as a service desk for forwarding questions to, for example, Legal Affairs, the Secretary to the Faculty Board or a PC trainer/assessor;
- whenever needed, the university's Legal Affairs department advises and supports the PCs in legal questions and procedures.

For further information and the contact details of Faculty support, please refer to Appendix 7C.

## 10. Promoting expertise

Leiden University offers a SPOC (Small Private Online Course) for PC members. The purpose of this SPOC is to enable PC members to acquire basic knowledge and expertise regarding the tasks and responsibilities of a PC. Every new PC member (student member and teaching staff member) is recommended to follow this SPOC. Invitations to follow the SPOC are sent out each Autumn.

Besides the SPOC, student members are offered more Faculty training sessions, which cover e.g. case studies and further discussion of the responsibilities with respect to the CER, and in which questions can be asked. These training sessions are in the first instance meant for student members, but can also be very valuable for starting teacher members. They are therefore very welcome to join as well. The policy adviser quality assurance will inform the student members about these sessions in good time each year.

Finally, reading and using this Manual will hopefully help you to perform your tasks within the PC as effectively as possible.

Teaching staff members of the PC are permitted to follow PC training in working time and with full pay. Any costs incurred for this will be paid by the Institute.

## 11. Time investment and remuneration

Students receive a grant for their work as a PC member. This remuneration is based on the duration of the appointment. For a student member who is appointed for one year, the remuneration is €300. Application for payment of the grant should be made to the Faculty's assessor, using the form 'Financial Support – Board Membership (*Financiële ondersteuning bestuursplaats*; FOB). The Faculty does, however, impose conditions for receiving payment for PC work: student members must attend the Faculty PC training, successfully complete the SPOC developed for PCs, and actively engage in work for the PC. When submitting the application, you must also prove that you were registered with Leiden University in the year of your PC membership. In June, the assessor informs the student members on the application procedure and deadline. International student members from non-EEA countries do not need to apply for a work permit in good time if they wish to receive this remuneration for their PC work. Non-EEA students, however, are not yet eligible for the Profiling Fund by way of compensation for work in coparticipation councils.

It is difficult to give an indication of the number of hours that student members will spend on PC work. On average, one should think of around 5-6 hours per month. However, the actual time investment can greatly depend on e.g. the number of programmes / tracks that are covered by the PC, and on the division of tasks within the PC.

Teaching staff do not receive financial compensation for their work as a PC member. Nevertheless, the Faculty Board considers it important that teaching staff members of PCs have enough time to perform their tasks well.

## Appendix 1 - Hyperlinks to relevant laws, regulations and policies

- [WHW](#) (*Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek* / Higher Education and Research Act): especially Art. 7.13 and Art. 9.18 (in Dutch)
- [Regulations of the Faculty of Science](#) (in Dutch, *Faculteitsreglement*)
- [Guide to Quality Assurance of Teaching FWN](#)
- [Course and Examination Regulations FWN](#) (in Dutch and English)

## Appendix 2 - Hyperlinks to relevant information/websites

- [Overview of composition of FWN Programme Committees. Consult the relevant study programme in the organisation guide](#)
- National online platform for Programme Committees [Opleidingscommissies – Best Practices](#) (partly in English)
- [Research report of the Education Inspectorate](#) ('Degree programme committees 2016', in English)
- [National Student Survey](#) (NSE) (also in English)
- [Dutch Student Union](#) (LSVb, also in English) and LSVb's PC Guide [OC-wijzer](#)
- [National Committee for Disputes in co-participation in Higher Education](#) (in Dutch)
- [Teaching and Learning Guide](#) (Leiden University guide for teaching staff and Programme Management)
- [Qualtrics](#) web-based survey software to design and use questionnaires

### Appendix 3 - Rights of the Faculty Council and Programme Committee regarding the Course and Examination Regulations

Higher Education and Research Act, Article 7.13(2) (WHW in Dutch)	Rights of the Faculty Council	Rights of the PC
<i>The Course and Examination Regulations establish for each study programme or group of study programmes, without prejudice to the other relevant provisions of this Act, the applicable procedures and rights and obligations regarding the education and examinations. These include at least:</i>		
<b>a.</b> the content of the study programme and final examinations,	Advice may be given <sup>1</sup>	Right of Prior Consultation <sup>2</sup>
<b>a1.</b> the method of evaluation of the education in the study programme,	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>b.</b> the content of the specialisations within a study programme,	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>c.</b> the qualities in the area of knowledge, understanding and skills that a student must have acquired by the end of the study programme, <i>[relates to learning outcomes]</i>	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>d.</b> where necessary, the organisation of practicals,	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>e.</b> the study load of the study programme and each of the courses therein,	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>f.</b> the detailed rules, referred to in Article 7.8b(6) and Article 7.9(5), <i>[relates to the study advice for the propaedeutic phase (rules regarding study results, provisions (including student counselling) and warning period, and rules regarding possible referral within the study programme to other specialisations)]</i>	Advice may be given	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>g.</b> the master's programmes to which Article 7.4a(8) is applicable, <i>[relates to study load of master's programmes in excess of 60 EC]</i>	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>h.</b> the number and sequence of the examinations and the occasions on which they may be taken,	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>i.</b> the full-time, part-time or dual nature of the study programme,	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>j.</b> where necessary, the sequence and time periods of the examinations and final examinations and the number of times per academic year that the opportunity is offered to take the examinations and final examinations,	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>k.</b> the detailed rules referred to in Article 7.10(4), <i>[relates to the validity period of passed examinations]</i>	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>l.</b> whether the examinations are taken orally, in writing or in another way, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to permit another manner of examination in special cases,	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>m.</b> the way in which students who have a disability of chronic illness are given reasonable opportunity to take the examinations,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>n.</b> whether oral examinations are held in public, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to permit another manner of examination in special cases,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>o.</b> the period within which the result of an examination is announced and whether and how there can be variation from this period,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation

<b>p.</b> the way and the period in which students who have taken a written examination are given the opportunity to inspect their graded work,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>q.</b> the way and the period in which students can inspect questions and assignments asked or given in the context of a written examination, and the criteria on the basis of which the grading took place,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>r.</b> the grounds on which the Board of Examiners can grant exemption from taking one or more examinations on the basis of previously passed examinations or final examinations in higher education, or on the basis of knowledge or skills acquired outside of higher education,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>s.</b> where necessary, that having passed examinations is a condition for admission to taking other examinations,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>t.</b> where necessary, the obligation to take part in practicals with a view to admission to taking the examination concerned, subject to the Board of Examiners' authority to grant exemption from this obligation, possibly with the imposition of alternative requirements,	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>u.</b> the monitoring of study progress and the individual student counselling,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>v.</b> if applicable: the way in which the selection of students for a special track within a study programme takes place, referred to in Article 7.9b, [ <i>relates to a special track aimed at students' attainment of a higher level of knowledge</i> ] and	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>x.</b> the actual design of the education.	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>y.</b> n/a (concerns practical universities) <sup>1</sup>	n/a	n/a
<b>z.</b> the language in which the education is provided and in which the exams are taken,	Advice may be given	Right of Consent
<b>aa.</b> the extent to which the institution implements the promotion of the expression skills of students in Dutch,	Right of Consent (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER)	Right of Prior Consultation
<b>bb.</b> the selection criteria, if there is a capacity limitation ( <i>fixus</i> ) of the study programme.	Right of Consent	Right of Prior Consultation

1. Advice may be given: means that the Board is *not legally obliged to ask for advice*, but the Faculty Council may still give advice.
2. Right of Prior Consultation: means that the Board *must consult* the co-participation body.

N.B. Other topics to which reference is made in the CER but which are not listed in Article 7.13(2) of the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW) (see the list above) are in principle subject to the Faculty Council's *Right of Consent* (without prejudice to the University Council's Right of Consent regarding the model CER), except for the detailed

<sup>1</sup> The sections y, z, aa and bb anticipate on forthcoming amendment to the WHW (effective date not yet known at the time of writing).

prior education requirements for the bachelor's programmes (model CER Article 5.2.3) and the qualitative admission requirements for the master's programmes (model CER Article 5.2.4). The PC has in principle the *Right of Prior Consultation* regarding the CER, except for the topics regarding which the PC has Right of Consent (see the list above).

## Appendix 4 – Example/format for reporting on course evaluations

### Course Evaluation Report – Programme Committee . . . .

Course name :  
 Year/semester/block :  
 Teacher(s) :  
 Report written by:  
 Date :

Number of respondents in evaluation	
Average students' rating of this course on a scale from 1 to 10	
Pass rate for this course	
Average score for exam	
....	

Main remarks on the quality of teaching, instructional methods, course content, assignments, assessment	
Strongest points	Main points for improvement
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Main remarks on the quality of study materials, use of ICT/Blackboard, communication, facilities, timetable, course load	
Strongest points	Main points for improvement
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Most important points for improvement for this course	
Most important points for improvement in last (year's) evaluation (max. 5)	Most important points for improvement in this year's evaluation (max. 5). (in <b>bold</b> : topics that needed improvement last time <i>and</i> still need improvement this time)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Concrete points of advice of the Programme Committee for adjustment/improvement of this course
1.
2.
3.

## Appendix 5 – Checklist for Programme Committees

The following checklist can help the PC to periodically reflect on whether its tasks and responsibilities are correctly guaranteed and executed. If the checklist reveals that certain topics may need extra attention in the future, the actions proposed for this purpose can be included in the PC's improvement agenda.

Tasks, responsibilities, conditions	Yes	No
Teaching evaluation		
Discussion of/advising on the course evaluations		
Discussion of/advising on curriculum evaluations (such as programme evaluations and panel discussions)		
Discussion of/advising on the results of the NSE		
Discussion of/advising on evaluation of supervision and grading of final papers / theses / research projects / internships		
Discussion of/advising on results of surveys of alumni and the professional field		
Availability of templates / standard questionnaires for various types of evaluations		
Advice to Programme Management about giving feedback on evaluation results (NSE, curriculum evaluation) to the represented groups (teaching staff and students)		
Giving feedback on PC advice / action points to the represented groups (teaching staff and students)		
Attention to privacy of teaching staff and students in e.g. (online) communication and archiving		
Programme accreditation (once every six years)		
Coordinating student chapter self evaluation report (student members)		
PC-members participate in panel discussions during midterms and accreditation visitations		
Discussing the visitation report and advising on the action plan		
CER and other policies		
Giving consent and issuing advice regarding a number of topics in the CER		
Advising on the implementation of (the rules in) the CER		
Advising the Programme Management on other educational policies, the future of the study programme and other programme- / education-related matters		
Advising on the provision of information in the Prospectus and/or in study handbooks		
Communication / information		
Supplying information about PC activities to the represented groups		
Sending issued PC advice to the Faculty Council		
Good information supply from the Programme Management		
Procedures, continuity and promoting expertise		
Formulating an annual report of the activities (PC Annual Report)		
Formulating an Annual Plan each year		
Rules of Procedure formulated for the PC		
Clear allocation of tasks between the PC members has been made		
Good attendance at meetings		
Good reporting / minute-taking of the meetings		
Adequate handover to / induction of new PC members		
Good archiving (incl. advice, minutes, reports)		
Sufficient offer by University / Faculty of resources for promoting expertise (e.g. Manual for PCs, training, meetings, workshops and/or knowledge sharing with other PCs)		
Sufficient use of / participation in resources for promoting expertise by PC members		
PC composition		
As far as possible, the student section and teaching staff section are representative of the represented groups		

Time for tasks and support		
PC members have enough time to carry out their tasks		
Official secretary (not a member of the PC)		
Secretarial support		

## Appendix 6 - Format for Annual Calendar of FWN Programme Committees

The Annual Calendar is intended as a guideline, not as a mandatory template. The calendar can not only serve as a checklist, but can also be helpful when scheduling meetings and/or issuing advice. (PC = Programme Committee, PD = Programme Director).

Date of meeting	Completed	Topic	Action holders	Action
September/ October	Moved to			
		Meetings schedule for the upcoming semester / academic year		For adoption
		Policy goals / annual calendar / evaluation plan of PC – new academic year		For discussion and adoption
		Rules & Regulations by Boards of Examiners – new academic year		For information
		Evaluation of courses (and/or learning pathways) – remainder of 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester previous academic year		For discussion, formulate improvement points, (if necessary) advice to PD and feedback to students and teaching staff
		Evaluation of courses (and/or learning pathways) – 1 <sup>st</sup> semester of current academic year		For discussion and advice to PD
		Reporting on BSA and success rate of – previous academic year		For discussion, formulate improvement points
		Recruitment / selection of student members		(appointment by Faculty Board as of 1 November)
		Results of the National Student Survey		For discussion, formulate improvement points, advice to PD
		Draft annual programme report(s), including report quality agreements + programme chart(s)		For discussion, formulate improvement points, advice on annual program report
November/ December				
		Handover: send PC Rules of Procedure and PC Manual: Tasks, responsibilities and procedures of PC (consult paragraph 4.6 PC manual)		For discussion (with new members)
		First faculty training session and SPOC for new PC members		Mandatory attendance for new student members, optional for teaching staff members
		Annual programme report(s), incl. report quality agreements		Give consent
		Range of minors offered in Leiden Register* - next academic year		PC advice on range of minors to PD
		Range of programmes offered (incl. specialisations and official language of instruction) in Leiden Register – year after next academic year		If necessary, PC advice on new programme or new specialisation, or discontinuation
		If applicable, desired curriculum changes – next academic year		For discussion. If applicable, formulate advice on desired changes for the new CER
		Assessment Plan – previous academic year		Discuss <i>implementation</i> of Assessment Plan, advice to PD /

			Board of Examiners, if necessary
		Annual report Examination Board(s) – previous academic year	For information
<b>January/February</b>			
		Second training session for new PC-members (about the CER)	Mandatory attendance for new student members, optional for teaching staff members
		Learning outcomes of programme	For discussion/evaluation, (if necessary) changes for new CER
		Admission requirements of programme	For discussion/evaluation, (if necessary) changes for new CER
		Course and Examination Regulations – current academic year	Evaluation of implementation
		Assessment Plan – next academic year	Advice on adjustments in line with planned curriculum changes
		Evaluation of courses (and/or learning pathways) – results of 1 <sup>st</sup> semester of current academic year	For discussion, formulate improvement points
		Contact hours of first bachelor's year – next academic year	For discussion > advice to PD
		Faculty CER and programme-specific appendix – next academic year	For discussion > advice to Faculty Board
<b>March/April</b>			
		Programme-specific appendix to CER + Assessment Plan – next academic year	Definitive consent or advice > to Programme Director
<b>May/June</b>			
		Report of success rate (drop-out, change of programme, re-enrolment rate, excellence) – previous academic year	For discussion, formulate improvement points
		Annual Track Report of Honours College	For discussion, formulate improvement points
		Action plan relating to programme assessment / midterm review	For discussion: <i>current situation</i> ; adjusting action points / timeline
		Nomination for Faculty's Teaching Prize	By PC student group
<b>July/August</b>			
		Evaluation of courses and/or learning pathways – results of 2 <sup>nd</sup> semester of current academic year	For discussion, formulate improvement points
		Curriculum evaluation (not necessarily every year)	For discussion, formulate improvement points
		Archive all advice	Archive, insofar as not yet done
		Collect/draft handover documentation	To ensure continuity of the PC

\* All the courses offered at Leiden University (study programmes, specialisations, minors) are set down in the Leiden Register. The Executive Board adopts the offered study programmes and specialisations each year at the beginning of June, and the minors at the beginning of March. The Leiden Register is always one year in advance of the current academic year. The Register has the function of recording the courses, and also forms the basis for checking the offered courses against Leiden University's quality standards and the quality assurance requirements.

## Appendix 7 - Email addresses of PCs, and others

### A. Email addresses of Programme Committees

The current membership of the various Programme Committees within the Faculty is [published online](#). This webpage also contains the (functional) email addresses of the Programme Committees.

### B. Email addresses of Faculty support bodies

**Secretary to the Faculty Board:** for questions or comments about e.g. appointment of PC members, the Faculty Regulations and, contact with the Faculty Council: [bestuur@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:bestuur@science.leidenuniv.nl)

**Policy Advisor on Quality Assurance** (*Science Education and Student Affairs [SOSZ]*): for questions and comments about e.g. this Manual, issues relating to advice on teaching evaluation in general, disputes and legal issues, etc.: [onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:onderwijsbeleid@science.leidenuniv.nl)

**Assessor:** the assessor functions as a facilitator for student members of PCs. The assessor is also the point of contact for the student members of the PC if they want to issue advice to the Faculty Board: [assessor@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:assessor@science.leidenuniv.nl)

**PC trainer:** for e.g. training of new student members and for questions or comments arising from the SPOC or the Faculty training sessions: [octrainer@science.leidenuniv.nl](mailto:octrainer@science.leidenuniv.nl)

## Appendix 8 – Joint Degree programmes in collaboration with Delft University of Technology

Our Faculty offers three Joint Degree programmes in collaboration with Delft University of Technology (*Technische Universiteit Delft*; TUD): BSc Life Science & Technology, BSc Molecular Science & Technology and MSc Industrial Ecology. The shared responsibility only has consequences for how some aspects of these study programmes are organised. The main differences compared with the Leiden University situation described in this Manual are the following:

### Faculty management

At Leiden University, every faculty has a Faculty Board, consisting of, among others, a Dean (whose role includes holding the research portfolio) and a Vice-Dean (who holds the education portfolio). At Delft, the faculties are managed by a Dean. Moreover, Delft does not have the equivalent of Leiden's student member of the Faculty Board, the assessor. Where reference is made in this Manual to the Faculty Board, for the Delft situation this should be read as: the Dean.

### Co-participation

Instead of a University Council, at University level the TUD has a Works Council (*Ondernemingsraad*; OR) for staff members and a Student Council (*Studentenraad*; SR) for students. Furthermore, at Faculty level the TUD does not have a Faculty Council, but rather a Section Committee (*Onderdeelcommissie*; OdC) for staff members and a Faculty Student Council (*Facultaire Studentenraad*; FSR) for students. At Delft, the Student Council and the Faculty Student Council exercise their respective co-participation rights with regard to the University model CER and the Faculty / programme-specific CERs. Where reference is made in this Manual to the relationship between the PC and the Leiden Faculty Council, for Delft this should be read as the relationship between the PC and the Faculty Student Council.

### CER

The Joint Degree programmes establish a CER that takes account of both the Delft and Leiden model CERs. In a few cases this means that a choice must be made between Delft policy and Leiden policy. The CERs of the Joint Degree programmes are adopted by both the Leiden Faculty Board and the Delft Dean. The timeline of the annual CER process for the Joint Degree programmes can differ slightly from the timeline that applies within the Faculty of Science at Leiden.

### Composition of the PC and appointment of PC members

The teaching staff members of the PCs comprise teaching staff from both Delft and Leiden. All the PC members are appointed by both the Leiden Faculty Board and the Delft Dean.