

**Plan van Aanpak bij de  
Research Assessment Public Administration  
Instituut Bestuurskunde  
30 maart 2021**

The Assessment committee praises the Leiden Institute of Public Administration for its efforts and results over the past six years (2014-19) and provides very good and excellent scores on the three main criteria in SEP. These marks are supported with very positive and stimulating comments and suggestions in the qualitative assessment.

The Assessment committee advises to continue our research strategy in the upcoming years. In this ‘Plan van Aanpak’ we discuss the recommendations made by the assessment committee (see the report for the full text) and indicate how we will tackle these challenges. In this text we refer between brackets to the relevant page numbers of the committee report. We focus foremost on the Institute of Public Administration at Leiden University, but take account of the separate and more general observations made by the Assessment committee on the field of Public Administration in the Netherlands more broadly.

1. *The committee recommends the institute to improve its research quality even further (p. 22-23; assessed with ‘2: Very good’).*

The institute has developed a viable and promising research strategy, supported with new appointments including at the level of full professor, which will be continued in the coming years. The recommendation of the committee to focus more on absolute top-journals in the field of public administration, as well as applying for high-level grants like NWO, ERC and Horizon, is part of this strategy. We aim for innovative and high-quality publications on our core themes as well as the selected areas for interdisciplinary collaboration such as artificial intelligence, sustainability, population health and migration. The institute’s increasing engagement with interdisciplinary research (see also p. 14) implies that high research quality is not only pursued through publications in disciplinary top journals (as stressed by the committee), but also through publication in high-ranking interdisciplinary journals. By doing high-quality research on public administration themes as well as important societal challenges, we also aim to focus on important grant-schemes to be pursued by groups of researchers and consortia through processes of *team science*, which will also support early career researchers to participate in pluralistic and interdisciplinary research. We will continue to aim for rigor and relevance in our research.

2. *The committee recommends the institute to continue working on its social impact at the management level as well as the broader institute level (p. 23; relevance to society, assessed with ‘1: World leading / Excellent’).*

Indeed, the conversation on how to realize impact is a continuous one due to the dynamic nature of the public sector as well as the problems that are experienced. In view of this dynamic as well as the pluriformity of ‘impact’, which covers a wide array of activities and outcomes, the institute will be careful in quantifying ‘impact’ using too limited indicators. Instead, we propose a more continuous way of bridging questions and problems in society with research and insights from the institute. In further developing this mutual relationship we will strengthen our efforts in the following ways: (a) we will more strongly integrate external networking in our research strategy and further stimulate durable connections between

external partners and faculty; (b) we will invest in support at administrative level on second-stream grants as well as third-stream contracts that will facilitate applications; (c) opportunities for research—either second or third-stream—as well as a discussion on the commitment to apply will become a recurrent topic in meetings of full professors, in theme groups and the Institute Council (see p. 13); (d) we will continue our discussions (both internally as well as with external stakeholders) on the conceptualization, realization and potential trade-offs between social impact and upholding research quality (p. 10), in order to further expand and solidify our relevance to society. In doing so, we also will further develop appropriate indicators of ‘impact’ in view of our research strategy (p. 17) .

*3. The committee recommends an ongoing and explicit institute wide discussion on criteria for hiring, promotion and professional development (p. 23; viability, assessed with ‘1: World leading / Excellent’).*

The institute welcomes the observation of the committee that a more inclusive promotion system is in place but needs to be further implemented. This includes a further elaboration of the importance of education or social impact for internal promotion in line with earlier reports on ‘Erkennen en waarderen’ (see also p. 11-13).

The institute will continue its institute-wide discussion on the promotion system and inclusivity, including in its meetings with full professors, theme-group meetings, and regular discussions in the Institute Board. The purpose of these discussions is to further develop and implement the framework that has been put in place. Another avenue remains, of course, the more private RO-conversations in which the prospects of personnel and professional development, within the department or elsewhere, needs to be discussed. These private conversations are an appropriate venue to start a discussion between supervisors and early-career researchers to help them navigate the growing and complex field of Public Administration, connect to the academic community, especially now in pandemic times (p. 11), and create more clarity in expectations for younger researchers with regard to third stream funding (p. 13). Finally, as the committee rightfully notes, the institute is blessed with more highly qualified scholars than there are promotion opportunities. For this, we strengthen our strategic personnel planning, which requires our full attention for the transparency in criteria and fairness of promotion.

*4. The committee recommends paying continuous attention to day-to-day practice of research integrity (p. 23; viability, assessed with ‘1: World leading / Excellent’).*

The formal checks are in place and having an effect. That said, supplementing these checks with continuous conversations is important. The institute will stimulate the theme groups to discuss these issues during paper discussions and research presentations. Similarly, the Scientific Director will be the contact point for colleagues to put forward dilemmas or problems dealing with these issues, broadly taken. Furthermore, we strive for a safe environment in which questions about on difficult dilemmas related to research can be discussed. It is important to continue discussing these issues with all colleagues so that we will indeed maintain our excellent reputation of a high-quality research institute.

*5. The committee invites the institute to reflect on the professional and career development of our PhD candidates (p. 23; viability, assessed with ‘1: World leading/excellent’):*

The Institute invests from this year onwards, together with the graduate school of FGGA, in a new position of PhD dean, who will start at the beginning of 2021. The PhD dean has a broad task in identifying challenges to PhD candidates, facilitating the existing ‘go-no-go’ decisions, setting up several activities with these candidates, and bringing problems related to

supervision to the attention of the dean and Scientific Director. The institute will discuss the recommendations of the committee with the newly appointed PhD dean so that the questions and concerns can be taken on at an early stage. Concerning professional skills and other learning components the institute will discuss, on the basis of input from the PhD candidates, with the Faculty's graduate school as well as the NIG (the national research school in Public Administration) how specific needs concerning career development (within and outside academia), interdisciplinary research, and collaboration between research and practice can be accommodated in the existing PhD training programs.

In focusing on these recommendations, we are very happy with the final conclusion of the Assessment committee: "In sum, the Leiden Institute appears to be a high-quality research institution with substantive societal relevance and high viability with the capacity to develop into a world class Institute." (p. 23). Based on the report as well as the research strategy described in the institute's report drafted for this assessment, the institute will further discuss its research program for the coming years.