Research Review Political Science 2013-2019

Response to report research review committee

The Institute of Political Science of Leiden University received the report of the Research Review Political Science 2013-2019. The report is positive with regard to both the quality and reputation of Dutch political science in general, and also the research performance of our Institute during the evaluated period. The report praises the Institute for its scientific output of socially relevant research produced in a turbulent period of large-scale expansion, as well as for its strategic move from a unified to a more diversified research program that was recommended by the previous research review. The Institute's research obtains highest score of 1 for two SEP standards (research quality and relevance to society), and a score of 3 for viability.

It is particularly for the area of viability that the report makes the following specific recommendations to both the Institute and the faculty/university. We have grouped the recommendations in several themes, which correspond to the intended measures below.

Recommendations review committee

Research clusters

• Consolidate the current composition of the institute and transforming the research clusters into salient working environments for all researchers.

PhD programme and community

• Increase the number of PhD candidates, notably by including a higher number of positions structurally funded by the Faculty and University.

• Invest in building a PhD community, including through a systematic analysis of the pros and cons of graduate school/ECPR training or return to NIG.

Research time

• Address high workloads, through the consolidation of current measures to free up time for research (teaching-free periods, reduction of teaching load especially for grant writing), and through an increase of the formal university research time allocations.

Personnel and Institute's cohesion

• Widen the possibility for scholars to be promoted to the higher ranks as part of an individual career paths.

• Ensure cohesion of the Institute. The committee advises the faculty and university management to look for possibilities to relocate the Institute in a single place.

Intended measures Institute

1. **Research clusters**
    - Further develop research clusters as the focal point for staff's research progress and development. This will be done by regularly evaluating the structure (number of clusters) and composition (membership of clusters) of the research clusters to both ensure a close fit between supervisors' and supervisees' research expertise, and enable research clusters to develop as research communities.

- Strengthen synergy among the research clusters, and between the research clusters and the Institute's broader research programme. This can be facilitated by reforming the Research Committee to include representatives from each cluster and the Research Grant Coordinator.
- Integrate PhD students and postdocs in research clusters in order to provide them with extra opportunities to engage with the Institute's various research activities.
- Increase the research cluster coordinators' involvement in the process of research grant development; research cluster coordinators should support the Research Grants Coordinator in the development of research grants from within their own clusters.

2. PhD programme and community

- Institute Board and Research Committee will together develop a comprehensive PhD policy that clearly spells out the Institute's expectations regarding the role and composition of supervision teams, the monitoring of PhD progress (in terms of research as well as planning), structure and format of PhD thesis, co-authorships of publications and PhD chapters, as well as the appointment and supervision of external PhD candidates.
- Review the system of PhD training. Currently we rely on a combination of FSW graduate school and (ECPR) summer and winter schools to train our PhDs according to their needs. We might (re)consider NIG, but will also discuss with the faculty the option of offering/including courses on methods relevant to our PhD candidates (or junior researchers) within the faculty offerings (be it through Graduate School or as part of joint methodological courses).
- Explore possibilities to increase PhD numbers by 1) maintaining a level of support for grant development and thereby strive to continue the current level of success in attracting external research finding; 2) discussing with the faculty/university the limits which the faculty currently sets on the Institute to fund PhD positions from the first money stream; 3) discuss with the faculty/university the strict requirements attached to obtaining ius promovendi for our more senior teaching staff to provide associate professors with an incentive structure for acquiring external funding.

3. Research time

- In the past two years the Institute managed to increase the formal 21% university research allocation (from the first money stream) to de facto 35% or more research time by implementing a number of measures at the institute level. Also for the coming years, the Institute strives to uphold an institute-funded higher research allocation by maintaining our practice of offering teaching-free periods, efficient and flexible organization of teaching, and internal research budget with flexible purpose (travel grants, research assistance, conference fees, literature, etc).
- Discuss with the faculty/university possibilities to increase the 21% allocation of research time from the first money stream.

4. Personnel and Institute's cohesion

- Develop personnel (including promotion) policies that will ensure that the Institute remains a stimulating and attractive workplace for talented academic researchers. The Institute currently employs a large number of talented and successful scholars who are at a similar point in their careers. The Institute will consider ways to address this organizational bottleneck, by for example diversifying English-language job titles in a way that better recognizes different levels of seniority, and working with the faculty/university to allow more individual career patterns and trajectories.

- The Institute's goal, which is also included in its Strategic Plan, is to have the Institute physically based in a single location, rather than divided across Leiden and the Hague as is currently the case. The Institute will continue discussions with the faculty/university to pursue this goal as part of the strategic positioning of social sciences and political science within the university and the broader national context.