

## Press release

16 March 2020

### **Making way for all aspects of quality**

*Strategic goals, Open Science, and Recognition & Rewards important basis for new research evaluation protocol*

**Today, the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (VSNU), the Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) will present the new Strategy Evaluation Protocol (SEP). Once every six years, the research organisations revise the evaluation protocol for academic research, which is used by research universities and KNAW and NWO institutions to evaluate research units. A committee, headed by Prof. Thom Palstra, has been reviewing and revising the SEP. The new protocol, effective from 2021, builds further upon the existing protocol to incorporate recent developments relating to the recognition and rewards of researchers as well as the concept of Open Science. 'This protocol is less focused on numerical lists and is based on a quality assurance system incorporating strategic thinking and action', says Palstra.**

#### **Key focus on goals and strategy rather than numerical evaluations**

The quality of Dutch research conducted at universities and KNAW/NWO institutes is evaluated once every six years. This is done through review visits of research units and institutes carried out by committees of Dutch and international experts and peers. The evaluation criteria and procedures are described in the SEP. VSNU, KNAW and NWO have revised the protocol to ensure greater compatibility with the current needs of academia and society. The new protocol has been renamed to Strategy Evaluation Protocol to emphasise that the evaluations will focus on the goals and the strategies of the research unit in question. The research unit will be evaluated based on the following criteria: research quality, social relevance and viability of the unit. Within these criteria, the new SEP will devote specific attention to Open Science, PhD policy and training, academic culture and HR policy. Evaluation committees will no longer assign scores in their report, instead they provide a critical substantive opinion and recommendations for the future. The new protocol will officially be effective from January 1st, 2021, although it can be used now for the purposes of preparing for evaluations.

#### **Kick-off meeting on 20 April**

On April 20, 2020, from 13.00u till 17.00u during an open meeting at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, the Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027 will be presented to Ingrid van Engelshoven, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science. This meeting is intended for everybody involved in research evaluations. The committee responsible for the formulation of the SEP will explain the decisions made during its creation, e.g. in view of the new approach to recognition and rewards of researchers. It will also address how universities and research institutes can incorporate the SEP into the internal quality assurance cycle. Parallel sessions will deal with a variety of aspects of the new SEP.

## Recognition and Rewards of researchers

In November 2019, all Dutch public knowledge institutions and research funders presented the new principles for recognition and rewards of researchers in a position paper entitled '[Ruimte voor ieders talent; naar een nieuwe balans in het erkennen en waarderen van wetenschappers](#)' (Room for everyone's talent: towards a new balance in the recognition and rewards for academics'). The new SEP incorporates these principles in relation to research. The new SEP is also based on the San Francisco Declaration Of Research Assessment (DORA), which is signed by the VSNU, KNAW and NWO. DORA is a global initiative that encourages less focus on the number of publications during assessment of researchers and more focus on research quality. The SEP facilitates this by basing the evaluation on the research units' own goals and strategy and focusing less on numerical data. The research units will determine for themselves which indicators they consider relevant for evaluation of the unit's research. The evaluation committee will no longer use score-based assessment categories; instead, the committee's evaluation will be part of an annual strategy meeting between the research unit and the board of the institution. As a result, the new protocol represents a move from an evaluation system towards a quality assurance system for Dutch research. Effective self-reflection and evaluation of the research units will help to reinforce Dutch research in the future.

*If you are a policymaker, secretary, committee member or researcher to whom the SEP is relevant and you would like to attend the meeting on 20 April, then please click [here](#) to register.*

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For further information, please contact:

Bart Pierik  
Spokesperson  
06 50 48 30 17  
pierik@vsnu.nl

Lange Houtstraat 2 | Postbus 13739 | 2501 ES Den Haag | + 31 (0)70 302 14 00  
post@vsnu.nl | www.vsnu.nl | KvK Utrecht 40480226 | IBAN NL61 INGB 0001 5964 15