

Integration of Research and Teaching

Young Academy Leiden – *Position Paper*

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Background

The integration of research and teaching is a core value of Leiden University, laid down in its Institutional Plan: “In Leiden every researcher teaches, and every teacher also conducts research” ([Institutional Plan](#), p. 19). Combining research and teaching is a requirement for a permanent position at Leiden University ([Guidelines for the Appointment of Academic Staff](#), p. 3).

De Jonge Akademie has indicated strong support for integration (*verwevenheid*) of research and teaching ([Uitgangspunten van de KNAW en De Jonge Akademie voor veranderingen in de financiering van het wetenschapssysteem](#), points 7-9), but also sees them too much as communicating vessels, with research time under pressure from increasing demands on education (due to rising student numbers).

Research indicates that early success in research funding (and therefore more research time) increases chances of success later on, which is known as the Matthew effect (Bol, De Vaan & Van de Rijt, [PNAS](#)). Various parties at the national level (VSNU, NFU, KNAW, NWO, ZonMw) have called for a new system of recognition and rewards for academic staff ([Room for everyone’s talent](#)). The balance between research and educational performance is one of the key aspects of their position paper.

Points of concern

Award of large external grants provides a relatively small number of researchers with much more time for research. We should avoid this leading to a two-tiered system with ‘haves’ who can spend a substantial part of their time on research (the ‘super stars’) and ‘have-nots’ who cannot.

There is a call for revaluing teaching performance and the introduction for a more teaching-intensive career path, but the room for this is hampered by the fact that most staff (certainly those without large grants) are already on a teaching-intensive path in terms of work hours, while being judged on research performance. The introduction of teaching-intensive career paths cannot mean even more work hours spent on teaching for these members of staff, because this will limit their ability to continue to combine research and teaching.

In addition, the structural dependence in some faculties on temporary teaching staff, such as *docenten* (adjunct lecturers without research appointment), is worrisome and at odds with the policy of combining research and teaching and the commitment in the Institutional Plan 2015-2020. At the same time, we recognize the essential role of these *teachers* in many (large-scale) programs. We are very concerned, however, about academics being stuck in a carousel of temporary teaching contracts, rotating from university to university or having many small teaching positions in parallel.

Recommendations

- An increase of research time in the first money stream (*eerste geldstroom*) is unavoidable if we want to commit to research-based teaching at universities.
- The balance between research and teaching performance should be redrawn: if teaching is a major part of the work, it should significantly feature in performance evaluations and career prospects.
- We reject the 'super star' model of science and embrace 'team science':
 - We support the award of smaller research grants for a larger group of researchers, rather than large grants for only a small group.
 - Staff on substantial research grants should contribute to education in their Institute. Research time buyout arrangements should take this into consideration, for example by limiting this to a maximum of two-thirds of working time.
- The assistant/associate/full professor (*UD, UHD, hoogleraar*) career path should remain one in which research and teaching is combined at the individual level. Promotion can be done on both research and teaching merits (i.e., very good researchers with satisfactory teaching performance and vice versa).
- If *docenten* are a structural part of a faculty's teaching needs, the possibility should be open to hire them on permanent contracts (and possibly promote them to Docent 3, 2 or 1). At the same time, their role and capacities should be carefully considered, as they cannot be expected to be research active themselves. For some teaching roles this is appropriate, but not for all.
- Whenever *docenten* are involved in the teaching of courses, the integration of research and teaching should be guaranteed at the team level, i.e. through supervision by a (research-active) course coordinator.
- The position of young academics (particularly *docenten*, both pre-doc and post-doc) is too often precarious and should be better protected. For example, small contracts (less than 0.5 FTE) and short contracts (less than 1 year) should be avoided, especially for those for whom this is their main occupation (those who teach one course next to a professional role elsewhere are in a very different situation).