

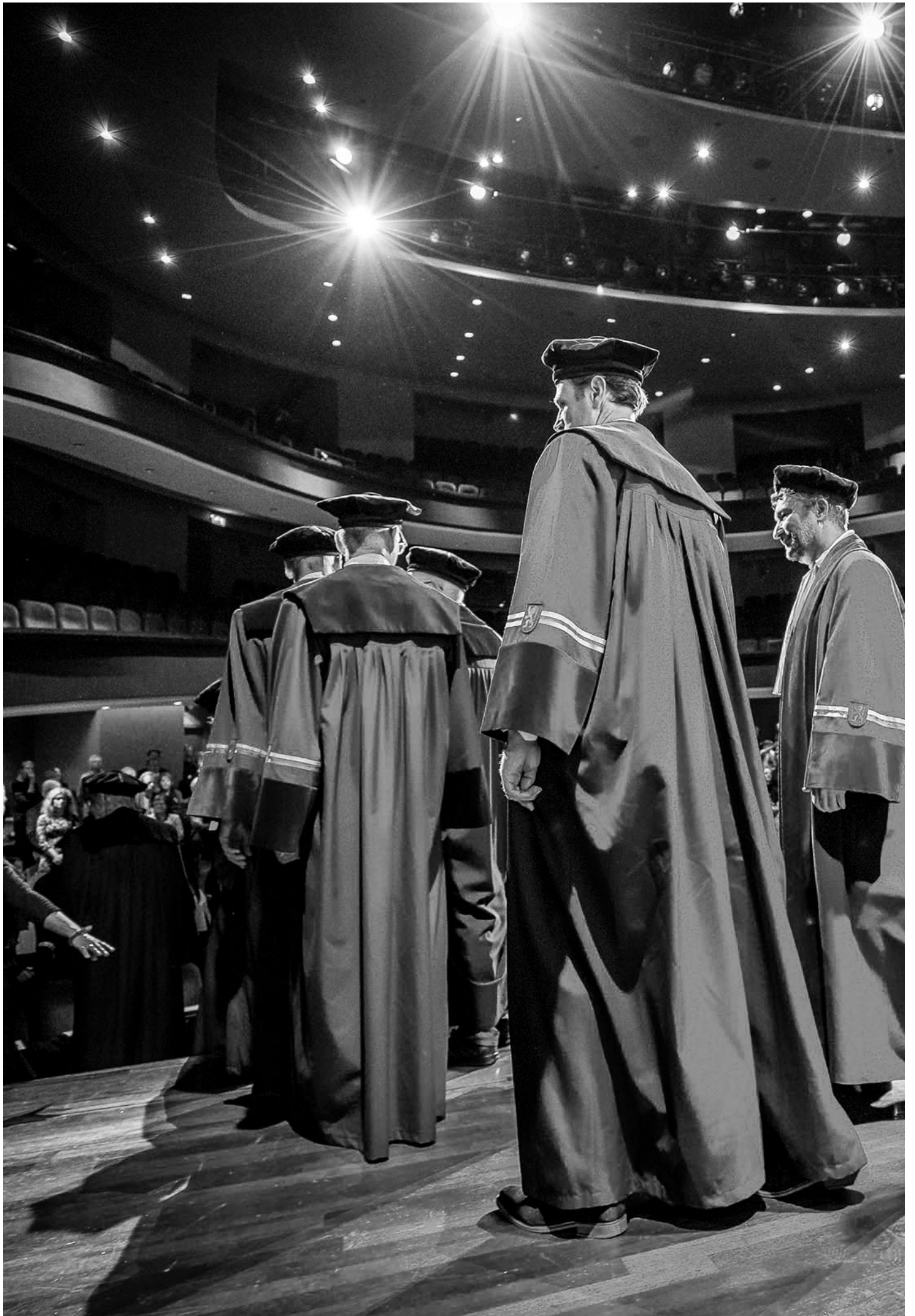


We are different

Recogniton and Rewards at the Open Universiteit

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Towards a new form of Recognition & Rewards

This document sets out the vision of the Open Universiteit on the Recognition and Rewards programme. It is based on the national initiative for a new form of recognition and rewards within the academic community.

'Room for everyone's talent' Position Paper

At the end of 2019, the VSNU (Association of Universities in the Netherlands), NWO (Dutch Research Council), NFU (Netherlands Federation of University Medical Centres) and ZonMw (Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development) published the position paper entitled 'Room for everyone's talent: towards a new balance in recognitions & rewards for academics.' In this paper, they express the goal of modernizing the system of 'recognition & rewards' for academic staff. By bringing about a change in culture, the goal is to establish a better balance between teaching, research, leadership, and impact, along with greater focus on quality (rather than quantity), an open academic community, and new forms of collaboration. This will enable specialisations within a role, and generate more dynamism that will benefit both the individual and the organization.

The shift which this document is bringing about is apparent in other areas too. The NWO and ZonMw are pressing further ahead with implementing the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) in their procedures and criteria, leading to research output being presented in a more narrative fashion on CVs and application forms. The Strategic Evaluation Protocol (SEP), which was updated in 2021 and is used to evaluate research units, also incorporates the principles of the new Recognition & Rewards system. It places a greater emphasis on societal impact, open science, diversity, and talent policy.





The Open Universiteit: proud to be different!

The Open Universiteit (OU) is a non-traditional, public university with a unique mission: to develop, innovate, and offer inspiring activating academic distance education. As far as recognition & rewards are concerned, our identity is distinctive in three aspects. We are proud of these aspects, which make us 'different' and, as such, form the basis for implementing our Recognition & Rewards programme.

1. Education is in our genes

The OU was founded in the early 1980s, in response to a need for innovation in education. To this day, this strong teaching profile is in our genes. In this respect, the ambitions set out in the position paper align perfectly with the strategy that the OU has been pursuing for many years, and our teaching has always been highly regarded and valued. At the OU, you cannot forge a career without substantial involvement in the teaching process. Recognition for our teaching is also expressed through such tangible awards as 'lecturer of the year' or 'educational product of the year,' which are also held in high regard outside the OU.



For the last 17 years, we have featured among the top three best universities in the independent 'Keuzegids' guide and, this year, four of the seven bachelor's degrees that we run have again been ranked among the best for their subject (source: Keuzegids 2022 and Nationale Studenten Enquête 2021). External reviews of our teaching are invariably positive. To guarantee the quality of our teaching, we established the centre of expertise for education (Expertise Centrum Onderwijs, ECO), which supports our lecturers with developing innovative and inspiring teaching. In addition, this centre runs a comprehensive programme for the professionalization of lecturers (BKO), in which all academic staff are encouraged to participate.

2. We are open and diverse

The OU represents accessibility and innovation in academic teaching; this is our unique mission in the higher education system. Openness and inclusion is in our DNA. We do not stipulate any prior qualifications for admission to our bachelor's programmes, and we make academic learning accessible to anyone who wants, or needs to study flexibly, for example alongside a job or other commitments: groups requiring specific attention (such as students with a disability) and students who have dropped out from other universities.

Our policy, including the recently revised educational model 'Activating Academic Distance Education' (Activerend Academisch Afstandsonderwijs), is geared in part to the educational success of these target groups. Our student population is accordingly diverse, and this diversity is also reflected among our staff. For many years now, the OU has had by far the highest percentage of female professors of any Dutch university: 42% female professors (FTE) at the end of 2020, a percentage that is head and shoulders above the national average of 24.2%. The recently established Diversity and Inclusion working group is currently developing a multi-year strategy for an even more inclusive and diverse population of students and staff going forward.



3. Research with impact is our mission

For decades, the research done by the OU has focused on innovation in teaching, an area in which it is pioneering. Part of our statutory mission is to disseminate and apply these research findings in Dutch higher education (including our own teaching). This is why we are constantly researching, improving, and developing new teaching methods and techniques, and why we share our knowledge and experience. The platform for digital learning (ddguide), set up during the Covid pandemic and on which lecturers from the whole of the Netherlands enthusiastically shared tips & tricks for the provision of online teaching, is a great example of this. We also have an extensive multidisciplinary research programme called 'Innovating for Resilience,' which incorporates insights from several disciplines represented in the faculties and tackles complex issues that are highly relevant to society. This programme expressly facilitates team science, involving all the different faculties. Our teaching is interwoven with our multidisciplinary and single-discipline research, leading to cross-pollination with our students' everyday living and working environment. As a university, we are very much a part of society.

Taking stock: where are we now?

While we are keen to retain all the good things touched upon above, there is of course room for improvement at the OU. Latterly, we have been taking stock of the current initiatives within our university that align with the Recognition & Rewards philosophy while also investigating what we are not yet doing. Semi-structured interviews with staff at the Centre of Expertise for Teaching, Academic Affairs, Human Resources and the Graduate School have given us a good impression of what is being worked on, the good practices we already have, and the challenges we face. This has provided the foundation for the three pillars of the programme.

*‘The Open Universiteit
has always had a strong
focus on teaching, which
aligns well with the
Recognition & Rewards
vision. It is a key aspect
of our identity of which
we are very proud’*



*prof. dr. Theo Bastiaens
Rector magnificus*

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Our ambition: a three-pillar approach!

What are our ambitions?

Close ties between teaching and research are a typical feature of the university system in the Netherlands. Teaching and research will remain core tasks for the OU. Another aspiration for the next few years is to focus more on, and allow greater scope and recognition for the core areas of impact and leadership. Societal impact is the foundation of our very existence: after all, society finances our research and, through activities designed to have an impact, we give the knowledge we have acquired through our research back to society. The leadership of the future stimulates innovation, takes a broad view of recognition and rewards, and has a collective mindset (with teams as the basis). Furthermore, we want to share our academic research and teaching with society and make it accessible to other researchers (open science).

We condense this into three pillars:

- **teams as the basis**
- **diverse and dynamic**
- **open science**

On the next page, we outline each of these pillars. Implementation-wise, our approach is one of extensive integration with the OU's existing and proposed ambitions and with good practices. Thus, the first pillar will have a great deal of tie-in with the ongoing Strategic Personnel Planning programme. While the pillars are aimed primarily at academic functions, there is always some interplay with other functions. Whenever certain aspects are also relevant to our support staff, this will be incorporated in the programme. In the coming period we will be looking at how and where the pillars can be made visible in the organization. For each pillar, a working group will be formed whose members are representative of the target groups.



Teams as the basis

It is essential that, as employees, we feel involved in implementing this strategy and, by extension, in the OU's future development, and that everyone can make a meaningful contribution. With that in mind, we will be paying more attention to strategic personnel planning, an OU-wide programme introduced in 2021. For the academic staff in particular, teams are a central feature of this. The added value stems from the mutually reinforcing diversity and complementarity of individual team members' skills and expertise. In practice, there is a persistent lack of recognition for both individual performance and teamwork which lead to academic performance in teaching and research. If we are to be a healthy and forward-looking establishment that also allows room for diverse talents, teams will be a more central feature. This means that at every level of the establishment (university, faculty, and department) we must have clear, realistic goals, with teams specifically assembled to contribute to those goals. Individual employees' talents and wishes must then be aligned with these team objectives, always with collaboration at the core. The basic principle is to enable employees to develop their full potential, in a safe, team-oriented working climate. The ability to offer permanent employment to university lecturers, associate professors and full professors is an important aspect of this.



Diverse and dynamic

This pillar places the focus squarely on the individual employee and promoting and utilizing their talents. Put succinctly: as well as the importance of recognizing and rewarding all four core areas, as an individual you must, as a matter of principle, have sufficient opportunities to develop further in those areas. We intend to do this in two ways: firstly by enabling employees to vary the emphasis within their role with regard to teaching, research, impact, and leadership; and by ensuring they have the scope to do this and are rewarded, e.g. during annual performance reviews. This means employees are able to specialize, and not that an academic has to become a jack of all trades. Both vertical and horizontal career development are possible. As well as the team-centred approach previously mentioned, the manager's role is crucial: good academic leadership. This is true not only of academics with an administrative or management role, such as teaching and research coordinators, departmental chairs, and deans, but also of new and established academics who supervise teams of undergraduate and PhD students.

Secondly, by promoting and facilitating these talents, which of course applies to the areas of teaching and research in which we are already making great headway. As an establishment, over the next few years we specifically aspire to allow greater scope for, and focus more on, the core areas of impact and leadership (both academic and in a general sense).

As regards leadership, an SKO (Senior Teaching Qualification) is currently being developed, performance appraisal training is available to staff and managers, and a leadership programme is being launched for three management levels. As regards impact, policies will be developed, training given, and we will be looking at the role that our Pure registration system might play in recording activities such as these, perhaps in a different way.



Open science

Open science and modernizing the recognition & rewards system are inextricably linked. The outputs of academics who invest their time and attention cannot automatically be traced back to traditional academic output such as publications. Despite this, those outputs may have a major impact on society and academia (sharing research data, for instance). We want to support academics in sharing their research as openly as possible as open science, but also in closed circles when necessary and responsible. A recent poll by the NWO found that 87% of researchers have a positive or very positive attitude towards open science. Young academics are even more enthusiastic, with a figure of 94%. However, researchers come up against barriers on the practical side. 64% of researchers believe that open science is not properly recognized and rewarded. With our identity and mission, the OU is inherently a fervent supporter of open science and open access. Transparency with regard to ethical testing, advance notification of research, data security, making data available to third parties, full disclosure, and so on are essential. The outputs of our scientific research should be publicly accessible as a matter of principle: things such as protocols, questionnaires, encoding schemes, anonymized data on research objects (people, institutes), analysis scripts, analysis output, and publications (open access). To achieve this, we are developing broader policies. One component of this pillar will be a pilot involving a group of multidisciplinary PhD students; from the outset, they will endeavour to embrace open science principles as fully as possible, and they will act as a

‘Our strength lies in playing a unique role in the academic world. We must preserve that strength, build on it and keep putting our own spin on it!’

*prof. dr. Halszka Jarodzka
Committee Chair*





Planning

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Launch							
Assemble committee							
Internal communication about launch							
Take stock							
Take stock of current situation by conducting semi-structured interviews							
Flesh out the pillar concept							
Prepare & share vision document internal and external							
Management team information session							
Internal discussion - dialogue & support							
with MT, deans, departmental chairs							
with employees & forums using focus groups							
Further detail of pillars							
Being visible - internal and external communication							
Newsletter, presentations, website and social media							
Active participation in national-level meetings							
Get to work! - phased implementation							
Set up working groups for each pillar							
Experimenting & pilots							
Leadership training							
Duration of sub-projects and details of pillars							
Support & assure - focused on culture change							
Facilitate and professionalize							
Sustainable embedding in organization							

References

OU.nl

On the website of the Open Universiteit there is general information about our vision on Recognition & Rewards and the steps we will take in the future

→ www.ou.nl/-/erkennen-waarderen

MijnOU

On myOU regular updates are posted about the programme. A separate page contains an overview of all information useful for employees.

→ mijn.ou.nl/group/mdw/-/erkennen-en-waarderen

Recognition & Rewards

The national website for Recognition & Rewards (in English) provides additional information about the national programme and insights into the approach of Dutch universities and research centres.

→ recognitionrewards.nl

VSNU-project group

A VSNU project group has fleshed out the 'Room for everyone's talent' position paper into a national Recognition & Rewards programme.

→ [Read the position paper](#)





Composition R&R Committee

Like the other institutions involved, the OU has established a Recognition & Rewards committee, tasked with formulating ambitions within the OU and liaising with the other committees in the Netherlands. The composition is as follows:

Chair

Prof. dr. Halszka Jarodzka

Professor of Instructional Design for Online Learning, Educational Sciences faculty

Project manager

Suzan Becks

Senior Policy Officer for Academic Affairs

Other members

Oscar Spee

Director of Human resources, Legal and Purchasing

Marie-Louise Lendfers

Senior HR Advisor/HR Coordinator

Immy Willekens

Research Communications Advisor Academic Affairs

