

QANU-Research Review
University for Humanistics

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FOREWORD

This report follows the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP) that was developed by VSNU, KNAW and NWO. The purpose of this report is to present a reliable picture of the research activities submitted for this review and to give feedback on the research management and quality assurance.

The review committee was supported by QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities). QANU aims to ensure compliance with the SEP in all aspects and to produce independent assessment reports with peer review committees of international experts in the academic fields involved.

QANU wishes to thank the chairperson and members of the review committee for their participation in this assessment and for the dedication with which they carried out this task. We also thank the staff of the units under review for their carefully prepared documentation and for their co-operation during the assessment.

Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities

Mr. Chris J. Peels
Director

Dr. Jan G.F. Veldhuis
Chairman of the Board

PREFACE

This report describes the quality assessment of the research of the University of Humanistics. The assessment covers the period 2002-2007 and was conducted according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP).

The quality assessment was carried out by a review committee consisting of one chair and five members with expertise in the relevant disciplines and in the professional field.

As chair of the Committee, I greatly appreciate the commitment, the expertise and the excellent cooperation of my colleagues. The Committee wants to thank all persons involved in the thorough preparation and support of the review.

Prof. F. Mortier
Chairman of the Committee

1. The Review Committee and the Review Procedures

1.1. Scope of the assessment

The Review Committee was asked to perform an assessment of the research programme of the University for Humanistics (UvH). The assessment covers research in the period 2002-2007. Although not a member of the Association of Universities in The Netherlands (VSNU), UvH opted for the application of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2003-2009 for Public Research Organisations (SEP). The Committee's tasks were to assess the quality of the research institute and the research programme on the basis of information provided by the institute and through interviews with the management, research leaders and PhD students, and to advise how this quality might be improved.

1.2. Composition of the Committee

The composition of the Committee was as follows:

- Prof. Freddy Mortier, Ghent University (chairman)
- Prof. Ann Phoenix, University of London
- Prof. Siebren Miedema, VU University, Amsterdam
- Prof. Dian Hosking, University of Utrecht
- Prof. Frans Jacobs, University of Amsterdam
- Hans Scheper, Ministry of Justice

A short curriculum vitae of each of the committee members is included in Appendix A.

Roel Bennink of the QANU Bureau (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities) was appointed secretary to the Committee.

1.3. Independence

All members of the Committee signed a statement of independence to confirm that they would assess the research of UvH in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between committee members and UvH were reported and discussed. The Committee concluded that there were no unacceptable relations or dependencies and that there was no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

1.4. Data provided to the Committee

The Committee received detailed documentation consisting of the following:

- Self-evaluation report of the University for Humanistics, including all the information required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP), with appendices;
- Copies of five key publications.

1.5. Procedures followed by the Committee

The Committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP), including the use of its rating system. The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix B.

UvH has one research programme, and the interviews about it were conducted in two parts: (1) Meanings of Life Department and (2) Humanization Department. The Committee was also asked to give advice about a revision of the PhD course and the establishment of a graduate school.

Prior to the site visit, each department as well as the different aspects of the UvH management were assigned to two members of the Committee, who were asked to formulate a preliminary assessment of the units assigned to them, using the formats laid out in the SEP. During the first meeting the Committee was briefed by QANU about research assessment according to the SEP. The Committee also agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the assessment.

In the first plenary committee meeting the reviewers presented their findings. These were translated into questions to be asked of the representatives of UvH in subsequent meetings. After these meetings the Committee identified any remaining questions and made an initial draft of the main findings. The remaining questions were addressed to the management of the institution on the final day of the visit.

The final assessment is based on the documentation provided by UvH, the key publications and the interviews with management, with the research leaders and with the PhD students. The site visit and interviews took place on December 4 and 5, 2008, at UvH in Utrecht (see the schedule in Appendix C).

As stipulated in the SEP, the Committee met with the Vice-Chancellor of the university (Prof. H. Alma), the research leaders (Prof. P. Derkx, Prof. D. Van Houten, Dr. J. Duyndam, Prof. A. Smaling, Prof. W. Veugelers, Prof. H. Kunneman) and PhD students. An opportunity to talk to the Committee was provided for any member of the institute who wished to be heard by the Committee, but the Committee received no such requests. After the interviews, the Committee discussed the scores and comments.

The draft report was written jointly by the members of the Committee, and finalised through email exchange. No confidential management letter was written. The final version of the report was presented for factual corrections and comments to the management of UvH. The comments were received and reviewed by the Committee. This led to changes in the report on a number of points. The final report was presented to the UvH Board and was printed after its formal acceptance.

2. Review at Institutional level

2.1. Introduction

Since 1989 the University for Humanistics (UvH) has officially been recognised and funded as an ‘appointed university’ by the Dutch government. UvH is an independent academic institution based on a humanist worldview and offers BA and MA programmes in Humanistics (accredited by the Netherlands-Flemish Accreditation Organisation, NVAO). At present, UvH has one research programme, Humanism and Humanity in the 21st Century (2005-2010) which is conducted by two departments (Meanings of Life and Humanization). This programme is a logical successor to the programme Humanism, Meanings of Life, Care and Citizenship (2000-2004).

2.2. Mission Statement

The mission of UvH is knowledge development through high-quality academic education and research, starting from humanist principles and contributing to a humane society in which all people can lead a meaningful existence.

UvH aims to become *the* academic knowledge centre in the Netherlands concerning meanings of life and humanization. The university aims to support developments and practices in society that focus on the advancement of a meaningful existence and of the humanization of organizations and society.

As an academic knowledge centre, UvH engages in the development and integration of knowledge in the areas of *Meanings of Life* and *Humanization of Society*, both separately and in their connection to each other. The former subject refers primarily to the search for existential meaning, characterized by reflexivity and a concern for the quality of one’s existence. The latter refers to the advancement of more humane social relationships and circumstances, often in an institutionalized context (care for the elderly, social work, education, moral and spiritual counselling, organizational and intervention studies).

UvH is closely affiliated with the humanist movement, both in the Netherlands and internationally. It is charged with the professional education of humanist counsellors for the Humanist League (*Humanistisch Verbond*). The university endeavours to contribute to the development of humanism as a worldview. The definition of “humanism” thereby covers all non-dogmatic variants of worldviews, whether they are religious or not.

UvH is more specifically oriented to the development of “Humanistics” as a discipline, i.e. the academic study of people, organizations and societies with respect to meanings of life and humanization. Humanistics develops concepts, theories and methods that help to provide insight into the interaction between the ways in which people give meaning to their lives and the ways in which organizations and their broader societal contexts support or hinder life fulfilment. The broad range of humanistics puts a strong multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary stamp on the concepts, theories and methods of the discipline. An example is the concept of normative professionalization, based on approaches stemming from ethics, psychology, sociology, philosophy of science and organizational theory.

Remarks on the mission statement

The Committee considers the mission of the institute to be clear and valid. The stated aim to become *the* academic knowledge centre in the Netherlands for Humanistics gives the impression that the ambition is on a national level. Since score 5 of the SEP criteria is reserved for work that is at the forefront *internationally* (see appendix B), a *nationally* oriented mission would seem to preclude the attribution of the score “excellent”. However, from interviews with the research leaders it became clear that one of the research aims for the coming years is internationalization of the research, both in publications and in the establishment of extended international network collaboration. The Committee remarks that this ambition is higher than the mission statement proclaims. It therefore recommends bringing the stated aim in accordance with the real ambitions.

The Committee adds that although the fact that UvH takes care of the professional education of humanist counsellors on behalf of the Humanist League is an important factor in deciding which research questions are to be addressed, particularly within the theme of Humanist counselling, the research ambitions of UvH as a whole need not be confined to a national framework. Research may gain greatly from participation in recognized and established disciplines at the international level that fit into or are compatible with the “Humanistics” project of UvH. Furthermore, from the interviews it appeared that more structured international collaborative networks are already in place than those mentioned in the self-evaluation report (i.e. with the universities of Stellenbosch, Bielefeld, Paris-Sud, Leicester).

In the opinion of the Committee, UvH should also make more efforts to get “Humanistics” accepted as a proper discipline outside the confines of UvH, nationally and internationally.

2.3. Leadership, Strategy and Policy

The internal organization of research was first changed in 2003, in the direction of a decentralization of research management. Three departments were formed (Meanings of Life and Worldview, Humanization and Meanings of Life in Organizations, and Citizenship and Education). This structure was further adapted, and in 2005 a dual structure was installed. Two departments were distinguished, Meanings of Life and Humanization, directed by Prof. Peter Derkx and Prof. Douwe van Houten, respectively, the whole coordinated by the Vice-Chancellor, currently Prof. Hans Alma. Each department covers several sub-sections, each responsible for one or more “research programme themes” (see Table 1). The research themes were formulated in line with the fields in which MA students can specialize.

The ultimate responsibility for the strategic leadership and decisions on the research programme lies in the hands of the General Board of the Foundation. Day-to-day running of UvH is the responsibility of the Board of Governors. This includes management of the organization and tactical direction for primary processes (education and research). The Board of Governors is chaired by Prof. Hans Alma, Vice-Chancellor. Members of the Board of Governors are Dr. Caroline Suransky (Director of Education), Prof. Peter Derkx (Head of the Meanings of Life Department) and Prof. Douwe van Houten (Head of the Humanization Department).

Vice-Chancellor Prof. H. Alma			
Meanings of Life Department (Prof. P. Derkx)		Humanization Department (Prof. D. van Houten)	
Section	Research Themes		Section
Humanist Counselling (Dr. T. Jorna)	<i>Theme 1:</i> Humanist Counselling (Dr. T. Jorna)	<i>Theme 4:</i> Moral education and democratic citizenship (Prof. W. Veugelers)	Education (Prof. W. Veugelers)
Worldviews, humanism in particular (Dr. J. Duyndam)	<i>Theme 2:</i> Worldviews, especially humanism (Dr. J. Duyndam)	<i>Theme 5:</i> Humanity, Integrity and Sustainability in Organizations (Prof. H. Kunneman)	Critical Organisations and Intervention Studies (Prof. H. Kunneman)
Philosophy of Science, Methodology and Research (Prof. A. Smaling)	<i>Theme 3:</i> Humanistics as science (Prof. A. Smaling)	<i>Theme 6:</i> Governments, Citizens and the Quality of Social Arrangements (Prof. D. van Houten)	
	<i>Theme 7:</i> Normative Professionalism (Prof. H. Kunneman)		

Table 1: Division of departments and sub-sections and their responsibility for one or more research themes.

The University Council is the representative advisory body that monitors the democratic quality of decision-making processes. It is divided into two councils that usually operate as one united body. The first is the Employees Council, consisting of three members of the academic staff and two members of the non-academic staff. The second council is the Student Council, consisting of five students.

The strategy for the period of the evaluation is described in two plans. The first Strategic Plan covers the period 2001-2004 and stipulates that UvH aims to enhance the internal coherence of its research and strives for national/international academic and societal recognition of its relevance. To achieve these goals, the research programme Humanism, Meanings of Life, Care and Citizenship 2000-2004 was developed. To stimulate international distribution of the results, the Empowering Humanity project was initiated. Members of the academic staff were encouraged to publish for a wider and more international academic audience, and UvH aimed to conduct more practice-oriented research.

From 2008 onwards some of the research in the themes has concentrated on a limited number of nominated projects. These projects are meant to stimulate research across themes and departments and to gain more focus. Two projects have already been approved: "Aging Well: wellbeing, meaning and human dignity in the life courses" and "Citizenship in an Intercultural Society".

Remarks on Leadership, Strategy and Policy

Although the Committee is overall very positive about the management of the research, the following observations and recommendations are applicable.

The self-evaluation report (see table 1) gave the impression that top-down steering of research dominates, which seemed inconsistent with the mission statement reference to "openness" and

“dialogue” and with the creative and entrepreneurial aspects of research activities. In particular, the top-down grouping of the research themes under the departmental headings appeared to be too neat on the one hand, and illogical on the other. From the interviews held during the site visit, the Committee gathered that the categories are more porous than they were portrayed to be. A clear example of this is the fact that the “section” Philosophy of Science, Methodology and Research is grouped under Meanings of Life, but UvH explained that this was simply a practical solution that should not be regarded as a sign that this area was considered to be more closely related to Meanings of Life than to Humanisation. Also, UvH explained that in the actual research practice, meanings of life and humanisation are always related, which means that e.g. the theme Humanist Counselling focuses both on meanings of life *and* on humanisation, even though the theme is situated in the Meanings of Life Department. The research of the staff and their publications often cover more than one theme of the research programme.

All in all, the impression of top-down management was not confirmed in the interviews. The management performs its task through face-to-face, open and collaborative dialogues. The Committee advises reflecting on the leadership/organisational structure of UvH in this light. This would also seem advisable given the institute’s avowed intention to follow an altogether different organizational logic: that of grouping research under the heading of well-defined research projects (as opposed to themes and departments).

The Committee feels that the management of the institute resembles, in practice, rather more a matrix structure and wonders if it might be more helpful to think of it that way. This would mean removing the top-down hierarchy, which is compliant with organizing research in the form of a limited number of projects headed by project leaders. In addition, one research director would be sufficient (rather than two). This way of working would allow the institute to use its limited research resources (in terms of fte’s) more efficiently.

2.4. Resources, Funding Policy and Facilities

The UvH provided an overview of the personnel resources in full-time equivalents (fte; see table 2).

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Tenured staff	5.06	5.98	5.84	6.07	6.56	6.40
Extraordinary professors	0.55	0.51	0.72	0.52	0.69	0.82
Non-tenured staff	1.07	1.05	2.16	2.29	1.77	0.57
PhD students	3.90	2.68	3.78	3.62	3.03	1.70
Total research staff	10.58	10.22	12.5	12.5	12.05	9.49

Table 2: Research staff and fte for research per year

Duties of tenured staff are divided between teaching (55%), research (40%) and administration and management (5%), with exceptions for staff members assigned to specific duties. A PhD student invests 70-80% of his/her time in research. In 2007 not all PhD places were filled. The workload for staff members is fairly high due to the ambitious goals of this small organization.

UvH is primarily funded directly by the government, with 18% of the approximately € 4 million lump sum received spent on research. Research councils (NWO, ZonMW) fund an average of 15% of the research, while only 5% of research is funded by contract research. Changes in direct funding as of 2009 will result in changes to the financial basis. UvH is preparing for

this in the 2008-2011 strategic plan which aims to safeguard a sound financial basis by limiting dependence on government funding.

The library has a collection of books and journals for teaching and research. A strong library collection exists in certain domains, and advice on the development of the collection is received from staff members. Plans exist to integrate the library with the Utrecht University library (UBU), starting with a trial in 2008 and possible outsourcing as of 2009. Access to digital journals and databases of the UBU is already available through UBU. The Practical Humanistics Database (DPH) contains bibliographic descriptions pertaining to the realm of Practical Humanistics.

The Humanistics University Press (HUP) aims to publish books and anthologies generated from the university research programme and is involved in soliciting publications from research groups and supporting cooperative projects.

In 2009 UvH will move from two different locations to one site in the centre of Utrecht. This will improve not only the facilities (e.g. library and ICT), but also collaboration. Personnel performance review consists of an annual discussion of the research plans of individual staff members during individual interviews.

Remarks on Resources, Funding Policy and Facilities

The Committee holds that the management of UvH is well aware of impending changes in funding policies and “market” circumstances, and is effectively anticipating them in ways that are generally adequately in control of the research processes and structures. The management has reacted appropriately to former evaluation results, making for satisfactory Plan – Do – Check – Act cycles. That an effective quality control is in place is evidenced by:

- the internal organization of research
- performance review mechanisms
- definition of productivity standards (see heading Academic Reputation)
- definition of strategic goals

Regarding the facilities, the Committee has learned from the interviews with the PhD students that they were not well-informed about the standard electronic methodological tools for data analysis, whether qualitative or quantitative, that are at their disposal. UvH does provide access to such tools, e.g. Atlas.ti, and the PhD students who started more recently do use such tools. The Committee advises investigating why not all PhD students seemed to know about these tools. If necessary, UvH could consider making agreements with another university (e.g. Utrecht University) to ensure that the UvH students have access to the tools that they need. This should be done in conjunction with the new professor of methodology in order to ensure the best possible teaching-research synergy and to obtain the possibility of training in the computing resources.

2.5. Academic Reputation

UvH occupies a special position in the academic landscape, being a small university based on a humanist worldview. The self-evaluation report states that UvH is successful in the publication of books by respected publishers and articles in high-status journals. The funding of three research projects by the Netherlands Organization for Academic Research (NWO) also indicates a national academic reputation. Academic recognition is furthermore indicated by requests from academic advisory committees to contribute to studies and reports. The participation and accom-

modation of UvH in KWALON (interuniversity platform for qualitative research in the Netherlands) shows that UvH plays a central role in qualitative research at a national level.

UvH employs clear guidelines for rating outputs in the form of dissertations and publications, expressed in “article equivalents” which treat academic, professional and popular publications as equivalent, and premised on expectations of a ratio of two academic publications to one professional or popular publication. The university has established minimum output norms for each of these categories of publication measured over a three-year period (on the basis of 0.4 fte research time). The system that applied for 2001-2007 was revised and refined in June 2008. Results are shown in table 3.

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Average
Academic standards							
Standard: 2 points/0.4 fte	52.9	51.1	62.5	62.5	60.25	47.45	56.12
Realized	69	58	74	104	76	72	75.5
Professional and popular							
Standard: 1 points/0.4 fte	26.45	25.55	31.25	31.25	30.125	23.725	28.06
Realized	41	38	53	39	41	46	43.00

Table 3: Aggregated results of the institute

Remarks on Academic Reputation

UvH employs clear guidelines for rating outputs in the form of dissertations and publications, expressed in “article equivalents”. In the category of academic publications, more points are awarded to refereed than to non-refereed publications. The university has established minimum output norms for each of these categories of publication measured over a three-year period (on the basis of 0.4 fte research time). On the basis of the productivity standards it has devised, the academics at UvH have exceeded the set standards.

The Committee considers it good practice to distinguish types of publication (academic, professional, popular) and to have weighted output norms for different categories. It is important to consider that internationally recognised indices of esteem focus on impact assessments of journals, citation counts and reviews of publications, especially peer-reviewed (i.e. refereed) academic publications. From that point of view an important aspect is that the list of journals for publications (appendix A of the self-evaluation report) was benchmarked by reference to the classification of the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH), in order to differentiate the quality of the journal publications.

2.6. Societal Relevance

The objective of the research programme is to create more possibilities for a meaningful existence in a humane society, making it relevant for both academic theoretical production and society. Societal relevance is reflected in:

- meaningful connections with other cultural, religious and social groups that can participate in research
- cooperation with humanist organizations, such as the Humanist League, Humanitas, Hivos, HVO and others, which inspires these organizations
- active participation of many researchers at UvH in public debate through giving lectures, participation in symposia and presence in the media

- contributions to professional practices, both on a theoretical level and in practical ways to improve these practices
- research activities directly related to policy-making, e.g. by informing policy-makers on important developments in society and in theoretical understandings
- several externally financed projects that aim to develop instruments to aid counselling practice, rather than academic articles.

2.7. Balance of Strengths and Weaknesses

UvH did not provide the Committee with a written SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, but provided one during the course of the meetings with the staff. It runs as follows:

Strengths: Six strengths were identified: (1) UvH has highly motivated personnel. (2) It achieves high output standards with few resources. (3) The reorganization of the institute into two departments, five years ago, has worked well. (4 & 5) UvH achieves cohesiveness across diverse activities and worldviews in two particular respects: the successful combination of academic and professional work and the linking of “Humanistics” with non-dogmatic approaches in religious as well as non-religious worldviews. (6) Multi-disciplinarity is seen both as a strength (because of the diversity and breadth of understanding it brings) and as a weakness (in that it is more difficult to publish multi-disciplinary than mono-disciplinary work).

Weaknesses: (1) The small scale of the institute. (2) The interdisciplinarity of humanistic studies and its relative lack of specialisation make it difficult to publish in first-rate international journals.

Opportunities: Five opportunities were identified: (1) The establishment of a new PhD school in response to a change in the funding mechanism of the university. (2) Close links with professional teaching institutions outside UvH offers opportunities for the development of innovative academic approaches. (3) Attracting external project funding. (4) The appointment of a new full professor to the existing chair Methodology and Philosophy of Science, which will strengthen the teaching and employment of both qualitative and quantitative methods. (5) For at least one senior professor (Prof. Kunneman) UvH is in a position to consider applying for an ERC Advanced Grant in 2009.

Threats: The major threat identified relates to the size of the institution and the implications of this for future development. Its small scale makes UvH vulnerable to changes in funding mechanisms and climate, to the effects of personnel changes (which have considerable impact on overall research policies), and generally to the lack of organizational advantages that large-scale institutions accrue as a result of their size. The small scale also forces the institution to spend considerable human resources on the implementation of new regulations.

Remarks on Strengths and Weaknesses

The Committee agrees with the SWOT analysis presented by the management. In addition, it suggests that:

- The high quality of the combination of professional approaches and academic research is evidenced by the PhD research that was presented by and discussed with some doctoral students (both research assistants and “external” PhD students)

- The plans for a PhD school are rightly expected to diminish the threats to funding. More international collaboration networks may help the university to obtain large external project grants, bringing in considerable financial assets (e.g. from EU funding).

The Committee supports the desire of the university for some form of membership of the VSNU (possibly associate membership for UvH together with the Protestantse Theologische Universiteit and the Theologische Universiteit Apeldoorn).

3. Assessment of the Research Programme

3.1. Short description

The UvH has one research programme, but in the period under review the research programme Humanism, Meanings of Life, Care and Citizenship (2000-2004) was succeeded by the programme Humanism and Humanity in the 21st Century (2005-2010). There is considerable continuity between the two programmes. For evaluation purposes the Committee made no distinction between the two when judging retrospectively. Prospectively, the point of reference is the current programme.

The programme focuses on the basic concepts of Humanistics (in two departments: Meanings of Life and Humanization) and their mutual relationship. Research is oriented with regard to current individual, societal and political questions and aims to further enhance interdisciplinarity. Five objectives for this programme have been formulated:

- to clarify and refine the principles of Meanings of Life and Humanization,
- to provide a scientific basis for the humanist ideals of self-actualization, educational opportunity, solidarity and justice,
- to clarify how these ideals can be put into practice,
- to reflect upon and develop humanism as a worldview,
- to advance the development of Humanistics as a science.

To achieve these objectives, each department covers several sub-sections and is responsible for one or more research themes. The research themes were formulated in line with the fields in which MA students can specialize. From 2008 onwards part of the research in the themes has concentrated on a limited number of nominated projects. These projects are meant to stimulate research across the themes and departments as well as to develop teaching-research synergy and capitalise upon the scarce human resources. Two projects have already been approved, “Aging Well: wellbeing, meaning and human dignity in the life course” and “Citizenship in an Intercultural Society”.

3.2. Scores

The Committee assessed the programme as follows:

	Quality	Productivity	Relevance	Viability
Humanism and Humanity in the 21 st Century (2005-2011)	Good to Very good (3/4)	Very good (4)	Excellent (5)	Very good (4)

An explanation of the scores is given in the following sections.

3.3. Quality

The Committee is generally positive about UvH’s leadership, strategy and policy, but advises reconsideration of the overall organization of research. Furthermore, from interviews with staff and PhD students, the Committee deduced that more care should be taken to ensure maximum communication and participation with respect to plans for the Graduate School.

About 18% of the lump sum the UvH receives from government funding is spent on research. This figure more or less corresponds to the international norm of 20% of research invest-

ment for public expenditure in higher education. Most (94%) of the total spent on research is invested in personnel costs, leaving 6% for other research costs. Nevertheless, the university does not have problems in financing its current research.

The UvH has at its disposal a very good and well motivated research and management staff, which has been adequately selected and trained for achieving UvH's aims in relation to academic research in general and academic (or academically grounded) research into professionalization. The personnel resources for research at UvH are rather limited and were actually temporarily declining (an average of 11.30 fte over the six-year period under review compared with 9.49 fte in 2007). The institute copes well with this limited personnel base by clustering different types of activities (research, teaching, etc.) in different periods of the year, adapting time schedules to personal wishes, providing sabbatical leave, funding participation in conferences, etc. Efficiency is also raised by the combination of teaching and research (both in progress and completed) in the BA and MA programmes by, for example, building teaching around publications in preparation. Moreover, the management is aware that more time should be made available for research purposes. Research time has been reduced in the immediate past due to a more thorough Bologna reconstruction of the teaching programmes than in other Dutch universities. This immediate threat to research time should now be reduced.

The Committee regrets, however, that no clear picture of the allocation of fte to themes and projects emerged in the course of the visit. It also remains unclear how different money streams are reflected in personnel allocation. The figures in the appendices of the self-evaluation report, for example, combine first, second and third money stream sources. This lack of clarity in the allocation of personnel to themes and projects and in the funding sources for personnel makes it difficult to judge the efficacy of staff allotment to themes and/or projects in relation to output. For future evaluations, the Committee recommends clarification of the distributions and distinguishing the sources of finance for research time.

The Committee also considers that the few resources available for the funding of research costs (apart from personnel costs) are probably only sufficient to finance desk research. This probably accounts for the fact that Philosophy alone, as one type of desk research, amounted to between 46.9% (programme 2000-04) and 35.2% (programme 2005-08) of the total publication output.

Although the staff is generally very good, the output lists show an uneven contribution to the overall results by a limited number of staff members, even correcting for differences in research time. The threat to the institute of depending too much on a few staff members should be more clearly recognized.

The Committee is positive about the plans to outsource the institute's library to the University of Utrecht. The costs for building and maintaining an extended digital library are probably beyond the reach of UvH. The management has thus anticipated well the impending changes in ICT necessary to the adequate support of research.

The university manages successfully to attract small national research grants. It has also succeeded in getting funding for two large NWO-funded projects. The Committee recommends redirecting (some of) the time invested in obtaining small grants toward attracting larger funds. It believes that the academic relevance of UvH's research and the calibre of its staff are such that larger grants can be obtained. In addition, many of the senior staff of UvH have

extensive international links that could be developed into networks of international collaboration networks to produce the critical mass needed for obtaining EU funding.

In terms of the scores on the SEP scheme, the Committee had some difficulty in attributing a score to quality. The work of the institute is at the forefront nationally for some research themes, but less nationally competitive for others. The institute itself is a national leader in its domain, but cannot yet be considered an international player. Therefore, the Committee decided, as far as overall quality is concerned, to allocate the score of 3/4 (Good to Very good).

This score has to be qualified to be well understood. The Committee believes that the institute underestimates its international potential and advises it to valorise its strengths on international academic markets. Many academics internationally know and value the work of UvH and are pleased to come to the institute and to collaborate with UvH academics. Despite this, the institute is not yet a sufficiently international player when research collaborations are taken into account. More structured collaboration networks are needed. UvH is already an international player, if not leader, as far as publications are concerned. Yet these publications do not get the attention they deserve, and their impact could be greater. The recommendation of this Committee to try to publish in higher status, peer-reviewed journals is thus important if this score is to be improved in the future. The Committee further observes a difference with respect to international orientation between the Meanings of Life and Humanization Departments, with the latter being more clearly on its way to international playership/leadership.

3.4. Productivity

It has already been pointed out that it is difficult to judge the effects of the allocation of personnel to particular research themes and/or projects. However, the Committee recognizes that UvH produces a tremendous output for an organization with so few resources. The number of professional publications amounts to 1/3 of the total output. This high proportion is in line with UvH's mission and is judged positively by the Committee. The number of total scientific publications is also considerable, representing about 3/5 of the total output. However, only one-third of them are published in refereed journals (not all of which are international). The Committee suggests that it would be acceptable for the institute's global output to be reduced in order for a constant output in internationally refereed journals to be realized.

The Committee remarks that the high productivity is inflated by the listing of many ultra-short publications of one or two pages. It recommends that the research director should check the conformity of these publications with quality standards before they are added to the list.

While the number of completed PhD theses has increased, the rate and numbers are low. Low output in this respect was identified by the previous review committee as a point requiring attention. The institute thus needs sustained effort to further increase its PhD output.

3.5. Relevance

The ideas and approaches of the UvH are original and innovative. Most of the key publications identified in the self-evaluation report convinced the members of the Committee (particularly those who are fluent in Dutch) of the academic and societal relevance of the studies undertaken at the institute. The publications live up to UvH's ambition to found the discipline of "Humanistics". The societal relevance of the research at UvH is excellent: staff members and their work are visibly, and to considerable effect, present in the professional and public worlds.

Because of the high international potential of the work at UvH, i.e. because the institute has an international “selling proposition”, the Committee gave a score of 5 for “relevance”.

The Committee advises the importance of further disciplinary diversification in relation to types of publications, to diminish the proportion of philosophical, desk-based work (as is happening in the current programme) and to increase the proportion of empirical research. It believes this to be necessary, taking into account the institute’s commitment to interdisciplinarity and to possibilities for international funding of empirical research.

3.6. Viability

The Committee expresses its belief in the continuing viability of research at UvH. The prospects are good. The age pyramid of the institute, however, shows that just over half of the staff members are aged between 56 and 65 years. The management is aware of the impending problems this could cause and is developing plans to deal with this. However, the disproportionate contribution of some members at the top of the age pyramid to the research activities adds to this potential problem. A careful recruitment strategy is needed for this reason and to realize the interdisciplinary and empirical aspirations of UvH. The recent appointment of a new professor in methodology is an important step in this direction.

4. The Graduate School

4.1. Short description

At present, full-time funded PhD students employed by UvH receive the majority of their training in research schools outside UvH. Plans exist to develop an UvH graduate school to provide more structured training and coaching (see information below). Approximately 50% of the PhD students who are not employed by UvH (external doctoral students) get their coaching and training within the Meaning in Organization PhD Programme (DBA). This programme aims to encourage professionals to return to the academic world to write a dissertation. It focuses on organizational change, social theory and qualitative research methodology. Various training modules of varying lengths are incorporated in the programme.

Plans exist to start a graduate school in 2010 for PhD students, whether or not they are employed by UvH. The goals of the graduate school are:

- improvement of training and coaching of all PhD students
- achievement of a higher percentage of completed doctorates
- increases in the number of dissertations
- consolidation and strengthening of UvH's financial position
- facilitation of the employment of PhD students in appropriate occupations.

Part of the programme is planned to be compulsory, with training modules that cover research methodology and philosophy of science. Additionally, specialized modules on specific research topics are compulsory for PhD students who work in particular fields or subjects. Proposed changes in comparison with the present Meanings in Organization programme include the teaching of broader research perspectives and of both qualitative and quantitative methods in different theoretical orientations. The Graduate School will be embedded in the overall organization, and input in the programme will be provided by all full professors/associate professors.

4.2. Advice on the plans for a graduate school

In the self-evaluation report UvH explicitly asked the Committee to give advice on two questions related to the plan to develop an UvH graduate school:

- 1) How does the Committee evaluate the plans for the development of a graduate school that trains several PhD students and that is broader in its methodological approach than the current PhD programme "Meaning in Organization"?
- 2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current PhD programme "Meaning in Organization" that should be preserved or improved upon in the development of a graduate school?

In answer to question 1): For the PhD students employed by UvH this might already constitute a real improvement, from an organizational point of view. At the moment there is no active organizational partnership of UvH in one of the Dutch research schools. In the meeting with current and former PhD students, the Committee learned that as a result in most cases they themselves need to find more specialized courses (outside UvH) that fit their research topic.

Bringing these students together with others in an UvH graduate school while at the same time broadening the spectrum of qualitative and quantitative methods and techniques to which they are exposed and drawing more on the methodological expertise in UvH (further

strengthened by the appointment of a new professor to the Methodology and Philosophy of Science chair) will create a fruitful research niche for these PhD students. Visiting professors from abroad might also contribute to this broadened methodological perspective.

The development of an UvH graduate school could also be a way of complementing the research policy, implemented in 2008, to strongly embed new PhD students in the new research projects.

In answer to question 2): The positioning of the PhD students in the current PhD programme “Meaning in Organization” in an UvH graduate school is unclear at present. This has more to do with the theoretical/philosophical and methodological paradigm that presently defines this programme, which is heavily influenced by the present director. It seemed to the Committee that this is oriented towards a particular form of qualitative research, and strongly reflects particular post-modern philosophies. In the meeting with past and present PhD students, the Committee learned that, in terms of content or orientation, there are mixed thoughts and feelings. For some students it was precisely this particular profile that led them to choose UvH. Others, however, were happy to have a broader range of social science perspectives and would have liked more opportunities to profit from the full range of qualitative and quantitative expertise present in UvH. They felt that this would be perfectly possible in any future revision of the programme.

In conclusion: The Netherlands is moving away from research schools and towards local graduate schools, and UvH research assistants have not participated in a research school up until now. Given this, the possibility to provide PhD students employed by UvH with specialized courses, adequate to their needs and reflecting a broadly based philosophical/theoretical and methodological orientation, along with the policy of strongly embedding new PhD students in the new research projects, leads the Committee to a very positive view of the proposed graduate school. However, there is the danger that potential PhD students (especially of the sort currently in the DBA programme) will no longer choose UvH precisely because of this broader profile (indeed some expressed the view that “UvH will become a university like a dozen others”). This said, it may also attract other students. It might be important for UvH to reflect on the impact of the broader profile on its mission statement and how this is put into practice.

As discussed above, the profile of the PhD programme “Meaning in Organization” can of course be evaluated as its strength and, at the same time, as its weakness. On the basis of the meetings with the students, we can identify some aspects of the current programme that might be preserved within the format of the new graduate school. The cohesion between the students of a cohort, especially in the first year, is experienced as very strong, very supportive, and very important in later years when they work more by themselves on their dissertation. Having a cohort comprising only older and professionally experienced participants who are doing a reflective practitioner-type PhD is also seen as important (i.e. not mixed in with newly graduated students with little organisational experience). The intensive workshops in a relatively small group in the first year is personally and academically perceived as a great gift. The strong theory-practice relationship is valued as a great strength in relation to a humanist ethic and the PhD student’s professional experience and/or jobs.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Curriculum vitae of the Committee members

Prof. Freddy Mortier (chairman) is Professor of Ethics at Ghent University, Belgium. He studied at Ghent University and at the University of Paris I (Sorbonne) and got his PhD in philosophy at Ghent University with a dissertation on views of the human body in 18th-century French paediatrics and obstetrics. He has been dean of the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy since 2004 and was head of the Department of Philosophy and Ethics from 2002 to 2006. He teaches general philosophy and bioethics at the faculties of Psychology and Educational Studies, of Medicine and Health Sciences, and at his own faculty. He is a member of the Belgian National Advisory Committee for Bioethics and was chairman and/or secretary of several ad hoc working parties in that committee. He is also a member of the Ethics Committee of Ghent University Hospital and of the directing board of viWTA (now called Instituut Samenleving & Technologie), the Flemish Parliamentary Institute for Technology Assessment. He was, in 2005 and 2006, the Flemish co-chairman of the national Commission of the Wise charged with writing recommendations for a revision of the federal system for the financing of the ministers of religions and the representatives of humanist associations. His research interests are in bioethics, mainly in the area of end-of-life research, including the ethics of euthanasia and other end-of-life decisions. Other fields of special interest are the rights of minors in health care and the relation between religion and health care. He has also published on the didactics of philosophy and on moral education.

Prof. Ann Phoenix is Co-Director of the Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London. Her research interests include: motherhood; social identities; racialisation; ethnicisation, gender (masculinities and femininities); intersectionality; young people; consumption; memory; narrative analysis, adult reconstructions of childhood experiences; serial migration; ethnically mixed households and language brokers. Her teaching skills lie in the field of qualitative methodologies including social and developmental psychology, narrative analysis, intersectionality and feminism. Her current research project is “Transforming experiences: Re-conceptualising identities and ‘non-normative’ childhoods”. This ESRC Professorial Fellowship research programme addresses how adults from different family backgrounds negotiate their identities as they re-evaluate their earlier experiences. Together with Wendy Hollway and Heather Elliott (from the Open University), she is in the process of completing an ESRC-funded research project called “Identities in process: Becoming mothers in Tower Hamlets”. This study is designed to gain insight into how cultural differences work in the forging of women’s identities as mothers, using a design enabling differences and similarities to be explored among women from different ethnic, class and cultural groups.

Prof. Siebren Miedema is Professor in Educational Foundations, including the Philosophy of Religious Education at the Faculty of Psychology and Education, Department of Theory and Research in Education, VU University, Amsterdam. He is Head of the Department of Theory and Research in Education. At the moment his main research topic in religious education is religious identity formation of young children and youngsters, combined with the topic of the identity of (denominational) schools. He is also Full Professor of Religious Education in the Faculty of Theology, Department of Praxis, VU University, Amsterdam. Since February 2007 he has been appointed as Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Sociology at the St. Petersburg State University, St. Petersburg, Russia, for 5 years and is participating in the 2-year international MA program “Global Sociology: Comparative Perspectives”. He is co-editor of *Panorama*, Intercultural Journal of Interdisciplinary Ethical and Religious Studies for Responsible Research (ARPM, Wolfenbüttel), and member of the editorial boards of *Religieus Pluralisme*

en Multiculturaliteit (Meinema, Zoetermeer), *Religious Education* (Taylor & Francis, Philadelphia), *Journal of Empirical Theology* (Brill, Leiden), *Research in Contemporary Religion* (Francke Verlag, Tübingen), *Studies in Philosophy and Education* (Kluwer, Dordrecht), *Pedagogiek* (Van Gorcum, Assen) and *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability* (Daugavpils University, Latvia). He is a staff member of ISED: the Institute for Studies in Education and Development, and of NOSTER: The Netherlands School for Advanced Studies in Theology and Religious Studies. He was Dean of the Faculty of Psychology and Education at VU University, Amsterdam, from September 2003 till September 2006. From September 1993 till September 2006 he held the endowed Hendrik Pierson Chair for Christian Education in the Faculty of Psychology and Education.

Prof. Dian Marie Hosking studied sociology, psychology and law at Sheffield University (UK) before taking single honours in Psychology. After various research and training contracts she won a scholarship to study for an MSc in Social and Industrial Psychology at Hull University. Her PhD (Warwick) combined psychological literatures, the sociology of organisations, political science and interactionist traditions from many fields in a study of leadership. Early employment experiences included contract research, management training and organisational development work – particularly for the engineering industry. Later employment included full and part-time consultancy work and teaching and research in both psychology departments (e.g. St Gallen) and business schools (e.g. Aston University). She has lived and worked in Australia (as Visiting Fellow in the Social Sciences, Flinders University), California (Visiting Fellow, USC), and Switzerland, where she was guest professor at the University of St Gallen. She takes a critical, social psychological, interactionist approach to social processes, organisation, and change. In 2001, she was appointed full professor at Tilburg University; in 2004 she moved to the Utrecht School of Governance (USG/USBO) as Professor in Relational Processes.

Prof. Frans Jacobs is Professor of Ethics, Department of Philosophy, University of Amsterdam. He studied Philosophy at the Catholic University Leuven. He received his PhD in 1985 on his thesis *Ten overstaan van allen* at the University of Amsterdam. On 1 April 1995 he became Professor of Ethics and is now head of the Department of Philosophy. From September 2004 he was chair of the section Art History of the UvA. He was associate professor at the Philosophy of Law Department of the Faculty of Law. He has held a professorship funded by the Socrates Foundation at the University of Leiden. He is a member of the Scientific Committee of the *Fonds Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek* in Flanders, of the Humanities Committee of KNAW, chair of the Board of the International School for Philosophy in Leusden and chair of the editors of the *Algemeen Nederlands Tijdschrift voor Wijsbegeerte*.

Hans Scheper has been head of the Department of Humanistic Counselling at the Ministry of Justice since May 2005. He studied psychology at the University of Groningen. Between 1989 and 2005 he held several management positions in private enterprise. His last employer was Tempo-Team, a subsidiary of Randstad Holding.

Appendix B: Explanation of the SEP scores

<i>Excellent (5)</i>	Work is at the forefront internationally and will most likely have an important and substantial impact in the field. Group is considered an international leader.
<i>Very Good (4)</i>	Work is internationally competitive and is expected to make a significant contribution; nationally speaking at the forefront in the field. Group is considered international player, national leader.
<i>Good (3)</i>	Work is competitive at the national level and will probably make a valuable contribution in the international field. Group is considered internationally visible and a national player.
<i>Satisfactory (2)</i>	Work that is solid but not exciting, will add to our understanding and is in principle worthy of support. It is considered of less priority than work in the above categories. Group is nationally visible.
<i>Unsatisfactory (1)</i>	Work that is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc. Work not worthy of pursuing.

Quality is to be seen as a measure of excellence and excitement. It refers to the eminence of a group's research activities, its abilities to perform at the highest level and its achievements in the international scientific community. It rests on the proficiency and rigour of research concepts and conduct; it shows in the success of the group at the forefront of scientific development.

Productivity refers to the total output of the group; that is, the variegated ways in which results of research and knowledge development are publicised. The output needs to be reviewed in relation to the input in terms of human resources.

Relevance is a criterion that covers both the scientific and the technical and socio-economic impact of the work. Here in particular research choices are assessed in relation to developments in the international scientific community or, in the case of technical and socio-economic impact, in relation to important developments or questions in society at large.

Vitality and feasibility. This dual criterion refers to the internal and external dynamics of the group in relation to the choices made and the success rate of projects. On the one hand, this criterion measures the flexibility of a group, which appears in its ability to terminate research lines that have no future and to initiate new venture projects. On the other hand, it measures the capacity of the management to run projects in a professional way. Assessment of policy decisions is at stake, as well as assessment of project management, including cost-benefit analysis.

Appendix C: Schedule of site visit

Site visit for the research evaluation of the University of Humanistics

Wednesday December 3, 2008

18:00	Hotel NH Centre Utrecht, Janskerkhof 10	Arrival committee members, drinks
19:00	Dinner for Committee	

Thursday, December 4, 2008

09:00-11:00	Committee meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - introduction to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP); - discussion of preliminary assessments; - preparing questions for the interviews
11:00-12:00	Meeting with the management : organisational setting, research management (short presentation followed by interview)	Topics to be evaluated: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Leadership 2. Mission and goals 3. Strategy and policy 4. Adequacy of the resources 5. Funding policies 6. Academic reputation of the institute 7. Societal relevance of the institute 8. Balance of the strengths and weaknesses of the institute
12:00-13:00	Theme leaders Meanings of Life Department (short presentation followed by interview)	In line with SEP, the general topics are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. what is the aim of the research? 2. what are the characteristics of the research process? 3. what are the most prominent results? 4. what quality indicators are used, to what extent do these indicate that the targets are being realised, what are areas for improvement?
13:00-14:00	Lunch	
14:00-15:00	Theme leaders Humanization Department (short presentation followed by interview)	
15:00-16:00	Consulting hour (by private appointment) and tour of facilities	
16:00- 17:00	PhD students (group interview)	central topics: their research projects, their supervision
19:00	Dinner for Committee	

Friday, December 5, 2008

09:00-10:00	Organisation of the PhD training “Meaning in organisation”	Topics: objectives, components, supervision, selection & monitoring, quality assurance, organisational setting
10:00-11:00	PhD students about the PhD training “Meaning in Organisation”	
11:00-12:00	Meeting with management	Questions of the Committee that have arisen during the visit
12:00-14:00	Committee meeting and lunch	Settling scores; drawing conclusions; task division towards report
14:00-14:30	Final session with the rector	