



SEP Evaluation  
Faculty of Religion and Theology  
2018-2023

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

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## 1. Foreword by the committee chair

This report contains the research evaluation of the Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT) of the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. The evaluation took place in November 2024 and included a two days' site visit. The review committee would like to thank the organizers at the FRT for their effective way of supporting us. We also noticed and appreciated the enthusiasm and professionalism of the staff and PhD students of FRT. We would like to thank all people involved in the evaluation for their support and open discussions, which reflect – in our view – the open and constructive environment at FRT.

The committee had access to all relevant documents, and during the site visit its members discussed a variety of subjects openly in a pleasant atmosphere. On behalf of the committee members, I would also like to thank the staff of Academion for their indispensable and effective support.

The FRT has been and still is involved in a complicated process of change and we realize that this process creates uncertainties among staff members. The change from Faculty to School can, according to the committee members, be beneficial as well. It also creates new opportunities for the future. These opportunities can not only positively affect the quality of the research, but also the societal impact of the FRT/SRT.

The balance between research quality and societal relevance will be crucial for the development of interdisciplinary work in the future. FRT is well on their way to promoting interdisciplinary research and already has considerable societal relevance. FRT still has steps to set in this process but has already created a solid basis for this present and future challenge.

It is our sincere hope that FRT/SRT will profit from our recommendations and that it will continue to grow and flourish.

Prof. dr. Pieter ter Keurs  
Chair

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1 Scope of the review

The Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) asked a review committee of external peers to perform a review of the research conducted at the Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT) over the period 2018-2023.

In accordance with the Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027 (SEP) for research reviews in the Netherlands, the committee was requested to carry out the assessment according to a number of guidelines. The assessment was to include a backward-looking and a forward-looking component. The committee was asked to judge the performance of the unit on the main assessment criteria specified in the SEP and to offer its written conclusions as well as recommendations based on considerations and arguments. The main assessment criteria are:

- Research Quality;
- Societal Relevance;
- Viability of the Unit.

During the evaluation of these criteria, the committee was asked to incorporate four specific aspects relating to how the unit organises and actually performs its research, its composition in terms of leadership and personnel, and how the unit is run on a daily basis. These aspects are:

- Open Science;
- PhD Policy and Training;
- Academic Culture;
- Human Resources Policy.

For more information on the criteria and categories of the Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027, see Appendix 1.

In addition, the VU and the FRT requested the following in its Terms of Reference:

To assess FRT in light of its strategic development during 2018–2023, focusing on whether it is on the right path given the profound challenges facing higher education in the Netherlands, especially for smaller, at-risk disciplines like theology and religious studies. Considering the recent Faculty's history of reorganization, the COVID–19 pandemic, and the current move towards a new organization, the Committee is requested to provide critical insights into the Faculty's resilience and strategic direction.

#### 1. Strategic Development and Institutional Coherence

Given the vulnerable state of university education, particularly for theology, we ask the Committee to evaluate how effectively the Faculty has navigated its strategic goals in this challenging environment.

- Alignment of institutional objectives: Has the Faculty succeeded in maintaining a clear, unified mission across research, education, and societal engagement? Despite the sector's challenges, has the Faculty been able to strengthen its academic and societal standing?
- Adaptation to crises: To what extent has the Faculty adapted to major disruptions, such as the COVID–19 pandemic, ongoing budget cuts, and the aftermath of the 2019 reorganization? Are we

positioning ourselves well for the upcoming transition into the School of Religion and Theology? Given the threats to theology as a discipline, are we doing enough to ensure long-term strategic resilience?

2. Research Quality and Innovation

Assess the Faculty's progress in maintaining and enhancing research quality, with a focus on:

- Quality and impact of research output: How does the Faculty's research compare to national and international benchmarks? Are there sufficient high-quality publications, and how can the visibility of research in top-tier journals be further improved, considering our culture of publishing in non-peer-reviewed volumes?
- Innovative approaches: To what extent has the Faculty incorporated cutting-edge methodologies, such as digital humanities, and pursued interdisciplinary research? What are the key areas for innovation of Theology and religious studies and potential growth?
- What are your recommendations for ensuring that all key academic areas—both traditional and emerging—are equally supported and advanced within the Faculty's strategy?
- How well has the Faculty managed to balance its focus on different disciplines, including empirical approaches and classical theological studies? Does the internal structure from 2025 allow for sufficient representation and development across all areas?

3. PhD Programme and Graduate School

Evaluate the current state and quality of the PhD programme with specific attention to:

- Supervision and output: Have the measures implemented during the review period sufficiently improved the quality of PhD education, including cohort formation, admission, and supervision structures?

4. Societal Engagement and Valorisation

Provide an evaluation of the Faculty's societal engagement and impact:

- Valorisation activities: How successful has the Faculty been in translating academic research into societal impact? What specific contributions has the Faculty made to public policy, community engagement, and collaboration with non-academic partners?
- Visibility and public outreach: Are the Faculty's public engagement activities—such as media appearances, public lectures, and partnerships with external organizations—effective? How could these initiatives be improved to increase the Faculty's societal footprint?
- Do you see any risks that the push for valorization and societal relevance might dilute the Faculty's commitment to traditional academic excellence, particularly in terms of research output and quality? How can we strike the right balance?

5. Future Strategy and Organizational Structure

Offer recommendations regarding the Faculty's future strategy and organizational structure, particularly in light of the upcoming transition to the School of Religion and Theology (SRT):

- Future research priorities: What are the most promising areas for future research, considering emerging academic trends and societal challenges, and how can SRT leverage its unique expertise and ongoing research to address these issues effectively? What are your recommendations for ensuring that all key academic areas—both traditional and emerging—are equally supported and advanced within the Faculty's strategy? How can the Faculty strengthen its international standing and interdisciplinary collaborations?
- Transition to SRT: What organizational changes (other than mentioned) should be implemented to ensure the smooth transition to the new School of Religion and Theology in January 2025? How can

the Faculty maintain its distinct identity and academic coherence within the broader Faculty of Social and Humanities Sciences?

6. Recognition & Reward:

- in line with SEP (p.10 about Talent Management) and the national Recognition and Rewards program (R&R) the board requests the committee to pay attention to and offer its assessment and recommendations on the research unit's policies on talent management.

## 2.2 Composition of the committee

The composition of the committee was as follows:

- Prof. dr. em. Pieter ter Keurs, professor emeritus of Museums, Collections and Society, Leiden University (chair);
- Prof. dr. Martin van Gelderen, professor for European Intellectual History, University of Göttingen;
- Prof. dr. Dorothea Erbele Kuster, associate professor of Hebrew Bible at the Protestant Faculty of the Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz;
- Prof. dr. Peter Ward, professor of Practical Theology, Durham University;
- Prof. dr. em. Marcel Poorthuis, professor emeritus of Interreligious Dialogue, Tilburg University;
- Dr. Veronica Cibotaru, postdoctoral research fellow, University of Tübingen;
- Kirsten Smeets, PhD candidate, Radboud University.

The committee was supported by dr. Fiona Schouten, who acted as project manager, and Liza Kozłowska MA, who acted as secretary on behalf of Academion.

## 2.3 Independence

All members of the committee signed a statement of independence to guarantee an unbiased and independent assessment of the quality of the research performed at VU University. Personal or professional relationships between committee members and the research unit under review were reported and discussed at the start of the site visit amongst the committee members. The committee concluded that no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence existed and that all members were sufficiently independent.

## 2.4 Data provided to the committee

The committee received the self-evaluation report from the FRT, including all the information required by the SEP.

The committee also received the following documents:

- The Terms of Reference;
- The SEP 2021-2027.

## 2.5 Procedures followed by the committee

The committee proceeded according to the SEP 2021-2027. In its first online meeting, on 14 October 2024, the committee was briefed by Academion about research reviews according to the SEP 2021-2027. The committee agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the review. Before the site visit, upon receiving the documentation from FRT, all committee members independently formulated a preliminary evaluation based on the written information that was provided. At the start of the site visit, the committee discussed these preliminary evaluations and identified questions to be raised during the site visit. For personal reasons, Prof. dr. Martin van Gelderen was unable to participate in the site visit; he provided the committee with his findings prior to the visit.

The site visit took place on 18-19 November 2024 (see the schedule in Appendix 2). After the interviews, the committee discussed its findings and comments in order to allow the chair to present the preliminary findings and to provide the secretary with argumentation to draft a first version of the review report. The final review is based on both the documentation provided by FRT and the information gathered during the interviews with management and FRT representatives during the site visit.

The draft report was presented to the VU for factual corrections and comments. In close consultation with the chair and other committee members, the comments received were reviewed to draft the final report. The final report was presented to the Board of VU and to the management of FRT.



## 3. Research review of the Faculty of Religion and Theology

### 3.1 Introduction

The Faculty of Theology of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) was founded as early as 1880. The Faculty maintained a cooperative agreement with the *Gereformeerde Kerken* in the Netherlands, training theologians for church ministry. In response to the foundation of the *Protestantse Kerken Nederland* (PKN) and with the emergence of new religious groups seeking academic establishment, the Faculty decided to embark on the path leading from an institution rooted in the Protestant-Reformed tradition to a multireligious Faculty. In 2018, this transformation was marked by renaming the Faculty to Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT). FRT's disciplinary backbone was represented in two departments: 'Text and Traditions' and 'Beliefs and Practices'.

During the review period of 2018-2023, FRT was governed by a collegial leadership, with the Faculty Board (FB) holding collective responsibility for all policy decisions. The Dean, chairing the FB, shared day-to-day responsibilities with the Dean of Education, the Dean of Research and the Director of Operations. The two Head of Departments did not formally act as members of the FB, but met with the FB every two weeks as part of the extended 'FB+'. The Heads of Department were responsible for the allocation of capacity and the individual development of academic staff. The FRT also hosts a Graduate School that in 2020 appointed a new director and a Policy Officer, responsible for PhD policy and the implementation of its guidelines.

FRT operated as an independent entity within VU until January 2025, overseeing education, research and valorisation activities. At the time of the evaluation (November 2024 – February 2025), the Faculty underwent a new development towards becoming the School of Religion and Theology (SRT) as a part of the new Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH). In addition to discussing the SEP criteria, the committee also reflected on this transition, which affects all staff and students of the faculty. This topic will be addressed throughout this report, but mainly under 'Viability'.

### 3.2 Profile, Strategy and Mission

FRT's core mission is the study of religion and theology, combining academic 'craftmanship' with interdisciplinary innovation and societal relevance. Through the study of religion, theology, and their engagement with contemporary challenges, FRT aims for its work to make a profound impact on both scholarship and society. Its research blends descriptive, analytical, and normative research, and is rooted in the concept of engaged scholarship. FRT aims to position itself as a global hub where diverse methodologies from religious studies and theology converge, driving forward new insights and meaningful contributions to the world.

In order to achieve its mission, FRT sought to strengthen the interreligious character of its research and to enlarge its societal relevance in a 'Strategic plan 2018-2020'. The Faculty increasingly sought to broaden its impact by engaging with a wider range of societal partners, including ministries, NGOs, and heritage institutions. This strategic shift ensured that the Faculty's expertise could be applied more broadly across diverse societal issues and contexts. The shift coincided with a restructuring and reorganization as well as with the Covid-19 outbreak. Both developments had significant impact on staff wellbeing and cohesion. In the ensuing 'Strategy Plan for the Faculty of Religion and Theology 2021–2024', the strategy was therefore

focused on fostering a dynamic research environment that promotes teamwork and supports the development of academic talent across all career stages.

The committee applauds the strategic move towards combining theology and religious studies. It appreciates that the shift towards interreligious and societally relevant research posed a challenge to FRT due not only to the accompanying reorganization, but also the consequences of Covid-19. The increased focus on community-forming and wellbeing is therefore a strategic choice that the committee supports.

### 3.3 Research Quality

#### *FRT research*

As mentioned before, research at FRT is organized in two departments. In the Department Beliefs & Practices, the study of beliefs encompasses the historical and contemporary exploration of religious traditions, including the development of ideas, doctrines, and normative teachings. It incorporates both confessional and non-confessional approaches to theology, primarily relying on the analysis of traditional sources in dialogue with philosophical traditions and cultural developments. Conversely, the study of practices focuses on empirical research into lived religion, examining concrete religious activities and their relationship to socio-cultural contexts. This area is methodologically grounded in empirical approaches, with a particular emphasis on qualitative research to understand what believers do and how they interact with their environments. The second Department, Texts and Traditions, specializes in the study of sacred texts, their impact on religious traditions, societies, and individuals, and the ways in which sacred texts are transformed by evolving contexts. Researchers in Texts and Traditions investigate the processes through which texts acquire sacred status and examine how advancements in communication technologies—such as manuscript production, printing, digitization, and artificial intelligence—have influenced and continue to influence the texts themselves, their transmission, and their societal impact. The interaction between sacred texts, individuals, and communities is a key focus, with particular attention to how these texts contribute to shaping normative conceptions of humanity.

Over the period of evaluation, FRT initiated ways to bring together its researchers in order to foster and stimulate bottom-up collaboration and connectivity. One of the key initiatives was the establishment of new research groups, which bring together scholars, PhD candidates, and research master students to collaborate closely. Research groups are established around specific themes with a clear research agenda and defined research questions, and are designed to foster a vibrant, interdisciplinary research environment. Each group has a designated team leader and all researchers must participate in at least one group. Another initiative was the organization of weekly Faculty lunches, offering both academic and support staff the opportunity to connect and engage, with scholars presenting their research in an informal setting. Furthermore, monthly Department meetings provide a platform for sharing research with the entire academic and support staff community.

Based on the self-evaluation and the conversations during the site visit, the committee gained a positive impression of the way that FRT research developed over the past period. According to the committee, FRT's combination of theology and religious studies is one of its core strengths. The committee is appreciative of the creation of research groups, which foster inter- and multidisciplinary as well as interreligious cooperation. The research groups are instrumental in achieving FRT's mission and streamlining bottom-up initiatives. The committee appreciates the innovative and creative connections with new disciplines forged through the choice of research themes. As a recent development in the relationship between beliefs and

practices, disciplinary boundaries are becoming more porous, so that this new direction lends FRT's research a sense of urgency and topicality.

For the sake of maintaining a clear and specialized research profile, the Faculty ensures that each Faculty member is rooted in their core discipline. This aligns with the four key research methods employed in theology as well in religious studies: textual, historical, systematic, and empirical. The committee appreciates FRT's awareness of the importance of disciplinary rootedness. It feels that such awareness is an important condition for achieving high-quality interdisciplinary and interreligious research. At the same time, it considers the connection of FRT research to urgent and contemporary societal themes and issues to be the most promising direction its research can take (see also 'Societal Relevance' and 'Viability'). It invites FRT to look critically at its research directions and to stimulate those groups and projects that show potential regarding societal relevance and impact.

The committee noticed that FRT does especially well in the field of qualitative research and finds this to be of added value in a world in which quantitative methods are dominant. It also saw some innovative approaches, for instance regarding digital humanities. The committee points out that connecting to other disciplines and methodologies (including humanities, but also sociology and anthropology) is a promising research direction that FRT is very well positioned for and that could further boost the topicality and urgency of FRT research.

In relation to this, the committee points out that the organizational structure of FRT could benefit from greater clarity, particularly regarding the division of departments and the organization of research lines and groups. At present, individual researchers experience great freedom and can start up research groups whenever they identify a subject of interest, provided that there are at least 4 FRT researchers involved with a 2-year commitment to research collaboration with a shared research agenda in terms of output. However, the resulting structural complexity may obscure rather than clarify FRT's profile. The current setup also raises the question how viable each research group is. This is something that should be taken into account in the upcoming period of further strategic and structural change as FRT transitions to SRT. According to the committee, regular evaluation of the organization of research and the research group portfolio is required, and management should not hesitate to discontinue a research group if necessary.

#### *Output and marks of recognition*

As mentioned before, FRT research has become increasingly topical and multidisciplinary, and stands out through its connection of theology and religious studies and its concern for disciplinary rootedness. Important research topics over the past years demonstrate this topicality and include Migration, Home-making, and Religious Heritage; Sacred Texts in Contemporary Contexts and Digital Humanities; and Trauma, Extreme Beliefs, Conflict Resolution, and Peacebuilding. FRT research has a solid international reputation to which the wide range of publications between 2018 and 2023 testifies. Its researchers acquired personal as well as collective grants (ERC; NWO Veni and Vidi as well as Gravitation; ERC; Templeton Foundation; ZonMW) and are prominent academics in their fields, internationally.

The committee is impressed with the large body of research and articles produced over the past period and the way these reflect FRT's current shift towards interreligious and societally relevant research. While FRT researchers often publish in non-refereed journals or volumes, the committee is impressed with the balance struck here between such publications on the one hand, and refereed and top tier journals on the other hand. The resulting balanced publication list matches the research unit's aims and profile well.

Between 2018 and 2023, FRT has kept its position as a leading international knowledge centre for religion and theology, as demonstrated by its high performance in the QS World Rankings (2024: 27th worldwide, 3rd in Benelux, 1st in the Netherlands). The committee is impressed with this result. Based on the content of FRT research as well as on external marks of recognition such as grant success, publications, and individual achievements of researchers, the committee concludes that the Faculty of Religion and Theology has a strong presence in the academic field and is doing very well.

### 3.4 Societal Relevance

As has become clear from FRT's profile and mission, the societal impact of its research has become central to the faculty over the last few years. This is first of all visible in the research themes highlighted above, that refer to topics such as migration, conflict resolution, and the like. This turn to pressing geopolitical and societal issues could be considered a core strength of the manner in which FRT research combines theology and religion. In order to enhance the societal relevance of its research, FRT has been investing in collaboration with societal stakeholders, including Bible societies, religious institutions, the Ministry of Social Affairs, and heritage organizations. The Faculty and its researchers are also engaging with networks such as the Network Institute, CLUE+, and heritage studies. Staff members are also actively involved in national research schools, including NOSTER and NISIS.

FRT has a long-standing tradition of engaging in valorization, a core activity that has taken on different forms and emphases over time. Historically, FRT Faculty members played pivotal roles in religious communities and the media, contributing their expertise on matters of faith to broader societal conversations. Today, FRT's presence in public discourse has expanded significantly, with researchers engaging with media outlets and providing insights into contemporary religious issues. Outreach and external communication currently comprise a broad range of activities, from lectures for local religious communities, media appearances, podcasts, and book presentations to conferences, research collaborations with public partners, and courses related to lifelong learning (LLO).

In line with its mission to societal relevance, the Faculty has sought to increasingly commodify its religious expertise to address pressing societal issues, such as war, peace, extreme beliefs, Covid-19, religious migration and home-making, digital approaches to sacred texts, sustainability, and planetary health. The emphasis is on leveraging religious literacy and traditions to offer solutions to contemporary social challenges. Target audiences for these initiatives include professionals from faith communities, government agencies, private sector firms, public officials such as mayors, and educational institutions. Significant valorization initiatives include the launch of professional training courses tailored to public sector professionals. In 2020, the Faculty introduced the "How to Deal with Religion?" course, designed for policymakers and professionals working in fields where religious literacy is essential. Another example is the customized program for diplomats and policymakers at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which focuses on the role of religion in diplomacy and policy-making. Additionally, a comprehensive training programme for spiritual caregivers has been further developed, with a special focus on trauma and psychopathology. Tailor-made courses were also created for personnel in the Ministries of Defence and Justice, addressing their unique needs. Contributions of one researcher to the "Ongelooflijke Podcast", where he discusses faith and secularism, serve as another example of the Faculty's outreach, promoting theological discourse to a broader audience and enhancing religious literacy in contemporary society. Furthermore, the FRT has successfully secured several legacies, which have significantly contributed to the Faculty's ability to fund research projects and enhance its societal outreach, thereby strengthening the Faculty's mission and impact.

Internationally, FRT has extended its reach through partnerships with the VU International Office, offering courses in regions such as Congo, Canada, and Australia. This expansion has enabled the Faculty to disseminate its religious expertise on a global scale, further enhancing its societal impact. The Faculty's contributions to academia and society have been recognized through various awards and honours, including staff members having been named Theologian of the Fatherland on three occasions during the review period.

In the documentation and during the site visit, FRT representatives pointed out that while societal relevance is important to its research, it could benefit from a more structural strategy and approach. For instance, there is no general Faculty policy on valorization and many activities are ad hoc and depend on individual connections of researchers. The committee agrees with this assessment. While the societal relevance of FRT research as well as the strong external presence of researchers can be considered impressive, the committee feels a coherent approach to relevance, valorization and outreach would be beneficial to the Faculty, also from the point of view of viability (see under 'Viability'). According to the committee, FRT should focus on external perceptions and invest in an external communication strategy which centers on interreligious dialogue as a unique selling point. Talented staff members should be stimulated to contribute to this, and FRT should engage beyond the groups it is already comfortable with to reach new audiences.

#### *Seminaries*

There are nine seminaries affiliated with the FRT: the Baptist Seminary, Buddhist Seminary, Centre for Islamic Theology, Doopsgezind (Mennonite) Seminary, Hersteld Hervormd (Restored Reformed) Seminary, Hindu Seminary, Netherlands Israelite Seminary, Remonstrant Seminary and SKIN (Samen Kerk in Nederland – Migrant Churches). These seminaries are academically integrated into the Faculty while retaining distinct responsibilities and financial arrangements. Their researchers participate in FRT research groups, contributing to the broader academic mission of the Faculty.

The committee encountered some challenges, both prior to and during the review, in positioning the seminaries, particularly with regard to their relationship with the Faculty and their contribution to research and societal relevance. The committee found the discussion with representatives of the seminaries during the site visit therefore both enlightening and inspiring. The committee observed that while all seminaries contribute to the Faculty's academic research through active participation in various research groups, their most important role is to connect the Faculty to their diverse religious traditions, educational focuses, and societal roles, ranging from integrated academic programmes to specialized post-master's training for clergy and chaplains. The committee is of the opinion that through the nine seminaries, it is possible to maintain significant relationships with specific religious communities. There are, however, challenges to be faced. There are notable differences between the various seminaries and it is therefore not entirely clear how interreligious cooperation is organized. This point of attention is particularly important for the interpretation of societal processes in a religious context.

Relatedly, the committee noted that non-Protestant traditions, such as Catholicism and Orthodoxy, are almost absent from the research landscape of FRT. The committee understands that this has to be situated in a particular historical and cultural context, but still finds this regrettable for a Faculty for which interfaith and interreligious dialogue constitute an important value. The committee therefore recommends investigating the possibility of including such perspectives or to create meaningful cooperations with such perspectives.

### 3.5 Viability

#### *Transition from FRT to SRT: Research Strategy 2024-2030*

The transition from the Faculty of Religion and Theology to the School of Religion and Theology (SRT), is effective April 2025. According to FRT, this move reflects both strategic foresight and a response to evolving academic and societal needs. The transformation is a significant reorganization aimed at enhancing the faculty's relevance, interdisciplinary collaboration, and societal impact in a rapidly changing world. The formal integration of FRT into the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) aligns with VU's broader organizational restructuring. The merger facilitates interdisciplinary collaboration by embedding the study of religion and theology within a wider academic context.

At the time of the site visit, this development was still a work in progress. The committee understood that the SRT is to remain a separate entity within the wider Faculty, and that its Graduate School (see below) will be retained. Research will be organized under four headings, e.g. Sacred Texts, Religious History and Heritage, Beliefs/Systematic Theology and Practices/Empiric (practical) Theology. The seminaries are also maintained as fruitful and unique connections to various religious perspectives that can enhance SRT research as well as education. In the new structure, a valorization strategy will be formulated identifying funding as well as networking opportunities. In addition to these efforts, SRT will connect to the School of Business and Economics, which has a long experience in reaching out to society to fulfil the increasing demand for lifelong education.

As was discussed during the site visit, SRT aims to enhance the coherence and visibility of its research agenda. FRT's history of interdisciplinary collaboration—integrating theology with sociology, history, and digital humanities—provides a strong foundation for this effort. A particular emphasis will be placed on integrating research with societal relevance. SRT aims to lead in areas such as peace and trauma studies, interfaith dialogue, and ecological spirituality, contributing to both academic discourse and practical solutions for pressing global challenges. This dual focus on academic excellence and societal impact aligns with VU's broader mission of being a “knowledge partner for life.” The committee fully supports this aim. It argues that the fields of theology and religion are very well positioned to play an important role in contemporary academic and societal discussions on religion, radicalization, extremism, etc., and that prominence in these areas can draw more scholars and students to FRT. The committee also appreciates the four new research themes, although it points out that the new structure should not become too complex. With four research themes interdisciplinary cooperation may become more challenging than with the present two departments.

In the opinion of the committee, a more intensive cooperation with SSH within this new structure is not only logical, but also potentially very fruitful. It could widen the scope of the FRT's research and stimulate interdisciplinarity in line with its current mission. Connections with fields such as sociology, anthropology, history, and philosophy and provide opportunities to explore religion's multifaceted roles in society. The fact that FRT would become embedded in the larger SSH faculty also offers the perspective of more research support and access to the infrastructure and activities of other researchers. This is all the more promising since FRT was sometimes vulnerable in terms of support. Additionally, the Faculty's reliance on a maximum reserve of 10% heightened its vulnerability. Finally, the committee finds that the transition also leads to a redesign and a re-thinking of existing structures and their functioning. It encourages the exploration of new opportunities in the process.

The committee is cautiously optimistic regarding the future of FRT and its research. It acknowledges the period of uncertainty the institute has experienced and applauds the high quality research and valorization



that was achieved nonetheless. In the short and middle term, prospects seem positive as in the next five years, FRT's original structure will remain embedded within the framework of the school. For the long term, the committee advises a continued and intensified focus on societally relevant research and targeted outreach and communication. In this way, the SRT might gain a stronger external profile that in turn attracts new students creating a stronger community as well as more financial leeway.

The committee acknowledges that the transition to SRT is not without challenges. Financial constraints, high overhead costs, and national budget cuts in higher education pose significant hurdles. Additionally, the merger's administrative demands risk diverting attention from core academic activities. The potential for internal fragmentation due to the integration with SSH further underscores the need for careful strategic planning. The committee advises ensuring that within the new structure, the current strengths of FRT are safeguarded. SRT's unique strength lies in its ability to integrate perspectives, fostering a holistic understanding of religion that can connect to societal challenges and other disciplines. This integration is particularly valuable in addressing contemporary issues where theological insights and empirical analysis intersect. By preserving this balance, SRT ensures that it remains a leading centre for the study of religion and theology, both nationally and internationally.

As mentioned under 'Societal Relevance', the committee advises creating a stronger external profile for theology and religion research at the VU. The current situation, with the Faculty undergoing a merger and threatening budget cuts, may make it look more vulnerable than it actually is. The committee thinks that investing in clear PR and a straightforward and coherent message to the outside world on what its research stands for, the new SRT can take control of its narrative and showcase the high quality research it offers. In doing so, it may be able to further enhance its societal relevance, attract more students and increase the collaborations with external parties. This in turn may lead to positive new research approaches that benefit SRT researchers in achieving its aims and mission.

#### *HR Policy & Academic Culture*

The panel learnt that FRT is currently developing a strategic HR plan in which the 'Recognition and Rewards' initiative will play a significant role. This plan aims to align staff development with broader academic and societal values, focusing on fostering leadership, valorization, and personal growth within the Faculty. This is particularly pertinent as 85% of the professors are over 50 years old, with nearly half being over 60.

In 2024, a working group composed of diverse FRT members and an HRM representative was established to revise scientific career profiles within the Faculty. Their objectives included updating career paths, refining promotion criteria, and clarifying tenure guidelines. The group further recommended that research output should prioritize quality over quantity. Candidates for promotion were advised to use narrative CVs to explain the relevance and impact of their work, rather than relying solely on journal rankings or publication volume. They also advocated for societal impact as a key consideration, encouraging researchers to address contemporary societal challenges and disseminate knowledge beyond academic circles. To ensure fairness and transparency in career progression, the group proposed the formation of a 'Career Track Committee' (CTC). This committee would oversee tenure and promotion decisions, provide constructive feedback, and collaborate with the annual employee review (Dutch: vlootschouw). This process would ensure continuous evaluation and support for academic career development.

The committee encourages the new direction taken regarding HR and particularly encourages taking on the Recognition and Rewards points of departure. In view of its recommendation on enhancing valorization and starting a PR initiative externally, SRT will need to single out and reward staff members with a particular gift for such activities. Also, the committee advises that such new recognition and reward systems be a regular

topic of discussion with staff and students. They should be aware of SRT's efforts in promoting this and in the consequences this new focus may have on their personal career paths. While steps are already being taken in this direction, the committee feels these efforts should be more prominent within SRT. Alternative career paths beside the classical research-driven one should be described, advertised and brought under the attention of all staff members.

A further point of attention is staff (as well as student) diversity. For example, there are less female PhD candidates, particularly among the external candidates (26,4% over the period under review), and their religious backgrounds show limited variety. The committee understands that this is due to the origins and nature of the field and that this cannot be solved quickly. Nevertheless, it is worth considering that diversity aligns with societal changes. If there is a significant gap between the composition of staff and societal developments. This may impact the faculty's public image. Therefore, the SRT should formulate an active diversity policy and promote this as much as possible.

As mentioned earlier, academic culture and social safety have been important concerns during the reorganization period. The FRT invested in a new structure rewarding bottom-up initiatives that brought together researchers from all ages. During the site visit, the panel learnt that these efforts were effective and that especially the younger generations benefit from the community and collaborative spirit that ensue from such activities.

The transition to SRT within the larger Faculty presents new challenges. International tensions, such as those in the Middle East, also impact the community, sparking differences in opinion on how to address such conflicts and whom to hold accountable. The Faculty offers Confidential Counsellors for employees, PhD students, and students, along with a counsellor for issues related to scientific integrity. It requires its researchers to adhere to the Code of Conduct for researchers in the Netherlands and to approach one another with frankness as well as caution in dealing with differences in conviction and viewpoint.

#### *PhD policy and training*

FRT has a limited number of PhD candidates, and a large percentage of external PhD candidates, many of whom are based internationally. In the past, PhD candidates suffered delays due to a lack of supervisors and a lack of formal structures and procedures. FRT worked hard on improving this situation over the past years.

FRT has its own Graduate School, which will continue after the merger. Between 2020 and 2023, the Graduate School significantly professionalized its PhD guidelines and procedures. PhD candidates are integrated into research groups early in their academic journey, guiding them toward impactful academic careers. A cohort-based supervision model fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and provides structured support from the outset. Additionally, the *ius promovendi* system has been expanded to include associate professors, enabling them to formally supervise PhD candidates, while assistant professors can serve as daily supervisors.

The FRT developed and implemented a new policy in September 2022 which contributed to the further professionalization of the Graduate School, a more efficient course of PhD trajectories and better integration of PhD research in the Faculty. The most important components of this policy are a stricter cohort-based selection procedure, taking into account the research agendas of research teams, embedding of all PhD candidates in research teams and a maximum duration of the PhD trajectory (eight years) with a mandatory go/no-go moment within the first two years. The Graduate School offers a broad range of education for PhD candidates via the VU PhD portal. In addition, the Graduate School has made the course Research Design,



Module 1: Academic Integrity mandatory for all PhD candidates (no exemption possible). The Graduate School is currently revising the content of this module.

In addition to the above measures, the Graduate School has focused on developing and implementing social policy in recent years. The Graduate School hopes to improve the well-being of PhD candidates and to create a community of learners and has taken the following measures to this end: a regular PhD newsletter (four times a year), Canvas page for PhD candidates, annual PhD conference, involving PhD candidates in research teams and providing insight into available agencies/help desks/confidential advisors. The appointment of a PhD candidate advisor further enabled better social supervision of the cohorts. Steps have also been taken to promote the intake of female PhDs. As it turned out that a relatively high percentage of female candidates from one of the GS' international partners had an MDiv degree and were therefore in principle ineligible for a PhD track at the VU, an additional, accredited preliminary course training up to the desired MA level has been established with this partner. Among its future ambitions are enhancing PhD information regarding success rates and bottlenecks, and growth of supervision capacity.

The committee appreciates the work done on PhD supervision and success. It found genuine efforts were made to foster a sense of community. In discussion with PhD candidates, the committee found that they were very happy with the support structures in place and the guidance they received. They are pleased with the online or hybrid options offered them in training and supervision. The committee compliments FRT with this result and hopes that the improvements made will have a positive effect on PhD success rates.

#### *Open Science*

Since 2020, the Faculty of Religion and Theology (FRT) has implemented the VU RDM policy and developed a tailored protocol to guide researchers through the research cycle. This protocol aligns with GDPR and other regulatory frameworks such as the FAIR principles. It focuses on secure data storage, ethical considerations, legal obligations, and facilitating access while safeguarding sensitive personal data. Ethical clearance is required for research involving personal or sensitive data, overseen by the Committee for Research and Ethics (CWBE) and supported by the faculty's data steward. RDM practices are also embedded in mandatory training for PhD candidates.

From January 2023, VU has adopted Open Access as the norm for publishing, aiming to create a sustainable and accessible academic publication landscape. FRT's researchers are encouraged to publish in Open Access formats, register their work in the VU Repository (PURE), and retain copyrights wherever possible. The VU Library assists in identifying Open Access opportunities, negotiating with publishers, and ensuring compliance with funding mandates. These efforts have led to a steady increase in the number of Open Access publications from the faculty.

The committee recognizes the efforts undertaken to boost open science at FRT. Much is already arranged through the university library, with increasing access to open resources. The committee is pleased to see that open access has become such a priority.

## 4. Executive summary and recommendations

The committee finds that the Faculty of Religion and Theology of VU University offers innovative and high-quality research that combines multiple disciplines and perspectives in a topical and urgent manner. The work at the intersection of theology and religion, while retaining an important place for disciplinary expertise, constitutes the FRT's unique selling point. The quality and output of research are highly ranked and match the Faculty's profile and mission very well. Efforts to enhance collaboration among researchers within FRT have resulted in a vibrant and increasingly open research culture where academic freedom and bottom-up initiatives are fostered. Societal relevance of research and interdisciplinarity are strong assets that will only gain in importance in the near future. Over the past period, FRT invested in professionalizing PhD policy and training, academic culture, and HR procedures. The committee applauds these efforts, and encourages continuing in this direction.

The merger of the faculty into a new SSH faculty, where FRT becomes the School of Religion and Theology, offers both opportunities and challenges. The committee is optimistic about the opportunities here to simplify the complex FRT structure, foster SSH collaborations and make use of shared support and facilities. The merger also offers opportunities in further enhancing societal relevance and interdisciplinary collaborations, heightening SRT's prominence in academia and society. The new SRT can take matters into its own hands here by controlling the narrative with a targeted and explicit PR policy directed at drawing in external parties and making visible the unique, relevant and high quality research it offers.

The committee's main recommendations are:

- Reduce FRT/SRT's structural complexity by regularly evaluating the research group portfolio and taking actions where necessary.
- Enhance FRT's/SRT's profile by investing in societally relevant research topics and outreach, and by seeking the connection with other disciplines such as social science, humanities, and anthropology.
- Formulate a policy on societal relevance and a PR strategy aimed at external parties.
- Enhance the new HR policy by explicitly and regularly discussing alternative career paths such as those formulated as part of 'Recognition and Rewards' with staff members.
- Develop a diversity strategy aimed at attracting and maintain diverse staff.
- Continue to improve PhD policies, trajectories, guidance and success.

## Appendix 1: The SEP 2021-2027 Criteria and Categories

The committee was requested to assess the quality of research conducted by FRT as well as to offer recommendations in order to improve the quality of research and the strategy of FRT. The committee was requested to carry out the assessment according to the guidelines specified in the Strategy Evaluation Protocol. The evaluation included a backward-looking and a forward-looking component. Specifically, the committee was asked to judge the performance of the unit on the main assessment criteria and offer its written conclusions as well as recommendations based on considerations and arguments. The main assessment criteria are:

- 1) **Research Quality:** the quality of the unit's research over the past six-year period is assessed in its international, national or – where appropriate – regional context. The assessment committee does so by assessing a research unit in light of its own aims and strategy. Central in this assessment are the contributions to the body of scientific knowledge. The assessment committee reflects on the quality and scientific relevance of the research. Moreover, the academic reputation and leadership within the field is assessed. The committee's assessment is grounded in a narrative argument and supported by evidence of the scientific achievements of the unit in the context of the national or international research field, as appropriate to the specific claims made in the narrative.
- 2) **Societal Relevance:** the societal relevance of the unit's research in terms of impact, public engagement and uptake of the unit's research is assessed in economic, social, cultural, educational or any other terms that may be relevant. Societal impact may often take longer to become apparent. Societal impact that became evident in the past six years may therefore well be due to research done by the unit long before. The assessment committee reflects on societal relevance by assessing a research unit's accomplishments in light of its own aims and strategy. The assessment committee also reflects, where applicable, on the teaching-research nexus. The assessment is grounded in a narrative argument that describes the key research findings and their implications, while it also includes evidence for the societal relevance in terms of impact and engagement of the research unit.
- 3) **Viability of the Unit:** the extent to which the research unit's goals for the coming six-year period remain scientifically and societally relevant is assessed. It is also assessed whether its aims and strategy as well as the foresight of its leadership and its overall management are optimal to attain these goals. Finally, it is assessed whether the plans and resources are adequate to implement this strategy. The assessment committee also reflects on the viability of the research unit in relation to the expected developments in the field and societal developments as well as on the wider institutional context of the research unit

During the evaluation of these criteria, the assessment committee was asked to incorporate four specific aspects. These aspects were included, as they are becoming increasingly important in the current scientific context and help to shape the past as well as future quality of the research unit. These four aspects relate to how the unit organises and actually performs its research, how it is composed in terms of leadership and personnel, and how the unit is being run on a daily basis. These aspects are as follows:

- 4) **Open Science:** availability of research output, reuse of data, involvement of societal stakeholders;
- 5) **PhD Policy and Training:** supervision and instruction of PhD candidates;
- 6) **Academic Culture:** openness, (social) safety and inclusivity; and research integrity;
- 7) **Human Resources Policy:** diversity and talent management.

## Appendix 2: Programme of the site visit

| November 18, 2024 |                                                   |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| Time slot         | Interview group                                   |
| 09:00 h           | Arrival at the VU, Central point NU building.     |
| 09:30 h – 09:45 h | Welcome at FRT by the Dean FRT                    |
| 09:45 h – 10:15 h | Preparatory meeting Committee                     |
| 10:15 h – 11:00 h | Faculty Board FRT                                 |
| 11:00 h – 11:45 h | Department Heads FRT                              |
| 11:45 h – 13:15 h | Lunch and Internal deliberation committee members |
| 13:15 h – 14:00 h | Researchers (senior)                              |
| 14:00 h – 14:45 h | Researchers (junior/medior)                       |
| 14:45 h – 15:00 h | Break                                             |
| 15:00 h – 15:45 h | PhD's                                             |
| 15:45 h - 16:15 h | Internal deliberation committee members           |
| 16:15 h – 19:30 h | Excursion                                         |
| 19:30 h -         | Diner                                             |

| November 19, 2024 |                                                                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Time slot         | Interview group                                                         |
| 09:30 h – 10:15 h | Graduate School and Research Bureau of FRT                              |
| 10:15 h – 11:00 h | Valorization and Impact                                                 |
| 11:00 h – 11:45 h | Delegates of the 9 Seminaries                                           |
| 11:45 h – 13:15 h | Preliminary deliberation committee members incl. lunch.                 |
| 13:15 h – 14:00 h | Final questions committee members to the FB+ & first feedback committee |
| 14:00 h – 15:30 h | Final deliberations Committee                                           |
| 15:30 h           | Preliminary findings Committee with drinks                              |

## Appendix 3: Quantitative data

### B.3 Input of research staff

| Table Input of research staff FRT total |           |              |           |              |           |             |           |             |           |              |           |              |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
|                                         | 2018      |              | 2019      |              | 2020      |             | 2021      |             | 2022      |              | 2023      |              |
| Research Unit                           | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          |
| <i>Scientific Staff (1)</i>             |           |              |           |              |           |             |           |             |           |              |           |              |
| Assistant professor                     | 24        | 4,17         | 19        | 3,73         | 20        | 3,78        | 16        | 2,92        | 18        | 2,88         | 22        | 4,33         |
| Associate professor                     | 13        | 2,14         | 10        | 2,07         | 11        | 2           | 8         | 1,26        | 8         | 1,33         | 11        | 1,47         |
| Full professor                          | 26        | 6,24         | 27        | 6,22         | 29        | 5,93        | 29        | 5,51        | 28        | 5,54         | 27        | 5,45         |
| Endowed professor (2)                   | 7         | 0,26         | 10        | 1,03         | 11        | 0,84        | 12        | 0,82        | 12        | 0,84         | 12        | 0,72         |
| Postdoc (3)                             | 10        | 2,73         | 11        | 4,51         | 16        | 4,91        | 16        | 5,08        | 15        | 4,65         | 12        | 4,68         |
| PhD candidates (4)                      | 10        | 8,12         | 8         | 6,42         | 5         | 3,44        | 5         | 3,81        | 7         | 5,64         | 7         | 7,18         |
| <b>Total scientific staff</b>           | <b>90</b> | <b>23,66</b> | <b>85</b> | <b>23,98</b> | <b>92</b> | <b>20,9</b> | <b>86</b> | <b>19,4</b> | <b>88</b> | <b>20,88</b> | <b>91</b> | <b>23,83</b> |
| <i>Other staff</i>                      |           |              |           |              |           |             |           |             |           |              |           |              |
| Support staff (5)                       | 11        | 6,1          | 11        | 6,1          | 11        | 6,2         | 11        | 6,2         | 12        | 6,5          | 14        | 7,1          |
| Visiting fellows                        | 0         | 0            | 0         | 0            | 0         | 0           | 0         | 0           | 0         | 0            | 0         | 0            |
| <b>Total other staff</b>                | <b>11</b> | <b>6,1</b>   | <b>11</b> | <b>6,1</b>   | <b>11</b> | <b>6,2</b>  | <b>11</b> | <b>6,2</b>  | <b>12</b> | <b>6,5</b>   | <b>14</b> | <b>7,1</b>   |

| Table Input of research staff B&P |           |              |           |              |           |              |           |              |           |              |           |              |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|--------------|
|                                   | 2018      |              | 2019      |              | 2020      |              | 2021      |              | 2022      |              | 2023      |              |
| Research Unit                     | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          | #         | FTE          |
| <i>Scientific Staff (1)</i>       |           |              |           |              |           |              |           |              |           |              |           |              |
| Assistant professor               | 17        | 3,09         | 13        | 2,52         | 13        | 2,45         | 10        | 1,78         | 11        | 2,04         | 13        | 2,51         |
| Associate professor               | 10        | 1,71         | 6         | 1,23         | 7         | 1,16         | 5         | 1,02         | 6         | 1,03         | 7         | 1,02         |
| Full professor                    | 14        | 3,28         | 16        | 3,47         | 17        | 3,63         | 17        | 3,4          | 17        | 3,44         | 16        | 3,35         |
| Endowed professor (2)             | 5         | 0,19         | 9         | 0,97         | 10        | 0,78         | 11        | 0,76         | 11        | 0,78         | 10        | 0,57         |
| Postdoc (3)                       | 7         | 1,79         | 8         | 3,07         | 13        | 3,43         | 11        | 3,92         | 12        | 3,68         | 10        | 3,91         |
| PhD candidates (4)                | 5         | 4,02         | 4         | 4            | 5         | 3,44         | 3         | 3            | 5         | 4,24         | 4         | 3,78         |
| <b>Total scientific staff</b>     | <b>58</b> | <b>14,08</b> | <b>56</b> | <b>15,26</b> | <b>65</b> | <b>14,89</b> | <b>57</b> | <b>13,88</b> | <b>62</b> | <b>15,21</b> | <b>60</b> | <b>15,14</b> |

| Table Input of research staff T&T |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|
|                                   | 2018      |             | 2019      |             | 2020      |             | 2021      |             | 2022      |             | 2023      |             |
| Research Unit                     | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE         | #         | FTE         |
| <i>Scientific Staff (1)</i>       |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |           |             |
| Assistant professor               | 7         | 1,08        | 6         | 1,21        | 7         | 1,33        | 6         | 1,14        | 7         | 0,84        | 8         | 1,82        |
| Associate professor               | 3         | 0,43        | 4         | 0,84        | 4         | 0,84        | 3         | 0,24        | 2         | 0,3         | 4         | 0,45        |
| Full professor                    | 12        | 2,96        | 11        | 2,75        | 12        | 2,11        | 12        | 2,11        | 11        | 2,1         | 11        | 2,1         |
| Endowed professor (2)             | 2         | 0,07        | 1         | 0,06        | 1         | 0,06        | 1         | 0,06        | 1         | 0,06        | 2         | 0,15        |
| Postdoc (3)                       | 3         | 0,94        | 3         | 1,44        | 3         | 1,48        | 5         | 1,16        | 3         | 0,97        | 2         | 0,77        |
| PhD candidates (4)                | 5         | 4,1         | 4         | 2,42        | 0         | 0           | 2         | 0,81        | 2         | 1,4         | 3         | 2,4         |
| <b>Total scientific staff</b>     | <b>32</b> | <b>9,58</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>8,72</b> | <b>27</b> | <b>5,82</b> | <b>29</b> | <b>5,52</b> | <b>26</b> | <b>5,67</b> | <b>30</b> | <b>7,69</b> |

Note 1: Comparable with WOPI categories HGL, UHD and UD; tenured and non-tenured staff.

Note 2: We only mention Endowed professor's who are financed by the Faculty or by a third party like the seminaries.

Note 3: Comparable with WOPI category Onderzoeker (researcher).

Note 4: Here we mention only the PhD who are employed by the University (PhD type 1a 'werknemer promovendi' and 1b 'promoverende medewerker' according to the VSNU's categorisation of 2019

([https://www.vsnul.nl/files/documenten/Nieuwsberichten/Een\\_gezonde\\_praktijk\\_in\\_het\\_Nederlandse\\_promotiestelsel.pdf](https://www.vsnul.nl/files/documenten/Nieuwsberichten/Een_gezonde_praktijk_in_het_Nederlandse_promotiestelsel.pdf)). The Graduate School of FRT had between 2018 - 2023 on a yearly base near 275 PhD's. Only 3% is on the payroll. The rest of the PhD's are external PhD candidates from all over the world.

Note 5: these figures are based on a 'norm' detailed below. In practice, individual researchers hold annual consultations with their department heads to determine their actual FTEs for the upcoming year, which may differ from the norm.

## B.4 Funding in relation to input research staff

| Table Funding FRT total |              |             |              |             |             |             |             |             |              |             |              |             |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
|                         | 2018         |             | 2019         |             | 2020        |             | 2021        |             | 2022         |             | 2023         |             |
| Research Unit           | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           | FTE         | %           | FTE         | %           | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           |
| <i>Funding</i>          |              |             |              |             |             |             |             |             |              |             |              |             |
| Direct funding (1)      | 15,76        | 66%         | 15,64        | 65%         | 14,79       | 71%         | 11,98       | 62%         | 11,86        | 57%         | 13,62        | 57%         |
| Research Grants (2)     | 6,5          | 28%         | 4,62         | 19%         | 1,9         | 9%          | 2,38        | 12%         | 3,5          | 17%         | 3,92         | 17%         |
| Contract research (3)   | 1,08         | 5%          | 2,33         | 10%         | 1,53        | 7%          | 1,31        | 7%          | 0,91         | 4%          | 1,54         | 7%          |
| Other (4)               | 0,32         | 1%          | 1,39         | 6%          | 2,68        | 13%         | 3,73        | 19%         | 4,61         | 22%         | 4,75         | 19%         |
| <b>Total Funding</b>    | <b>23,66</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>23,98</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>20,9</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>19,4</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>20,88</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>23,83</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Table Funding B&P     |              |             |              |             |              |             |              |             |              |             |              |             |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
|                       | 2018         |             | 2019         |             | 2020         |             | 2021         |             | 2022         |             | 2023         |             |
| Research Unit         | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           | FTE          | %           |
| <i>Funding</i>        |              |             |              |             |              |             |              |             |              |             |              |             |
| Direct funding (1)    | 11,2         | 80%         | 10,69        | 70%         | 9,84         | 66%         | 8,17         | 59%         | 7,62         | 50%         | 7,75         | 48%         |
| Research Grants (2)   | 1,64         | 12%         | 1            | 7%          | 1            | 7%          | 1            | 7%          | 2,9          | 19%         | 3,32         | 21%         |
| Contract research (3) | 1,02         | 7%          | 2,27         | 15%         | 1,47         | 10%         | 1,25         | 9%          | 0,85         | 6%          | 1,48         | 9%          |
| Other (4)             | 0,22         | 1%          | 1,3          | 8%          | 2,58         | 17%         | 3,46         | 25%         | 3,84         | 25%         | 3,59         | 22%         |
| <b>Total Funding</b>  | <b>14,08</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>15,26</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>14,89</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>13,88</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>15,21</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>16,14</b> | <b>100%</b> |

| Table Funding T&T     |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
|                       | 2018        |             | 2019        |             | 2020        |             | 2021        |             | 2022        |             | 2023        |             |
| Research Unit         | FTE         | %           | FTE         | %           | FTE         | %           | FTE         | %           | FTE         | %           | FTE         | %           |
| <i>Funding</i>        |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |             |
| Direct funding (1)    | 4,56        | 48%         | 4,95        | 54%         | 4,95        | 87%         | 3,81        | 69%         | 4,24        | 75%         | 5,87        | 76%         |
| Research Grants (2)   | 4,86        | 50%         | 3,62        | 42%         | 0,9         | 10%         | 1,38        | 25%         | 0,6         | 11%         | 0,6         | 8%          |
| Contract research (3) | 0,06        | 1%          | 0,06        | 1%          | 0,06        | 1%          | 0,06        | 1%          | 0,06        | 1%          | 0,06        | 1%          |
| Other (4)             | 0,1         | 1%          | 0,09        | 3%          | 0,1         | 2%          | 0,27        | 5%          | 0,77        | 13%         | 1,16        | 15%         |
| <b>Total Funding</b>  | <b>9,58</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>8,72</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>6,01</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>5,52</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>5,67</b> | <b>100%</b> | <b>7,69</b> | <b>100%</b> |

Note 1: Direct funding (lump-sum budget).

Note 2: Research grants obtained in national scientific competition (e.g. grants from NWO and KNAW).

Note 3: Research contracts for specific research projects obtained from external organisations, such as industry, government ministries, European organisations and charitable organisations.

Note 4: Funds that do not fit into the other categories.

## B.5. Overview Graduate School output

### B.5.1a External PhD's FRT

| Tabel 3a. External PhD's FRT |                  |           |                                |    |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       |                  |       |              |       |       |
|------------------------------|------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|----|---------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|------------------|-------|--------------|-------|-------|
| Enrolment                    |                  |           | Succes rates                   |    |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       |                  |       |              |       |       |
| Starting Year                | Enrolment male/f | Total M+F | Graduated in year 4 or earlier |    | Graduated in year 5 |       | Graduated in year 6 |       | Graduated in year 7 |       | Graduated in year 8 |       | Not yet finished |       | Discontinued |       |       |
|                              | M                | F         | #                              | %  | #                   | %     | #                   | %     | #                   | %     | #                   | %     | #                | %     | #            | %     |       |
| 2015                         | 40               | 14        | 54                             |    | 3                   | 0,06% | 6                   | 0,11% | 5                   | 0,09% | 6                   | 0,11% | 23               | 0,43% | 11           | 0,20% |       |
| 2016                         | 30               | 14        | 44                             | 3  | 0,07%               | 8     | 0,18%               | 2     | 0,05%               | 2     | 0,05%               | 1     | 0,02%            | 18    | 0,40%        | 10    | 0,23% |
| 2017                         | 26               | 11        | 37                             | 6  | 0,16%               | 3     | 0,08%               | 1     | 0,03%               |       |                     |       | 19               | 0,51% | 8            | 0,22% |       |
| 2018                         | 39               | 13        | 52                             | 9  | 0,17%               | 3     | 0,06%               |       |                     |       |                     |       | 26               | 0,50% | 14           | 0,27% |       |
| 2019                         | 26               | 8         | 34                             | 6  | 0,18%               |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       | 27               | 0,79% | 1            | 0,03% |       |
| 2020                         | 31               | 8         | 39                             | 6  | 0,15%               |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       | 26               | 0,67% | 7            | 0,18% |       |
| 2021                         | 27               | 11        | 38                             | 2  | 0,05%               |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       | 32               | 0,84% | 4            | 0,11% |       |
| 2022                         | 28               | 11        | 39                             | 1  | 0,03%               |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       | 34               | 0,87% | 4            | 0,10% |       |
| 2023                         | 26               | 8         | 34                             |    |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       |                     |       | 31               | 0,91% | 3            | 0,09% |       |
| Total                        | 273              | 98        | 371                            | 33 | 0,09%               | 17    | 0,05%               | 9     | 0,02%               | 7     | 0,02%               | 7     | 0,02%            | 236   | 0,64%        | 62    | 0,16% |

### B.4.1.b. Standard/ Contract PhD's FRT

| Table 3b. Standard/Contract PhD's FRT |                  |   |           |                                |       |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       |                  |       |              |       |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|---|-----------|--------------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|-------------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|--------------|-------|
| Enrolment                             |                  |   |           | Success rates                  |       |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       |                  |       |              |       |
| Starting Year                         | Enrolment male/f |   | Total M+F | Graduated in year 4 or earlier |       | Graduated in year 5 |       | Graduated in year 6 |       | Graduated in year 7 or longer |       | Not yet finished |       | Discontinued |       |
|                                       | M                | F |           | #                              | %     | #                   | %     | #                   | %     | #                             | %     | #                | %     | #            | %     |
| 2015                                  | 3                | 2 | 5         |                                |       |                     |       | 2                   | 40%   | 2                             | 40%   | 1                | 20%   |              |       |
| 2016                                  | 3                | 1 | 4         | 1                              | 25%   | 1                   | 25%   | 1                   | 25%   |                               |       | 1                | 25%   |              |       |
| 2017                                  | 1                | 0 | 1         |                                |       |                     |       | 1                   | 100%  |                               |       |                  |       |              |       |
| 2018                                  | 1                | 3 | 4         |                                |       | 1                   | 25%   |                     |       |                               |       | 3                | 75%   |              |       |
| 2019                                  | 0                | 0 | 0         |                                |       |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       |                  |       |              |       |
| 2020                                  | 1                | 1 | 2         | 1                              | 50%   |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       | 1                | 50%   |              |       |
| 2021                                  | 2                | 0 | 2         |                                |       |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       | 2                | 100%  |              |       |
| 2022                                  | 1                | 1 | 2         |                                |       |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       | 1                | 50%   | 1            | 50%   |
| 2023                                  | 3                | 0 | 3         |                                |       |                     |       |                     |       |                               |       | 3                | 100%  |              |       |
| Total                                 | 15               | 8 | 23        | 2                              | 0,09% | 2                   | 0,09% | 4                   | 0,17% | 2                             | 0,09% | 12               | 0,52% | 1            | 0,04% |