

The National Education Programme

Guide for participation in AE&R



Institutions in the Academic Education & Research (AE&R) sector will receive funds from the National Education Programme on three different grounds:

- **Compensation for lost income, for example from the halving of tuition fees.**
- **Structural resources for increasing student numbers.**
- **Incidental resources for the elimination of backlogs.**

As a representative advisory body, it is essential that you are aware how much money is being made available for your (part of the) university. Another, equally essential, question is how much of this money is structural and how much is incidental. The representative advisory body, the University Council, or the Student Council and Works Council, have a right of approval in relation to the university's choice of how and to what these funds are allocated. This is irrespective of whether these funds are incidental or structural. This also means they have a right of approval in relation to the formative choices made by the competent authority.

The question that always arises in this type of decision-making process is what do we decide centrally, and what has to be decided elsewhere. Depending on how much confidence the representative advisory body has in the influence lecturers can exert on decision-making within educational units on which the money is being spent, the universities' representative advisory bodies may demand more or less detailed decision-making and justification.

AOb provides a number of guides for the discussions between the representative advisory body and the competent authority. These guides are intended to provide items for discussion that can be included if appropriate to the situation at your institution.

- 1** In times of corona, the pressure of work has increased significantly. If it is possible in terms of the labour market to take on more personnel, this option is all but unavoidable. This means that backlogs can be reduced for students and compensation provided for the additional efforts of colleagues during the period of the coronavirus pandemic. Don't think only of lecturers in this respect. Other roles within the institution may need more people on an incidental basis. The pressure of work can also be reduced by expanding part-time employment relationships, renewing temporary employment relationships or converting these into permanent contracts.
- 2** Good people are attracted by good working conditions. This means, among other things, that people should be recruited on the basis of job security. Flexible contracts have no place in this. We advise implementing a policy whereby everyone who has demonstrated their suitability being given a permanent contract after no more than one year. It is realistic to offer permanent contracts instead of temporary ones. After all, more money is being made available structurally to the AE&R sector because there are now once again more students in academic education than previously. As AOb, we are calling on employers to recruit the right people for the profession and

to retain these with permanent contracts. Colleagues taken on during the past year and who are working well, should receive accelerated permanent employment contracts. In addition, AOb is urging awareness of having (overly) limited (permanent) employment contracts – for example at 0.15 FTE – as these are in principle just disguised on-call contracts. Perhaps unnecessarily, we once again stress the right of approval the personnel section of the representative advisory bodies has in relation to the choice of either permanent or flexible contracts. In recent years, many universities have demonstrated that they have maintained an unnecessarily large flexible shell.

- 3** There is a need for student support. This requires a greater commitment of teaching and student support staff. Spending money on additional policy officers is therefore not a logical choice.
- 4** With the additional funds that are of a less structural nature, a bridge can be built to deal with ageing. For example, a shifting of tasks onto newly recruited personnel or personnel who are able to progress. The Vitality Pact in the Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities offers the possibility for this. This allows older employees to continue in their role for longer, while their new colleagues get the chance to progress.
- 5** Discuss how the quality of education can be brought back to a good level, and maybe receive an additional impulse. Consider what is required to achieve this. Make use of the crisis as an opportunity to retain the good aspects of online working, but prevent for example contact time being reduced because explanations are available to students online. A new vision of education can help with a clear definition of the framework.
- 6** Changes in education (blended learning: a hybrid work/learning environment, online and physical) demands professionalisation. This means that good training and additional support are essential. This requires sufficient funds, but above all also sufficient time being available. Only then can this transition be successful. Experience shows that in times of great pressure of work, the time dedicated to allowing the personnel to take additional courses or re-training is the first to be sacrificed. So ensure that this professionalisation is sufficiently facilitated in terms of the structural dedication of both time and money.
- 7** Ensure that research that is associated with the education is actually linked to the education, so that innovations and knowledge acquired can find their way directly to the future users of these: the students. Facilitate the lecturers and aspiring professors sufficiently that they are able to take up both physical teaching and research activities again, and where necessary catch up.
- 8** Attention must be devoted to the welfare of students and employees. Where necessary, reinforce professional support in this area, so that requests for help are signalled in time and promptly dealt with, so these don't get neglected or passed back to the individual student or employee.

- 9 The justification required by the ministry is not the only important aspect. The agreements with the representative advisory body on the use of resources must also be monitored by the representative advisory body. Clear agreements concerning exactly where the hours and Euros should be committed have proven of great importance in subsequently determining whether the resources have in fact been spent in accordance with the agreements. Agreements can also be made within university's local consultations on the monitoring of personnel policy based on the National Education Programme funds. This local consultation and the representative advisory bodies can consult among themselves on this.
- 10 Evaluation is important in distinguishing effective and less effective interventions from one another, also into the future.

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