Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG)

Assessment of research quality 2004 - 2009
Contents

1. General information ............................................................................................................................................. 4
2. Review of the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture ................................ 8
3. Assessment of the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture ....................13
4. Assessment of the three Research Programmes of the Institute ......................................... 20
5. Recommendations ............................................................................................................................................... 28
Appendices ..................................................................................................................................................................... 32

Colophon

University of Groningen
Office of the University
Department of Academic Affairs and International Relations

Address  PO Box 72
NL 9700 AB Groningen
Phone  +31-50-3635370
Email  AZ@rug.nl
Website  www.rug.nl/bureau/corporate/on\nderzoek/kwaliteitszorg

Faculty of Arts
Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG)

Address  PO Box 716
NL-9700 AS Groningen
The Netherlands
Phone  +31 50 363 5918
Fax  +31 50 363 5821
E-mail  icog@rug.nl
Website  www.rug.nl/let/onderzoek/onderzoekinst\ntuten/icog

To be cited as  Assessment of Research Quality, Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG) 2004-2009, University of Groningen 2011

Layout  Studio Jelien
1.1 National system for assessing the quality of research

According to national agreements, the Board of the University of Groningen is responsible for organizing adequate, thorough, independent assessments of all research conducted at the University of Groningen. The evaluations follow the national Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 (SEP). The aim of the SEP is to provide common guidelines for the evaluation and improvement of research and research policy, based on expert assessment. One requirement of the protocol is that the research is evaluated externally every six years.

The Board of the University (College van Bestuur) has invited a Peer Review Committee (PRC) of five external experts to evaluate the research that was carried out at the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture ('Instituut voor Cultuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek Groningen'; ICOG) in the period 2004 – 2009. The PRC was requested to assess the quality, productivity, relevance and vitality of the research institute and its three programmes or Project Groups. Its assignment was to evaluate whether the ICOG produced results relevant to the scientific community and results relevant to society, and also to evaluate the training of PhD students.

The PRC based its evaluation on the SEP (www.knaw.nl/sep). No additional protocol or Terms of References were supplied for this review (SEP Article 4.4).

1.2 Composition of the PRC

Prof. R. A. M. Aerts, Political History, Radboud University Nijmegen (chair)
Prof. A.W. M. Gerrits, Russian History and Politics, Leiden University
Prof. L. Missinne, Dutch Literature, University of Muenster;
Prof. K. A. Ottenheym, History of Architecture, Utrecht University
Prof. L.M.L. Rodríguez, Languages and Cultures of Latin America, Leiden University;
Dr S.F. Brouwer-Keij MBA from the Office of the University of Groningen was executive secretary of the PRC.
1.3 Procedures used

Prior to the site visit, the Board provided the PRC with a Self Evaluation Report (SER) of the Institute containing a list of 15 key publications. The key publications were made available to the committee for review on a CD-Rom and in hard copy during the site visit.

The CD-Rom contained a complete list of publications, arranged according to the three Project Groups and their chronological or thematic subgroups. It also provided information on the PhD programme.

The PRC members were asked to complete a preliminary assessment form. The Committee had one telephone meeting prior to the site visit.

At the request of the PRC, additional information was supplied on:

- the teaching load,
- the PhD completion rates,
- the number of research staff in the three subgroups,
- the output requirements of the faculty and the ICOG,
- the number of publications in A journals or the percentage of papers in Dutch,
- the research institutes or centres and
- the percentage of research grants and contract research funding.

During the site visit the ICOG management and Faculty complied with PRC requests to provide the committee with additional information. This additional information enabled the PRC to estimate the PhD completion rates. Furthermore, the PRC assessed the international impact of the publications by estimating the percentage of journal papers published in Dutch and the number of articles published in the Groningen Series on Cultural Change.

The site visit took place on 6-9 December 2010. The full programme is presented in Appendix 2. During the site visit the PRC met with the Dean and the Faculty Board, and with the former director of ICOG, Professor Hoen, and the current director of the Institute, Professor Jensma. In addition, the Committee spoke with the former Director of Studies of the Graduate School (Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities), Dr Van Boven, and with the Managing Director of the new Graduate School, Dr McCully, about the issue of PhD training. It also conducted separate interviews with representatives of the three Research Groups and with a delegation of PhD students.

The interviews were of an exploratory nature. The Committee appreciates the positive and open manner in which the participants discussed the matters at hand and the enthusiasm shown by the management, researchers and PhD students. The Committee would have welcomed more opportunity to interview members of the teaching staff in order to learn about the effect of the teaching load on the feasibility of research.
2.1 Description of the Institute

The Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG) is one of the three Research Institutes within the Faculty of Arts. ICOG’s mission, as stated in the Self Evaluation Report, is ‘to research and reveal culture in all its aspects, both in the past and in the present’. The Institute hosts, coordinates, encourages and facilitates research in the fields of culture, history and literature. ICOG conducts research in the fields of history and the study of international relations and organizations, literary history and theory of literature, the history and theory of the arts and architecture, the study of culture, and media and journalism studies.

ICOG research aims at an interdisciplinary approach. Its Project Groups are organized in such a way as to encourage both synchronic and diachronic connections between researchers.

On average, ICOG comprised 79.3 FTE research staff (85.1 in 2009), including 39.5 FTE tenured staff (43.0 in 2009), 6.9 FTE non-tenured staff (6.0 in 2009) and 33.0 FTE PhD students (36.0 in 2009). About 12 FTE of the research staff are full professors (36 individuals).
In the period under review (2004-2009), ICOG research was arranged into three Project Groups:

ICOG I Politics, Media and Nation-building,
ICOG II Cultures and Identity
ICOG III Society and the Arts

The three ICOG sections are of a rather unequal size. The third group is the largest, representing about 55% of the Institute’s research effort. With 18%, ICOG I is the smallest project group, while ICOG II forms about 26%. All three Project Groups have subdivisions that coincide with historical periods: Antiquity, Middle Ages and Early Modern Age, the Long Nineteenth Century, and the Twentieth Century. Furthermore, ICOG III is divided again into the four sections of: Society and Text, Society and Image, Gender, and Art and Knowledge.

2.2 Position of ICOG within the Faculty of Arts and its relation to other Research Institutes:

ICOG researchers – tenured staff, PhD students and postdoctoral fellows (hereinafter referred to as ‘postdocs’) – also participate in national research schools, such as
- OIKOS (National Research School in Classical Studies).
- NRSMS (Netherlands Research School for Medieval Studies).
- N.W. Posthumus Institute (Netherlands Research School for Economic and Social History).

Furthermore, two thirds of all ICOG researchers are members of the local Graduate School, GRSSH (Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities), the former Rudolf Agricola Institute (RAI). During the period under investigation GRSSH provided the advanced academic training of PhD researchers.

2.3 Director and Advisory Board

In accordance with official Faculty guidelines, ICOG is managed by an Academic Director and an Advisory Board. Professor M. Gosman (Medieval and Early Modern French Literature) was director of the Institute until September 2006, and Professor H. Hoen (International Political Economy) presided over the Institute for the four years that followed. As from September 2010, Professor G. Jensma (Frisian Language and Literature) has been in charge.

Furthermore, there is an Advisory Board consisting of nine ICOG researchers. During the period 2004-2009 the board was chaired by Professor M. Kemperink (Dutch Literature)

2.4 Other research clusters and institutes within the Faculty of Arts

During the site visit it turned out that the Faculty of Arts encompasses several ‘institutes’ or ‘centres’ that are active in research and that operate alongside or across the formal ICOG structure and programmes. On request the PRC received a full list of the operational centres and the centres in the making (see Appendix IV) The status of these institutes and how they interconnect is not clear, as they are of a rather diverse nature. Some of these institutes or centres combine research with educational activities or knowledge valorization. Some operate in collaboration with third parties. Only a few institutes or centres appear to be dedicated to enhancing cooperation between researchers. The E.H. Kossmann Institute is a successful example of this. It is an apparent clustering and collaboration of researchers in the field of Political History, from all three programmes of ICOG I, II and III. The Centre for Arts and Society seems to be another rather promising initiative.
2.5 Graduate School

ICOG established the GRSSH Graduate School (Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities) in order to be able to support the increasing number of PhD students. The school has provided an intensive training programme for PhD students. It was led by Dr E.M.A. van Boven (Director of Graduate Studies) supported by M.R.B. Wubbolts MA (PhD coordinator). From 1 September 2010, the graduate school has become a more general Graduate School, responsible for the support and training of all PhD students in the Faculty of Arts (ICOG, GIA and CLCG).

2.6 Cultural Change programme

Research in the humanities in the period 2003-2009 was not only guided by the programmes of the three ICOG sections and the initiatives of the above-mentioned institutes. From 1999 until 2006, it was enhanced by a third area of thematic focus, the Cultural Change (CC) programme. Three CC programmes – Dynamics and Diagnosis (1999), Impact and Integration (2000), and Perception and Representation (2002) – were secured within the University of Groningen in open competition. Their aim was to strengthen research in the Humanities. The funds from the Cultural Change programme enabled the organization of international workshops and conferences. It has been a commendable decision to divert funds to establishing an English-language publication series, Groningen Studies in Cultural Change (GSCC). The series is being published by Peeters, a well-known academic publisher from Leuven. In the period 2002 to 2010, 44 volumes were published.
Chapter 3 Assessment of the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG)

3.1 Aim of the assessment

This assessment has a dual aim. On the one hand, it is a quality assessment of the performance of ICOG in the period of 2003-2009 in accordance with the SEP (Standard Evaluation Protocol). On the other hand, given that ICOG is restructuring its internal organization and that the GRSSH graduate school is also entering a new phase, the PRC also has an advisory role. The assessment is therefore a review of the structure that, whatever happens, ICOG will be leaving behind. The aim of the PRC’s interviews has been to seek recommendations for a new structure.

3.2 About the assessment method

The PRC held internal discussions about the way in which the SEP Protocol should be employed. Not all categories or subcategories of the Protocol are usable, measurable or applicable. In the score structure, in which 'good' actually occupies the middle position, there is a risk of inflation. The PRC does not want to go along with this, and has thus applied the SEP criteria strictly but according to their full meaning and value. With the score 'good' (3), the SEP means that research is ‘competitive at a national level and makes a valuable contribution in the international field’. The PRC certainly does not wish to undervalue this score. The national academic world and the more broadly developed public at home or in another specific linguistic region represent a relevant and legitimate world to communicate within for a number of disciplines in the arts. Scholars in large countries (Germany, France, the USA) do the same to a great extent. This therefore does not imply a limitation of the intrinsic quality of the research; at the most, it is a limitation of the dissemination and effect or impact of this research.

In some cases, the PRC has not decided upon a round number (3) or (4) but a score in between. The composition of the three ICOG groups, which are all large to very large and heterogeneous (particularly ICOG II and III), makes it difficult to provide an assessment score that does justice to the excellence present or brings weak performances to the fore. The scores therefore necessarily indicate an average.

The assessment, in figures, for ICOG as a whole:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>good to very good, 3 to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Productivity</td>
<td>good to very good, 3 to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relevance</td>
<td>good to very good, 3 to 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitality &amp; Feasibility</td>
<td>very good, 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.3 Quality

In accordance with the SEP, the quality assessment includes the quality, relevance and academic reputation of the research (3.7), leadership (4), organization (2), resources (4) and PhD training (4). The general quality of the research and the performance of the research organization or institute are assessed together here. In general, ICOG was a well-performing institute in the period investigated.

It is only the structuring of the research into three groups of a rather heterogeneous and not always logical composition and a very unequal size that, in the opinion of the PRC, has not succeeded. Evidently, the management of ICOG itself also believes this because it is now looking to an alternative arrangement. The old setup, with three groups that are divided again into thematic subgroups, which are further divided into four periods, gives a bureaucratic, forced impression. The umbrella narrative that connects the ICOG groups programmatically is interesting in itself, but in everyday practice has little to do with the research conducted within the groups. These essays are not of a connecting, programmatic nature. The structure has been more of an administrative than of a programmatic nature. Incidentally, the researchers do not consider this structure to have hindered them in any way in their everyday work. What is more, the umbrella narrative did actually bring together researchers who otherwise would not have come into contact with each other.

Since 2006 in particular, the management of the Institute has shown it has a good eye for recognizing the necessity for improvement and how to realize this.

The funds that the Institute had at its disposal are on average relatively generous, although the options were limited in the years 2005–2007 due to financial problems in the Faculty. The Institute has sufficient direct funds (for research and conference travel costs, and for conferences, workshops, proceedings and guest lectures), although it is
Chapter 3 Evaluation of the Institute

It is very good that the researchers within ICOG formally receive a lot of research time (30-40%); since 2010 even assistant professors receive 40% fixed research time. A further good measure is that in recent years ICOG has been able to award a bonus of EUR 6,000 (‘broedbonus’) to researchers at Senior Lecturer level to allow them to free up their time temporarily in order to prepare an NWO application that stands a good chance of succeeding. The funds that went to ICOG via the Cultural Change programme have also made a number of activities possible (conferences, workshops, the GSCC series).

The intensive, tightly structured PhD training that was offered by GRSSH in the period investigated is very good and in terms of setup is positively exemplary. The PhD students give a positive evaluation of the supervision, curriculum and opportunities at the local research school. Nevertheless, the PRC feels obliged to comment upon what the intensive PhD training represents in terms of return. Of the 53 PhD projects that were started in 2004, 2003 or earlier still, 25 have still not been completed. On average, the 25 PhDs (in total 118 projects) that were completed went 15 months over time. After 2006, the return appears to be better.

Productivity

In the period investigated, ICOG comprised a total of 476 FTE research input. This is on average 79.3 FTE per year spread over 39.5 FTE tenured staff, 6.9 FTE non-tenured staff and 33 FTE PhD students. They produced a total of 506 publications per year. Of these, 242 were in the category of academic publication, and about a third of these appeared in journals and the rest in the form of book chapters. Furthermore, on average 13.8 monographs and 13 PhDs were produced. The researchers also produced 95 professional publications and 97 reviews per year and were involved in 46 editorial activities.

This means that per FTE input ICOG researchers realized on average 6.3 publications per year, of which 3.4 were academic publications including monographs and PhDs. Corrected according to the ICOG norm of output measurement, this figure is 3.9 academic publications because scientific monographs count as five academic publications. The ICOG researchers have performed above the minimum output norm here that is employed by the Institute. Leaving aside whether the ICOG norm can be termed high in comparison, the researchers have therefore published well despite the teaching load that they experience as being heavy.

Both in the first and last periods the management of ICOG has taken measures that appear to have had a positive effect upon the productivity and motivation of the researchers. The Groningen academic publication series Groningen Studies in Cultural Change is certainly positive. The volumes generally issue from a symposium or colloquium on a theme that has promoted inspiring collaboration between people or groups within ICOG. This has resulted in a series of 42 volumes, which are published by Peeters in Leuven, an internationally renowned academic publisher. There is also a disadvantage to this Groningen series of publications, however. A considerable number of the academic publications, estimated at 25-30%, are realized within the scope of this in home series. Despite the undisputable quality of the series, its international impact is still not particularly great, neither in general nor per discipline, in the opinion of the PRC. This therefore means the Groningen research, due to the existence of its own series, runs the risk of not being visible and ‘competitive’ enough.

The establishment of the ‘broedbonus’ to the tune of EUR 6,000, to provide ambitious researchers who have little research time or heavy teaching duties with the opportunity to prepare a research proposal, appears to be a good measure. The measure is motivating and increases the likelihood of submitting proposals to NWO or ESF that are in with a chance. The effect of this measure, which was introduced in 2009, can, however, not yet be measured. The same is true for the increase in the allocation of research time to all staff that was effected in 2009.

Relevance

The academic relevance of the ICOG research cannot be evaluated generally but only by discipline or subdiscipline. The PRC cannot provide an opinion on this. It is also clear that the majority of the ICOG research cannot focus on more or less direct social applicability. This is true for the
humanities in general. However, ICOG performs considerably well on this point. Within the Institute are several centres that do not just contribute to research but also to valorization, to the dissemination of knowledge, and to the provision of information, or that provide some sort of social service. In recent years, the researchers and groups within ICOG conducted research in relation to or for the benefit of the media, the cultural sector, the public administration, the northern region, the European Union and South-East European governments and institutions. The new Centre for Arts and Society and the ‘Culture in the Mirror’ project (aimed at designing a curriculum for cultural education) have also contributed to an increase in the social relevance of university research.

Furthermore, with a number of researchers there is a direct relationship between fundamental, theoretical research and participation in the public debate, both national and international. With 568 professional publications for a general public, the ICOG researchers have also substantially contributed to the dissemination of knowledge. The 581 reviews for either a specialized audience or a more general audience are essential as a service to scientific debate itself. This use of research time must therefore not be undervalued.

On the basis of these considerations, the PRC has assessed the ICOG research on the criterion of ‘relevance’ as good to very good.

**Vitality and feasibility**

In accordance with the SEP, the PRC evaluated the strategy, SWOT analysis, robustness and stability of the Institute. ICOG is a lively and dynamic research institute. Researchers work together on inspiring and meaningful projects, sometimes within the organizational structures and sometimes right across them. From its meetings with tenured staff researchers and with PhD students, the PRC has gained a very positive impression of the research climate.

An acknowledged weakness of the structure comprising three large, heterogeneous umbrella groups is that many researchers had difficulty identifying with the groups or programmes they were supposed to participate in. A smaller scale or a more coherent structuring of project groups should bring about improvement here. In some project groups the ambition to participate actively in international scientific development could be enhanced. More of an effort could be made to acquire indirect government funding. However, there is a clear awareness of the shortcomings, and improvements have begun to be made. The allocation of more research time may prove to be of importance, provided this formally allocated research time does not disappear under actual teaching pressure.

All in all, there is no doubt that ICOG is a well managed, well functioning, robust and dynamic research institute.
Chapter 4 Assessment of the three Research Programmes of the Institute

4.1 Project Group 1 (ICOG I): Politics, Media and Nation-building

The three project groups within ICOG were assessed in accordance with the SEP in terms of quality, productivity, societal relevance and vitality. The quality aspect consists of an evaluation of quality and scientific relevance of the research (based upon academic publications, monographs, and PhDs), academic reputation and acquisition of research grants. The ‘resources’ and ‘organization’ components were not assessed because the project groups do not deal with these themselves.

Politics, Media and Nation-building (ICOG I) is, with 18% of the FTE-input, the smallest of the three ICOG project groups. The average staff complement in the period 2004-2009 was 14.05 FTE research staff, 7.15 FTE of which were tenured staff, and in 2009 it was 14.85 FTE research staff (8.05 FTE tenured staff).

There are three ‘project subgroups’ within the project group: Historical aspects of politics, media and nation-building, International Relations and organizations, and Socio-economic aspects of politics, media and nation-building. The term ‘project groups’ suggests the execution of a joint programme from three perspectives. In practice, this is not the case. The setup reflects the existing chair assignments. ICOG I is an umbrella group consisting of three groups of researchers who mainly have their own orientation. From the perspective of the programme description, it is illogical that the media historians have been housed in ICOG II and a number of historians who are characteristic for this programme in ICOG II and III. Researchers from ICOG II have published about all sorts of aspects of nation-building. Whatever the reason for this grouping of researchers may have been, it compromises the credibility of the ambitions of the programme from the outset. Historians from ICOG I, II and III have come together in the E.H. Kossmann Institute, which deals with aspects of political culture, theoretical reflection on politics and the relationship between media and politics. This Institute has been a successful initiative with a clear potential for bringing researchers together and inspiring them, and is well known outside Groningen.
Chapter 4 Evaluation of the Research Programme

The assessment of ICOG I is:

- **Q** good to very good 3-4
- **P** good to very good 3-4
- **SR** very good 4
- **V & F** good to very good 3-4

**Quality**

Within the group are considerable differences in level, academic reputation and ambition as concerns national and international visibility and the chosen periodicals in which to publish. The nature of some of the research makes it logical and right that this has a regional or national focus, but the research with an international theme could be more ambitious. The three NWO grants secured (Dr D.J. Wolffram, Dr M. Doortmont, Dr A. de Baets) are a relatively good result.

**Productivity**

This group produced 309 academic publications, monographs and PhDs, or 51.5 per year. With an average research input of 14.05 FTE, this is 3.6 academic publications per year per FTE (or, corrected according to ICOG norms, 4.0) and therefore above the ICOG norm. The group produced 15 PhDs (for 12 professors/associate professors) or 2.5 PhDs per year.

Of the three ‘projects’ within ICOG I, Historical Aspects performed best with an average of more than five academic publications per year per FTE. The International Relations group published somewhat below the average.

**Societal Relevance**

Through the work of Dr de Baets (censorship and persecution of historians) and through publications about European integration, security and humanitarian policy, the international political order, administrative problems and regional history, the societal relevance of the research in ICOG I is relatively high.

**Vitality**

Although ICOG I is in fact an umbrella group consisting itself of three groups dealing with political and socio-economic history and international relations, there has been a lot of activity under this umbrella. The group has a number of ambitious researchers who are capable of securing more research funding. The E.H. Kossmann Institute in particular has been a successful initiative that has the potential to grow into a new, strong, well-equipped cluster of research, collaboration and research presentation.

4.2 Project Group 2 (ICOG II): Cultures and Identity

With 26% Cultures and Identity is, in size, the middle of the three ICOG umbrellas. Its average size was 19.4 FTE, of which 10.2 was FTE tenured staff. In 2009 the total staff complement was 25.2 FTE, of which 12.7 was tenured staff. In the period 2004-2009 this group experienced the greatest fluctuations in size, growing from 15.4 FTE in 2006 to 25.2 FTE in 2009. Cultures and Identity increased in 2009 by 20%, which was much more than the other groups.

Cultures and Identity is a very heterogeneous cluster that is subdivided into four period groups (Antiquity, Middle Ages/Early Modern Times, 19th Century/Fin de Siècle, 20th century). The cluster comprises mainly literary scholars, cultural historians and media historians. Despite seeming to be a programme, the associated researchers experience it as unspecific and indistinctive, but equally not as an inhibiting structure. It acted as a useful framework for interdisciplinary collaboration. In general, contacts with colleagues and initiatives of national research schools were more important for the members of this cluster. Members of ICOG II also participated in the Kossmann Institute. The associated researchers valued the agreeable combination of freedom, facilitation and opportunity to enter into interdisciplinary contacts.

The assessment of ICOG II is:

- **Q** very good, 4
- **P** good to very good 3-4
- **SR** good 3
- **V & F** good to very good 3-4

**Quality**

In this group there are also clear differences in quality, ambition and reputation, but the group includes many strong performers with good publications in leading periodicals in their discipline. This means that the average is at a very good level. Of the 18 NWO grants, seven were secured by members of ICOG II. Of the eight successful
propose more in the scope of the NWO grant programme 'Internationalization in the Humanities' three were achieved by researchers within ICOG II. Within ICOG this research cluster is by far the most successful at securing NWO grants. ICOG II also has the most Rosalind Franklin Fellowships for talented female researchers.

**Productivity**

This group achieved a total of 406 academic publications, including monographs and dissertations, or 68.3 per year. With an average staff complement of 19.4 FTE that is 3.5 academic publications per research FTE, somewhat above the minimum norm for ICOG. Corrected according to ICOG criteria, it would be 4.5 due to the large number of monographs and therefore well above the ICOG norm. The Cultures and Identity group also produced the most popularizing publications and reviews (5 per FTE) and carried out the most editorial activities (0.7 per FTE). Within ICOG II the productivity of the ‘20th Century’ group was above average and that of “19th Century/Fin de Siècle” below average.

Within ICOG II 19 PhDs were completed, or 3.1 per year. In relation to the figure of 17 professors and associate professors within ICOG II, the PhD result is comparable to that of ICOG I.

**Societal Relevance**

The large number of popularizing publications and reviews for general periodicals and the contributions of the media historians mean that the societal relevance is considerable. Researchers from ICOG II participate in centres such as the Center for Japanese Studies and the Centre for Canadian Studies that also aim at broader dissemination of information.

**Vitality**

Organizationally speaking, Cultures and Identity is much too big and heterogeneous as a research umbrella, but within this cluster a great deal of quality and much stimulating collaboration has arisen. There is therefore no doubt about the research potential. Again, PRC advises restructuring this cluster into smaller, more coherent units.

---

### 4.3 Project Group 3 (ICOG III): Society and the Arts

The Society and the Arts ‘project group’ consists of 55% of the research input of ICOG, in total 279.5 FTE or an average per year of 46.6 FTE. In 2009 the staff complement was 47.2 FTE. The average of the tenured staff was 22.0 FTE (22.3 FTE in 2009).

ICOG III is a very big and heterogeneous cluster of literary scholars, historians, art historians and cultural scientists. Society and the Arts is more of a container theme than a programme, although there is a special focus on the dynamic relationship between culture and society, theoretical aspects of that relationship and the arts as such, and processes of transmission of knowledge and ideologies. The cluster is divided into four subgroups (Cultures and Contexts: Texts, Cultures and Contexts: Images, Gender, Culture and Knowledge). These four are divided once again into four period groups as in ICOG II.

Society and the Arts is also experienced by the researchers as an ‘environment’ that has definitely promoted interdisciplinary contacts and collaboration. A recognized weakness according to the Self Evaluation Report was the relatively limited identification with this ‘project group’, apart from within the subgroups of Gender and Arts & Knowledge. There were excellent performances within the Society and Text subgroup, but this group, which was bigger within ICOG III than the other three groups together, suffered most from the lack of coherence.

The assessment of ICOG III is:

**Quality**

Society and the Arts has a number of the best researchers within ICOG in terms of national or international reputation. This influences the general assessment of quality but at the same time the group is so extensive that the quality of the best researchers cannot determine that of the whole group. This is true for all achievements. In securing NWO/VNC
grants, this team performed below the ICOG average: seven of the 18, and therefore 39%, whilst S&tA consists of 60% of the tenured staff of ICOG. Furthermore, nearly all of the grants awarded here are for proposals made by historians and art historians; there were hardly any proposals from Literary and Cultural Studies. From the interviews it emerged that too few proposals were submitted, and that these were often insufficiently prepared. Further, that work pressure and age distribution implied that there were too few opportunities to try for the NWO Innovational Research Incentives Scheme, and finally that the methods dispute within Literary Studies has a disadvantageous effect upon the chances of receiving an award.

Productivity
The researchers of ICOG III achieved a total of 899 academic publications, including monographs and PhDs. That is 150 per year, with an average of 46.6 FTE or 3.2 publications per research FTE (according to ICOG criteria 3.7). The productivity therefore is at or somewhat above the ICOG minimum norm, but it is the lowest of the three groups within the Institute. Within ICOG III, considerably less was written for a more general audience and fewer reviews were produced (1.1 per FTE per year). The number of editorial activities was 0.6 per FTE per year.

Forty-four PhD theses were successfully defended, or 7.3 per year. Set against the staff complement of professors and associate professors (36) this is a ratio of 1.2, comparable with the result within ICOG I and II. Considered in terms of the staff complement, the PhD output within the Cultures and Contexts: Texts subgroup was considerably lower than that of the other subgroups.

Societal Relevance
Within Society and the Arts a number of researchers had a high societal impact through publications and positions they held. The establishment of the Centre for Arts and Society, which gives policy advice to projects and institutions in the sphere of cultural education, is also a good initiative. In this context the new research programme ‘Culture in the Mirror’ (started in 2008, supervisor Prof. B.P. van Heusden) funded through contract research and with the aim of designing a curriculum for cultural education is of great significance.

Vitality
Although it is even more true for ICOG III than for the other ICOG sections that the current setup is too big and heterogeneous, the general verdict about the strength of research as well as the motivation and dynamics within this section is positive. ‘Knowledge production and transmission in society’ is a promising new focus in the research. Furthermore, clustering around the Centre for Arts and Society should provide direction and have a dynamic effect on some of the research. A connecting element is also the theoretical or meta-reflection upon history, art, image and text. This line of research, partly due to the great influence of Prof. F.R. Ankersmit, had become a Groningen specialism. One way for the Faculty to continue this line of research after Ankersmit’s retirement would be to invest in the appointment of a researcher with a comparable appeal and impact.
As the PRC was asked to advise on possible ways of improving ICOG, a number of recommendations follow. This sometimes means going into more detail on points that have already been documented in earlier chapters of this assessment.

5.1 The structure of ICOG

The Institute itself has already made the decision to end the division into three clusters of rather unequal size, which was effected in 2004. These clusters were a response to the assessment report of 2004, which did not find the division at the time of the research into twenty different groups very favourable. However, the clustering chosen in 2004 has not really solved that problem: the three big clusters were also subdivided into subthemes and periods. This resulted more in an administrative matrix than in true centres of research. The clusters house both stronger and weaker performers, and the overarching themes have inspired some researchers but not others. It can also be ascertained that the big clusters gave researchers the freedom to enter into all sorts of partnerships.

The PRC supports ICOG’s proposal to reduce the organization and steering of the research as well as the responsibility for it to about nine groups, clusters of a number of related groups of chairs. Thematic steering at the institute level will be introduced through the three new profiles (1. History and theory of politics, 2. Knowledge production and transmission, 3. Cultural landscapes).

There is space here for a number of ‘centres’ or ‘institutes’ that have been set up in recent years. Their status was unclear to the PRC. But as the institutes are evidently able to connect and stimulate the researchers and present the Groningen profile to the outside world, they have a valuable function. They are a kind of ‘promotional workshop’. The PRC strongly advises enabling such initiatives and continuing to enable them without the need to formalize them straightaway. Apart from the E.H. Kossmann Institute and the new Centre for Arts and Society, one could also consider a ‘centre for the study of minority cultures and peripheral regions in Europe’ or a ‘centre for Hanseatic and North...
and East European studies’. The ICOG can differentiate itself in these fields to the outside world. There can be an evaluation every three or five years of whether such institutes do actually generate the intended research activity and positioning. In a number of cases existing or potential ‘institutes’ are close to the proposed chair clusters. There is an opportunity here for both organizational forms to grow closer in an unforced way.

5.2 PhD supervision

The PRC understands the motives for absorbing the Groningen Research School for the Study of the Humanities into a broader and more general Graduate School. The advantage of scaling-up, however, cannot outweigh the loss of the qualities of the intensive supervision with a specific focus on humanities that was provided up to now in the well-functioning GRSSH. A local and specific graduate school can also very easily be further internationalized.

5.3 The visibility and impact of the ICOG research

Of all ICOG publications in 2004-2009, 53% consisted of academic publications including monographs and PhDs, 18% were professional publications and 19% were reviews (either academic or for the general reader). These are good percentages. The PRC fully recognizes that the humanities have a responsibility to continue to communicate with the general public and society. Valorization is important. With particular reference to the academic publications, an increase in the level of ambition would be desirable, in particular where it concerns disciplines with a predominantly international orientation. ICOG researchers publish relatively often in via the in-house GSCC series and in via volumes at other recognized academic publishers, but relatively little at the most selective academic top publishers and journals. The GSCC series could gain more weight and impact through peer review and inviting leading foreign contributors.

Improvement could also be made to the acquisition of research funds from indirect government funding and contract research, particularly with Literary Studies. This could be furthered by designating temporary research foci and facilitating the frontrunners in these. Via its national research school, Literature Studies could also initiate a more extensive programme at NWO. The performance of ICOG in securing funds from the NWO Innovational Research Incentives Scheme is moderate. Improvement is not only a matter of appointment policy (age distribution) but also of an active recruitment of Veni and Vidi grant candidates from elsewhere. To enhance ICOG’s appeal the institute could display the qualities and profiles of the Groningen research in a more assertive manner.
Appendices

Appendix 1  Detailed information on input (FTE) and output of the Institute
Appendix 2  Programme of the site visit
Appendix 3  Peer Review Committee, and brief CVs
Appendix 4  List of Research Centres and Institutes
Appendix 5  Independence form PRC

### Appendix 1  Detailed information on input (FTE) and output of the Institute

#### Table  Overview of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICQG</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total tenured staff</td>
<td>39.70</td>
<td>39.05</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td>37.20</td>
<td>40.55</td>
<td>43.05</td>
<td>237.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-tenured staff</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>40.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. students</td>
<td>30.30</td>
<td>32.40</td>
<td>30.90</td>
<td>30.10</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>197.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total staff</td>
<td>78.10</td>
<td>79.45</td>
<td>77.95</td>
<td>73.15</td>
<td>81.30</td>
<td>85.10</td>
<td>475.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table  Research staff at institutional level

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICQG</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total tenured staff</td>
<td>39.70</td>
<td>39.05</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td>37.20</td>
<td>40.55</td>
<td>43.05</td>
<td>237.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total non-tenured staff</td>
<td>8.10</td>
<td>7.90</td>
<td>10.20</td>
<td>5.85</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>6.05</td>
<td>40.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ph.D. students</td>
<td>30.30</td>
<td>32.40</td>
<td>30.90</td>
<td>30.10</td>
<td>38.00</td>
<td>36.00</td>
<td>197.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>total staff</td>
<td>78.10</td>
<td>79.45</td>
<td>77.95</td>
<td>73.15</td>
<td>81.30</td>
<td>85.10</td>
<td>475.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Table  Overview of Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICQG</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in journals A</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>501</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>book chapters C</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>194</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Academic publications</td>
<td>258</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>238</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>254</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1454</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monographs M</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD theses PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional publications</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prof. publ. P</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reviews R</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>581</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Editorial act. E</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>277</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendices

Appendix 2

Program of the site visit

2010 Peer Review Site Visit
Assessment of Research Quality 2004 - 2009
Instituut voor Cultuurwetenschappelijk Onderzoek
Groningen

Peer Review Committee (PRC):
Remieg Aerts (chair),
André Gerrits, Lut Missinne, Koen Ottenheym and Luz Rodríguez

Monday, 6 December

1:00 – 4:00 p.m.  PRC preliminary meeting
Location throughout most of the visit: Board Room
(1315.0331) Harmonie Building
Oude Kijk in ‘t Jatstraat 26, Groningen

6:00 pm  Opening dinner
ICOG research evaluation 2010
Location: Bistro ‘t Gerecht, Oude Boteringestraat 43,
Groningen (next to hotel)

Peer Review Committee members
Gerry Wakker – Dean of the Faculty of Arts
Kees de Bot – Vice-dean and director Graduate School
Herman Hoen – former director ICOG
Goffe Jensma – current director ICOG
Fennegien Brouwer-Keij – Secretary to the PRC
Heidi Disler – Faculty Research Policy Advisor

Tuesday, 7 December

Location: Board Room (see above)

9:00 – 10.00 a.m.  Opening, Discussion of Goals
Gerry Wakker
Kees de Bot
Egon Dietrich (Faculty Treasurer)
Rita Landeweerd (Faculty Secretary)
Herman Hoen
Goffe Jensma
Fennegien Brouwer-Keij
Heidi Disler

10:00 – 11:00 a.m. PRC Discussion

11:00 a.m. – 12:15 p.m. Meeting with PhD students
Marek Neuman
Jennifer Meier
Korrie Melis
Klazina Botke
Marleen Timmer
Frank Harbers
Boris Noordenbos
Joost Krijnen
Konstantin Mierau

12:15 – 12:45 a.m.  Meeting with Director of Studies
former ICOG Graduate School:
Erica van Boven

12:45-1:00 p.m.  Meeting with director and
managing director Graduate
School for the Humanities: Kees
de Bot and Chris McCully

1:00 – 2:00 p.m.  Lunch Harmonie Building
Canteen

Group meetings
The protocol will be the same for each research group (see
below). The group may present for max. 15 minutes, incl.
2010 updates (new grants, promotions, etc.), if they wish.
The rest of the time will be reserved for questions by the
Peer Review Committee.

2:00 – 3:00 p.m.  Group I: Politics, Media, and
Nation-building
Doeko Bosscher
Herman Hoen
Jan van der Harst

3:00 – 3:30 p.m.  PRC Discussion

3:30 – 4:30 p.m.  Group II: Cultures and Identity
Joop Koopmans
Wessel Krul
Onno van Nijf
Sabrina Corbellini

4:30 – 5:00 p.m.  PRC Discussion
Appendix 3

Peer Review Committee, and brief CVs

The Board of the University is responsible for the selection of the chair and further configuration of the external evaluation committee. The Faculty and the unit to be evaluated were invited to suggest committee members. The selection procedure for chair and members ensured the competence, expertise, impartiality and independence of the evaluation committee as a whole. At the start of the site visit the PRC members signed a standard ‘Competence and independence of peer review committee members form’. According to the University of Groningen protocol for research evaluations
www.rug.nl/corporate/onderzoek/kwaliteitszorg

The PRC for the evaluation of CLCG in 2010 consisted of three members and a secretary, their CVs are listed below.

Brief CVs

Prof. R. A. M. Aerts, Radboud University Nijmegen, chair; Aerts holds a chair in Political History after the Middle Ages at Radboud University. He is director of the Dutch Postgraduate School for Political History and a member of the KNAW (Royal Dutch Academy of Science). His research encompasses the political culture and the social and cultural embedding of politics.
www.ru.nl/geschiedenis/wie_wat_waar/medewerkers/medewerkers/aerts/

Prof. A.W.M. Gerrits, Leiden University; Gerrits holds a chair in Russian History and Politics at the Institute for History of Leiden University.
www.hum.leiden.edu/history/organisation/staff-history/gerritsawm.html

Prof. L. Missinne, University of Muenster; Missinne holds a chair in Dutch Literature at the University of Muenster. She is executive director of the Institut für Niederländische Philologie.
www.uni-muenster.de/HausDerNiederlande/institut/mitarbeiter/missinne.html

Prof. K. A. Ottenheym, Utrecht University; Ottenheym holds a chair in History of Architecture at Utrecht University. He is director of the Dutch Postgraduate School for Art History (OSK) and member of the KNAW. His
current research is aimed at the international influence of Dutch architecture in early modern Europe.

www.uu.nl/gw/medewerkers/KAOttenhey

Prof. L.M.L. Rodríguez, Leiden University; Rodríguez holds a chair in Latin American Literature at Institute for Cultural Disciplines of Leiden University. His current research is aimed at language and culture and covers Latin American literature, rhetoric, and politics of knowledge.

www.hum.leiden.edu/icd/organisation/members/rodriguezlml.html

Dr S.F. Brouwer-Keij MBA, executive secretary

Brouwer is policy advisor for research and valorisation at Office of the University of Groningen (Bureau).

www.rug.nl/staff/s.fbrouwer-keij

Appendix 4       List of Research Centres and Institutes

1. Arctic Centre (=GIA)
2. Biografieinstituut (=ICOG)
3. Canadian Studies (=ICOG)
4. Centrum voor Japankunde (=ICOG)
5. Gender Studies (=ICOG)
6. Centrum voor Informatie- en Communicatieonderzoek (=CLCG)
7. Centrum voor Metageschiedenis (=ICOG)
8. Centrum voor Oost- en Midden-Europa Studies (=ICOG)
9. Expertisecentrum taal, onderwijs en communicatie (=CLCG)
10. Ernst Kossmann Instituut (=ICOG)
11. Hanze Studie Centrum (=ICOG)
12. Kenniscentrum Landschap (=ICOG)
13. Mexico Studiecentrum (=ICOG)
14. Nederlands Agronomisch Historisch Instituut (=ICOG)

Appendix 5       Independence form PRC

Competence and independence of peer review committee members

1. Members of the peer review committee must base their assessment primarily on:
   •  the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 for Public Research Organizations
   •  the ‘specific peer review protocol’ adopted by the Board of the University

2. When judging the quality of research, members of the peer review committee must base their assessment on the following information:
   •  the self-evaluation report and accompanying documentation
   •  possible additional information provided at the request of the peer review committee
   •  interviews, lectures and talks conducted within the framework of the assessment

3. Members of the peer review committee must meet the generally accepted quality demands within scientific research, including:
   •  competence and professionalism
   •  independence and objectivity
   •  care and consistency
   •  transparency and impartiality

4. Members of the peer review committee may not have any personal, scientific, financial or any other potential conflicts of interest when participating in the research assessment of Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture (ICOG) of the Faculty of Arts and are therefore both qualified and competent to carry out their task as independent assessors.

5. Members of the peer review committee must report any potential conflicts of interest in the assessment procedure to the chairman of the review committee.

I declare that I have read the above and that I will comply with it to the best of my ability.

Place and date:__________________

Signature:_____________________

Name:__________________________

This national protocol can be downloaded from: http://www.knaw.nl/sep