

Response to the Research Review Spatial Sciences 2013-2019

Board of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences

URSI Management

March 2, 2021

The research of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences, organised in the Urban and Regional Studies Institute (URSI), was evaluated by an international Peer Review Committee (PRC) in November 2020, along with the research of two other institutes of the universities of Utrecht and Amsterdam. We received the assessment report of the PRC at 18 December 2020.

The Faculty Board is very happy with the positive results of the evaluation. In quantitative terms, we scored 2 (very good) on research quality, 1 (world leading/excellent) on societal impact, and 2 (very good) on viability.

In qualitative terms, the PRC has written a lot of words of praise. The Committee finds URSI to be an inclusive, interdisciplinary, research institute that undertakes high quality international research of excellent impact and societal relevance in the fields of geography, planning and demography. The PRC noted that the publications from members of the Faculty make a significant contribution to our fields, they are of high scientific impact and relevance and contribute to important, complex, and socially relevant global and local topics. The Committee was impressed by both the volume and breadth of societally relevant research and by our innovative responsiveness to both academy-driven and community-driven research endeavours. The PRC found the staff to be supportive of the organisation of research within the Faculty and feel they are able to contribute to a multiplicity of projects in collaboration with internal members of the Faculty as well as external academic and public/private entities.

The Committee provided some recommendations to further improve the research of our Faculty. In combination with the new SEP criteria, we find that the key challenges for the next years are:

- 1) to take the next steps in developing a clearly articulated approach to come to more prioritised research topics and strategies;
- 2) to (re)define research quality in the discipline of geography and planning, in collaboration with the colleagues in Utrecht and Amsterdam, and to be (more) strategic in developing high quality research products and publications;
- 3) to continue to explore innovative and community-driven research, in conjunction with theoretically-driven research, while acknowledging more fully the effort and trade-offs (in time) for producing both types of research products.

The results of the research evaluation and the recommendations of the Committee are embedded in the Faculty's Strategic Plan 2021-2026. Moreover, the ways in which the recommendations will result in plans and strategies for the next research period will be discussed in an URSI 'heidag' in late Spring 2021. Our results and strategies in research will be monitored and subject of ongoing discussions on a yearly basis via the Faculty Strategy days.