

Leadership at the University of Groningen



Taking responsibility, collaborating, and being open to other perspectives — these are key values at the University of Groningen (UG). We strive for the well-being and development of both staff and students. This calls for leadership. Leadership is a crucial catalyst in realizing our strategic goals and core missions: research, education, and societal impact. Leadership is not a goal in itself but a means to foster a safe working environment and achieve excellent results.

What is leadership?

Leadership is a social process in which, together with others, you set and achieve goals. It takes place both formally and informally. There is no such thing as 'optimal leadership'. It largely depends on the context. However, there are specific behaviours that indicate good leadership, like described in this leadership vision. When we talk about leadership, we often refer to the person in a managerial position. However, this leadership vision is about leadership behaviour, which applies to all of us.

What do we expect from leaders at the UG?

- We expect everyone to at least possess personal leadership skills and be willing to further develop their own leadership. Leadership is not something you automatically master just because you are an excellent researcher, teacher, or support professional. However, there are possibilities to develop it.
- The wide range of leadership development training possibilities offered at the university supports and encourages employees to strengthen their leadership behaviour so they can reach the required skill level for a leadership role. However, the development of leadership behaviour and skills is more than just theory. You primarily develop these competencies through training, practice, and by applying them in practice. Also, by regularly reflecting on your actions and learning from inspiring colleagues.
- We want to recognize and value good leadership. Conversely, we start a conversation when someone's leadership behaviour does not meet expectations in a certain situation or role. In this context, leadership and leadership development are also part of the R&D (Results & Development) interviews, so it is assessed and encouraged. Recognizing leadership as an important role also means recognizing the necessary time and functional support needed, such as from HR, ICT, and Finance.

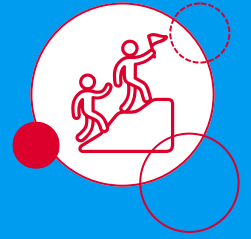
Leadership: position or role?

We view leadership as a role. A role is a combination of related activities that someone (temporarily) takes on, based on current needs and circumstances. A position is a fixed set of tasks and responsibilities.

A leadership role may coincide with a position, for example when you are a formal manager. But even if you do not have a managerial position, we still expect you to show leadership behaviour appropriate to the leadership role(s) you are fulfilling at this moment.

Leadership roles

We distinguish four leadership roles: personal leadership, individual leadership, group leadership, and organizational leadership. The boundaries between these roles are not strictly defined. You may also hold multiple roles at the same time. The four roles are described below, including the behaviours and skills that go with them.



Personal leadership: focused on yourself

Personal leadership applies to everyone and it forms the foundation of our work. You lead yourself, your own work, your own development and career. This happens in research, teaching, and support, regardless of age or career phase. Personal leadership includes behaviour such as setting goals, reflecting, showing commitment, collaborating, keeping agreements, speaking up, asking for and offering help to colleagues. Personal leadership also means being able to navigate through the organizational context you work in and having the adaptability to respond to developments within your field and the organization. Associated skills include communicating, taking initiative, acting with integrity, planning and organizing, and having self-awareness.



Individual leadership: focused on others

Formally or informally leading another employee(s) is called individual leadership. In this leadership role, you guide, direct, and support one other or others to perform, develop their talents and to grow. This includes behaviours such as holding motivational (R&D) conversations, setting frameworks, setting boundaries, recognizing and valuing others, understanding what employees need in all their diversity to be able to perform and grow, and providing tailored direction and support. Individual leadership also means being able to address inappropriate behaviour or underperformance, if necessary. Associated skills include dialogue skills, acting situationally, understanding differences between people, and giving trust.



Group leadership: focused on a group

Group leadership is in place when you lead a group of employees who are interdependent, such as a team, department, project, program, or network. In the role of group leader, you ensure that employees achieve shared results through collaboration. This includes behaviour such as determining direction and group goals, managing conflicts, working with business information, and organizing dialogue and constructive opposition. Group leadership also means creating a safe and inclusive work environment and taking the organizational context into account. Associated skills include making and explaining decisions, working with data, understanding group dynamics, addressing inappropriate behaviour, showing organizational sensitivity, and leading by example.



Organizational leadership: focused on the organization

Leading an organizational entity, such as the university, a faculty, or an institute, requires organizational leadership. For this leadership role, you need governance skills such as having a long-term vision and the ability to determine strategy, and you are the internal and external face of the organization. Organizational Leadership includes behaviour such as making decisions in difficult situations, keeping track of and operating within budget, leading other leaders, and acting in accordance with applicable (inter)national laws and regulations (compliance). Associated skills include acting in the interest of the greater whole, having a long-term vision, dealing with stakeholders, understanding organizational dynamics, and showing political sensitivity.