

MEMO UG VISION/Framework ON CAREER PATHS: EDUCATION

Version 2 November 2022

Background

Diversification of career pathways is one of the five tracks within the UG Recognition & Rewards (R&R) roadmap. The aim of this track is to achieve a greater diversity in career paths at the UG, to promote excellence in each of the key areas in academia¹. This memo focuses in particular on the key area of education, i.e. enabling dedicated education-focused career pathways. A recently conducted consultation round showed that the importance of R&R is widely recognized by all eleven faculties of the UG. Furthermore, faculties agree that education should be more recognized and valued, and they expressed their willingness to invest in career diversification within their faculty. They also stressed that they missed a clear UG vision on career diversification to guide them (see Appendix for the full summary of the consultation round).

This memo outlines the main contours of the UG framework on career diversification for academic staff², containing a vision, a framework, concrete guidelines for faculties, and recommendations for continuous professional development.

UG vision on diversification of academic careers

The UG is an open academic community that provides opportunities for students and staff to develop themselves to their full potential. We are committed to create a challenging, sustainable and safe work environment where our staff are recognised for their contributions, have opportunities to develop their talents, and can invest in their careers and employability³. To bring this further, the UG has been working on the development of a broader perspective on academic careers, in line with the national programme 'Room for Talent' (Ruimte voor ieders talent). At the UG, we envision making room for talent by creating opportunities for differentiated career paths focusing on research, education, societal impact or health care. We want to match talent to the right roles in a value-focused way.

UG framework for career diversification

The proposed framework comprises two different kind of trajectories for diversification of academic career pathways at UG:

1. Establishment of academic **tracks** with a specific focus area
Examples: The educational leadership track at UMCG, the academic tracks at UMCG, FEB and FSE with a focus on education. For faculties with a strong focus on teaching, e.g. UCG, Arts, Law, diversification could be reached by introducing a track with a focus on research.
2. **Flexibilisation** within existing profiles
These are tailor-made trajectories that meet the different needs and wishes of individual staff members and that fit within the faculty's strategic goals and organization. Smaller faculties could opt for these trajectories, as they often lack the resources to offer special career tracks.

¹ Room for everyone's talent: Towards a new balance in the recognition and rewards of academics (2019), https://www.universiteitenvannederland.nl/en_GB/Recognition-and-rewards-of-academics.html

² The consultation round also indicated a need for a vision (and framework) on career development of support and teaching staff D1-4. This could be a goal for the next R&R roadmap.

³ Making Connections - Strategic Plan University of Groningen, 2021-2026.

The decision on what trajectory is most suitable, depends on the faculty context and goals. We therefore ask each faculty to explicitly define in their strategic personnel plan what kind of trajectories it will offer and map out how staff members can progress in their careers through these trajectories. Specifically, we ask faculties to describe the trajectories, including the requirements for promotion and continuing professional development (CPD). It is important faculties indicate in what way the different trajectories differentiate between areas, in order to avoid the proverbial 'schaap met de vijf poten'. Also, we do not expect that all career pathways should lead towards full professorship.

The goal of this process is to develop equally valued career paths with clear and up-to-date criteria and transparent procedures for promotion. All elements of academic roles, whether in research, teaching, impact, governance or leadership, are considered important, but from the profile/track descriptions it should be clear that it is not expected that one person excels in all areas.

Supporting infrastructure for career diversification with a focus on education

Our recent consultation round indicates that the development of career diversification leads to a higher demand for continuous professional development (CPD) activities, in particular for the profile or track with a focus on education. There is a need for both formal and informal learning. The first refers to an expected higher demand for STQ trajectories, especially in English. FSE and FEB have made the STQ part of the promotion criteria of their tracks with a focus on education and it is anticipated that other faculties will follow a similar direction. Furthermore, we should facilitate community building among those with an education profile. The need to connect with colleagues within a similar track to facilitate their professional development has been expressed on several occasions during the consultation round.

To stimulate and support professional development beyond existing qualifications it is necessary to take the following steps:

- Developing a CPD framework with a coherent support structure from the TAG platform in collaboration with CIT-ESI, incorporating formal and informal learning opportunities offered across the UG, including credentials or badges;
- Increasing the number of STQ trajectories/places;
- Giving STQ alumni a greater role in mentoring of staff;
- Redesigning the UTQ and STQ, specifically fill the gap between these two qualifications.

In addition, we recommend faculties to evaluate the career paths with the support of TAG. In this way, we create a learning organization and opportunities for sharing good practices across the UG.

Appendix: Summary of consultations on diversifying career pathways

5 April 2022

Joke Fleer & Winny Bakker

Introduction

Diversification of career pathways is one of the five tracks within the UG R&R roadmap. In 2021, we established the following goal for this track:

To enable greater diversity in possible career paths at UG, starting with a dedicated education-focused career pathway.

To explore the extent to which the eleven faculties of the RUG committed themselves to diversification in career paths, in particular with respect to tracks focusing on education (e.g. educational leadership), we proposed a process of wider consultation. Between October 2021 and February 2022, we organized in-depth conversations with all eleven faculties to learn more about their perspectives on diversification in career (educational) tracks, initiatives they have taken to implement such tracks and their needs for support from the committee. On 10 February 2022, we organized an interfaculty follow up meeting to present our first results and give room for dialogue and sharing of best practices. The consultations have not only given more insight in practices, but also in perceptions on teaching careers and some misconceptions on the 'what' and 'why' of the Recognition and Reward programme.

Consultations: format and structure

In the majority of the consultations, the dean and/or vice dean and approximately two representatives of the teaching staff were present (see appendix). In many consultations, an HR officer or other staff member designated to faculty R&R policy was also present.

The consultation meetings were focused on the faculty context and perspective. The following questions were asked:

- How are educational pathways thought about within the faculty?
- What is already happening as part of the R&R movement?
- What are the needs and wishes of staff and administrators?
- How can the committee/working group facilitate this process?

All faculties accepted our invitation. In total, we consulted over 45 colleagues in 11 faculty meetings. Approximately 20 colleagues attended the online meeting on February 10.

Main findings

The importance of R&R is widely recognized and everyone agrees that education should be more recognized and valued. Overall, more diversification in career paths is wished for. But how? There are different views on this, partly depending on the size and organization of the faculty.

- **Faculty context / organizational goals**
This relates to strategic goals (personnel plan) and room and need for a separate track for education. Some larger faculties have made a strategic choice to allocate resources for a separate

track for education. Smaller faculties indicate that they simply do not have room for separate tracks (in terms of both financial and human resources).

- **Type of trajectory**

We came across different kinds of trajectories or tracks:

- 1) teacher tracks (tracks focused solely on teaching, 'docentenloopbaan') or academic tracks with a focus on teaching.
- 2) flexible trajectories (flexibilisation within existing UFO profiles) with an explicit focus on education.

We found that smaller faculties tend to opt for **flexibilisation**, i.e. tailor made trajectories that meet the different needs and wishes of individual staff members and that fit within the faculty strategic goals and organization. As stated before, they do not have the room/resources for separate tracks. Larger faculties, such as FSE and FEB, have chosen for a **teacher track** with a focus on education.

Tracks focusing solely on teaching, such as the educational leadership track at UMCG, are not desired by most of the faculties, because they are of the opinion that there should always be an **interconnectedness between education and research**.

We also found that faculties with a strong focus on teaching indicate that they wish to put more emphasis on **research** in their R&R strategy instead of on education. In their context, diversification means creating more opportunity/room for teaching staff to conduct research. This applies to both small and large faculties.

Other topics and issues that came out of consultations and follow up meeting:

- **Promotion policy & criteria**

Faculties struggle with questions like: How to make distinctions between different profiles? How to make recognition visible (what criteria do we use)?

- **D1/D2 teachers**

What is the career perspective of D1/D2 teachers at the UG? This is a special group that needs more attention. On the one hand, faculties do not want to appoint too many D1/D2 teachers, on the other hand this group of teachers takes on a lot of teaching tasks and often have great potential for innovation in teaching. At some faculties, this group is quite large. The impression is that this group of teachers feels somewhat lost, as they do not have a platform such as YAG or Young Academy. An important question then is how these teachers could connect with each other, and whether this can be facilitated by TAG and ESI.

- **Community building and professional development:** Some faculties expressed the wish for an infrastructure or network to connect teachers - especially those in a similar track or position - and to facilitate professional development. In line with the recommendations described in Graham's Roadmap for Change (2019), the TAG Community of Practice could be used as a platform for this purpose. In addition, the skills and experience of STQ teachers could be used more.

- Possible/perceived **barriers:** Concerns of CVs with a focus on education being less competitive, gender bias (less desirable tracks predominantly occupied by female teachers), workload associated with the perception of having to be excellent in all domains ('schaap met de vijf poten'), lack of a clear framework for teaching careers.

Next steps

Based on the consultations and the follow up meeting, the following suggestions for next steps can be formulated:

- Develop a UG framework for career diversification
 - UG vision on career paths and diversification
 - Concrete guidelines and support for faculties
 - Framework should leave room for variation: different kind of tracks that fit the faculty context
- From building blocks to coherent structure of continuous professional development (CPD):
 - Strengthening the position of TAG as UG wide platform for community building (professional development)
 - Redesign UTQ and STQ, fill the gap between the two
- Create a learning organization
 - Evaluation of pilots (tracks at FEB and FSE, Personal Development Plan at Campus Fryslan, etc.)
 - Sharing of good practices

