



# MHeNs Self Assessment 2015-2020

School for Mental Health and Neuroscience - MHeNs  
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## 7. Summary

The last six years have seen a considerable growth for MHeNs, both in terms of research income (almost doubled) and in terms of permanent academic staff (almost 50% increase). This was driven, amongst others, by successful acquisition of large grants in neuromodulation, ophthalmology, dementia research and psychiatric genetics and a steep increase in the acquisition of personal grants (particularly VENI's and VIDI's). MHeNs has continued its strategy of applying its methodological expertise in neuromodulation, monitoring, neuroimaging, cell biology & genetics and prevention & rehabilitation in research programmes that are closely integrated with the needs of the clinical stakeholders (clinicians, patients, carers) in the clinical focus areas of the MUMC+ and our national clinical partners. We have formalised these links in the new matrix, which corresponds to that of the MUMC+'s Brain-and-Nerve Centre and is also reflected in our new website (<https://www.maastrichtuniversity.nl/research/school-mental-health-and-neuroscience>). We believe that one of the sources of our strength is the close integration of fundamental and clinical research, which allows us to develop new technologies in areas such as neuromonitoring and neuromodulation for patient benefit. Another is the close integration of psychiatry and clinical neurosciences, and of psychological and biological research methods. Psychological methods, such as experience sampling, are very important for innovation in "somatic" healthcare, and biological methods, such as neuroimaging and genetics, are very important for mechanistic understanding of mental disorders. We will continue with this philosophy, also in collaboration with the Faculty of Psychology and Neuroscience. Our strategy for the next six years is to continue providing a stimulating and diverse research environment for early-career researchers and carry on with our talent mentoring programme. We will invest in our data management and sharing infrastructure, which includes both investments in ICT capacity and staff with data management and governance expertise. Regarding academic culture, we will continue with some of the new formats for remote and hybrid academic collaboration to facilitate our crucial international collaborations in an efficient and sustainable manner and to ensure maximal participation of our external PhD candidates and collaborators in School activities. Although our growth curve will likely flatten we plan to expand in some strategic areas such as cell biology, genetics and bioinformatics. We will continue investing in transdiagnostic research platforms, in which we pool our expertise (in collaboration with other FHML research institutes and partner faculties, as well as outside institutions) with the aim of developing innovative mechanistic models (e.g., neurons and organoids differentiated from patient-derived pluripotent stem cells) and interventions (e.g., electrical and pharmacological neuromodulation, nanotechnology). At all stages of our research programme we will interact with stakeholders and the general public, starting with focus groups about research questions and culminating in dissemination and implementation programmes of our research products for clinical practice.