

# Valedictory lecture by Mirjam G.A. oude Egbrink

## *'The art of balancing'*

November 28, 2025

**Maastricht University**



Livestream: <https://youtube.com/live/aIPAgpck1Q0?feature=share>

Dear vice-rector, dear Annemie,  
dear chair of the Executive Board of MUMC+, dear Helen,  
dear colleagues,  
dear family and friends,  
here in the auditorium and also online.

As soon as I started preparing this speech, I had to strike a balance: what should I focus on in this lecture? There were several possibilities, given the course of my career at this university.



More than 40 years ago, I came to Maastricht from Groningen to do PhD research at the department of Physiology and the then newly established research institute CARIM (CARDIOVASCULAR RESEARCH INSTITUTE MAASTRICHT). The photo on the left dates from the 1990s and was part of a photo report in the newspaper *De Limburger*, featuring ten young female UM scientists who were potential candidates for promotion to higher positions. That was at a time when UM was still at the bottom of the list in terms of the number of female staff members at Dutch universities.

The lower part of the photo shows an image of the research I was working on at the time, namely the *in vivo* study of blood cell-vessel wall interactions in the smallest blood vessels in our body, the microcirculation.

I conducted my PhD research<sup>1</sup> under the supervision of Rob Reneman, Geert Jan Tangelder and Dick Slaaf. I am very happy and honored that Geert Jan and Dick are both here today! Unfortunately, Rob Reneman is unable to come, but he is with us in spirit. We have exchanged many emails and also visited him recently.

From the three of you, I learned all the facets of being a good researcher, and I continue to benefit from that to this day: thank you so much!

I would also like to thank all my colleagues in Physiology and CARIM over the years: the Physiology department and CARIM have always provided me with a pleasant working environment, which has been very beneficial to me.

Both during my PhD project and afterwards, I always took on a lot of teaching roles. I enjoyed it, it went well, and apparently others noticed that, because in 2008 I was asked to become director of education in Medicine, then in 2011 scientific director of the Institute for Education (IfE) at FHML, and later also vice-dean of education.

From that moment on, I worked in the IfE most of the time, where I was also given a warm welcome. When I left the IfE this summer, I received a memory game as a gift with photos of many of the people I worked with there. On the slide you see only a part of them. Of course, receiving a memory game as a gift gives you pause for thought, but I assume it was meant positively, so that I would never forget you all...

Many thanks to all my IfE colleagues, who are all so important to everything related to education at FHML.

I have also experienced a great deal of support and cooperation from all colleagues and students who have been members of the IfE Executive Board and Board of Directors over the years, in particular Ineke Wolfhagen, with whom I formed a duo for many years, and Mariëtte Crijssen, who has now so competently taken over the baton. Also Mariëlle, René, Pauline, all

directors of education, and student members: thank you very much. And of course, that also holds for the IfE secretariat, Nathalie and Esther. You were always my rock, and that was indispensable and very much appreciated.

And many thanks also to all my FHML colleagues who are or were active in education, too many to mention: the fact that our programs are always highly rated, both by students and by external review committees, is the result of a great deal of dedication and teamwork; we did and do it all together, and I am really proud of that.

I have also enjoyed working closely with colleagues from the research institute SHE (School for Health Professions Education) and the department O&O (Educational Development and Educational Research). This collaboration is very important for our education, which I will come back to later; for now, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all of you!

I would also like to thank all my colleagues on the Faculty Board. Annemie, as chair: thank you for your trust and the truly enjoyable collaboration and always positive atmosphere!

Thanks also to the current and former members of the university's Education Platform, in which I enjoyed working with the rector, other members, and all the vice-deans of education who came and went. We will stay in touch.

And, of course, our talent club. The latter was an initiative of Martin Paul and Albert Scherpbier; we were the second group, all women, and this has brought us a lot. We still meet regularly to this day, which is very enjoyable, and hopefully we will continue to do so for a long time to come.

Finally, I would also like to thank all the societies in which I functioned member of the board: the Benelux Society for Microcirculation or MiVaB, the European Society for Microcirculation, and the Netherlands Society for Medical Education (NVMO).

After completing my own PhD, I supervised several PhD students, first at CARIM and later also at SHE, as co-supervisor and supervisor, always together with others. One of the best things about my job was that I had the opportunity to work so much with young, motivated people. Quite a few of you are here today. It has been an honor to supervise you; thank you, and also thanks to all my colleagues inside and outside UM with whom I have had the privilege of working closely together on these projects!

This was the most important part of my valedictory lecture! But of course, there is more...

After reviewing all of this, I decided to focus this lecture on the period since my inaugural lecture in 2012, and not on education itself, but on a number of balancing acts that I have had to deal with as scientific director of the IfE and as vice-dean of education.

To this end, I will discuss the four topics below, which have been frequently and prominently addressed over the past 14 years. I found them important, and at times quite complicated. I will explain them one by one, also paying attention to research in these areas.

## Content lecture



Balancing with regard to:

- appreciation of education – research – healthcare
- job satisfaction – work pressure
- costs of education – benefits of education
- educational research – educational practice



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The first topic:

### **The balance between the appreciation of education, research, and healthcare.**

First of all, I examined the legal tasks of universities and UMCs; to this end, I checked the WHW (Dutch Higher Education and Scientific Research Act) anno 2025.<sup>2</sup>

According to the WHW, the main tasks of universities in the Netherlands are: providing scientific education, conducting scientific research, training scientific researchers or technological designers, and transferring knowledge for the benefit of society. The WHW also mentions the tasks of academic hospitals (or UMCs): activities in the field of patient care and supporting scientific medical education and research at the universities to which they are affiliated.

In essence, these tasks involve providing education, conducting research, and providing patient care.

However, there is no mention of any distinction in prioritization or appreciation between these three main tasks. In practice, however, the appreciation of these tasks is not balanced!

The general feeling is that there is more appreciation for achievements and efforts in the field of research and healthcare than for education. This is also described in international scientific literature. Here are three examples of quotes from the last 10 years.

From an article<sup>3</sup> by Scott and Scott in 2016: *'... even so, academics valued teaching, were committed to students, but were resentful that institutional values and rewards remained focused on research.'*

In an article<sup>4</sup> by Salib and colleagues in 2022: *'... current approaches for evaluating and advancing faculty remain grounded in an assumption that research is the primary form of scholarship.'*

And in an article<sup>5</sup> by Yvon Steinert et al in 2024: *'... despite many years of effort ..., teachers are still not as valued as researchers and clinicians at many academic health science centers.'*

And these are just a few examples.

What is the situation in the Netherlands? As early as 2010, the so-called *Commissie Toekomstbestendig Hoger Onderwijs Stelsel* (Committee on Future-Proof Higher Education System), chaired by Cees Veerman, stated in its advice to the Ministry of Education, Culture

and Science<sup>6</sup>: *'Within universities, prestige is still mainly determined by research. A revaluation of education in relation to research is sorely needed.'*

Steps have indeed been taken in response to this. In 2019, Dutch knowledge institutions and science funders published the report *'Room for everyone's talent: towards a new balance in the recognition and appreciation of scientists'*.<sup>7</sup> This report also states that many scientists feel there is too much emphasis on research performance, and that modernization of the system of recognition and appreciation is necessary and requires a cultural change.

There is a growing awareness that scientists cannot function as jack-of-all-trades who must excel in the entire range of academic tasks, and steps are being taken everywhere to implement this cultural change. The effect of this Dutch recognition and appreciation movement is monitored by means of a questionnaire called the Culture Barometer. In 2024, data from this questionnaire<sup>8</sup> showed that people support and embrace the goals of the movement, but that in practice -across the board- not much change is being felt yet.

This movement is also taking place worldwide: many universities are in the process of adapting their systems of recognition and reward. Studies have been launched to measure the impact of these changes. One such study is being conducted by Ruth Graham in England, who is the initiator of the international Advancing Teaching network,<sup>9</sup> which designed and validated a Teaching Cultures Survey. This questionnaire focuses specifically on the valuing of education. It has been distributed to universities around the world, including UM and a number of other Dutch universities.

This Teaching Cultures Survey has now been distributed three times, in 2019, 2022, and 2025, in order to also obtain a longitudinal picture of changes. The overall response rate in 2022 was 24%, and respondents represented all stages of a university career, up to and including leadership positions.

The findings from 2019 and 2022 are known and have been published at an overall level.<sup>10,11</sup> The data from 2025 will follow shortly. I will now present a few results from the 2022 report, which also includes comparisons with data from 2019.

Firstly, respondents' reactions to the statement that time spent on university teaching has a positive impact on the career progression of academics in their institution: in both years, only 25% of respondents agree with this statement, while the rest have no opinion or disagree. It should be noted that the figures from 2019 and 2022 are virtually identical, indicating that no change has occurred during this period. If you break down this data into managers and other respondents, it is striking that people in leadership positions respond most positively here.

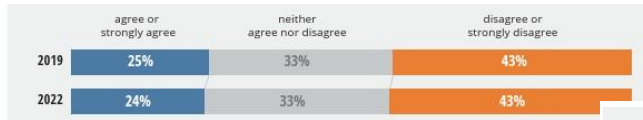
Next are the responses to the question of how important -according to respondents- various activities are for promotion steps at their university, for a typical academic on a teaching/research contract, as we often see as well. From left to right, these activities are: research, teaching, entrepreneurship, and management tasks. In 2022, 87% of respondents indicated that, in practice, performance in the field of research was particularly important for promotion steps at that time. Teaching and the other two tasks clearly counted for less.

In the follow-up question, about what those respondents themselves would like to be most important, what their preference would be, it turned out that an almost equally large proportion of respondents believed that research was indeed very important, and that they considered entrepreneurship and management to be significantly less important.

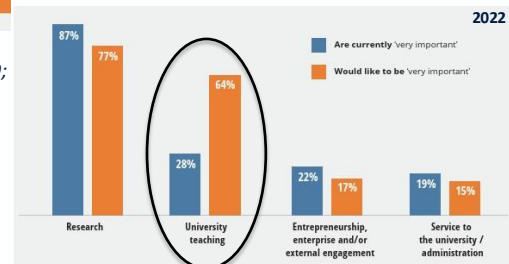
# Teaching Cultures Survey 2019 - 2022 - 2025

Teaching Cultures Survey 2019 – 2022 – 2025, Ruth Graham

Aim: 'to capture and track the culture and status of teaching within universities worldwide'



Statement: Time spent on university teaching has a positive impact on the career progression of academics at my institution (n=10.411 in 2019;



Question: In your view, how important are/would you like each of the following activities to be for promotion ... (for a typical academic on a teaching/research contract) at your university?



The most striking result, however, was that 64% felt that performance in the field of teaching should also play a very important role, much more so than was the case in practice at that time (according to those same respondents). Responses to this same question in 2019 were similar. So here too, there was almost no change between 2019 and 2022.

These findings are similar to the responses to a few questions in the broader Dutch Culture Barometer of 2024<sup>8</sup>: experience shows that relatively much attention is paid to research, while respondents indicated that there should also be more appreciation for education and other tasks.

It is important to realize that these are overall data, originating from all participating universities, within which all different disciplines are represented. This does not say much about the situation within UM or within MUMC+.

Because recognition and appreciation of employees is also high on the agenda within UM, and because we really care about the appreciation of education, we have started a research project within SHE on the valuing of education in our own setting, with Juul Hennissen as a PhD candidate and Diana Dolmans and Boukje Compen supervising this project together with me. The first study within this project<sup>12</sup> focused on the experiences and perceptions of employees with regard to the appreciation of education within the MUMC+ organization (i.e., FHML and academic hospital together). All employees that participated in the study were involved in research and/or healthcare tasks in addition to education, and had different backgrounds, with each of our three educational domains (Health Sciences, Medicine, and Biomedical Sciences) represented.

This qualitative interview study yielded three themes.

The first theme is that, even though higher authorities claim that education is recognized and valued proportionally, this is not always experienced in practice. A telling quote from one of the interviewees was:

*'The biggest gap is between what is claimed and what is experienced. We are fortunate to have very good teachers. [...] But we make it incredibly difficult for them to continue doing so long-term, because they are not valued enough.'*

## Appreciation of education

Hennissen et al, submitted 2025

“How is the organizational culture regarding the valuing of teaching perceived by teaching staff in academic health professions education?”

- Although teaching is claimed to be valued, it does not always feel way in practice
- A more human-oriented culture is preferred over the current, more formal culture
- Organizational culture around the valuing of teaching differs among departments



The second theme concerned the fact that employees prefer a human-oriented culture to the current, more formal approach. Although it was also recognized that structures and agreements are necessary for the organization of education, more opportunities for collaboration and creativity would be appreciated.

The third theme that emerged was that the organizational culture with regard to the valuing of education differs between departments, and that the managers of those groups play an important role in this.

This is nicely illustrated by the following quote:

*‘That new educational coordinator is pushing hard [for education] in that other department. And there you see that things can really change. That you find people who want to go the extra mile. But one has to provide guidance and leadership. That’s not the case, I think, in many departments.’*

In this regard, it is interesting to note that I recently attended an online presentation by Ruth Graham at Roland Laan’s farewell symposium at the Radboud University in Nijmegen, in which she gave a preview of the results of her 2025 survey. She said that the commitment of department chairs is one of the most important factors in recognizing and valuing education. This is consistent with Juul’s findings. His next study will therefore focus on the beliefs and working methods of department chairs and the opportunities and challenges they experience in this regard. That research is currently underway (with many thanks to all participants!), and we naturally hope that it will provide starting points for helping those chairs.

All in all, we can say that important steps are being taken towards a more balanced recognition and appreciation of education, research, and healthcare, but that we are not there yet. A cultural shift cannot be achieved in one late afternoon; it takes time. The studies conducted so far do indicate that managers have an important role to play in this cultural shift. It is really important to recognize that in an academic institution, education is just as important as research and patient care, and that employees who perform educational tasks must be given the time allocated for this, that they must be able to follow training courses, and that they must be valued proportionally. During recent accreditation visits to Dutch medical schools, we have seen that this is still a regular problem everywhere.

Managers will need to be facilitated and assisted in this process by providing them with training and raising awareness, by giving them the time to actually implement this change, and also by making agreements about this when they are appointed.

The desire to be valued fairly and equally for equivalent tasks is not new, nor is it unique to humans, as can be seen in a well-known video of research conducted by the world-famous primatologist Frans de Waal, who died last year, and his colleague Sarah Brosnan. They conducted this research with capuchin monkeys that had to perform the same task but were rewarded differently for doing so. The following film clip shows Frans de Waal during an English-language presentation about this research. Let's watch and listen.

*Film clip, see livestream valedictory lecture (from 38:00 to 40:30):*

<https://youtube.com/live/aIPAgpck1Q0?feature=share>

Nothing human is alien to these monkeys. Unequal appreciation also leads to dissatisfaction among us. More equal appreciation for education will lead to more intrinsic motivation and more enjoyment at work.

This brings me automatically to the second topic of this lecture:

### **The balance between job satisfaction and work pressure.**

A topic that has been on the agenda regularly throughout my term, and it still is.

A frequently heard complaint, not only within UM, is that employees who generally enjoy their work and are highly motivated indicate that they experience high work pressure. And that high work pressure is often related exclusively to teaching, something I still do not fully understand. After all, healthcare and research also involve high work pressure, in the case of research, for example, due to tight deadlines, extensive project applications, and very low chances of success.

The question is how we can achieve a good balance, with less perceived work pressure and more job satisfaction.

In many organizations, this issue is often addressed using the Job Demands-Resources Model.<sup>13,14</sup> This model describes the effect of job demands and job resources on the quality of work performance and on personal health and happiness.

There are two main components in this model: the first is that of the job demands, or task requirements. Task requirements that cause too much stress consume energy. Think of psychosocial or physical stress, or high work pressure. Psychosocial stress can include high emotional or cognitive stress or undesirable behavior. Physical strain often involves physically demanding work. In our case, within a university, this usually concerns physical underload resulting from too much sedentary work, sitting behind computers, which is also unhealthy! All of this can be detrimental to health and performance.

The second main component in this model is the job resources, which are factors that provide energy and contribute to job satisfaction. Examples include social support from colleagues in teams, autonomy in the workplace, support and feedback from your manager, recognition and appreciation, and opportunities for further development through training and courses. In addition, there are also personal resources, such as matters in the private sphere or personal characteristics, such as optimism and self-reliance.

It is a complex model, but it is clear that a healthy balance between job demands and job resources is important for work performance and employee well-being.

Culture and leadership within an organization play an important role in this regard. The goal should be to stimulate employee energy and engagement and reduce stress and work pressure, for example by distributing tasks evenly and implementing supportive measures.

What is the situation in Dutch universities when viewed through the same lens?

This is described in the recently published report by SoFoKles, the Social Fund for the Knowledge Sector.<sup>15</sup> The aim of this report was to identify areas of concern that lead to intensive working weeks at Dutch universities and to formulate proposals to counteract this intensification.

The university field appears to have changed significantly over the past 20 years. The number of students has roughly doubled. The number of PhDs has more than doubled, and the number of publications has increased by 50%. And the success rate for grant applications is low and has continued to decline.

At the same time, the number of employees has also grown, by more than 50%, but not at the same rate as the aforementioned parameters. In addition, government funding per student has fallen by 25%.

It is therefore not surprising that university staff are experiencing increased work pressure. The most frequently cited causes are an overload of tasks in various areas -such as education, research, and healthcare-, an increased pressure to perform at a high level in all of these areas, and frequent peak workloads. It was striking that personal ambition was also cited more often as a cause of work pressure: difficulty saying "no" and the desire to advance quickly in one's career.

However, the same report also states that, despite the work pressure they experience, university staff are satisfied or even very satisfied with their jobs and do not want to leave the university. This presents a complex paradox!

How to deal with this?

All of the above shows that there is involvement at different levels: the organization with its culture, leadership, the group, and the individual. An integrated approach will be necessary. I am convinced that limited interventions at one level, such as adjusting the standard hours for a small number of teaching roles, will not provide a sustainable solution.

As already evident from Juul Hennissen's research,<sup>12</sup> and also from the doctoral research of Guy Bendermacher<sup>16</sup> and Stephanie Meeuwissen,<sup>17</sup> a human-oriented culture and leadership are important; personal attention and appreciation can counterbalance work pressure. And giving attention and appreciation can be done in a very simple way, by a pat on the back or a compliment now and then. Also crucial in this regard are effective communication and transparency from both the organization and leadership, which is not easy as we all know: people often do not read emails and newsletters, and UMPLOYEE is no exception. So, this presents a serious challenge.

Besides, all our studies consistently show that people realize that a certain structure is also necessary in a large and complex educational organization such as ours. Balancing the central organizational structure required for our education with a human-oriented culture is a complex challenge. Care must be taken to avoid creating a sense of control, as this conflicts with the feeling of autonomy, which will lead to more stress.

Important resources that are often mentioned and that are very recognizable include the possibility to work together in teams or learning communities, and the provision of training and development opportunities to further develop talents. Within FHML, we offer a wide range of appropriate training courses through the Faculty Development task force, and Edlab, UM's Center for Teaching and Learning, also offers many training activities.

Adequate and sustainable support in performing education-related tasks is also an important resource that can alleviate work pressure. Several years ago, we set up the Blocksupport team within our faculty to alleviate the administrative tasks of block planning groups; this team now consists of almost seven FTE and is highly appreciated.

## Job satisfaction - work pressure

### Integrated approach!

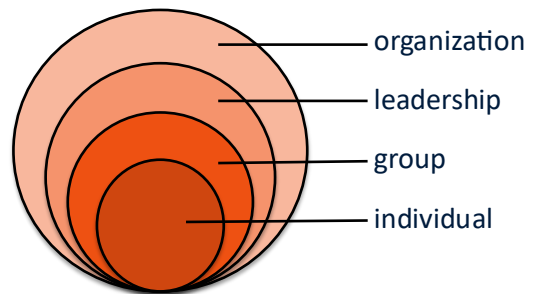
- human-oriented culture and leadership
- recognition and appreciation
- effective communication and transparency



- teams and learning communities
- training and development opportunities
- adequate and sustainable support



- clearly stated and shared responsibilities
- early agreement on tasks and reimbursement of all parties involved



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See e.g.: Bendermacher, 2021; Meeuwissen, 2021

Finally, it is important to assign responsibilities clearly and effectively at an early stage; this is something that still needs further development. For example, it must be clear that program and block coordinators fulfill serious leadership roles. They have a predetermined budget of hours at their disposal, within which the chosen educational activities must fit. The trick is to reserve enough hours for the teachers who will carry out and supervise these educational activities, so that these teachers will not experience excessive work pressure. In addition, the necessary support from the lFE must also be taken into account at an early stage within the available budget.

In case it turns out that the available budget does not allow for all activities, other choices will have to be made. For example, a program with less educational activities (although letting go is difficult), or the use of less intensive working methods -by working with peer feedback among students or by using simpler processes. Or by using technology and AI, while taking care that this does not actually lead to more work pressure (think of the introduction of emails instead of letter mail; we thought the workload would decrease, but we only ended up sending more emails).

It is also important to realize that not everyone will ever be satisfied, as personal characteristics also partly determine the feeling of work pressure.

Finally, the government should be added as the largest circle of influence, because everything depends on sufficient government funding. Austerity measures such as those announced by the outgoing government will only increase the workload, and that is definitely not the path we should be taking. The gains made by D66 in the recent elections at least give some hope for better times ahead.

This is a nice bridge to the next balance:

### The balance between the costs and benefits of our education.

I already mentioned the available budget for education. Within that budget, there should be a balance between the costs and benefits of education.

At present, there seems to be widespread ignorance about the costs of everything that is needed to design and implement high-quality education. And measuring the benefits, the effectiveness of that education, is even more difficult. This makes it complicated to work cost-

effectively and make well-informed choices, even though this is necessary in a situation of impending budget cuts.

It is clear that knowledge about the costs and benefits of education and a good balance between the two are important: we are constantly making choices about new forms of education and want to be able to weigh up the costs against the benefits: does it deliver what we think or hope it will deliver?

You would expect us to always do it this way, but that is not the case! This is relatively uncharted territory, both in educational practice and in the field of educational research.

Therefore, gaining more insight into costs and benefits of education is important in order to be able to make cost-conscious decisions more often, especially when resources are limited. Jennifer Yaros, a PhD student supervised by Aggie Paulus, Silvia Evers, and me, is conducting research in this area. She is looking specifically at the cost side of higher education. Her studies focus on the question of whether we have the right guidelines in place to accurately and reliably assess costs,<sup>18</sup> and whether teachers<sup>19</sup> and managers<sup>20</sup> actually use the available information about costs. Are they really doing that?

Jennifer's studies show that simply identifying the costs of education is already very complicated.<sup>18</sup> There may be unclear or differing stakeholder perspectives, which makes comparison impossible. For example, costs can be calculated from the perspective of the student, the program, the university, or the government. The context is also important, of course; medical programs are generally more expensive than many other programs, and education in the Netherlands is more expensive than education in many other countries. Furthermore, available resources are often shared, e.g., when it comes to student internships in hospitals, where the separation of resources and costs between healthcare and education is complicated.

A follow-up study showed that teachers' perspectives on the costs of their education vary considerably.<sup>19</sup> Some take cost considerations into account when making choices, while others believe that the quality of education should always outweigh the costs and do not want to think about it. It also emerged that training to raise cost awareness is virtually non-existent.<sup>19,20</sup>

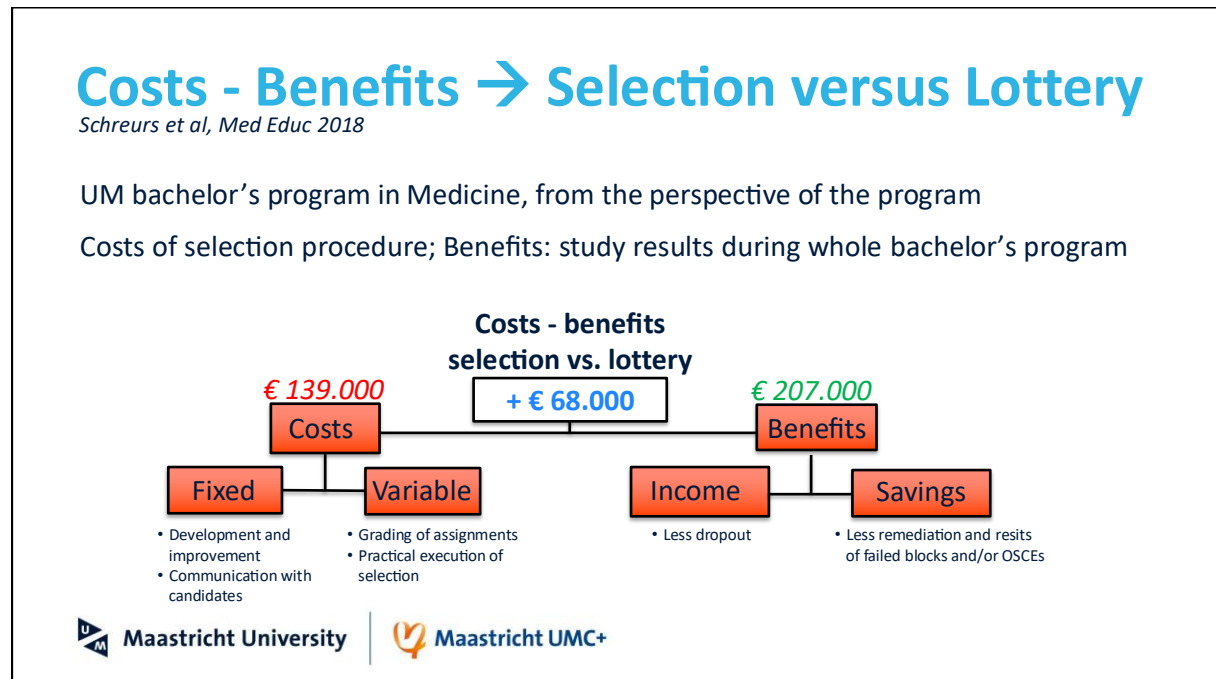
Fortunately, it is not the case that we do or have done nothing at all regarding costs and benefits of education. In 2018, for example, Sanne Schreurs, under the supervision of Kitty Cleutjens, Arno Muijtjens, Jennifer Cleland, and myself, conducted research into the costs and benefits of the then-new selection procedure compared to the lottery system for the bachelor's program in Medicine.<sup>21</sup> A clearly defined and relatively small educational component of which the costs and benefits could reasonably be identified as a basis for decision-making in this area: which of the two was the most cost-effective from the perspective of the program?

We mapped out the costs of the selection procedure in comparison with the costs of the lottery procedure, and on the benefits side, we looked at the study results throughout the entire bachelor's program of selected students versus students that entered through lottery. This research was conducted based on three student cohorts from the period in which the selection procedure and the lottery procedure were still used side by side (2011-2013). The selected students on the one hand and the students that entered through lottery -who had not participated in the selection procedure- on the other, did not differ in terms of their secondary school exam grades, age, and gender.

The selection procedure consisted and still consists of two rounds: the first round is based on an online portfolio, the second round takes place at the university and consists of assignments that assess talent for medical competences and also address the match of candidates with our educational philosophy.

The calculations focused on the average costs and benefits per cohort. On the cost side, the selection procedure involved fixed and variable costs. Fixed costs include the development, evaluation, and continuous improvement of the procedure by a taskforce, as well as

communication with the candidates. Variable costs depend on the number of participating candidates; these include the costs of assessing and grading portfolios and assignments, and the practical execution of the selection process during the day at the university, e.g., supervision and catering. Converted to an average, full cohort, these costs amounted to €139,000 per year at the time. The costs of the lottery procedure were negligible for the program.



When we looked at the study results, the selected students performed better than the students who were admitted by lottery: there were fewer dropouts in the first year (which is the year with the highest dropout rate). Converted to a full cohort, seven selected students dropped out versus 20 students who entered the program through lottery. When students drop out in the first year of their studies, the program loses government funding for those students in their second and third year as well as after graduation, which amounts to a lot of money. We have adjusted for the decrease in personnel costs, but that does not compensate for the loss. The selected students also needed fewer remediation of failed blocks and/or resits of failed skills tests throughout the bachelor's program, which also saved a considerable amount of money. Converted to a full cohort of selected students, this resulted in a net profit of €207,000 compared to a cohort of students selected by lottery. The combination of net costs and savings per full cohort indicates a positive outcome of €68,000 when using selection instead of lottery!

The conclusion of this cost-benefit analysis was that the relatively expensive selection procedure is financially preferable to lottery, thanks to the fact that this selection procedure is predictive of later academic performance, something we have also demonstrated in other studies by Sanne Schreurs.<sup>22</sup> This research led us to conclude that there was and is no reason to discontinue our selection procedure, especially since there is no proven evidence of other adverse effects of that procedure, e.g., in terms of diversity of our student population.

## Costs - Benefits

Important for well-informed decision making →

- increase understanding and awareness of costs and benefits of education
- research to develop guidelines for cost identification
- involve financial experts
- organise training on financial aspects of education
- stimulate research into benefits of education

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All in all, the message is that cost-benefit analyses can provide important information for making well-informed decisions involving large sums of money, decisions that are not always easy. In order to enable such decision making on a larger scale, it is necessary to increase understanding and awareness of costs and benefits of education. Further research is needed to develop useful guidelines to support the determination of the costs of education. It is also desirable to involve financial experts and organize training in this area. Finally, in order to enable cost-benefit considerations, it is also desirable to encourage research into the benefits and returns of education.

This brings me straight to the final balance I want to discuss today:

**The balance, or rather the relationship between educational research and educational practice.**

Within our faculty, we are in the unique position of the presence of research institute SHE and the O&O department, which offer a wide range of educational expertise. The SHE institute is world-renowned for its research into education in the field of medicine and health sciences. Over the years, SHE's reputation within our own faculty has also grown, partly due to close collaboration with the Institute for Education (IfE), a collaboration that focuses on making our education as evidence-informed as possible. Those who attended the symposium earlier today saw some great examples of this.

The collaboration between IfE, SHE, and the O&O department is aimed at strengthening the relationship between educational research and educational practice, further stimulating innovation in our education, and focusing on the implementation of new educational plans, because that is much more complicated than is often thought. Finally, the collaboration is also aimed at enabling career prospects with a focus on education, about which more will be said later.

How do we put this collaboration into practice?

Firstly, through close cooperation between teachers and educationalists. The educational task forces in our faculty play an essential role in this. The task groups in the areas of Faculty Development, Assessment, Program Evaluation, and Educational Design and E-learning consist mainly of members of the O&O department, beside colleagues from other departments

who are also trained in educational science. These groups advise and support teachers in education, are involved in revisions and innovations, and thus fulfill a very important role. Secondly, by offering a range of opportunities to increase educational expertise. For example, the task groups are intensively involved in training staff in their areas of expertise and, where necessary or requested, also in the form of customized training. In addition, SHE offers a variety of more extensive training programs, including the MHPE, the two-year part-time Master in Health Professions Education. Each year, the IfE and SHE jointly make two study places available in this master's program, including associated study time, for interested colleagues who wish to develop further in the field of education. A few dozen colleagues within our faculty have now completed the MHPE or are still studying for it. This undoubtedly adds value to the quality of our education.

Finally, with the support of the Faculty Board, the IfE and SHE also work together to facilitate career opportunities in education. People within this profile pursue careers with a clear emphasis on education, but not without research activities.

What does this educational career policy look like in practice?

As early as 2010, under the leadership of Albert Scherpbier, the first steps were taken towards the possibility of a career profile on education for those of us who did not originally have a scientific background in education. In the years that followed, this was further developed, together with Ineke Wolfhagen and the successive directors of SHE, Cees van der Vleuten, Jeroen van Merriënboer, and Pim Teunissen.

This Educational Career Policy at FHML<sup>23</sup> focuses primarily on the associate professor and full professor phases. The idea is that people in the preceding assistant professor phase primarily develop a mixed profile on education, research and/or healthcare in order to experience what suits them best. In addition to this line, the final step in the teacher track (to Teacher-1) is also part of this policy. Employees in this line focus entirely on education.

The policy sets out a number of general principles that must be met in all cases: candidates must have a PhD, there must be a dominance of tasks in the field of education, and people who want to enter the associate professor/full professor track on education must also be and remain active in research, because sufficient knowledge of new scientific developments and of how to conduct good research is important for contemporary academic education. This research requirement does not apply to the teacher track, although up-to-date knowledge is of course also a requirement there.

The criteria that candidates in the educational career profile must meet for each promotion step are divided into five categories.

The first one focusses on professional development in education: candidates must pursue a master's degree in education, e.g., by following the SHE master program MHPE.

The second category concerns 'past performance' in education, with a focus on the roles already fulfilled in education. It is necessary to have already demonstrated that one has performed well in a number of important, coordinating, and/or policy-related roles in education. In addition, we also ask that candidates remain active in executive educational roles, to experience first-hand how our education is perceived by students and colleagues.

The third category concerns 'future performance': in which educational area do the candidates wish to distinguish themselves in the future? This could for example be in the field of assessment, interprofessional education, or quality assurance; there are many possibilities. The condition is that the choice fits within the faculty's visions on education and assessment and that it concerns an unoccupied niche.

## Educational careers @ FHML

### Criteria

- professional development in education at master's level (e.g., MHPE)
- 'past performance' in education
- future profiling ('future performance')
- research on education
- management

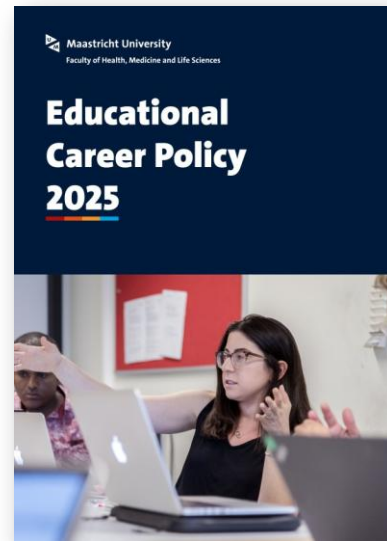
*Member of ECCo*



Maastricht University



Maastricht UMC+



The fourth category concerns educational research. As I said before, the basic principle is that an associate professor or professor on education always remains active in the field of research, also in this career profile. When moving to associate professor level 2, this will usually be research within the candidate's original discipline. From associate professor level 1 onwards, active involvement in educational research is also expected, focused on improving and innovating education at FHML. Institute SHE offers assistance with this transition, which takes time; people can attend meetings, take courses, and collaborate with experienced SHE researchers. From my own experience, I can say that you learn a great deal from this. During the professorship phase, the faculty and SHE make a limited amount of research funding available, where appropriate in collaboration with another institute.

Finally, management experience and commitment are also required, initially in the field of education and later also at faculty or university level.

All employees in the educational career profile are automatically members of the ECCo, the Educational Career Community, which meets regularly to discuss current educational issues or to advise the lFE.

Currently, around 25 people are active in the educational career profile. All in all, these are not very large numbers, and the numbers have remained more or less stable over the years, but it is a highly motivated group that means a lot to FHML education.

All in all, when we look at the balance between educational research and educational practice, we firmly believe that there is a successful collaboration between the Institute for Education, the O&O department, and SHE. This leads to a unique win-win situation that contributes to the quality and innovation of our education and to the recognition and appreciation of people with a passion for education, who are given the opportunity to further develop and distinguish themselves.

This wonderful conclusion brings me slowly to the end of my valedictory lecture.

The aim was to provide insight into the art and importance of balancing in the management of education, and the considerations that can be made in this regard. My goal, and that of everyone around me -because I didn't do any of this alone- has always been to use knowledge, experience, and research as effectively as possible to arrive at the best possible decisions at

the service of our education. And to do so within a faculty and university that are committed to education, and where the lines of communication are short. When necessary, and there have been such moments, for example during the COVID period, I could always reach the dean or the rector; during the day, in the evening or during the weekend, it didn't matter, and that was quite special. All together, I have always enjoyed working at this university very much, and will continue to do so a little, also after today.

All in all, I am proud of our education, the way we organize and design it, and everyone involved in it!



We don't think 'keep up the good work' is good feedback, so I'm not going to say that. I'd rather say something like this:

Explore new avenues and discover new routes in education, and do so in a way that it will be affordable, and feasible for everyone involved, and -above all- don't forget to show your appreciation! Then, the future will be bright!



From now on, my weeks may look like this. That seems wonderful to me.

It also means much more time to spend with our family, Menno, Carlijn, Hessel, and Tom. You have supported and encouraged me all this time. From our new home, I will enjoy the time to come as much as possible together with you, also enjoying the freedom we will have, and all the new opportunities that will arise; I am looking forward to it!

**Ik heb gezegd!**

*(traditional end of a valedictory lecture in Dutch)*

## Abbreviations

CARIM	Cardiovascular Research Institute Maastricht
FHML	Faculty of Health, Medicine and Life Sciences
MHPE	Master of Health Professions Education
MUMC+	Maastricht University Medical Center +
OI	Institute for Education FHML
O&O	Department of Educational Development & Educational Research
SHE	School of Health Professions Education
UM	Maastricht University
UMC	University Medical Center

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