

# **RESEARCH REVIEW**

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

**MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY**

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# REPORT ON THE RESEARCH REVIEW OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES AT MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY

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# 1. FOREWORD BY THE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Interdisciplinary research responding to real world problems is in high demand, yet at the same time it is a risk for research groups that want to make it the bread and butter of their work. Career progressions, university structures and funding decisions are still shaped by disciplinary preferences. The quality of collective research, and interdisciplinary scientific results, is often more difficult to benchmark. However, it is not impossible, but needs more sophisticated metrics. The research impact which comes with this needs qualitative evidence, for example captured in impact case studies, a method developed in the context of the British Research Excellence Framework, and introduced by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) of Maastricht University in their self-assessment report, perhaps for the first time in the Netherlands. During our visit to the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, we found out many members of its faculty do not only talk about interdisciplinary research but practice it. Their strategy 'Moving Boundaries and Bridging Disciplines' is not a top-down strategy but an emergent one, lived by many faculty members and their PhD researchers, and nurtured by the management.

It has been the task of the Review Committee to review the quality of the work of FASoS, and to pay special attention to the interdisciplinary profile and long term viability of the interfaculty research centres. Our evaluation and recommendations can be found in the report. What remains to be done here in this preface is to thank everyone involved for making it an inspiring, well-organized and smooth process. I would like to thank other members of the review committee Astrid Ertl (Goethe University), Isa Baud (University of Amsterdam) and Mark Bovens (Utrecht University) for their collaboration and exchanging of ideas. Our work depended on the guidance and hard work of our secretary Fiona Schouten, we are thankful for that. In the end review-type work like this really depends on the quality of the preparatory work, the organization of the visit and the constructive nature of all discussions during the visit. We felt this was all excellent and we enjoyed the process.

Johan Schot, Chair of the Committee,  
Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex

October 2017





## 2. THE REVIEW COMMITTEE AND THE PROCEDURES

### SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

The review committee was asked to perform a review of research conducted between 2011 and 2016 at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS) of Maastricht University.

In accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021 (SEP, amended version September 2016) for research reviews in the Netherlands, the committee's tasks were to assess the quality, the relevance to society and the viability of the scientific research at the research unit as well as the strategic targets and the extent to which the unit is equipped to achieve these targets. A qualitative review of the PhD training programme, research integrity policy and diversity also formed part of the committee's assignment.

FASoS provided the committee with Terms of Reference concerning the assessment. In this document, FASoS asked the committee to pay special attention to the interdisciplinary profile and character of the research and the long-term viability of the interfaculty research centres.

### COMPOSITION OF THE COMMITTEE

The composition of the committee was as follows:

- Prof. J.W. (Johan) Schot (chair), Director of the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex;
- Prof. I.S.A. (Isa) Baud, Professor of International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam;
- Prof. M. (Mark) Bovens, Professor of Public Administration at the Utrecht University School of Governance;
- Prof. A. (Astrid) Erll, Professor of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main.

The curricula vitae of the committee members are included in Appendix 2. For personal reasons, Prof. Astrid Erll was not able to be present at the site visit. She provided input prior to the visit and commented on the report.

The committee was supported by Dr. Fiona Schouten, who acted as secretary on behalf of QANU.

### INDEPENDENCE

All members of the committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of FASoS in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between committee members and the research unit under review were reported and discussed in the first committee meeting. The committee concluded that there were no unacceptable relations or dependencies and that there was no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence.



## DATA PROVIDED TO THE COMMITTEE

The committee received the self-evaluation report of the unit under review, including all the information required by the SEP. The committee also received the following documents:

- Terms of Reference
- Appendix 1.1.1 Strategic Plan UM 2012-2016
- Appendix 1.1.2 FASoS' Matrix Structure
- Appendix 1.1.3 SEP 2015-2021, Amended Version (Sept 2016)
- Appendix 1.1.4 Strategic Plan FASoS 2016-2020
- Appendix 1.1.5 FASoS Tenure Track Policy
- Appendix 2.1.1 Strategic Plan FASoS, 2011-2015
- Appendix 2.2.1 FASoS Policy on valorisatie
- Appendix 2.2.2 Strategic Plan UM, 2017-2021
- Appendix 2.3.1 Self Assessment FASoS, 2005-2010
- Appendix 2.3.2 Report Committee, 2005-2010
- Appendix 2.3.3 ReactionsResearchAssessment-includingCvB\_2005-2010
- Appendix 2.3.4 Report on the Library committee
- Appendix 2.3.5 FASoS Self Assessment,2011-2013
- Appendix 2.3.6 Report Committee, 2011-2013
- Appendix 2.3.7 FB Response to the Mid-Term Assessment, 2011-2013
- Appendix 2.3.8 FASoS Mission & Vision
- Appendix 2.3.9 Strategic Personnel Plan FASoS
- Appendix 2.3.10 Research Quality FASoS
- Appendix 2.3.11 Citation Analysis FASoS
- Appendix 2.3.12 New BA Programme on Digital Transformations
- Appendix 3.0 FASoS Criteria for Publications
- Appendix 3.0.1 Rapport Waardevol Indicatoren\_voor\_valorisatie
- Appendix 3.0.2 Stuurgroep Onderzoek en Valorisatie\_vergadering 23-09-2016 – Oplegger valorisatie
- Appendix 3.0.3 Rathenau Definities en Beleid
- Appendix 3.3.1 External Grants at FASoS, 2011-2016
- Appendix 3.3.2 FASoS Income through Indirect Government Funding and Contract Research
- Appendix 3.3.3 Selection of FASoS Demonstrable Marks of Recognition from Peers
- Appendix 3.4.1 Selection of FASoS Research Products for Societal Target Groups
- Appendix 3.5.1 Handleiding QRiH NL
- Appendix 3.5.2 NWO Publicatieculturen
- Appendix 3.5.3 Metric\_Tide\_2015
- Appendix 5.1.1 The Graduate Programme at FASoS
- Appendix 5.1.2 Bridges between the Graduate School and the Part-time PhD Programme
- Appendix 5.1.3 Manual for External PhD's (version 13 July 2016)
- Appendix 5.1.4 GS Manual and Annexes (version 13 July 2016)
- Appendix 5.1.5 PhD Monitoring
- Appendix 5.1.6 Core Curriculum FASoS Graduate School
- Appendix 5.1.7 National Research School Courses
- Appendix 5.1.8 Prizes of FASoS PhDs
- Appendix 5.2.1 List of FASoS PhD defences
- Appendix 5.2.2 Achieving Strategic Goal 'Increasing the size of the Graduate School'
- Appendix 5.3.1 Inaugural Infrastructure Prize for WTMC
- Appendix 5.3.2 WTMC Self-Evaluation, 2011-16
- Appendix 5.3.3 WTMC Key Publications, 2011-16
- Appendix 5.3.4 Report International Review Panel, WTMC Evaluation 2017
- Appendix 5.3.5 Statement of Impartiality, WTMC Peer Review Panel
- Appendix 6.1 The Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice, Version2014
- Appendix 6.2 Regulation for Scientific Integrity at Maastricht University



- Appendix 6.3 UM Research Data Management Code of Conduct
- Appendix 6.4 UM Regulation Governing the Attainment of Doctoral Degrees (version 19 October 2016)
- Appendix 7.1 FASoS Recruitment and Career Policy for Academic Staff (version 16 December 2016)
- Appendix 7.2 FASoS Selection Procedure Staff (version 2 March 2016).

## PROCEDURES FOLLOWED BY THE COMMITTEE

The committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP). Prior to the first committee meeting, all committee members independently formulated a preliminary assessment of the unit under review based on the written information that was provided prior to the site visit. The final review is based on the documentation provided by the research unit, along with the information gathered during the interviews with management and representatives of the unit. The interviews took place on 14 September 2017 (see the schedule in Appendix 3) in Maastricht.

Prior to the interviews, the committee was briefed by QANU about research reviews according to SEP. It also discussed the preliminary assessments and decided upon a number of comments and questions. It agreed upon procedural matters and aspects of the review. After the interviews, it discussed its findings and comments in order to allow the chair to present the preliminary findings and to provide the secretary with material to draft a first version of the review report.

The draft report by committee and secretary was presented to the research unit concerned for factual corrections and comments. In close consultation with the chair and other committee members, the comments were incorporated in the final report. The final report was presented to the Board of Maastricht University and to the management of the research unit.

## THE STANDARD EVALUATION PROTOCOL

In its assessment, the committee used the criteria and categories of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015-2021. For more information on these criteria, see Appendix 1. The committee found that the current SEP requires an assessment on a relatively high aggregation level. The various research programmes were not assessed separately, as in the previous FASoS research assessment, and did not receive individual scores. Instead, the committee assessed the unit as a whole.

The committee concluded that this approach has its limits in the context of reviewing a research unit such as FASoS. The four research programmes making up the unit vary in size as well as in scope. Assessing them as one meant that the committee was forced to overlook clear differences between them. The committee also found (cf. 3.1) that the interdisciplinary research which characterises FASoS takes place mainly at a programme level, making the research programmes FASoS's most natural unit. In the view of the committee, a qualitative and quantitative assessment of research quality, viability and relevance to society at a research programme level would have allowed it to do more justice to the reality of FASoS research.





## 3. RESEARCH REVIEW OF THE FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES OF MAASTRICHT UNIVERSITY

### 3.1. FASoS: strategy and targets

#### *Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences*

The motto of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University is 'moving boundaries, building bridges'. Research and education at the Faculty are characterised by an explicitly interdisciplinary approach, focusing on the interrelationships between Europeanisation, globalisation, scientific and technological development, political change and cultural innovation. The Faculty offers two BA, eight MA and 2 research master's programmes, as well as four research programmes. It also participates in three interfaculty research centres and coordinates two research centres on a Faculty level. Furthermore, FASoS has a strong connection to Maastricht University's Brussels Campus, and provides training to a number of professional PhD candidates there.

FASoS consists of four research programmes. Arts, Media and Culture (AMC) examines cultural practices such as conservation, representation and remediation, as well as societal issues pertaining to cultural and linguistic diversity, media and heritage. Globalisation, Transnationalism and Development (GTD) explores how transnational linkages created through the exchanges between individuals, families, political elites and civil society organisations within the Global South and between the Global South and North affect societies. Maastricht University Science, Technology and Society Studies (MUSTS) investigates how modern societies are constituted by science and technology and, conversely, how social and cultural conditions shape technological innovations and discoveries. Finally, Politics and Culture in Europe (PCE) seeks to understand and explain processes of European cooperation and integration (in the broadest sense) in their historical, political, institutional and ideational dimensions. These four programmes tie in with Maastricht University's research focal points: 'Europe and a Globalising World', 'Learning and Innovation' and 'Quality of Life'. They all involve an interdisciplinary team of researchers and combine various disciplines.

The directors of the four research programmes are members of FASoS's strategic advisory body for research: OTO, or 'Overleg Team Onderzoek'. OTO is further composed of the Faculty's associate dean for research and receives input from the research centres. It is supported by FASoS's research officers and a funding advisor. It advises the Faculty Board on research strategies.

#### *Strategy and targets*

The FASoS strategic plan (*Smart choices*, 2016-2020) mentions three guiding principles: bridge-building, professionalization and an outward-looking approach. The Faculty has developed four categories of specific instruments through which this strategy is to be achieved. One of them, the development and implementation of a clear-cut policy on 'valorisatie' of research (FASoS prefers not to translate this term), will be addressed in section 3.3 of this report. The other three are the creation of a stimulating research environment; targeted support for research activities, e.g. grant applications; and policies to increase the number and quality of PhD projects. These instruments will be addressed below.

#### *Research environment*

Based on the interviews the committee conducted during the site visit with staff, PhD candidates and management, it concludes that research culture at FASoS is inclusive and group-oriented. FASoS promotes an atmosphere of professional collaboration and mutual support.

This group orientation is both visible in and strengthened by a carefully designed hiring strategy, which the Faculty Board has been implementing since its installation in 2016. FASoS recruits new



staff members based on their profile, quality, and affinity with interdisciplinary collaboration and outreach. It has appointed a committee of five professors to assist in recruitment; for every vacancy, two of them are consulted along with the HR policy officer.

Previously, FASoS hired junior staff members on temporary contracts and offered tenure-track opportunities to only a small number of them. In 2016, this strategy was replaced by one in which new staff members are given a six-year contract and apply for tenure after five years. Their application is judged according to clear criteria concerning research, management, and teaching. As a result of this policy, continuity and stability are promoted among staff members and tensions and insecurities surrounding temporary contracts are reduced. Junior and senior staff members told the committee during the site visit that they strongly endorsed the new hiring strategy. The committee shares this view. It notes that not all tenured staff members (UD/assistant professor) can make the move to higher positions (UHD/associate professor and professor), and that this may cause staff members to leave the Faculty after obtaining tenure. However, in this case promotion also takes place according to explicit criteria and is carefully decided upon by a committee of professors.

#### *Targeted support for research activities*

The FASoS strategy focuses on the acquisition of research grants, at both the national and the international level. The Faculty formulated a number of targets concerning grant acquisition for the next five to ten years: to procure at least 20% of the annual income through indirect government funding and contract research (second- and third-stream funding); to obtain at least five NWO Veni grants, two Vidis and one Vici, as well as two ERC grants; and to have the lead in at least one Horizon 2020 proposal. The committee finds that these targets are sensible and that they match the size, scope and budget of the Faculty. Over the period under study, 2011-2016, FASoS has been relatively successful in obtaining international grants: it won 3 prestigious ERC grants. It has been less successful with national grants (NWO Vici), but was granted 2 Vidi and 5 Veni grants.

In order to reach the targets mentioned above, FASoS provides its researchers with extensive support. A professional team assists grant applicants in matters such as research policies, HRM and finances. Mock interviews and additional training are available to those applying for a grant. FASoS staff members typically spend 60% of their time on education and 40% on research, but reduction of the first in favour of the second is possible. Researchers can apply for additional research time, for which various funds are in place. A specific governance body, consisting of the research programme directors, the heads of departments, the associate dean for research and the dean, decides which applications are to be supported, in order to concentrate efforts and use resources as effectively as possible. The Faculty stimulates cooperation between researchers when applying for grants. It ensures they share their experiences from earlier attempts and promotes reapplication when a proposal did well in earlier rounds. Also, it provides a financial incentive to researchers participating in NWO or European funding panels, in order to gain knowledge of the workings of these institutions and to increase Maastricht University's visibility. The committee is impressed with the elaborate strategy of FASoS concerning grant acquisition.

The committee considers there to be room for improvement when it comes to the allocation of internal funding. During its site visit, it found that junior staff members only acquire extra time through applying for one of the available funds, such as the Additional Research Time (ART) fund and SEO grants to prepare or rework and submit or resubmit a funding proposal in Horizon 2020. The large majority of these applications is successful. In its discussion with junior staff, the committee discovered that young staff members are glad that these funds exist and appreciate the transparency of the application criteria. At the same time, they mention that the application process is an extra burden for them. In combination with a heavy workload, which FASoS identifies as one of its major weaknesses in the self-evaluation report, this process seems cumbersome. The committee suggests that the Faculty consider reducing this administrative

burden, for instance by creating a more general programme for short-term sabbatical periods, which extends to junior researchers.

#### *PhD intake*

FASoS PhD intake decreased after direct (first-stream) funding of PhD positions by the university was terminated in 2012. The number of PhD research FTEs went down from 34.55 in 2011 to 19.44 in 2012 and 24.1 in 2016. As a consequence, FASoS changed the target of one PhD graduation per research FTE to the more realistic goal of having 30-35 PhD candidates in 2020, which means an annual intake of around 10 PhD candidates. At the same time, it took measures to ensure PhD intake. One of them was a strong focus on applications for second- and third-stream funding as discussed above. Another was the creation of a matching programme, in which the Faculty matches external funding to finance a PhD position. With currently (2017) eight such PhD projects underway, for none of which matching was rejected based on budgetary issues, it is clear that this strategy is viable.

The committee found out through the self-evaluation report that FASoS's PhD numbers as shown in Appendix 4 are presented according to SEP standards and therefore do not take into account the PhD candidates from the Brussels Campus. This means that PhD intake and numbers are higher than Appendix 4 suggests. FASoS reaps the benefit of the Brussels project, which started prior to the 2012 changes in financing and which has led to 11 PhD candidates from the professional field of EU institutions. These PhD candidates combine research with full-time jobs and rely on third-stream financing. According to the committee, FASoS has put a structure in place which enhances the chance of a solid and continuous influx of PhD candidates. However, this will need continuous attention.

#### *Research priorities*

FASoS started out as an education-oriented Faculty and has needed time to formulate and strengthen its research orientation. Compared to the previous assessment and the midterm review, the committee finds that FASoS has come a long way in consolidating its research identity. It applauds the smart choices made by the FASoS management, the focus on quality instead of quantity of publication, the formulation of clear objectives coupled with flexible implementation and the inclusive and people-oriented approach. FASoS strategy, leadership and management are currently excellent in the committee's opinion.

The successful consolidation of FASoS research leads the committee to ask the question of what the next step ought to be. How can FASoS move to the next level without jeopardising its current achievements and its solid basis? Can FASoS aspire to international excellence on the Faculty level? Provided FASoS wants to move beyond the 'very good' level, it needs to develop a vision for the next phase. Simply optimising the current strategy would not work since it relies too much on a bottom-up process. The committee would like to make some suggestions as to the directions FASoS might want to take. Before doing so, it first describes the current strategy and its strengths.

The FASoS research strategy functions primarily from the bottom up. Research initiatives spring up from earlier projects and partnerships, and new themes are broached by researchers and the research programmes themselves. FASoS staff said that one PhD project has even led to a new strand within a research programme and has inspired multiple other projects. After such bottom-up development, some top-down decision-making does take place: FASoS management decides which themes and directions it wants to nurture. At the level of the research programme, too, conditions and boundaries are imposed. For instance, the programmes have lists of preferred research outlets. In dialogue with OTO and the Faculty board, they decide which types of output are acceptable within a certain discipline or a combination of disciplines, and which journal should be approached for a certain publication. On the whole, the FASoS research strategy combines bottom-up and top-down processes and can be described as cautious, context-dependent, and sensitive to disciplinary pluralism.



This strategy has been successful so far, and FASoS has nurtured certain niches of research in which it has become world leading. Still, the committee wonders whether it would not be an option to give these or other strategically chosen niches more mobilising power within the Faculty, without losing its solid basis and plurality of research. This would imply that FASoS defines a number of topics and areas in which it wants to be world-leading, and then assigns more resources to these areas.

The start of a new bachelor's programme on Digital Transformation seems mainly driven by market opportunity (more students) and the desire to build stronger connections between individual researchers and research groups. A question FASoS may want to address is whether this is also an area for building world-leading research.

### *Interdisciplinarity*

Following Maastricht University's request in the Terms of Reference, the committee paid special attention to the interdisciplinary nature of FASoS research. In the site visit interviews, management and staff stated that interdisciplinary work takes place most of all at the level of the research programmes. There, researchers encounter each other and work together most naturally. FASoS's extensive experience with interdisciplinary research has yielded the universally shared conviction that interdisciplinary work is difficult even between adjoining disciplines, and that the possibilities at the higher organisational levels are limited. The research programmes are the loci of interdisciplinary work, while the research centres allow for contacts with other researchers and their stakeholder networks and the Faculty provides a solid organizational structure.

FASoS research aims at pushing the disciplinary boundaries, creating synergies between disciplines and formulating new conceptualisations. FASoS therefore consistently promotes interdisciplinary research in its strategy and organisational structure. When staff members are recruited, their willingness to conduct interdisciplinary research is taken into account, and researchers from different disciplinary backgrounds meet and team up as colleagues in the programmes. Maastricht University's educational concept is problem-driven, and therefore characterised by an interdisciplinary approach. In short, as became clear during the site visit, interdisciplinarity is part of FASoS's DNA.

According to the committee, beyond FASoS's built-in interdisciplinarity at the research programme level, there is room for a more conscious and reflective approach for FASoS as a whole. FASoS should capitalise on its experience in interdisciplinary work: it should reflect on methodology, epistemology, and theory, and contribute to theory-building on interdisciplinary research by utilizing and capitalizing on its own experiences. This could be a chance for FASoS research to truly innovate, to push boundaries and to build bridges. As one FASoS staff member put it: the Faculty could be sitting on a pot of gold. If FASoS intends to become world-leading, the committee would argue that laying down and publishing a theoretical reflection on its interdisciplinary practices (in theory and research methodologies) might be an important building block.

### *Long-term viability of the interfaculty research centres*

Alongside the four research programmes, FASoS has five research centres, which aim to intensify collaboration across programmes and interaction with other faculties and external stakeholders. Two of them are partly or entirely organised within the Faculty. The Centre for the Social History of Limburg (SHCL) is connected with the research programmes GTD and PCE; the Centre for Gender and Diversity (CGD) with AMC. Three further, interfaculty research centres were established recently, between 2013 and 2015. These are the Maastricht Centre for Citizenship, Migration and Development (MACIMIDE), the Maastricht Centre for Arts, Culture, Conservation and Heritage (MACCH), and the Centre for European Research in Maastricht (CERiM). The committee was asked to pay special attention to the long-term viability of these research centres.

The committee interviewed a number of FASoS staff members involved in the organisation of the three interfaculty centres. Their aim is not so much to stimulate interfaculty interdisciplinarity; rather, they increase the visibility of FASoS researchers among stakeholders within the university and outside it. Researchers from FASoS can benefit from the networks and knowledge of other researchers and rely on their channels to disseminate research output. Thus, the centres are a starting point for collaborations and provide the infrastructure to reach out beyond Faculty boundaries.

All three centres have been allotted three years' start-up funding from Maastricht University. After three years, the aim is for them to be self-sufficient. The centres have been working hard at establishing themselves and have generated clear added value. The longest-running centre, MACIMIDE, even realised a multiplier effect by generating eight PhD positions and a postdoc.

The committee considers the three-year funding to have been 'seed money' well spent. The centres have had a positive effect on visibility and valorisation and have created fertile ground for future results. However, the committee is of the view that viability remains low in the present financial scheme. A centre such as MACIMIDE generates funding for research, but can't finance its own overhead costs out of such funding. The committee considers the target of financial self-sufficiency within three years overly optimistic. In its view, the university will have to invest more if it wants to continue benefiting from these centres.

### **3.2. Research quality**

The self-assessment report revealed that FASoS considers high-impact, peer-reviewed publications an important performance indicator of its research quality. FASoS has created a threshold of three such scientific publications in leading outlets per research FTE and year, thus aiming at quality rather than sheer quantity. The types of publication are taken into account: an article counts as one unit, whereas a monograph published with a leading academic publisher counts as five. As mentioned previously, prominent outlets have been singled out for every research programme. In the eyes of the committee, the threshold system is a sensible strategy as long as the number is taken to be a minimum rather than a target. This is currently the case: from its conversations with FASoS researchers, the committee learnt that especially the senior staff members publish more than the minimum threshold of 3 per FTE, and that the target is easily met.

As an interdisciplinary Faculty, FASoS explicitly aims for publications which push the disciplinary boundaries of existing debates. Its researchers frequently choose outlets with a distinctly interdisciplinary profile or try to add a new angle to an existing field of research, for instance by publishing an article on migration studies in a psychology journal. As a result of this explicit policy, FASoS sometimes forgoes publication in top-tier outlets that have a more traditional disciplinary focus. The committee embraces this cross-boundary approach, and would like to urge FASoS to continue focusing on new conceptualisations and methodological innovations as important aspects of research quality.

External recognition of FASoS research is amply demonstrated by the prizes awarded its researchers, as well as by their memberships of selection committees and PhD juries and their visiting scholarships or professorships. According to the committee, a number of FASoS researchers are very influential world-wide and belong to the top researchers in their fields. FASoS research has successfully managed to obtain external funding, most notably European (ERC) grants. The committee is pleased with the 100% ERC score over the period under review (three proposals leading to three grants). FASoS has been slightly less successful in gaining national NWO grants. The committee does not consider this a serious issue, since the overall level of income generation is very good, and future rounds may yield better results. The Faculty's response to continue trying is welcomed, and the committee expects the strategy of



reapplication, organised learning and encouragement of selection committee participation to increase FASoS's chances in obtaining more NWO grants in future.

The interdisciplinary nature of FASoS research makes an outside comparison difficult. In preparing for the assessment, FASoS had trouble finding benchmarking partners on either a national or an international level. FASoS finally opted for a 'virtual benchmark'. Upon consulting the university board and in cooperation with the university library, two quantitative citation analyses were executed. The first measured the impact of FASoS's top twenty publications by comparing the frequency with which they are cited to the average frequency for leading journals in the various fields. This exercise clarified that the top FASoS articles were cited at least five times as often as other top journal publications. A second analysis yielded similarly positive results. Around 300 FASoS publications were quoted on average 2.18 times more often than the expected number in the respective fields.

The committee understands the difficulties FASoS encountered in finding benchmarking partners. It is pleased with the efforts FASoS has undertaken to provide a benchmark and appreciates the fact that the FASoS management turned to the university board and library for advice and assistance. The resulting analysis is innovative and illustrates that FASoS research is clearly above-average worldwide. However, the committee finds that this way of benchmarking does not account for the fact that the overall level of research in the Netherlands can be considered above-average worldwide. The results of the benchmark therefore do not say much about the position of FASoS vis-à-vis research groups in the Netherlands or top institutes abroad.

The virtual benchmark can be considered a first step, but more pluralistic ways of benchmarking might provide better insights and stimulate FASoS's scientific impact. For instance, citation analysis at the level of individual researchers, while running counter to the Faculty's strong group identity, might provide clearer insights into the impact of publications. Likewise, the comparison of (inter-)disciplinary subsections of the FASoS research programmes with similar groups in the Netherlands and abroad could create a clearer image of where FASoS research stands and help determine what can be achieved in the future.

### **3.3. Relevance to society**

The self-assessment report presents three case studies demonstrating the societal impact of FASoS research. They contain such diverse examples and activities as presidential debates during the EU parliamentary elections, art installations in nursing homes, and a science festival on sound. The committee discussed the case studies and 'valorisatie' with researchers and management during the site visit. It concluded that FASoS research has great potential where relevance to society is concerned: the thematic scope of the research is extensive, and the range of target audiences and stakeholders is wide. In addition, FASoS's interdisciplinary DNA presupposes a direct rapport with societal issues and developments, since interdisciplinary research is implicitly problem-based. FASoS's societal impact was stimulated through the acquisition of external funds, since 'valorisatie' of research is often built into the application procedure.

The committee found that while societal relevance is an important part of FASoS research, it is expected to come about naturally, organically and bottom-up. Projects give rise to opportunities for reaching out, and these opportunities are seized. This bottom-up approach is part of FASoS's 'valorisatie' strategy, which sees 'valorisatie' as a subdimension of research and encourages it through various means (a prize, a dedicated website, and a funding line) when the opportunity presents itself. The committee is pleased with these efforts, but feels FASoS research would greatly benefit from adding (not replacing current efforts) a proactive and focused approach to 'valorisatie'.

While the committee appreciates the current achievements concerning societal outreach, which it judges to be of a very good level, it recommends FASoS to take 'valorisatie' to the next level.

By making conscious choices concerning the forms of impact befitting the various types of research, but also concerning the stakeholders involved, audiences targeted, and collaborations sought, 'valorisatie' could gain focus. This process of professionalization should also have an HR component. FASoS could consider appointing a 'valorisatie' officer to support researchers. It could offer training sessions to staff members and PhD candidates. And finally, it could differentiate between researchers. Some individuals or projects create more societal impact than others, and the allocation of resources to promote 'valorisatie' could be adapted to this difference.

The committee considers the Brussels Campus PhD programme an example of a highly successful proactive impact strategy within FASoS. Here, a 'package model' is achieved where research, teaching and the working field are joined together. Research concentrates on societal issues from the candidates' professional practice, and societal partners and stakeholders within EU government and advisory bodies are easily approachable as part of the candidates' network. This PhD programme demonstrates the level of integration and purpose that can be achieved in some, although certainly not all, research projects.

The committee is pleased with the way the interfaculty research centres promote relevance to society in their role as 'hubs' or catalysts for establishing the necessary contacts between FASoS researchers and stakeholders in and outside the university. Already, the Maastricht municipality and other local groups have approached FASoS researchers through these centres. Maintaining these centres could therefore increase the relevance to society of the Faculty's research.

### **3.4. Viability**

Due to sound management and leadership, a sensible strategy, smart choices and careful allocation of resources, the viability of FASoS appears to be very good. The committee received no indication of any financial issues. While in some years the balance will be more positive than in others due to dependence on grant application success, the overall impression is one of stability and gradual growth.

The hiring strategy aimed at enhancing early careers (cf. 3.1) and group orientation makes the Faculty very attractive for young staff members. The Faculty nurtures its young researchers and provides them with stability and a pleasant working environment. The committee did notice a bottleneck at the point of moving from tenured UD to UHD, but on the whole, young staff members are allowed to develop and grow in a positive and stimulating atmosphere.

### **3.5. PhD programmes**

FASoS has a graduate programme in place for its PhD candidates. The programme is chaired by the associate dean for research. It distinguishes three types of PhD candidates. First of all, there are the internal PhD candidates, who belong to the Graduate School (GS) of the Faculty. Second, there are the professional part-time PhD candidates of the Brussels Campus. These professionals are usually working in the area of European affairs and employed at EU institutions in Brussels. Finally, FASoS full professors supervise external PhD candidates who are not employed by FASoS, but who are overseen by the GS director.

Internal PhD candidates enrolled in the Graduate School receive structural training and guidance during their PhD trajectory. By six months, they must have completed their research plan and received feedback on this from the Graduate School Advisory Board. They are reassessed after one year and given approval to proceed or not. Further progress and feedback meetings are scheduled at 15, 22 and 36 months after starting the trajectory, followed by an exit meeting.

Along with supervising and monitoring, the GS organises a local curriculum, which is evaluated and updated annually. In bi-weekly meetings, PhD candidates receive either practical advice or skills training, for instance on grant application, the art and struggle of academic writing or career orientation. Internal PhD candidates are also enrolled in one of many national research schools. One of them, WTMC (assessed in 2017 as of world-leading quality with regard to its doctoral



training activities), is currently chaired and run by FASoS. These schools provide the PhD candidates with specific disciplinary training.

PhD candidates at FASoS are supervised by a two- or three-person team, headed by a professor and often with an interdisciplinary component. They are followed through a PhD tracking system introduced in 2015, which allows GS to monitor PhD candidates' progress and send them automatic reminders of meetings and activities. PhD candidates can approach a confidential advisor. Their supervisors meet in bi-annual intervision sessions to discuss best practices and challenges encountered in PhD supervision. PhD candidates are also prepared for the job market: FASoS researchers provide coaching for academic careers, and the university's Career Services is involved in the training for non-academic careers. Alumni often participate in the GS curriculum to reflect on various career paths.

The committee is impressed with the PhD programmes, monitoring and training in place. It finds that the general training provided by the GS is comprehensive. What is more, it provides reflection on multi- and interdisciplinarity, which is lacking in the disciplinary national research schools where PhD candidates receive methodological training. In the GS, a course is taught on the subject. In its activities, the GS takes care to invite speakers from at least two different disciplines. Upon discussing their training and supervision with the PhD candidates, the committee learned that both the internal and the professional PhD candidates were very satisfied with the training, guidance and supervision they received.

FASoS PhD candidates are relatively successful: they complete their programme on average in 4.9 years, which is four months earlier than the Dutch average. Employability is also very good: of 31 GS graduates, 65% found jobs at a university or a university of applied sciences and 35% occupy a position in civil society organisations or as government or policy officers. Of the eleven professional PhD candidates, three are about to graduate, six years after the start of their programme. Since they achieve this while working full-time, the committee finds the delay understandable.

### **3.6. Research integrity policy**

FASoS safeguards research integrity first of all by adhering to the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Academic Practice (VSNU). Furthermore, research integrity is actively promoted by the University's Ethics Review Committee for the inner city Faculties (ERCIC), which deals with non-medical research involving human subjects. All funding proposals which include personally identifiable data are advised to consult ERCIC for ethical clearance, while researchers in general are encouraged to seek ERCIC's advice before embarking on a new project. ERCIC regularly reports to FASoS's Faculty Board and presents its work to the research programmes.

Maastricht University has developed a Research Data Management (RDM) Code of Conduct. FASoS adheres to this code and informs its Faculty members through a customised document. This document is also distributed to external researchers working on non-funded projects. Other university-wide measures to promote research integrity include a confidential advisor who can be consulted when university staff encounter undesirable behaviour or situations in which the integrity of their research is compromised, a plagiarism check for PhD theses and the requirement for professors to publish an overview of their ancillary positions in the interest of impartiality and independence. Finally, research integrity is promoted through discussions among FASoS staff members, for instance in the context of research programmes or meetings. The Graduate School dedicates various meetings to research.

The committee discussed research integrity policies with the FASoS management and was told that FASoS has neither the expertise nor the resources to take the lead in such matters. FASoS complies and collaborates with university-wide policy-making and actively raises awareness among its researchers. The committee agrees that this cautious approach is a sensible strategy,

provided developments concerning research integrity are followed closely and the approach is kept up-to-date.

On the subject of open access publishing, FASoS also stated it chooses to follow national developments and best practices. The committee understands this, but recommends the Faculty select a small number of its key publications for open access publication. This small financial investment could increase the visibility and impact of FASoS research world-wide.

### **3.7. Diversity**

Gender diversity at FASoS is impressive: 55% of overall staff is female, and 45% of full professors are female, compared with 28% nationally. Similarly, 49% of staff members are Dutch and 51% of a different nationality. The committee consider these figures to be excellent and exemplary.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

Through smart choices, sensible strategies and an inclusive and people-oriented approach, FASoS research has consolidated its position and viability. The time has come to decide on the next step. If FASoS intends to become world-leading, the committee recommends the Faculty formulate a vision on how to achieve this. It advises the Faculty to capitalise on its unique interdisciplinary practice by reflecting and publishing on the methodology, epistemology and theory of interdisciplinary work. Research quality and societal impact might receive a quality stimulus if the most outstanding and promising niches and directions are identified, singled out and supported by the management, and more professional support is made available for generating research impact. Investing in the long-term viability of the interfaculty research centres might increase this impact as well. FASoS may also consider elaborating its thinking on how to benchmark its work, which could provide clarity concerning the choices to be made.

### **Overview of quantitative assessment**

Research quality:	very good (2)
Relevance to society:	very good (2)
Viability:	very good (2)





## 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reduce the workload of junior staff members by diminishing the administrative burden of applying for research time, for instance by introducing a general programme for short-term sabbatical periods which extends to junior researchers.
- Develop a clear and widely supported vision on focal areas for nurturing world-leading research. This research should have mobilising power within the Faculty, and thus connect a range of researchers.
- Contribute to innovation and theory-building and capitalise on the Faculty's interdisciplinary profile by reflecting on the methodology, epistemology, and theory of interdisciplinary work.
- Explore more pluralistic ways of benchmarking in order to gain a perspective on FASoS's position among the top research groups in the Netherlands and abroad.
- Design a clear and proactive strategy to focus and strengthen the societal impact of FASoS research. Conscious choices should be made concerning which researchers and programmes to invest in and how to support them.
- Invest in open access publishing of a selection of top publications to increase FASoS's visibility and impact world-wide.
- Invest in the long-term viability of the interfaculty research centres in order to continue providing FASoS researchers with collaborative opportunities within and outside Maastricht University and in order to continue benefiting from the research funding these centres generate.





## APPENDICES





## APPENDIX 1: EXPLANATION OF THE SEP CRITERIA AND CATEGORIES

There are three criteria that have to be assessed.

- Research quality:
  - Level of excellence in the international field;
  - Quality and Scientific relevance of research;
  - Contribution to body of scientific knowledge;
  - Academic reputation;
  - Scale of the unit's research results (scientific publications, instruments and infrastructure developed and other contributions).
  
- Relevance to society:
  - quality, scale and relevance of contributions targeting specific economic, social or cultural target groups;
  - advisory reports for policy;
  - contributions to public debates.

The point is to assess contributions in areas that the research unit has itself designated as target areas.

- Viability:
  - the strategy that the research unit intends to pursue in the years ahead and the extent to which it is capable of meeting its targets in research and society during this period;
  - the governance and leadership skills of the research unit's management.

Category	Meaning	Research quality	Relevance to society	Viability
1	World leading/excellent	The unit has been shown to be one of the most influential research groups in the world in its particular field.	The unit makes an outstanding contribution to society	The unit is excellently equipped for the future
2	Very good	The unit conducts very good, internationally recognised research	The unit makes a very good contribution to society	The unit is very well equipped for the future
3	Good	The unit conducts good research	The unit makes a good contribution to society	The unit makes responsible strategic decisions and is therefore well equipped for the future
4	Unsatisfactory	The unit does not achieve satisfactory results in its field	The unit does not make a satisfactory contribution to society	The unit is not adequately equipped for the future



## APPENDIX 2: CURRICULA VITAE OF THE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Prof. J. W. (Johan) Schot** is Director of the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of Sussex. As a Professor in History of Technology and Sustainability Transitions Studies, Schot's interests orientate around action-driven research that focuses on integrating disciplines and providing the historical perspective for increased knowledge to support positive societal change. He is the author of publications such as *Transitions Towards Sustainable Development. New Directions In The Study Of Long Term Transformative Change* (Grin, Rotman & Schot) and *Writing the Rules For Europe: Experts, Cartels and International Organisations* (Schot & Kaiser). Schot is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) elected for his achievements in interdisciplinary work. In 2015, he was awarded the Leonardo da Vinci Medal for his outstanding contributions to the history of technology.

**Prof. A. (Astrid) Erll** is Professor of Anglophone Literatures and Cultures at Goethe-University Frankfurt am Main. She has worked on memories of the First World War, the Spanish Civil War, British colonialism in India and the Vietnam war. She is general editor of the book series *Media and Cultural Memory* (de Gruyter, since 2004), co-editor of *A Companion to Cultural Memory Studies* (with A. Nünning, 2010), *Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory* (with A. Rigney, 2009), and author of *Memory in Culture* (Palgrave 2011)/ *Kollektives Gedächtnis und Erinnerungskulturen* (2005, 2nd ed. 2011), an introduction to memory studies. She is part of the editorial board of the journal *Memory Studies* (SAGE) and the book series *Memory Studies* (Palgrave).

**Prof. I.S.A. (Isa) Baud** has been Professor of International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam since 2003. Previously, she held a Professorship in Urban Studies in Developing Countries at Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam and was a staff member of the Institute of Housing and Urban Development Studies, Rotterdam. She has worked extensively on issues of urban development, focusing especially on local governance arrangements, exclusion processes, and poverty and livelihood issues. She was vice-president of the European Association of Development Studies from 2002 to 2008, and is a member of the editorial boards of several leading journals in development studies. Isa Baud is Chair of the Board of National Research School CERES.

**Prof M. (Mark) Bovens** is Professor of Public Administration at the Utrecht University School of Governance and a member of the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) in The Hague. His present research interests include accountability and governance, citizenship and democracy; meritocracy and education gaps in politics and society; success and failure of public governance; and trust in government. Before coming to Utrecht in 1997, he was a lecturer at the Departments of Political Science and Public Administration of Leiden University. In 2000 he became full professor of Public Administration and co-founder of the Utrecht School of Governance (USG). Together with Paul Verweel, he directed the USG from 2000 until 2013. He was a visiting fellow at Nuffield College, the University of Western Sydney, the LSE, and at the Australian National University. He was an Adjunct Professor (honorary) at the Department of Political Science in the Research School of Social Sciences of the Australian National University in Canberra (2007-2012). Mark Bovens has published over twenty monographs and edited volumes in the area of politics, government, and legal theory. He is a member of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW). In 2013, he became a member of the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy, the strategic think tank of the Dutch cabinet and was elected a Fellow of the American National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA).

## APPENDIX 3: PROGRAMME OF THE SITE VISIT

### Wednesday, 13 September 2017

- 18.00 Welcome and preliminary interview session with Sophie Vanhoonacker (dean) and Kiran Patel (associate dean of research) (*with drinks*)  
Location: 1<sup>st</sup> floor Restaurant Petit Bonheur  
Address: Achter de Molens 2, Maastricht  
Located next to the hotel
- 18.30 Internal meeting assessment committee
- 20.00 Dinner for assessment committee members only

### Thursday, 14 September 2017

- 08.45 Pick-up at hotel to walk to Faculty
- 09.00 Welcome by Sophie Vanhoonacker (dean), Kiran Patel (associate dean of research), Jessica Mesman (associate dean of teaching), Cerien Streefland (Faculty director), Aagje Swinnen (research programme director AMC), Valentina Mazzucato (research programme director GTD), Harro van Lente (research programme director MUSTS), Tannelie Blom (research programme director PCE), Christine Neuhold (Graduate School director), Lidwien Hollanders (research policy officer); Thomas Christiansen (director part-time PhD programme). Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).
- 09.15 Policy, strategy, viability & research ethics by Sophie Vanhoonacker (dean), Kiran Patel (associate dean of research), Jessica Mesman (associate dean of teaching), Cerien Streefland (Faculty director), Aagje Swinnen (research programme director AMC), Valentina Mazzucato (research programme director GTD), Harro van Lente (research programme director MUSTS), Tannelie Blom (research programme director PCE), Christine Neuhold (Graduate School director), Lidwien Hollanders (research policy officer). Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).
- 10.30 Internal discussion assessment committee (*incl. coffee*). Room: 0.001.
- 11.00 – 12.30 Research quality indicators and relevance to society indicators (demonstrable publications and other output; demonstrable use of publications and other output; demonstrable marks of recognition) by Kiran Patel (associate dean of research), Aagje Swinnen (research programme director AMC), Valentina Mazzucato (research programme director GTD), Harro van Lente (research programme director MUSTS), Tannelie Blom (research programme director PCE), Lidwien Hollanders (research policy officer). Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).
- 12.30 – 13.00 Internal discussion assessment committee (*incl. lunch*).
- 13.00 – 13.30 Research centres MACCH, CERiM, MACIMIDE by Sophie Vanhoonacker (dean), Kiran Patel (associate dean of research), Vivian van Saaze (director MACCH) Thomas Christiansen (director CERiM), Valentina Mazzucato (director MACIMIDE). Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).
- 13.30 – 14.30 Graduate School and national research school WTMC by Kiran Patel (associate dean of research), Christine Neuhold (Graduate School director), Alexandra Supper (Graduate School coordinator), Thomas Christiansen (Campus Brussels director), Sally Wyatt (WTMC director), Lidwien Hollanders (research policy officer). Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).
- 14.30 – 14.45 Internal discussion assessment committee. Room: 0.001.
- 14.45– 15.30 Junior staff members. Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).  
Vivian van Saaze  
Elsje Fourie  
Alexandra Supper  
Pablo del Hierro



- 15.30 – 16.15 PhD students. *Room: Spiegelzaal (1<sup>st</sup> floor).*  
Claudia Egger  
Simone Schleper  
Daan Hovens  
Afke Groen  
Mike Bostan (part-time PhD)  
Albi Alla (part-time PhD)  
Francesco Morini (part-time PhD)
- 16.15– 17.30 Internal discussion assessment committee. *Room: 0.001*
- 17.30 – 18.00 Presentation of preliminary findings by the committee for involved Faculty members. *Room: Grote Gracht 90-92, Turnzaal*

## APPENDIX 4: QUANTITATIVE DATA

### FASoS research staff

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Tenured staff	23.38	22.16	24.36	23.63	26.77	28.31
Non-tenured staff	17.89	18.87	19.54	17.6	15.12	12.9
Total excl. PhDs	41.27	41.03	43.9	41.23	41.89	41.21
PhD candidates	34.55	33.73	33.17	24.81	19.44	24.1
<b>Total research ftes</b>	<b>75.82</b>	<b>74.76</b>	<b>77.07</b>	<b>66.04</b>	<b>61.33</b>	<b>65.31</b>

### Research output

<i>Publication category*</i>	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Article-scientific refereed	52	81	84	87	112	86
Article-scientific non-refereed	27	17	32	17	17	9
Refereed scientific/scholarly monographs	2	2	6	4	3	7
Non-refereed scientific/scholarly monographs	12	6	7	5	4	8
Refereed edited volume	2	7	22	5	4	7
Non-refereed edited volume	0	4	7	4	8	8
Refereed book chapter	26	38	73	40	42	46
Non-refereed book chapter	49	45	31	42	23	53
<b>Total publications</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>262</b>	<b>204</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>224</b>

\* Numbers represent single publications

### Research funding

	2011**	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
<i>Funding (research fte/percentage of research fte)</i>						
Direct funding (1)	50.12/65%	41.51/57%	40.81/53%	45.88/60%	45.56/62%	47.62/59%
Research grants (2)	17.42/23%	20.21/28%	28.68/37%	24.06/31%	18.74/25%	17.57/22%
Contract research (3)	9.03/12%	11.46/16%	8.18/11%	6.62/9%	9.27/13%	15.97/20%
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>76.57/100%</b>	<b>73.17/100%</b>	<b>77.68/100%</b>	<b>76.57/100%</b>	<b>73.57/100%</b>	<b>81.15/100%</b>
<i>Expenditure (k€/%)*</i>						
Personnel costs	12.422/63%	12.347/70%	13.093/70%	13.567/72%	13.573/73%	13.736/76%
Other costs	7.309/37%	5.331/30%	5.551/30%	5.252/28%	5.059/27%	4.398/24%
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>19.731/100%</b>	<b>17.678/100%</b>	<b>18.644/100%</b>	<b>18.819/100%</b>	<b>18.632/100%</b>	<b>18.134/100%</b>

\* Total expenditure (including education and support)

\*\* In 2011 Maastricht University used a different method for allocating the other costs



## PhD enrolment and completion

Enrolment			Success rates						
Starting year	Male/female		Total M+F	Graduated in the 4 <sup>th</sup> year /earlier	Graduated in the 5 <sup>th</sup> year	Graduated in the 6 <sup>th</sup> year	Graduated in the 7 <sup>th</sup> year	Not yet finished	Discontinued
	M	F							
T-8 2008	3	6	9	4/44%	2/22%	-	-	1/11%	2/22%
T-7 2009	4	8	12	1/8%	6/50%	2/16%	1/8%	1/8%	1/8%
T-6 2010	3	8	11	3/27%	1/9%	2/18%	-	4/36%	1/9%
T-5 2011	8	7	15	6/40%					4/26%
T-4 2012	4	3	7	2/28%					-
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>16/29%</b>					<b>8/15%</b>