

## Recognition & Rewards – Education

### Introduction

This narrative describes the vision on education-oriented careers, including their assessment, as developed by the UM Education Committee of the Recognition & Rewards programme. This narrative is a dynamic vision document, aimed at serving as a basis for further discussion.

This fits naturally with UM's mission of providing *student-centred learning*, which has been centre stage since the founding of the university. This document's goal is to provide a starting point from which UM can create an organisational culture in which teaching is explicitly recognised as important. For instance, by forming learning communities in which teachers share and reflect on their teaching practice, and by providing guidance for shaping career paths based on contributions to teaching and learning.

Providing high-quality university education requires a great diversity of people and insights. Therefore, it is very important that individual talents are aided in developing in different manners. At the same time, it is important that education-oriented professionals at UM meet a number of predetermined, basic requirements, and that there is a common point of departure for the organisation. This document first presents the different roles and related competencies that are key for such a new organisational culture. Secondly, it describes the supporting conditions required at both university and faculty level to realise this culture. The appendix gives examples of how different teaching career trajectories could concretely take shape. This narrative will be used as the starting point for the concrete development of progressive levels of teaching achievements and their evaluation.

The fact that this narrative focuses on a university career with a focus on education does not mean that education is not important for other career tracks at Maastricht University. On the contrary, the overarching UM narrative on Recognition & Rewards explicitly states that the interrelatedness of education and research does require that academics have enough competences in both key areas of education and research. This means that for all staff, -from teaching assistant to professor-, their teaching performance will continue to be an important dimension of their annual talk and career perspectives. It is therefore important to further define the required teaching achievements and evaluation criteria. These criteria will however be of a different nature than for those opting for a career with a focus on education. As such a career is not yet common practice at UM, the narrative below focusses on how it can be concretely be given shape.

Developing a culture within our institution in which there is room for diverse competencies and performances is key. This requires a culture that is open for creativity, supports learning opportunities, and applauds practices that inspire.

### The university teacher and teaching careers

Teaching at a university is a demanding task. We recognise that considerable knowledge and skills are required to be a good teacher in this environment. When this narrative refers to the term *teacher*, it is implied that this is a *scholarly* teacher, following the ideal type of Ruth Graham, who designed a career framework for university teaching based on extensive research.<sup>1</sup> According to Graham, a scholarly teacher is someone who creates optimal conditions for student learning, engages with colleagues, is

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<sup>1</sup> R. Graham (2018), *The Career Framework for University Teaching: Background and Overview* (London: Royal Academy of Engineering). Available at: <https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/reports/career-framework-for-university-teaching-background>

thoroughly versed in the relevant research literature and takes an evidence-informed approach to developing and improving their teaching practice over time.

In line with the overall philosophy of the Recognition & Rewards programme, a teaching career is not necessarily defined in traditional terms of vertical steps towards full professorship, but can also be rewarding in the horizontal sense of personal development. For example, by taking on different roles in teaching delivery, management and/or research throughout a career or by developing innovative education ideas and being supported by the university in doing so.

### **Starting point for a university career with a focus on education**

Every teacher fulfills different roles that require a set of related competencies. We have bundled these competencies into six roles: expert, educator, leader, scholar, innovator and collaborator. We use the visual metaphor of the peacock to underline the importance of different talents that contribute to further personal development and a career in teaching. Just as the peacock is proud of its unique feathers, UM is proud of its teachers for their personal talents and contributions to the university.



Figure 1 – Different roles of a teacher

Each of the six feathers of the peacock (see figure 1) represents a teacher role that someone might want to develop further. Depending on one's talents and aspirations, teachers can choose their own path in how to develop these roles and the related competencies. One does not need to excel at everything, though a minimum level in each is desirable. This means there is no one-size-fits-all approach for personal development and a teaching career. In the table below each role is explained further.

EXPERT	A staff member who aspires to a career in education is <b>well educated</b> and <b>an expert in their academic field</b> ; furthermore, they are able to make this body of knowledge accessible to a student audience.
EDUCATOR	A good teacher is <b>focused on the students</b> , on students' <b>active involvement</b> and <b>empowerment</b> . They are trained in the field of education and continue to develop themselves. They have the ability to simplify and convey complex matters in a way that engages students. They have the ability to enthuse and motivate students to get more out of themselves than they had expected, and they teach students how to learn. This is done <b>face-to-face</b> , in <b>online</b> settings or through a combination of both, blended learning. This teacher ensures inclusiveness and diversity in the classroom. They respect students' input in improving education, enter into dialogues with students about education and coach students into empowered and autonomous beginning professionals.
LEADER	This person shows <b>strong educational leadership</b> . This can be within the teaching of one's own discipline, within a faculty, university wide or in a national or international context. This leadership can be in roles with increasingly heavy <b>management</b> responsibilities. However, leadership can also be defined as becoming an international <b>expert</b> in a particular field of education and disseminating this knowledge. Leadership can also take the form of a <b>pioneering</b> role, demonstrated by a person who drives educational innovation.
SCHOLAR	This role emphasises <b>expertise with educational research</b> , i.e. deploying or conducting practice-based research in the field of education with the goal of improving student learning and furthering pedagogical knowledge. Evidence-informed approaches strengthen university education, and can inspire and motivate teachers to critically reflect on their own teaching practice and philosophy.
INNOVATOR	This colleague is an <b>innovator of education</b> . Innovation demands space and inspiration and can take many different forms. We often see innovation within a university come about through the combination of professional expertise with educational research. We also see the creative person innovating education on the basis of scientific theories or insights for which there is little or no scientific evidence. We also see teachers who mainly engage in practice-based educational research in their own educational practice, making use of insights or theories from the educational sciences. And we see many hybrid forms. All these approaches are necessary in order to provide high-quality education.
COLLABORATOR	The collaborator is a <b>bridge builder</b> and someone who <b>makes connections</b> . This is essential, as teaching should not be an isolated activity. It is the connection with students, with research, with the wider UM community, with the national and international communities in which students eventually find themselves that is essential for continued development, success and innovation. This staff member does not work alone, but is an engaged member of society and shares their knowledge. This teacher inspires, enthuses and encourages innovation and change and is able to disseminate local, regional, and national and international knowledge and train others in the profession.

Table 1. Definition of different roles of a teacher

In each of these six roles, it is indispensable to have the ability for self-reflection and a willingness to continue to learn and develop oneself further. Development and training in the field of education should therefore be the common thread in every educational career. Facilitating and offering teachers time and space to professionalise contributes to valuing and rewarding teaching.

In order to bring these roles and competencies to life, the appendix features three fictional colleagues at different stages in their career: Ruben, John and Catherina. Each portrays what an academic career path of someone with a passion for education might look like.

- Ruben, an assistant professor, is adept at innovating his education by experimenting with new approaches, and evaluating them together with students, fellow teachers and educational researchers.
- John, an associate professor, is an example of an academic with a strong interest in teaching as well as educational innovation and research who has had the opportunity to develop his educational management skills in particular.
- Catharina, a full professor, is an accomplished researcher in the field of education who inspires colleagues to apply educational theories in their classrooms and course design.

In line with the ambition of the Recognition & Rewards programme to enable greater diversity in academic profiles and careers, it is important to emphasise that the academic does not have to excel in every role, but excels in some while being well versed in others.

### **How can we implement this?**

We have described a vision in which academics follow a personal trajectory based on their talents, interests and ambitions: a bespoke teaching career. The realisation of this vision requires the following supporting conditions.

#### *Creating learning communities*

In order to establish an organisational culture in which continuous improvement of education is part of our day-to-day practice, it is important to create learning communities. In these, teachers share and reflect on their teaching practice, mutually enhance their learning, peer coach and inspire each other and build partnerships with other teachers, students and educational developers.

#### *Integration into HR policy*

The recognition and rewarding of teaching is only possible if it is integrated into the university's broader human resources policy cycle. The quality and needs in terms of teaching should be part of a faculty's strategic personnel plan, recruitment and selection (i.e., the criteria on which we recruit externally), the new employee introduction programme, personal development plans and appraisal and assessment talks. None of the above can be possible without solid leadership that steers a clear course towards a development-oriented work environment. This kind of leadership is a role for managers that is in its core concerned with creating an organisational learning climate and encouraging employees to engage in lifelong learning.

#### *Offering lifelong learning*

A precondition for recognising and rewarding teaching is to further develop the way in which we foster our staff's talents and allow them to grow and develop by offering training and learning opportunities. At best, this is a longitudinal training and development programme that is closely related to the various

teacher roles and competencies. It should fit with teachers' individual needs, have a strong connection with their daily teaching practice and stimulate community building.

*Getting inspiration from existing best practices*

We don't have to start from scratch, as we already see promising examples within the university that can serve as inspiration for the creation of such a breeding ground for education-oriented careers. The interfaculty Inspiring Educational Leadership programme, FHML's educational career policy, FSE's teaching career trajectories and UCM's capstone project in which students develop a blueprint of a new course are all examples. By supporting and stimulating talent at an early stage in certain places at the university, these innovations can be strengthened and expanded throughout the organisation.

We can also consider adopting good practices from other universities, like the teaching fellowship programme at Utrecht University and TU Delft. This is a programme in which talented teachers receive a grant for a period of two years to run a project and at the same time go through a guidance and professionalisation programme. They are offered unique opportunities to create learning communities among teachers. Such a fellowship programme can serve to broaden their horizons as well as offer a solution if they wish to specialise or have a particular professional ambition. Appointing teaching fellows is also a way of recognising and valuing education.



# Ruben Scholl

Lecturer (UD): innovator

8  
Years  
of  
experience



## BIO

Birth Date  
**1 October 1989**  
Nationality  
**German**  
Location  
**Köln**



## ABOUT ME

During my PhD, I discovered I had a greater love for teaching than research. I find it very rewarding to work closely with young talented minds and to get the best out of them. I love to play and experiment with the things students and I do in our learning adventures. I share these experiences both with my students and colleagues. Based on these insights and current theories and evidence from education research, I keep innovating my teaching. I want to be an educational leader of tomorrow.



## EDUCATION

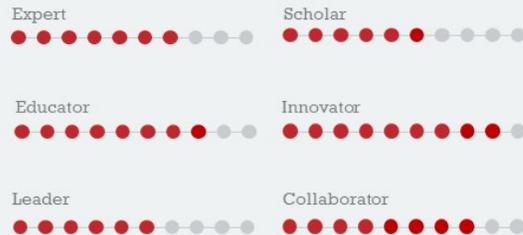
- 2007 ● **Humboldt Gymnasium**  
Pre-university degree
- 2010 ● **University of Cologne**  
BSc Neuroscience
- 2012 ● **Maastricht University**  
MSc Biomedical Science
- 2016 ● **Maastricht University**  
PhD Biomedical Science



## CAREER TIMELINE



## COMPETENCIES



## ROLES



### Professional statement Ruben Scholl

After my studies to become a biologist, I started teaching my own subject. As it turned out, guiding and motivating a group of students was more difficult than I had thought. Fortunately, I had great colleagues who I asked for feedback, and I followed courses to develop myself and my education further. I got to know a number of educational experts during these courses, and I started talking to them about my experiences and my ideas to improve education.

It soon became clear that a number of theoretical principles underlay education, and these provided me with a guideline for thinking about educational improvements. For example, the principle that we prefer to organise education around relevant problems from professional practice or society (contextual learning) helps to promote the application and transfer to practice.

As a teacher, I entered into a dialogue about this with students and other teachers. Together we came up with innovative ways to make my subject more attractive to students in line with these principles. When we had implemented the new approach, I was naturally curious to discover how this innovative approach was experienced by students and teachers. Together with the students and teachers and educational experts, I evaluated and investigated the new approach. I then presented this to colleagues in my own faculty and at a conference. I was also asked to come and explain my approach at other universities. Next to these experience-based educational innovations, I also started to use evidence-based educational methods from literature as a basis for my teaching.

In recent years I have fulfilled various educational roles. I'm open to new ideas, try to innovate, research new educational methods and adapt educational practice. I also try to further develop my insights into learning by means of all kinds of training courses and programmes, but above all in dialogue with my students, fellow teachers and educational researchers. Nowadays, I assist students, teachers and even PhD students in improving and researching their own educational practice. I not only contribute to innovation in education, but also to improving scientific insights in the field of education and to building bridges between educational practice and educational research. I try to inspire others to further develop themselves as educational innovators, researchers and leaders in the field of education. I hope to be an ambassador for colleagues who aspire to a career in education.





# Catharina Visser

Professor: researcher

30  
Years  
of  
experience



## BIO

Date of birth  
1 June 1965

Nationality  
Dutch

Location  
Groningen



## ABOUT ME

After I obtained my MSc in biology, I started teaching this subject at the university. I often had conversations with students, teachers, and educational scientists, on how to optimize and innovate my teaching practice. I decided to start a MSc in Education to gain better insight in recent scientific insights and theories about education. Nowadays I inspire teachers and student to innovate and investigate their teaching practices by making use of theories and scientific insights.

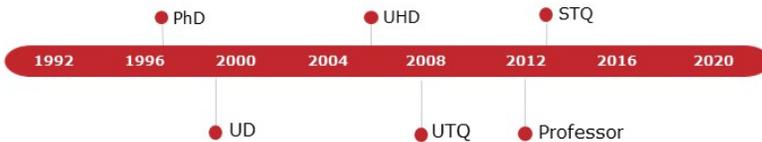


## EDUCATION

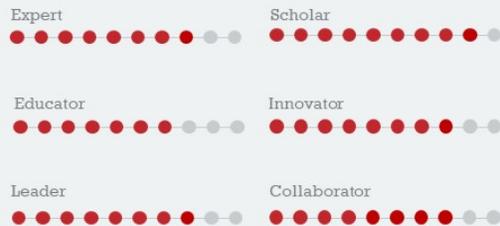
- 1983 ● **Martini Lyceum**  
Pre-university degree
- 1988 ● **Nijmegen University**  
MSc Biology
- 1993 ● **Utrecht University**  
MSc Education
- 1997 ● **Maastricht**  
PhD Education



## CAREER TIMELINE



## COMPETENCIES



## ROLES



### Professional statement Catharina Visser

Education is key to lifelong learning and personal development. In my daily work, I focus on optimising education. Given that education is very complex and context bound, I closely collaborate and create partnerships with teachers, students, educational designers and researchers to innovate and improve teaching practices. In addition to this, I make use of theories, a set of principles or guidelines for designing and investigating teaching practices and closely collaborate with educational scientists. Together we come up with innovative ways to better prepare students for their future profession and lifelong learning. We analyse, design and investigate new teaching approaches. We continuously adapt and innovate our teaching approaches based on theories, scientific evidence, stakeholders' perspectives and contextual differences. Given that there is no single solution that works optimally under all conditions, I want to gain better insight into why a certain approach to teaching might work in a specific context with a particular target group and particular goals in mind. I inspire others to innovate and investigate their teaching practices and am an ambassador for colleagues who aspire to a career in education.

My interest in educational research started when I became involved in research as a student assistant. After my master's degree, I fulfilled various roles in education as a teacher, course coordinator, programme committee member, bachelor's programme coordinator and programme director. My input was highly appreciated in all roles. I implemented a major educational innovation in a programme by making use of theories in the field of educational sciences. I evaluated and investigated the innovation and wrote several papers to disseminate my innovative approach within my university, but also nationally and internationally. Currently, I assist teachers and PhD students in innovating and investigating their educational practice. My goal is to build bridges between educational practice and theory in my work.

