



ESPhil
Committee members

Datum

Onderwerp

Research review Philosophy 2012-
2017: reflections from ESPhil

Ons kenmerk
CvB/AZ/EK/IL/279795

Dear Committee members,

Uw kenmerk

In this document, we reflect on the outcomes of the evaluation of research in philosophy at six Dutch universities over the period 2012-2017, focussing on the assessment of ESPhil.

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Bijlage
geen

Afdeling
College van Bestuur

The Review Committee's overall impression was that ESPhil is an excellent research institute with a strong research agenda and a particularly laudable policy as far as societal relevance is concerned. ESPhil has developed strong relationships with other faculties and the Committee was confident that such interfaculty networks will secure ESPhil's future.

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Summary of the results:

Research quality: 2 Relevance to society: 1 Viability: 1

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First of all, given the EUR's emphasis on creating positive impact for society, we are very proud that ESPhil attained the highest possible score (1), indicating that ESPhil indeed represents a visible and dedicated team of academic scholars who contribute not only to high-quality academic research, but also to societal debate in various ways. Also, the score for viability (again, the highest possible score, 1) is important for us. Many humanities fields are facing a struggle for existence. We managed to secure a solid base. At the same time, we acknowledge that, although the quality of our research is good (2), there is room for improvement, notably when it comes to acquisition. We already developed a research strategy with the aim to strengthen our acquisition capacity, also on the international level. This strategy, which is in alignment with the EUR strategy 2024, has been discussed both internally and with the EUR university board. In view of this, the comments made by the review committee are very helpful. In order to further strengthen our position, the Committee highlighted the following recommendations. Focussing on research and acquisition, this is their key message:

- (1) Re-think the research strategy as far as the signature of the Institute is concerned: Should ESPhil be perceived as an association of four rather autonomous research groups or rather as the department that is famous because of its emphasis on societal relevance? If the latter were the case ESPhil might want to highlight such signature more explicitly
Comments: this is addressed as a core issue in our new strategy. Our ambition is to become one team (rather than four compartmentalised groups) dedicated to combining forces to realise academic quality in combination with positive societal impact. We encourage collaboration both internally and with other Faculties of EUR. For a successful acquisition strategy, collaboration, also across boundaries, developing new coalitions is of key importance.
- (2) Intensify collaborations with other faculties on the level of research
Comment: Again, an important recommendation which is already incorporated in our research (e.g. our contribution to the research initiative on the dynamics of inclusive prosperity), but also of our new research strategy. ESPhil is optimally positioned to play an interactive and proactive role, collaborating with the other EUR schools on both campuses and reaching out to a broad range of societal partners and audiences, strengthening the focus of our research, on the basis of our academic strengths, but sensitive the ambitions of EUR and other schools. We aim to increase our capacity to acquire funding for research by developing more collaborations with other faculties and by exploring a broader range of acquisition opportunities, e.g. via collaboration with external (academic and societal) partners and on the European level (H2020 and beyond); Funding opportunities for philosophy as such are limited. Therefore, interdisciplinary collaboration is important, both in terms of academic content (being challenged by cutting-edge developments in other fields while contributing philosophical input and reflection to emerging research practices elsewhere) and in terms of opportunities for acquisition. For instance, by joining consortia with other EUR colleagues of other faculties.
- (3) Join forces with VU to consider the possibility of a research master in Philosophy and Economics;
Comment: We are explicitly exploring this option together with colleagues from the VU.
- (4) Keep the possibility of internally funded PhD positions because this is one of the very few ways to support individual projects that are vital for philosophy;
Comment: We are dedicated to continuing this possibility, although we intend to do this in such a way that it will become sustainable in the sense that this unique instrument will be employed to strengthen the results of our research strategy.

(5) Make sure that junior staff members have sufficient time to build up their research career.

Comment: special attention will be given to support of junior staff members notably in tenure track positions.

The Executive Board of Erasmus University Rotterdam,



Prof. dr. R.C.M.E. Engels
Rector Magnificus

