

Appendix: response ERMECC and History@Erasmus

Response ERMeCC to the recommendations of the external review committee

Research directors: Prof. Susanne Janssen and Prof. Filip Vermeulen

Recommendations review committee

1. Develop a shared strategic plan which is based on the synergy between the two research centres;
2. Invest in improving PhD duration;
3. Develop and communicate clear-cut publication strategies, which take into account the balance between academic publications and those aimed at society at large;
4. Develop a clear framework for promotion decisions that includes expectations regarding a candidate's publication record as well as activities to enhance the societal relevance of research;
5. Use a tool to monitor research output and steer the direction of research;
6. Emphasize interdisciplinarity as the Centre's key strength in external communication;
7. Reflect on the ideal balance between work aimed at enhancing societal relevance and academic publications;
8. Strive for an even stronger presence on editorial boards;
9. Invest in more support staff for grant acquisition;
10. Keep up and perhaps intensify measures to promote a healthy work-life balance in order to avoid future stress-related problems;
11. Develop a plan to improve the career opportunities at EUR for talented associate professors;
12. Reflect on the causes of the gender imbalance in senior positions and set more ambitious targets to improve the gender diversity in senior positions;
13. Consider formalizing the Centre's management and decision-making structures in order to handle future growth.

Strategy and grant acquisition (R1, R6)

As mentioned in the cover letter, the development and implementation of a shared strategic research plan has already been prioritized. In that context, ERMeCC will also further align its research agenda with new opportunities, challenges and requirements that emerge in the wider contexts of our university, as well as national and European research policies and funding opportunities.

Publications strategies (R3, R5, R7)

In the forthcoming year we will prioritize the recommendations regarding the monitoring of our research (R5) and the development of clear-cut publications strategies (R3), that take into account the balance between academic publications and publications/activities that aim at enhancing societal impact (R3 and R7). Concretely, this implies that in 2020-2021 - preferably before the start of the new P&D cycle - we aim to revisit and update the current faculty-wide policy (established in 2015) as explained in the ESHCC *Strategy enhancing scientific quality, academic reputation and productivity* and the accompanying *Research quality assessment system*.

PhD duration (R2)

In recent years, the two departments participating in ERMeCC have already taken steps to arrive at the current high PhD completion rate and low drop-out figures. A range of measures has also been taken to improve the average duration of PhD trajectories, such as ensuring that each PhD candidate has a

teaching free period of at least 6 months in the final year of her/his contract and throughout the trajectory has extended teaching free periods. The supervision structure has been strengthened: each PhD candidate can count on the support of at least two supervisors and a designated daily supervisor. In

the forthcoming year, at the level of the School, we will work on the development and implementation of a more advanced progress monitoring system that makes use of the *Hora Finita* portal.

HR recommendations (R4, R10, R11, R12)

The ESHCC is currently working on updating its framework for promotion decisions, based on the advice of the external work group that was installed for this purpose in the third quarter of 2020 (R4). Also, recommendations from the EUR wide taskforce on “Recognizing and Rewarding” (*Erkennen en Waarderen*) will be taken into account here.

We should note that expectations regarding both the publication record and activities to enhance societal impact (R4) are already an integral part of the annual Performance and Development cycle at our School and as such receive due attention.

Both at the level of the School and ERMeCC we are determined to keep up and take additional measures to advance a healthy work-life balance (R10) for our research staff and PhD candidates (see R2).

The ESHCC endorses the EUR wide 25-25 policy and targets (by 2025, at least 25% of the senior positions fulfilled by women) to improve the gender imbalance in UHD and HL positions. At the level of ERMeCC the 25% target has already been reached, with the recent promotion of four female assistant professors to associate professor and the forthcoming appointment of a new full professor in Organizational Communication (as of November 2020). In the near future, we expect some additional promotions of women to the ranks of associate professor. . Still, in line with the panel’s recommendation we aim for a higher representation of women at the full professor level, in particular in the department of arts and culture studies.

We also have increased our efforts to improve career perspectives for talented associate professors (R11), among things through the establishment of externally funded personal chairs, sponsored chairs or chairs by special appointment, notably chairs that address current societal challenges and as such can be expected to further raise the societal impact of our research.

External communication (R6)

The ERMeCC management will indeed make sure to emphasize interdisciplinarity as a key-strength in its external communication. More generally, in the forthcoming period, the ESHCC will invest more in external communication about the school’s research achievements.

Grant acquisition recommendations (R9)

As mentioned in the cover letter the support staff for grant acquisitions has recently been strengthened both at the faculty and the university level (). At the level of ERMeCC, we aim to continue and further strengthen our established practice of discussing relevant grant opportunities with our members and providing critical feedback to grant applications.

Presence in editorial board (R8)

Further strengthening our presence in editorial boards is indeed something we will continue striving for. In recent years we have also taken steps to strengthen our position in major international academic associations and networks in our research areas, which have been quite successful thus far and will likely also result in additional editorial board memberships.

Governance (R13)

As mentioned in the cover letter, as of September 1, the ESHCC has implemented a new governance structure, which implies a formalization and strengthening of research management both at the level of the School and the level of ERMeCC (cf. the new faculty regulations).

Response History@Erasmus to the recommendations of the external review committee

Research director: Prof. Gijsbert Oonk

Recommendations review committee

1. Develop a strategic plan which takes advantages of the synergies between History @ Erasmus and ERMeCC;
2. address the uncertainties and decline in morale among staff members after the turbulence around the merger;
3. increase the number of associate and full professors to remedy workload concerns, especially among junior members of staff;
4. provide security for assistant professors by changing contracts from short to long term;
5. restore administrative staff to levels previously enjoyed by the unit. This will involve hiring at least two funding advisors;
6. stimulate the writing of international refereed journal articles and monographs with renowned publishers, over other forms of output, such as chapters in edited volumes;
7. provide an adequate replacement for the retiring head of the unit;
8. use progression panels for PhD candidates in a more systematic way. Apart from evaluating the research produced by the student and evaluating their overall progress, this panel should also provide advice on the amount of teaching the student should not exceed in order to be able to complete the PhD within 4-5 years;
9. install a mechanism to ensure that when the first supervisor is unable to supervise, the second supervisor or another member of staff with the right expertise is able to immediately step in as an interim first supervisor;
10. address the imbalance in age and gender in the department's composition of research staff;
11. it is time for the central university level show appreciation for the hard work of this unit during turbulent times and shrinkage, by making the necessary investment in order to see the realisation of its full potential.

We list the most important measures and plans below which are not mentioned in the cover letter and above.

Address workload, merger, short term contracts, diversity (R2, R3, R4, R10, R11)

The uncertainties and decline in morale among staff members after the turbulence around the merger are addressed. A new Dean is appointed as per 1-11-2020. Moreover, in the proposed budgetplan there is room for two tenured-staff and a new PhD student. This will reduce the number of temporary staff. These new permanent positions are an excellent opportunity to address the gender, diversity and age imbalance of the institute.

Publication strategies (R6)

We aim to stimulate the writing of international refereed journal articles and monographs. As a start, we will organize a History@Erasmus meeting in 2020-2021 to address the publication culture and talk about

publication strategies. A possible starting point is NWO publication: *Onderzoek publicatieculturen Sociale en geesteswetenschappen* (Research Publication culture in Social Sciences and Humanities) of 2016. In the forthcoming year, we aim to revisit and update the current faculty-wide policy (established in 2015) as explained in the ESHCC *Strategy enhancing scientific quality, academic reputation and productivity* and the accompanying *Research quality assessment system*.

Provide an adequate replacement for the retiring head of the unit (R7)

We are happy to announce that this place is filled as per 1 November 2020.

PhD duration (R8, R9)

In recent years, History@Erasmus have already taken steps to arrive at the current high PhD completion rate and low drop-out figures. A range of measures have also been taken to improve the average duration of PhD trajectories, such as ensuring that each PhD candidate has a teaching free period of at least 6 months in the final year of her/his contract and throughout the trajectory has extended teaching free period. The supervision structure has been strengthened: each PhD candidate can count on the support of at least two supervisors and a designated daily supervisor. In the forthcoming year, at the level of the School, we will work on the development and implementation of a more advanced progress monitoring system that makes use of the *Hora Finita* portal.