

RESEARCH ASSESSMENT REPORT

Theological University of Apeldoorn

2024



Theological University of



Apeldoorn

serving knowledge

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Preface

On behalf of the assessment committee, I am pleased to present the assessment report on the research of the Theological University of Apeldoorn, following an on-site visit by an international committee in May 2024.

An assessment report on research always reflects an outsider's perspective, but as such, it also reflects the positive and benevolent considerations of those who were invited to come inside, observe, and converse with their hosts on site.

We were warmly received and enjoyed our two days at this small university, which is built on such a human scale. I would like to thank the board of TUA for entrusting the committee with the important task of evaluating the institution and for hosting us.

We appreciate the open and sincere interactions with the university before and during the site visit. As a committee, we benefitted greatly from this cooperative atmosphere.

We sincerely hope that TUA will draw in the coming years from our conclusions and recommendations

C. van der Kooi
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Content

Preface	2
Executive summary	6
1. Introduction	8
1.1. Context and aims of the assessment	8
1.2. Composition of the assessment committee	9
1.3. The assessment process	9
1.4. Quality of the information	10
2. Mission, structure and strategy of TUA	11
2.1. Mission and history	11
2.2. Governance structure	11
2.3. Funding	12
2.4. Research strategy	12
3. Findings and recommendations on research quality	14
3.1. For TUA in general	14
3.2. For Biblical Exegesis & Systematic Theology	15
3.3. For Church History & Church Polity	16
3.4. For Formational Practices	17
3.5. PhD policy and training	18
3.6. Research integrity	20
4. Findings and recommendations on societal relevance	22
4.1. Relevance to the Christian Reformed Churches	22
4.2. Impact on education	23
4.3. Public theology	23
4.4. Open science	23
5. Findings and recommendations on viability	25
5.1. Financial resources	25
5.2. 1.1. Governance structure	25
5.3. Human resources policy	25
5.4. Academic culture	27
6. Appendices	28
6.1. Terms of Reference for the assessment	28
6.2. Programme of the site visit	31
6.3. Staff composition at TUA	33
6.3. Funding of TUA	



Executive summary

Main findings

The committee commends the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA) for its efforts to integrate into the broader national and international theological fields. It is pleased that TUA actively seeks national and international collaborations, sometimes in pioneering roles. The scope and depth of TUA's activities is impressive, given its small size. However, in spite of the previous committee's recommendations, TUA has had limited success in its efforts to publish in high-ranking academic journals. To do so is crucial for establishing academic partnerships and securing research funding.

TUA maintains strong ties with the Christian Reformed Churches, contributing to the training of its leaders, opening original sources, and enhancing doctrinal understanding. The relation with the Christian Reformed Church deserves to be cherished. TUA significantly impacts Christian education in the Netherlands, particularly through its collaboration with Driestar Christian University. The university has made progress in open science, including publishing several books with open access and making PhD theses freely available. Continuing these efforts will further increase the relevance and impact of TUA's research.

Significant progress has been made in structuring the graduate programme: formalizing admissions, including young researchers in group meetings, and providing methodological training. The annual Graduate Week is highly valued. The committee appreciates the progress that has been made in this respect. Moreover, TUA has undertaken measures to ensure research quality and integrity, including the appointment of a confidential advisor for integrity violations, the establishment of an independent Ethics Committee, and the training of PhD candidates in academic integrity. These are all valuable steps.

Securing continuous funding remains a concern for TUA, even though there is much goodwill. The committee suggests a multi-channel approach, combining academic funding applications, charity funds, and private sponsorships. Collaborative efforts with other universities to acquire substantial grants are essential, even though challenging in the theology discipline.

The current governance structure of three research groups and ten research domains aims to bring coherence to TUA's research. However, the committee emphasizes the need for flexibility and cross-pollination between research fields to enhance the university's academic output and innovation.

With a small research staff and the impending retirement of key figures, TUA faces challenges in maintaining and expanding its talent pool. One of its assets is that it fosters a warm and inviting academic atmosphere. The facilities, including a recently expanded library and a lecture hall, are excellent. Maintaining this inviting environment is crucial for the university's ongoing success and attractiveness to both staff and students.

Main recommendations

- Develop a targeted strategy to increase publications in high-ranking academic journals. Use your networks. Mentor some of the junior researchers to pursue ambitious writing and submission strategies.
- Focus your research, maintaining your classic themes and adding new topics as far as they fit into a coherent portfolio.
- For the BEST research group, focus on methodological integration. Clarify the discretionary powers of the BEST leadership.
- For the CHCP research group, focus on your strengths: the history of the (Protestant) Reformation.
- For the Formational Practices research group, clarify the term 'practical theology'. Emphasize the unique interaction between descriptive, conceptual, and empirical research in dialogue with the Reformed tradition.
- Define and develop the focus of public theology at TUA.
- Ensure flexibility and cross-pollination between research fields within the governance structure.
- Structure the research themes of upcoming PhD projects so that they align with the research group's programming. Create a more stimulating and demanding atmosphere for PhD candidates.
- Diversify career paths, with some focusing more on academic, others on valorizing outputs. Develop some tenure tracks for academically gifted and motivated PhD candidates. Try to establish inter-university or internationally shared postdoc positions.
- Intensify collaboration with Driestar Christian University.
- Increase diversity among research staff.

I. Introduction

I.1. Context and aims of the assessment

The executive board of the Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA) asked a committee of peers to assess its research over the period 2018 - 2023. The university comprises three research groups: Biblical Exegesis & Systematic Theology, Church History & Law, and Formational Practices. Each of these research groups was subject to this assessment, as was the university as a whole. The basis for the assessment is the terms of reference drafted by the university (see appendix 6.1). The assessment helps to monitor and improve the quality of the research conducted at TUA and aims to contribute to its viability. Additionally, the assessments of the quality and societal relevance of the research contribute to fulfilling the duty of accountability towards church, government and society. The university's executive board may use the outcomes of the research assessment for quality assurance purposes and institutional strategy development.

Specifically, the committee was requested to address the following three assessment criteria:

1. research quality
2. societal relevance
3. viability.

During the evaluation process, the assessment committee was asked to consider four additional aspects as well. These aspects are included as they are becoming increasingly important in the current scientific and societal context and relevant for the continuing successful development of a university such as TUA.

The additional aspects are:

1. open science
2. PhD policy and training
3. academic culture
4. human resources policy.

These are the criteria and additional aspects of the Strategy Evaluation Protocol, which most research organizations in the Netherlands use for their research assessments and they also form the basis of the research assessment of TUA. The committee has taken these criteria as its main focal points. The university and its research groups also asked a number of additional questions, which the committee has tried to answer as best as it could within the available time.

The committee was asked to provide a written assessment in accordance with the guidelines of the Strategy Evaluation Protocol. The committee was also asked to provide recommendations for improvement.

1.2. Composition of the assessment committee

The assessment committee consisted of:

- Prof. Kees van der Kooi (chair), professor emeritus of Systematic Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam; distinguished lecturer, Erasmus University Rotterdam, Netherlands
- Prof. Gerdien Bertram-Troost, professor of Beliefs & Practices, Faculty of Religion & Theology, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Prof. Wim Francois, professor of Early Modern Church & Theology, Faculty of Theology & Religious Studies, KU Leuven, Belgium
- Prof. Kobus Kok, professor and department chair of New Testament, Evangelical Theological Faculty, Leuven, Belgium
- Prof. Ferdi Kruger, professor of Practical Theology, North-West University, Potchefstroom, South Africa
- Prof. Archibald L.H.M. van Wieringen, professor of Old Testament, Tilburg University, Netherlands
- Ms Petra Charles-Laagland Winder, MA (PhD candidate), Protestant Theological University, Netherlands.

The committee was supported by Mariette Huisjes, MA, who acted as committee secretary.

1.3. The assessment process

The committee first met online on 18 March 2024 to become acquainted with each other, with the assessment process and with the Theological University of Apeldoorn.

A few weeks before the committee visited the university in person, the board of the university had invited each of the researchers to speak with the committee individually and anonymously if they wished to do so. None of the researchers chose to make use of that opportunity.

Prior to the site visit, all committee members had read the university's self-evaluation and drafted first impressions and questions to be asked during their site visit. These were discussed within the committee at the start of the site visit. The interviews with staff members, along with a guided tour through the university, took place on 29 and 30 May. For the full programme, see appendix 7.2. At the end of the site visit, the assessment committee chair presented some first impressions and conclusions to the university.

This assessment report is based on both the documentation provided by the Theological University of Apeldoorn and the information gathered from the interviews during the site visit. The committee members each contributed to the writing of the assessment report. The first draft of the report was compiled and edited by the secretary and reviewed by the chair. The

committee members then offered feedback, which the chair and secretary processed. The secretary sent a draft report to the university, which then checked the report for any factual errors. In close consultation with the chair, the secretary used these comments to create the final report.

1.4. Quality of the information

Before and during the site visit, the committee received the following documents:

- terms of reference
- Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021 -2027
- self-evaluation report 2017-2023
- introductory PowerPoint presentation
- assessment report of TU of Apeldoorn & TU of Kampen 2012-2017
- reflections & a renewed research strategy in response to the previous assessment
- output registrations for each of the three research groups
- highlighted publications 2018 – 2023 for each of the research groups
- research programmes 2018 – 2023 for each of the research groups
- final report by the chair of Church Practices 2026-2031
- programme for graduate week 2024.

2. Mission, structure and strategy of TUA

2.1. Mission and history

The Theological University of Apeldoorn (TUA) was founded in 1894 by the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. It has a threefold mission: to maintain a training programme for ministers, to engage in theological scholarship, and to provide theological education. In doing so, TUA serves the Christian Reformed Churches and society in a broader sense. Its motto is: 'serving knowledge'. The General Synod of 28 May 2008 determined that TUA is an independent legal entity.

In 2017, attempts to fuse TUA and the former Theological University of Kampen (now Theological University Utrecht) into a Reformed Theological University were thwarted by ecclesiastical decisions. Nonetheless, collaborations in research between the two institutions have continued in the research group Biblical Exegesis & Systematic Theology (BEST). Regular consultations between the two universities continue to occur in other areas, such library services, educational policy and governance. More broadly, these consultations also occur within a network of four Dutch universities that are inspired by a Christian and/or humanistic worldview, the so-called NLU network. Besides TUA, the network consists of the Protestant Theological University (located in Amsterdam and Groningen), the Theological University Utrecht, and the University of Humanistic Studies (also located in Utrecht).

2.2. Governance structure

TUA is governed by an executive board comprising the 'rector magnificus' and the president. The rector is primarily responsible for all matters relating to education and research, closely collaborating with the college of professors. The president of the executive board is primarily responsible for organizational matters such as research and educational support, facility policy and finance.

The supervisory board of TUA currently consists of six members. They supervise the execution of tasks by the executive board and assist them with advice. The supervisory board also approves the budget, the annual accounts, the annual report and the multi-annual strategic plan of TUA.

Although TUA is an independent legal entity, important decisions such as the appointment of professors and other academic staff are proposed by the executive board of the university and must be approved by the General Synod, the highest organ of the Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands.

TUA has an employee participation council, which operates according to the guidelines of the Dutch Higher Education and Scientific Research Act. The council advises the executive board and has the right of consent in important matters.

2.3. Funding

The university operates with funding from the Dutch government, which constitutes approximately 52% of its budget. Apart from direct funding from the government, most of the external funding in the period under review was received through contracts with European organizations (Erasmus+, the research infrastructures for religious studies RESILIENCE and ReIRes) or other channels. One major other channel consisted of contributions from the Christian Reformed Churches. Additional funding came from private donors, charitable organizations and specialized funds.

In 2023, the minister of Education, Culture & Science in the Netherlands allocated additional financial resources to the members of the NLU network of Christian or humanistically inspired universities, including TUA. This allocation is a recognition of the fragile financial position of these universities, and an incentive for them to strengthen their teaching and research. TUA will receive EUR 500,000 annually from this grant for a period of seven years, 90% of which is allocated to research.

2.4. Research strategy

The research conducted at TUA from 2018 to 2023 can be characterized as maintaining continuity while also exploring new directions as a result of the unsuccessful attempt in 2017 to establish a Reformed Theological University. The collaborative research programme Biblical Exegesis & Systematic Theology (BEST) with the Theological University Utrecht (formerly Theological University Kampen) has been continued. The research group Early Modern Reformed Theology, jointly run by TUA and the Theological University of Kampen, was terminated and followed up within TUA in the newly established research programme Church History and Church Polity (CHCP). The research group Reformed Theology in a Secular Europe, another collaboration with the Theological University of Kampen, had been considered vulnerable in previous assessments and has since been dissolved. Its successor at TUA is the research group Formational Practices. Within the research groups, each research leader (mostly professors) has their own research domain.

Personnel changes have significantly influenced the progress of research at TUA, including both the retirement or departure of key researchers and the recruitment of distinguished new researchers. A notable outcome of the previous research assessment recommendations was the establishment of a graduate programme, offering structured guidance to PhD candidates, including the substantial group of external PhD candidates at TUA. It is TUA's intention to further consolidate its graduate programme.

For the future, TUA's research strategy focuses on:

- developing new research domains
- strengthening the internal coherence of the research programmes
- strengthening the TUA research community

- promoting national and international cooperation in research
- monitoring the quality of research and publications
- increasing the number of research publications.

A number of policy instruments have been put in place to contribute to these strategic goals. For example, the research groups write a multi-year plan for each of the domains (which plans are regularly evaluated), annual TUA-wide research meetings are organized, overarching themes are identified that all research groups contribute to, and more research time is has been to the staff.

3. Findings and recommendations on research quality

3.1. For TUA in general

The committee was pleased to find that in the period under review, TUA actively sought connection with the broader national and international field of theology. Some examples include collaborations with the Theological University Utrecht (formerly Kampen), with the Restored Reformed Seminary (located at VU Amsterdam), with the Protestant Theological University and with Driestar Research Centre. Memoranda of understanding made with research centres in Potchefstroom, Grand Rapids, Jakarta, Canterbury and Oslo/Bergen are just a few examples of TUA's international collaborations.

Participation in the RESILIENCE network is particularly worth mentioning in this context. In this consortium, thirteen European institutions collectively aim to innovate competencies, knowledge, approaches, and impact within religious studies. The network forms an infrastructure connecting libraries and research centres across Europe. It opens up online resources, data, etc. to the stakeholders and offers training opportunities to (future) librarians and researchers. RESILIENCE acquired funding from the European Union for its preparatory phase, which lasts until 2026. The committee applauds such connections and greatly appreciates that TUA had a pioneering role in establishing RESILIENCE. Now that the initiative has demonstrated its potential, TUA can harvest, making good use of the networks, research methodologies and access to funds that RESILIENCE offers.

The committee is convinced that the dialogues with national and international networks will enhance the quality of TUA's research as well as provide opportunities to acquire research funding. The committee's recommendation is to make even more (and more effective) use of such networks in order for example to increase the number of publications in high-ranking, internationally recognized journals.

As TUA itself stated in its self-evaluation report, the number of publications it has managed to place in high-ranking academic journals is still low. This seems to be a tenacious problem since it was addressed by the previous panel as well. The committee underscores the importance of a presentation at the highest academic level. Not only is it a prerequisite for academic partnerships and the acquisition of research funds, but the Christian Reformed Church, being TUA's primary stakeholder, will also benefit from access to the forefront of theological knowledge. The committee therefore strongly recommends that TUA develop a strategy to access high-impact academic journals. This is not easy and will inevitably involve setbacks and numerous failed attempts. It will therefore require persistence, but the task must be taken seriously. Specifically,

the committee recommends that TUA's researchers who are inclined and interested in engaging in academic discourse do their utmost to pass through peer-reviews and reach these high-ranking journals. Senior researchers may do so in collaboration with the members of their research group and/or national and international networks. The research sabbatical that they are encouraged to take (as of 2024) is already a good step in that direction. Talented junior researchers should be structurally stimulated and groomed to embark on this academic path by their more experienced colleagues (see also par. 3.5).

The committee admires the scope and depth of TUA's activities. For a small university, it has done an enormous amount of work. However, given its limited size and capacity, TUA has to make choices in what research lines it wants to focus on. Spreading itself too thinly over too many topics will be detrimental to its visibility and reputation. The committee recommends that TUA's research groups discuss this issue carefully amongst each other. The classic themes in which TUA has traditionally shown prominence (Reformation studies, hermeneutics of the Bible, covenant, Israel, wrath of God) should definitely be continued. New and innovative research lines are an improvement of course, certainly when overarching research lines are shared between the research groups, as in the case of Death, Dying and Comfort. However, the sum total of research conducted at TUA should be coherent and focused and fit in a typical TUA niche.

3.2. For Biblical Exegesis & Systematic Theology

In the research group BEST, the fields of biblical studies and systematic theology join forces. Certainly within the Dutch theological research landscape, this is a unique collaboration that allows for a strategic constructive alignment and holds much promise. A strong point of BEST is that it is rooted in the very rich Dutch Reformed tradition and its heritage. The strength of the Dutch Reformed landscape is the contribution it has always made to biblical theology, and the bridge it forms from biblical studies to systematic theology. The committee sees this as a very strategic position and an advantage for TUA. Moreover, collaboration within BEST takes place not only between two fields of research, but also between TUA and the Theological University Utrecht more broadly. This fortifies the research between two relatively small academic institutions and broadens their respective international networks.

The collaboration between the two theological disciplines of biblical exegesis and systematic theology also entails some challenges. On the one hand, the specific characteristics of each discipline must be preserved, and on the other hand, a methodological bridge must also be sought to enable a coherent approach. Such a collaboration needs in-depth methodical reflection in the research meetings. For the survival of BEST, the committee recommends that explicit attention be paid to these methodical discussions. The constructive alignment of each BEST researcher's foci with those of BEST as a collaborative effort must not stand in the way of the specific development of the individual's own talents and interests. It will be rewarding for BEST to strive for substantial coherence while simultaneously also making use of the

possibilities of the researchers, juniors and seniors. However, to achieve this, the way in which strategic leadership is implemented must be taken into serious consideration. While it is evident that the executive boards of TUA and the Theological University Utrecht, respectively, are formally responsible for their own staff members, strategic leadership with respect to the content and quality of the research seems to be a weak point in the BEST community. During the site visit it did not become clear to the committee whether this is defined and organized, and if so, how. The committee therefore recommends that the two institutions involved in BEST clarify the discretionary powers of the BEST leadership as being distinct from the formal and hierarchical responsibility of the executive boards.

The committee found that BEST is staffed in part by talented younger scholars who have not yet had an opportunity to develop their academic profiles and build a larger network. Nevertheless, they carry a large responsibility. The committee notes that clear leadership structures and guidance by senior scholars will help the younger staff grow further. Having senior scholars take on the role of mentor would lead to an optimal working environment in which the younger staff can work on creating national and international networks and be more effective in getting their research published.

BEST researchers reported that they are members of international societies such as the International Society for Biblical Hermeneutics, the Society of Biblical Literature, and the American Academy of Religion and contribute to these by presenting papers at annual meetings, while also seeking opportunities to publish their outputs through these societies. The committee considers this a favourable development. Active membership of international networks helps TUA researchers to exchange knowledge and ideas, opening up a wider range of perspectives. Furthermore, it strengthens their academic visibility and may lead to new collaborations and funding opportunities.

Recent research outputs of BEST, as catalogued in the self-evaluation report and including some top publications, indicate a growing tendency to publish – or an aim to publish – in highly rated book series and in journals of high impact. The committee applauds this. It encourages the younger BEST scholars to publish their doctoral work in highly reputable academic series or journals. In a sense, these are forms of low-hanging fruit, since the doctoral work is already there as part of the PhD thesis. Nevertheless, the committee observes that volumes based on conferences may take too long to be published, or may even fall through completely. This is regrettable and should be prevented.

3.3. For Church History & Church Polity

The research group CHCP traditionally focuses on the history of the (Protestant) Reformation. They research, publish and comment upon its sources, such as *Opera Omnia Melancthonis* and *Acta of the Synod of Dordt*. This line of research has so far been a great strength, for which TUA is highly appreciated within national and international theological communities. It

therefore goes without saying that the group should continue this work. Taking the 500th birthday of the Reformation as a starting point, TUA has taken on a pioneering role in the international platform Refo500 and, above all, in its academic branch, the Reformation Research Consortium (REFORC). REFORC has by now grown into an international network focusing on early modern Christianity that holds annual conferences in which about a hundred researchers from all over Europe and the US and from various denominational backgrounds participate. The highly successful scholarly series *Refo500 Academic Studies* is also embedded in REFORC. In addition, CHCP played a large role in setting up ReIReS (research infrastructure on religious studies) and the aforementioned RESILIENCE network (see par. 3.1). The committee explicitly states that it holds these achievements in high regard.

Partly through international exchange and dialogue with researchers of different (confessional) backgrounds, awareness has grown within CHCP that the group's research should be broadened to include the history of the late Middle Ages and of Pietism. In addition, there is now a strong focus on exegesis in Christian Antiquity, and a lively research dynamic is also being developed there. The committee wholeheartedly welcomes these developments as enriching in themselves, but it wonders whether there is sufficient academic staff and critical mass within the group to cover new topics in addition to pursuing the group's more traditional core research activities. In this respect, a particular concern is the impending retirement of the leading scholar in this group. This would seem to put the viability of the group at risk.

Apart from this concern, given its achievements, CHCP may look back with pride on the period under review. At the same time, the committee notes that there is room for progress in the field of publications, both in terms of quantity and quality. The committee therefore calls for senior researchers to encourage PhD candidates from the outset to write good articles, for example once they have completed a chapter of their dissertation or have presented a paper at a conference. The principal investigators themselves are likewise called upon to display more ambition in writing and submitting publications. In this respect, CHCP shares in the concerns and recommendations that apply to TUA as a whole.

3.4. For Formational Practices

The committee sees great potential for both academic and societal relevance and growth in the research group Formational Practices, particularly through international partnerships and the exchange of postdocs and research fellows. The group has ample expertise on its four research domains: practical theology, Christian education, theology & music, and missiology. In the self-evaluation report and during the site visit the group also displayed reflective prowess and good insight into its own strengths and weaknesses. This combination is an excellent starting point. With its focus on theology and music, the group has found a genuine niche. The committee is also enthusiastic about the developments towards action research around Christian

education, where stakeholders participate directly in the research. This type of research is innovative and has good potential for societal relevance.

One of the research domains within this group is called ‘practical theology’. In the committee’s opinion, this term may give rise to some misunderstanding. The committee’s impression is that in TUA’s interpretation, practical theology is specifically focused on ecclesiastical practices, whereas outside of TUA practical theology is more broadly defined. The committee recommends clarifying the name of this research domain. All four of the group’s domains would then fit well under the banner of Formational Practices.

From the discussions during the site visit, it became clear to the committee that the researchers within Formational Practices do not want to confine themselves to empirical research. Conceptual, theoretical and source research are also part of their work. The committee welcomes this wholeheartedly, for it believes that with such a combined approach, TUA can make important contributions to theological research. The committee recommends communicating more explicitly to the outside world that the work of the Formational Practices group at TUA consists of a unique interaction between descriptive, conceptual, and empirical research in dialogue with the Reformed tradition.

The committee sees many opportunities for the ‘theology & music’ research domain, which is currently in full development. This domain is especially promising when combined with views on contemporary experiences with church music, youth, and education. The committee recommends that the group explore beyond classical musicological approaches when shaping its research programme and consider possible interfaces with missiology and systematic theology.

TUA asked the committee to comment on the diversity in research methods within Formational Practices. The committee adopts a positive view on this diversity. It believes that the strength of this research group can be enhanced by using multiple research methods. If these methods are explicitly discussed and carefully distinguished, several approaches can mutually reinforce each other.

3.5. PhD policy and training

Although TUA is a relatively small institution in terms of capacity, it succeeds in enrolling a good number of PhD candidates. The composition of the graduate programme at TUA is very much shaped by the fact that the vast majority of PhD candidates are external. At the end of 2023, the number of PhD candidates was 71, of whom three had a substantial research appointment at TUA, three others had a small part-time appointment, and the remaining 65 PhD candidates were self-funded or funded by external parties.

PhD candidates at TUA typically complete their doctoral studies in five to six years, with an annual dropout rate (after final enrolment) of three to five students. Partly in response to recommendations from the previous

assessment, TUA has made significant progress in structuring the graduate programme through which PhD candidates are trained and supervised. For example: the processes of admission to the graduate programme and approval of the research proposal have now been formalized, and students receive methodological training. PhD candidates are assigned to one of the three research groups, invited to join its meetings and also encouraged to take part in NOSTER, the national research school for religious studies. In addition, all PhD candidates are invited to participate in TUA's annual Graduate Week. This week offers them a varied programme, including in-depth lectures, peer-feedback sessions, workshops covering topics such as methodology, research integrity, and ethical aspects of empirical research, training sessions on academic writing, and opportunities to engage with the TUA community. It is TUA's intention to further strengthen the graduate programme, with a focus on the currently non-binding nature of programme participation and more thorough training in methodology, research skills, and research ethics.

The committee is pleased with the progress that has been made in the training and supervision of PhDs. In the period under review, some major improvements were implemented. It is promising that the graduate programme for PhD candidates has gained substance, as it will help PhD candidates to feel part of community and it will allow TUA to enhance the quality of its research. The Graduate Week is greatly appreciated; the PhD candidates the committee spoke with invariably considered this a valuable and instructive experience. The committee welcomes the incorporation of PhD candidates into one of the research groups at TUA and their attendance at meetings of such groups, since this gives the PhD candidates context for their research.

The committee has some more recommendations that may help TUA in consolidating its graduate programme whilst at the same time enhancing the quality of its research.

Its advice is to structure the research themes of upcoming PhD projects in such a way that they align with the research group's programming, in order to build cohesion and even to enhance opportunities for collaboration between PhD candidates. This cohesive aspect can be of a substantive or a methodological nature, or both. More cohesion will help to make the research groups into genuine learning communities, which will enhance the quality of research as well as the quality of the training PhD candidates receive at TUA.

The PhD candidates with whom the committee met – including both internal and external candidates – appeared surprisingly relaxed. They reported that little to no pressure was put on them during their PhD trajectory. While pressure is often seen in a negative light, a healthy level of it can push individuals to bring out the best in themselves, provided there is good supervision. The committee therefore recommends creating a more stimulating and slightly more demanding atmosphere. Expectations concerning deadlines, publications, conference attendance and outreach activities should be clear from the start and carefully monitored. Importantly, PhD candidates should be stimulated to share their findings with the

(academic) world through a well-developed publication strategy. In order to do so, they can make use of conference presentations or finished chapters of their thesis. This would help PhD candidates to flourish and increase their visibility and that of TUA.

As usual in the context of theological institutions in the Netherlands, there are only a few prospects for an academic career at TUA. There is a very limited number of positions, if any, for post-docs or assistant professors. Nevertheless, the institution should be better prepared in this respect and actively build up a reservoir of scholars who could potentially be appointed and strengthen the field. The committee therefore recommends developing some tenure tracks for academically gifted and motivated PhD candidates. In particular, TUA could make efforts to establish inter-university or internationally shared postdoc positions. These may also help to foster collaborative relations.

It is beyond doubt that TUA's annual Graduate Week is a great asset for the graduate programme. The committee understands the dilemma that TUA faces when considering whether or not to make it mandatory for all PhD candidates. On the one hand, given that the vast majority of PhD candidates at TUA are external, the Graduate Week could be the one unique opportunity to bring them all physically together once a year, which would be of great value for creating a true research community. On the other hand, some international PhD candidates may face serious practical and financial obstacles that make it hard for them to travel to Apeldoorn. The committee can only recommend that TUA use wisdom in setting out a policy, possibly including virtual attendance, even though this is definitely not ideal and will greatly weaken the effect.

3.6. Research integrity

Over the period under review, TUA took steps to ensure the quality and integrity of academic research. A confidential advisor was appointed for the reporting of academic integrity violations, as was a committee to investigate research such reports. As of 2023, TUA has an independent Ethics Committee, consisting of scholars from other universities. The aim of this committee is to ensure that the rights, safety and well-being of participants in empirical research conducted at TUA are respected. PhD candidates are trained in academic integrity, and there is a peer review of methodology within the research groups. During the Graduate Week, PhD candidates take a mandatory workshop on research integrity. Also, a plagiarism scanner for MA and PhD theses is in the process of being implemented. The committee applauds these developments, as more steps towards the professionalization of research at TUA. The functioning of the Ethics Committee seems effective.

As an aspect of research integrity, the committee draws attention to academic articles published by multiple authors. Single-authored articles have long been tradition in theology, but multi-authored articles are becoming more and more accepted and even valued. The committee recommends that TUA follow this lead, since it could stimulate (interdisciplinary) collaborations and a

broadening of perspectives. When PhD students propose a multi-authored approach, a dialogue about this should always be possible.

4. Findings and recommendations on societal relevance

4.1. Relevance to the Christian Reformed Churches

One of the assets of TUA is its good and strong ties with the Christian Reformed Churches. It is well embedded in the community and serves it by training its leaders, opening up original sources, enabling a better understanding of doctrines, and enhancing its practices. TUA researchers engage in formation work for churches, perform practical work for societal institutions, and share knowledge through guest presentations in various contexts. In addition, TUA can help represent the Christian Reformed community towards Dutch society and international partners. In general, in exchange for commitment, TUA helps the Christian Reformed Churches to stay lively and energetic.

The 500-year anniversary of the Protestant Reformation in 2017 and the 400-year anniversary of the Synod of Dordt in 2018 were excellently used as occasions for reaching out to a wide audience through Dutch media, underscoring the importance of the Reformation as identity-forming for many Dutch citizens. Also, TUA faculty gave lectures in the Netherlands, Germany, the US, South-Korea, and Indonesia.

TUA has been successful in finding outlets for its research through Christian newspapers and local church bulletins. It has published books which make original texts accessible for a wide audience, for instance through the series *Studies in Reformed Theology*. In addition, TUA researchers collaborate with societal partners in the fields of education (see par. 4.2) and missiology, for example. Last but not least, TUA fortifies Christian Reformed churches by bringing many ministers to a higher intellectual level through active academic research as external PhD candidates.

The committee admires TUA's good relationship with and relevance to the Christian Reformed Churches, something which not many universities naturally possess. Its recommendation is to cherish these precious ties, as indeed is already TUA's plan for the future. The Discriminating Love project, for instance, offers a unique angle to further enrich TUA's relevance. The committee advises TUA to consider expanding its relevance beyond the Christian Reformed community, and if this is acknowledged as a calling, to think about what strategy to use and which partners to collaborate with in doing so. A too limited goal-setting might be the easy way, but in the long run that would not be wise and responsible. In considering this, it should be taken into account that putting more energy into academic publications – as the committee recommends doing – could impact the amount of time that is available for societal activities.

4.2. Impact on education

Through the research group Formational Practices, TUA has a clear impact on orthodox Christian education in the Netherlands. This is indeed one of the strong indicators of its societal relevance. The establishment of the chair of Christian Education a few years ago has led to more and more practice-oriented empirical research, and based on this research, TUA has produced a well-used handbook, *Christian School Pedagogy*, and educational materials for elementary schools and youth workers. The chair of Christian Education has been active in national debates concerning the aims and character of education. At the invitation of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture & Science, he also contributes to expert meetings on the formation of personhood.

The cooperation with Driestar Christian University is of vital importance to TUA's impact on education. By joining forces in many ways, senior researchers and PhD candidates have created a wonderful learning community. For instance, staff from both institutions collaborate in empirical and theoretical research, a number of TUA PhD candidates teach at Driestar, and the two institutions have held a series of webinars, transferring the new *Christian School Pedagogy* to teaching professionals. The committee is enthusiastic about the collaboration between TUA and Driestar. The exchange of practical and theoretical perspectives is advantageous for research at both institutions. Together they can expand the Christian *ethos* in society, and through Driestar, TUA can maximize its impact on the quality of Christian education. The committee recommends that TUA further intensify its collaboration with Driestar and that other groups within TUA take the learning community of TUA and Driestar as an inspirational good practice.

4.3. Public theology

Theology, by definition, has a public dimension. A field of research that especially accentuates this is public theology. By preparing a chair in public theology, TUA has signalled the need to create space for reflections on the interface between theology and a secular or pluralistic society. The committee applauds the steps taken so far, but has the impression that reflection on what public theology means for TUA has not yet fully matured. Does TUA want to focus on interrelations between theology and politics, economics and culture? Does it aim to be a constructive voice in society, so that religious beliefs can inform and shape public discourse and action? The committee invites not only the research group that will host the new chair, but TUA as a whole to openly reflect on how it wants to define public theology. Gaining an understanding of what kind of public theology is meant will also help answer the question of where to locate Public Theology in TUA's organizational structure.

4.4. Open science

During the period under review, open science became more prominent on TUA's agenda. For instance, several books were published with open access, including *Sola Scriptura: Biblical and Theological Perspectives on Scripture, Authority, and Hermeneutics* and *Covenant: A Vital Element of Reformed Theology*. Also, all PhD

theses are now freely available through the TUA website. Plans to increase open science are on the way. For instance, the Ethics Committee, now in its second year, is concentrating on the adherence to FAIR data management, with findability, accessibility, interoperability, and reusability as its core values.

Particularly within the research domain of Christian education, research is regularly conducted in direct collaboration with societal stakeholders. For instance, a study on commitment to the church was carried out in close partnership with one of the youth organizations of the Christian Reformed Churches, whose members were involved in shaping the research and participated in its execution. Designs of participatory action research and theological action research – both geared towards conducting collaborative research with societal stakeholders – are increasingly being implemented in PhD trajectories at TUA.

The committee is very happy to see that big steps have been taken to open up TUA research, both in terms of open access publication and FAIR data management and in terms of action research that is executed together with stakeholders. The committee encourages TUA to proceed on this upward curve. It will help to increase the relevance and impact of its research.

5. Findings and recommendations on viability

5.1. Financial resources

The committee observes that continuity of funding will probably remain a source of concern for TUA. External research funding is of vital importance for TUA. This is one more reason to collaborate with other universities and strive for visible academic excellence. Although securing research funding in competition is challenging for the discipline of theology, and collaborative attempts with affiliated universities to acquire voluminous grants from the Dutch funding organization NWO have so far been unsuccessful, TUA has successfully obtained external funding through the Erasmus+ programme for its share in RESILIENCE, the network on religious studies. Moreover, five external PhD students have succeeded in acquiring grants through NWO, the Dutch philanthropic organization Porticus, the Langham Partnership, a Christian organization that aims to support churches globally, and the Norwegian missionary organization. The goodwill that is embodied in private donations and crowdfunding for TUA is admirable.

In general, a multi-channel approach, where (collaborative) research proposals addressed at academic funding agencies, charity funds and private sponsors go hand in hand, seems commendable.

5.2. I.1. Governance structure

As described in paragraph 2.2, research at TUA is currently structured in three research groups, with a total of ten research domains. In principle, each senior researcher has their own domain. The committee approves of the fact that TUA tries to bring coherence in its research through this governance structure. At the same time, the committee states that the borders between the domains and groups should be permeable. For a small university, cross-pollination between the research fields is essential.

5.3. Human resources policy

Composition of research staff

With a total research staff of around 7 FTE, TUA's research staff is relatively small. Researchers from outside TUA are therefore particularly welcome to participate in the research groups. This includes professors holding endowed or personal chairs, emeriti professors, and associate researchers. The latter group comprises some of TUA's own PhD graduates who are pursuing careers outside academia but still engaging in research as well as other academics whose research is closely related to the research focus of the various research domains.

The impending retirement of key researchers at TUA is a point of concern. Some of them have been great leaders and pioneers both nationally and internationally, and their loss will be a severe depletion. On the other hand, TUA has proven to be resilient in the face of adversity, and the committee is

convinced that it will be able to revitalize itself. For this purpose, the committee considers it important that TUA enlarges the talent pool from which it recruits its talent.

TUA has always been a homogenous community, consisting mainly of white Dutch men. This has been changing gradually, now that more female students are enrolling at the university. The 2020 decision by the synod of the Christian Reformed Churches to no longer regard a professorship at TUA as an ecclesiastical office was an important step. Since ecclesiastical offices are not open to women in the Christian Reformed Churches, that decision formally opened the way to appoint female professors as well as professors from other denominations. In addition, the recently introduced policy of actively appointing associate researchers within the various research groups has also significantly increased the ethnic and cultural diversity of these groups.

The committee is convinced that it is in TUA's interest to enlarge its talent pool while at the same time making the research community more diverse and rich in perspectives. The committee was satisfied to hear that TUA is actively pursuing an increase in diversity, and that where two candidates in a selection procedure are found to be 'of the same quality', preference is given to someone from an underrepresented background. This is an important step. However, the committee warns that the assumption that standards of quality are neutral and objective ignores the possibility of embedded biases. Research shows that in assessing quality, people tend to favour traits that mirror their own gender and cultural background. To increase the gender balance in particular, more is needed than just opening up vacancies to both genders. As it is, TUA has only one female staff member among its research staff, and of the 28 PhD graduates in the reporting period, only four were women. The committee recommends actively helping gifted female PhDs to flourish, and purposefully searching for female talent within and beyond the Christian Reformed denomination. In general, the committee strongly advises TUA to give more space to female researchers to ensure a healthier gender balance within the university.

Recruiting talent is one thing; retaining good researchers is another. In the committee's view, TUA should try to make itself an attractive employer. Starting from 2024, programme leaders of research domains are encouraged to make use of a six-month sabbatical in which they can work on a project leading to a publication. This is a fitting example of good employership; another example would be ensuring that career paths at TUA can be comfortably combined with caregiving responsibilities for both men and women. Think, for instance, of the times at which meetings are scheduled. A pitfall for TUA could be that it tries to do too much with too few researchers. As recommended above, the committee recommends making clear choices and keeping work pressure realistic.

Talent management

In the period under review, TUA professionalized the monitoring and support of its research staff, and it is currently consolidating this process. At the start of their careers, younger researchers receive coaching and mentoring from more experienced colleagues. Plans are underway to further formalize this in the future. Annual development interviews are held with all staff, and training opportunities are provided. Prospective full and associate professors follow a tenure track with clearly formulated conditions and steps in their career path.

The committee is satisfied to see that in its human resources policies TUA is connecting more and more to a broader academic tradition, for instance by setting up the tenure track procedure. Using internationally acknowledged systems of appointment and promotion will improve TUA's position in the wider academic field. It will make TUA more attractive as an employer, it will stimulate its researchers to bring out the best in themselves, and it will facilitate collaboration with other universities that use the same system. The committee therefore encourages TUA to proceed on this track.

In its self-evaluation report, TUA stated that it takes personal wishes into account when following up on the development interviews. The committee applauds this. TUA's mission is manifold: it wants to bring ministers who train as PhD candidates to a higher intellectual level, it wants to reach out to church communities, and it wants to engage in theological scholarship. All of these tasks are valuable, they are all partly intertwined, and each task has its own career path. The committee therefore strongly recommends that TUA diversify career paths, with some focusing more on academic, others on valorizing outputs. Which path is chosen should depend on where the talents and ambitions of research staff lie. For PhD candidates this is especially feasible, since technically speaking (though not necessarily in terms of age) they are at the start of their career. Ideally, PhD candidates should be offered flexible training paths that suit their personal plans and that lead to diverse exit profiles that fit TUA's strategy.

5.4. Academic culture

The committee observed a very warm and inviting atmosphere at TUA, with direct and open lines of communication. In case anything should go wrong, TUA has a confidential advisor for all staff and students. This person can be approached about any kind of abuse: sexual abuse, abuse of power, bullying, intimidation, etc. Concerns in the area of inclusiveness can also be raised (anonymously, if desired) with the confidential advisor. To the committee, this seems a sufficient system to guarantee social safety.

Finally, the committee was overwhelmed by the facilities at TUA, the recently expanded library and the lecture hall in particular. They are magnificent and inspiring!

6. Appendices

6.1. Terms of Reference for the assessment

1. Introduction: Research assessments in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, the boards of the universities are responsible for the quality of the research at their institution. As part of their quality assurance cycle, all academic research in the Netherlands is evaluated every six years. The executive board of the relevant university commissions the research assessment and determines which research units are to be evaluated. For the coordination of the assessment, all research organisations associated with the Association of Universities in the Netherlands (UNL), the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW) and the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NOW) use the Strategy Evaluation Protocol. The main goal of a SEP evaluation is to evaluate a research unit in light of its own aims and strategy. In the self-evaluation, the unit reflects on its ambitions and strategy during the previous six years as well as for the future in a coherent, narrative argument, supported wherever possible with factual evidence. This fact means that there should be a direct relationship between the arguments with regard to the aims and strategy on the one hand and the type of robust data underpinning the self-evaluation on the other. The SEP assessments help to monitor and improve the quality of the research conducted by the research unit. Additionally, the assessments of the research quality and societal relevance of research contribute to fulfil the duty of accountability towards government and society. The boards of the institutes may use the outcomes of the research evaluations for quality assurance purposes and institutional strategy development. The protocol itself is reviewed every six years in order to move along with important developments in research.

2. Objectives of the research assessment of Theological University of Apeldoorn

The committee is requested to assess the quality of research conducted by the three research units, Biblical Exegesis and Systematic Theology (BEST), Church History and Law (CHL) and Formational Practices (FP) as well as to offer recommendations in order to improve the quality of research and the strategy of the research units. The committee is requested to carry out the assessment according to the guidelines specified in the Strategy Evaluation Protocol. The evaluation includes a backward-looking and a forward-looking component. Specifically, the committee is asked to judge the performance of the unit on the main assessment criteria and offer its written conclusions as well as recommendations based on considerations and arguments. The main assessment criteria are:

- 1) research quality;
- 2) societal relevance;

3) viability of the unit.

During the evaluation of these criteria, the assessment committee is asked to incorporate four specific aspects. These aspects are included, as they are becoming increasingly important in the current scientific context and help to shape the past as well as future quality of the research unit. These aspects are as follows:

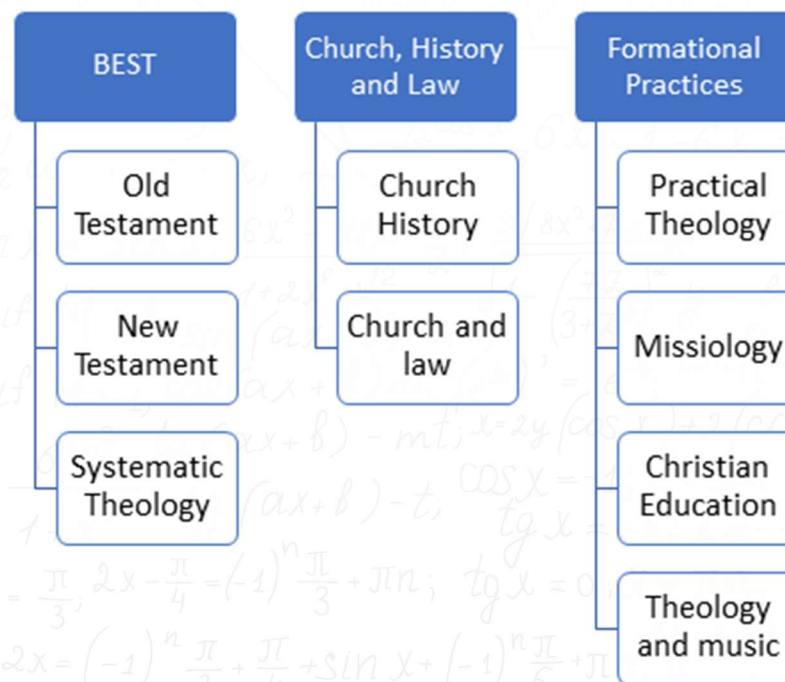
- 1) Open Science: availability of research output, reuse of data, involvement of societal stakeholders;
- 2) PhD Policy and Training: supervision and instruction of PhD candidates;
- 3) Academic Culture: openness, (social) safety and inclusivity; and research integrity;
- 4) Human Resources Policy: diversity and talent management.

The main assessment criteria and the four specific aspects are described in detail within the Strategy Evaluation Protocol.

In addition to these criteria specified in the Strategy Evaluation Protocol, the board requests the committee to pay attention to the following additional questions as well as to offer its assessment and recommendations:

General

1. Participation in the Research Infrastructure
2. The academic culture as a whole
3. New research structure, three research programs and seven research groups as an improvement, especially seen from the former combined **PT/CE** which was to include missiology and theology and music:



Biblical Exegesis and Systematic Theology (BEST)

1. BEST as an interdisciplinary research group, bringing together Biblical studies and systematic theology:

- a. the fruitfulness of the interdisciplinary approach in developing new insights
 - b. the group's achievements in terms of interdisciplinary integration (conferences; resulting in books (including two in OA))
 - c. the potential of the BEST-strategy 2024-2029 (edited volumes; project with two PhD-positions) for further developing the interdisciplinary cooperation
 - d. the potential of the plans for widening the interdisciplinary approach (to include non-theological disciplines), in the context of the 'Suffering and Sacrifice'-project (including application for external funding)
2. BEST as a joint research group of two NLU's, namely TU-U and TUA:
 - a. advantages (more staff; stronger, more diverse group)
 - b. the challenge to relate the BEST-program to the central program and/or research focus of both individual institutions (most specifically, the place of 'Crucial Commitment' within the TU-U program 'Vulnerability and Hope')
 3. The relationship between the BEST-program and the societal relevance of BEST's theological blog, which is supported by two (national/regional) newspapers and addresses contemporary questions with relevance for society.

Church History and Law (CHL)

1. The publication strategy consisting of:
 - a. the launch and editing of book series to stimulate research in general and junior scholars in particular
 - b. the production of text editions as fundamental for historical scholarship.
2. Participation in REFORC as interdisciplinary and interconfessional network of scholars and academic institutions
3. Expanding the focus of research from a concentration on the Reformation to the Early Modern Period 1400-1700, thus including late medieval theology and orthodoxy and pietism/puritanism.
4. Initiatives to connect the disciplines of law and theology through a special chair and through conferences and publications.

Formational Practices

1. The methodological part: diversities in research methods within the distinctive area's.
2. The restructuring as mentioned above which comes from our research group in order to obtain more independent units.

3. Committee requirements: statement of impartiality

The members of the committee are requested to sign a statement of impartiality before they conduct their assessment work. In this statement, the members declare that they have no direct relationship or connection with the relevant research units.

4. Schedule of the assessment and reporting

The self-evaluation and the site visit form the main sources of information for the committee, on which basis it draws up its report. The self-evaluation will be sent no less than four weeks prior to the site visit, together with the Strategy Evaluation Protocol and the programme for the site visit. The site visit will take place on 29 and 30 May 2024. Jacob Karels, Research Policy Officer at the Theological University of Apeldoorn, will contact you about logistical matters and other relevant issues related to the research assessment approximately two months prior to the site visit. The committee is requested to report its findings in an assessment report drawn up in accordance with the SEP guidelines and format. The committee is asked to send the draft report to TUA Board no more than eight weeks after the site visit. TUA Board will check the report for factual inaccuracies; if such inaccuracies are detected, the committee will ensure that they are corrected. The committee will then send the final version of the assessment report to the board. The board publishes the final version of the assessment report.

6.2. Programme of the site visit

Bezoek op locatie, 29-30 mei

Woensdag 29 mei

09:00-09:15 Commissie arriveert en start werkzaamheden

09:15-10:45 Interne voorbereidende ontmoeting Commissie

10:45-11:00 Koffie

11:00-12:00 Ontmoeting *College van Bestuur*

Deelnemers:

- Arjan Dorst, MSc, Voorzitter College van Bestuur
- Prof. Dr. Maarten Kater, Rector / Lid College van Bestuur
- Jacob Karels MA, Beleidsmedewerker Onderzoek

12:00-12:30 Reflectie Commissie

12:30-13:15 Lunch

13:15-13:45 Rondleiding universiteit

13:45-14:45 Ontmoeting afvaardiging onderzoeksgroep *Biblical Exegesis and Systematic Theology*

Deelnemers:

- Prof. Dr. Arie Versluis, Hoogleraar en Domeinverantwoordelijke Oude Testament
- Dr. Arjan van den Os, Universitair Hoofddocent en Domeinverantwoordelijke Nieuwe Testament
- Prof. Dr. Henk van den Belt, Hoogleraar en Domeinverantwoordelijke Systematische Theologie
- Dr. Niels den Hertog, Universitair Hoofddocent en Domeinverantwoordelijke Publieke Theologie
- Dr. Henk de Waard, Universitair Docent Oude Testament en secretaris BEST

14:45-15:15	Reflectie Commissie
15:15-15:30	Koffie
15:30-16:30	Ontmoeting afvaardiging onderzoeksgroep <i>Church History and Church Polity</i> <i>Deelnemers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Dr. Herman Selderhuis, Hoogleraar en Domeinverantwoordelijke Kerkgeschiedenis en Kerkrecht Dr. Gert van den Brink, Universitair Hoofddocent Historische Theologie Dr. Pieter Rouwendal, Universitair Hoofddocent Historische Theologie
16:30-17:00	Open spreekuur (na aanmelding)
17:30	Diner Commissie

Donderdag 30 mei

09:00-10:00	Ontmoeting afvaardiging onderzoeksgroep <i>Formational Practices</i> <i>Deelnemers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Dr. Maarten Kater, Hoogleraar en Domeinverantwoordelijke Praktische Theologie Prof. Dr. Bram de Muynck, Hoogleraar en Domeinverantwoordelijke Christelijke Pedagogiek Prof. Dr. Albert Clement, Hoogleraar en Domeinverantwoordelijke Theologie en Muziek (online) Dr. J. van 't Spijker, Universitair Hoofddocent en Domeinverantwoordelijke Missiologie
10:00-10:30	Reflectie Commissie
10:30-10:45	Koffie
10:45-11:30	Ontmoeting promovendi en <i>early/ mid-career researchers</i> <i>Deelnemers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gerard Bosker MA, werknemer-promovendus CHCP Leonardo Chandra MA, buitenpromovendus BEST (tot 11:15) Fianne de With MA, werknemer-promovendus FP Dr. Henk de Waard, Universitair Docent Oude Testament en onderzoeker BEST
11:30-11:45	Ontmoeting Hoofd en Coördinator Graduate Program <i>Deelnemers:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prof. Dr. Bram de Muynck, Hoofd Graduate Program Jacob Karels MA, Coördinator Graduate Program
11:45-12:15	Reflectie Commissie
12:15-13:15	Lunch
13:15-15:15	Commissie trekt gezamenlijke conclusies <i>College van Bestuur</i> is beschikbaar voor een eventuele extra ontmoeting
15:15-15:30	Koffie
15:30-16:30	Commissieleden schrijven aan rapportage
16:30-16:45	Voorzitter Commissie presenteert belangrijkste conclusies
16:45	Borrel

6.3. Staff composition at TUA

The input of research staff within the three research groups in the period 2018-2023.

Research Staff	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
BEST						
Full Professor	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0,8	0
Associate Professor	0	0	0	0	0,3	0,3
Assistant Professor	0,65	0,65	0,65	0,7	0,8	1,2
(Internal) PhD Candidate	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,5	0,3	0,3
Total BEST	1,95	1,95	1,95	2	2,2	1,8
CHCP						
Full Professor	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,4
Endowed Professor	0	0,4	0,4	0,6	0,6	0,6
Associate Professor	0	0	0	0	0	0,6
Assistant Professor	0,3	0,3	0,5	0,7	0,25	0
(Internal) PhD Candidate	0,92	0,92	0,92	0,92	0,92	0,92
Total CHCP	1,32	1,72	1,92	2,32	1,87	2,52
FP						
Full Professor	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,4	0,7	0,4
Personal Chair / Endowed Professor	0,2	0,2	0,2	0,4	0,15	0,15
Assistant Professor	0	0	0	0,2	0,2	1,1
Researcher	0	0	0	0	0	0,2
(Internal) PhD Candidate	0,7	0,7	0,6	0	0	1
Total FP	1,3	1,3	1,2	1	1,05	2,85
Total Research Staff in fte	4,57	4,97	5,07	5,32	5,12	7,17

6.3. Funding of TUA

The university operates with funding from the Dutch government, which constitutes approximately 52% of the university's budget. Table 1 presents a breakdown of the funding and expenditures allocated to research during the period 2018-2023. The research units do not have their own budget; financing comes through the university. Apart from direct funding from the government, most external funding was received through contracts with European organizations (Erasmus+: RESILIENCE and ReReS) or other channels. One major other channel was provided by contributions from the Christian Reformed Churches, of which 20% was allocated to research until 2022. Additional funding came from private donors, charitable organizations and specialized funds.

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Total
Funding							
1 Direct	€ 265.225	€ 292.655	€ 338.286	€ 399.610	€ 390.773	€ 1.070.080	€ 2.756.629
2 Grants	€ 4.200	€ 12.225	€ 17.733	€ 5.000	€ -	€ -	€ 39.158
3 Contract	€ 46.635	€ 199.919	€ 147.918	€ 80.044	€ 76.418	€ 181.535	€ 732.469
4 Other	€ 159.462	€ 173.934	€ 232.266	€ 192.959	€ 148.170	€ 15.900	€ 922.692
Total funding	€ 475.522	€ 678.733	€ 736.203	€ 677.613	€ 615.361	€ 1.267.515	€ 4.450.948
Expenditure							
Personnel	€ 415.500	€ 444.200	€ 482.700	€ 494.300	€ 467.700	€ 696.300	€ 3.000.700
Material	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -	€ -
Other	€ 129.216	€ 206.002	€ 216.274	€ 137.587	€ 151.297	€ 395.854	€ 1.236.230
Total expenditure	€ 544.716	€ 650.202	€ 698.974	€ 631.887	€ 618.997	€ 1.092.154	€ 4.236.930
Difference	€ -69.194	€ 28.531	€ 37.229	€ 45.726	€ -3.636	€ 175.361	€ 214.018