



Best Practice Report

Free University Amsterdam

University Profile

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| Name of the institution | Free University Amsterdam |
| Short description/profile of the institution | <p>Since its foundation, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam has stood for scientific and value-driven education, research and knowledge transfer. We are free thinkers with expertise and A Broader Mind. And we work together to build a better world for people and the planet.</p> <p>University with a focus on society</p> <p>The world is facing major challenges, while there are growing divisions within society. This calls for science with a conscience. With our expertise, open mindedness, enterprising spirit and multidisciplinary approach, we work on developing sustainable solutions that impact society. We focus on four profile themes: Connected World, Governance for Society, Human Health and Life Sciences, and Science for Sustainability.</p> <p>Unique and multidisciplinary University</p> <p>VU Amsterdam is a unique university with faculties in the humanities, STEM, social sciences and medical sciences. Our education and research are closely linked. We combine our top position in research with a strong social orientation, which has resulted in an excellent international reputation. Our education and research are distinctly multidisciplinary. This is reinforced by the fact that our faculties are all located on one campus. We are a true campus university in the heart of the Zuidas Knowledge District, sharing its excellent national and international position and accessibility.</p> |
| Project name | <p>Responsible Conduct of Research – Research Integrity and Ethics in Georgian Universities (ETHICS)</p> <p>Project ID # SEP-210826364</p> |

Information about the Policy Documents

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| <p>Please share a description of research integrity issues underlined in any of the existing university policy documents.</p> <p>Describe the document's main principles and date of its adoption.</p> | <p>The VU has its policy described at the website: https://vu.nl/en/about-vu/more-about/academic-integrity . Starting point is the National Code of Conduct that is embraced by the VU (since oct 2018). The university embraces the duty of care that follows from it. There are procedures for complaints (integrity committee), policy how to implement RI in the organization (RI coordinators in each faculty) and policy includes the mandatory training of PhD students. Currently, mandatory training of supervisors is up for debate in the organization.</p> |
| <p>Please share a description of research ethics issues are underlined in any of the existing university policy documents.</p> <p>Describe the document's main principles and date of its adoption.</p> | <p>At the same webpage, policy regulations regarding research ethics can be found. For medical research, a legally required IRB is established at the medical faculty (METC) https://metc.amsterdamumc.org/ . For non-medical research, in recent years most faculties at VU have also established their own ethics committee, often under the responsibility of the dean. Information on these committees can be found at: https://vu.nl/en/about-vu/more-about/academic-integrity There local regulations and procedures can be distinguished for each discipline.</p> |
| <p>Please describe the implementation Research Management Data at your institution. Is it obligatory to use repository or is it purely upon the researcher to decide?</p> | <p>https://vu.nl/en/employee/research-data-support At this page more information can be found on Data management. There is a nation wide policy to publish open access and a trend to follow open science at all stages in the research process (from preregistration of studies towards open access publication), yet this is not default, nor obliged for all disciplines. For funded projects, it is often obligatory to publish open access (like EU funded) and to put data on repositories (like the OSF site). Many universities have made arrangements with publishing houses, making it costless for individual researchers to publish in well-known journals from publishers like Springer, Elsevier. A list with journals is made available for all employees at the library website.</p> |
| <p>Awareness of Academic Personnel and Researchers</p> | |
| <p>Do you conduct any in house trainings for the university academic personnel on research integrity and research ethics?</p> <p>Please provide short information on specific trainings that has been conducted. What were the topics covered</p> <p>Are these trainings being evaluated?</p> | <p>It is obligatory for all PhD students at the VU and AmsterdamUMC to follow a course on research integrity, not yet on research ethics. It will become obligatory for supervisors of PhD students to take a course on RI as well, yet this is not implemented, but will be in the following years. More information can be found on sites: https://www.vumc.nl/educatie/onze-opleidingen/opleidingsdetail/courses-on-research-integrity.htm or https://vu.nl/en/education/phd-courses/research-integrity-course-faculty-of-science</p> <p>These trainings are indeed evaluated, and some even from an educational scientist perspective, in order to determine the impact of these trainings.</p> <p>The NRIN (Netherlands Research Integrity Network) has trainings on offer for integrity officers, as well as that it organizes meetings for integrity officers to exchange experiences in a confidential setting.</p> |

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| | https://www.nrin.nl/news-blog/30-mei-2023-dag-voor-vertrouwenspersonen-wi-lezing-training-en-intervisie |
| <p>Do you conduct any in house trainings for the university young researchers/PHD students on research integrity and research ethics?</p> <p>Please provide short information on specific trainings that has been conducted. What were the topics covered</p> <p>Are these trainings being evaluated?</p> | <p>Yes, see above</p> |
| <p>Please provide information on Academic Support Services for Researchers and PhD students at your institution.</p> | https://vu.nl/en/research/more-about/help-support-and-advice-for-phd-candidates |
| Procedures | |
| <p>Which structural unit analyzes any issues related to research ethics at your institution? How was this unit established and what is the specific functions of it?</p> | <p>There are research ethics committees at each faculty (see above), and there is a (legally mandatory) IRB for medical research active. The local ethics committees are often initiated by the deans of faculties, some faculties have national networks to offer support (like in the behavioral sciences there is NETHICS https://www.nethics.nl/). The non-medical research ethics review is still fully in development, as recently the ministry of health has provided a report on non-medical research in the medical faculties (eg research on patient files).</p> |
| <p>Any other resources that you would like to share on Research Ethics and Integrity.</p> | <p>None for now</p> |