

Preamble UMCG Research Assessment

2015-2021

19 April 2022

Reader's guide

The report of the assessment of the UMCG and its Institutes contains the following sections:

1. Preamble (this document), containing:
 - the foreword of the chair and vice-chair of the overarching UMCG-committee;
 - an elaboration of the procedures followed.
2. Report A: UMCG-wide report
3. Report B: Institute report CRCG
4. Report C: Institute report GUIDE
5. Report D: Institute report SHARE
6. Report E: Institute report B&C
7. Report D: Institute report KOLFF
8. Appendix: containing all appendices of UMCG and its Institutes

Sections 1 and 8 are overarching, and are to be considered as the Introduction and Appendix of each of the separate reports.

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Foreword

This assessment evaluates the quality and societal relevance of the UMCG and its constituent Institutes between 2015 and 2021. Importantly, it is also future focused and evaluates how the UMCG aspirations, strategies and policies will ensure the UMCG remains viable, relevant and influential in a dynamic and changing world.

The assessment committee consisted of nineteen scientists and clinicians from leading universities and research institutes in Europe and the USA. The inclusion of an early career researcher at PhD student level on the site-visit committee was highly valued and demonstrated a progressive approach, bringing the lens of the next generation of leaders to the review process. Committee expertise spanned the range of subfields and activities undertaken at the UMCG. We are indebted to all committee members for their generosity of experience, opinion and expertise and in approaching the evaluation process with an open and cooperative spirit.

The committee would like to acknowledge that the UMCG Community engaged energetically and openly with the review procedure. The robust process ensured that the digital site-visit elaborations were taken into account and allows the Committee to be confident of the evaluation quality and relevance.

The digital site visits took place in the months of November and December 2022. In this period, the five Institute subcommittees as well as the overarching UMCG-committee spoke with an extensive and diverse set of representatives of the UMCG-research community. The committee's work was greatly aided by the excellent set of materials that were provided by the UMCG and its Institutes in advance of the review visit. The well-prepared, comprehensive critical reflection of the self-evaluations and the open and constructive nature of the interviews with involved researchers allowed the committee to gain in-depth insight into how the staff viewed the quality of their research, its societal impact and its viability. We would like to extend a special thanks to the Dean and Vice Dean of the UMCG, prof. Marian Joels and prof. Erik Boddeke respectively, and to the five Institute directors, professors Marcel Vugt (CRCG), Jos Kosterink (GUIDE), Iris Sommer (B&C), Maarten Postma (SHARE), and Yijin Ren (KOLFF), for their support and assistance in the review process.

The professionalism and skill of the UMCG Research Office in bringing this review to life should not be underestimated. We would like to acknowledge in particular Elizabeth Koier and Barry van der Strate for their excellent support leading up to and during the course of the review. We would also like to record a special thanks to the excellent secretaries of the review process, Jesseka Batteau, Jetje De Groof, and Peter Hildering.

The goal of this review was to offer an objective external evaluation of the research, societal relevance, and viability of the UMCG. Overall, the UMCG is well placed to prosper in what is a challenging landscape. The assessment committee expresses the hope that the UMCG will embrace the findings and recommendations, and that these prove helpful to the UMCG and its research Institutes in realizing their aspirations and ambitions over the coming years.

Prof. dr. Willy Spaan and Prof. dr. Nicol Keith
Chair and Vice Chair of the committee

The assessment committee and the procedures

1. Scope of the review

The assessment committee was asked to perform a research assessment of the UMCG and its constituent research institutes, covering the period between 2015 and 2021. The assessment committee consisted of five subcommittees that evaluated the UMCG's five research institutes: (1) The Cancer Research Center Groningen (CRCG); (2) The Groningen University Institute for Drug Exploration (GUIDE); (3) The Research Institute Brain and Cognition (B&C); (4) The Research Institute Science in Healthy Ageing and HealthcaRE (SHARE); and (5) The W.J. Kolff Institute for Biomedical Engineering and Materials Science (KOLFF). Each subcommittee was represented by its chair in a UMCG-wide committee that evaluated the UMCG as a whole.

The assessment committees of the institutes were requested to assess the quality of research conducted by the UMCG's research institutes as well as to offer recommendations in order to improve the quality of research and the strategy. The UMCG-wide committee was requested to do the same for UMCG-wide themes.

All committees were requested to carry out the assessment according to the guidelines specified in the *Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027 (SEP 2021-2027)*. The evaluation includes a backward-looking and a forward-looking component. Specifically, the committees were 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

During the evaluation of these criteria, the UMCG-wide assessment committee was asked to incorporate four specific aspects. 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 Executive Board of the UMCG provided the assessment committee with Terms of Reference concerning the assessment. In this document, the Board asked the committee to pay special attention to and offer recommendations in the assessment regarding the following aspects:

1. The UMCG research institutes are organized in research programmes. The institute committees are requested to advise on the portfolio of programmes for each institute in relation to the strategy of the institutes and the UMCG as a whole.
2. The UMCG will organize two focus group meetings with external, non-academic stakeholders on the theme of *Societal Impact* and add a report of the focus groups to the self-evaluation. The UMCG-wide committee is asked to include this external perspective on the social impact of the UMCG in its assessment.
3. The UMCG-wide committee is requested to advise on the existing UMCG research structure of institutes and programmes and its recent strengthening, and whether further reinforcement or a different organizational structure for research is more desirable.

4. The UMCG-wide committee is asked to assess the developments within the European Institute for the Biology of Ageing (ERIBA) and the Aletta Jacobs School of Public Health (AJSPH).
5. A specific case regards the collaboration between GUIDE and GRIP. The UMCG GUIDE Institute has a strong collaboration with the Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) institute Groningen Research Institute of Pharmacy (GRIP). The GRIP research (content-wise) will be part of the UMCG-GUIDE evaluation, but the strategy, the governance and leadership skills of the management of the GRIP institute as well as the four specific aspects mentioned above will be assessed separately by a GRIP specific committee, which will have overlap with the UMCG GUIDE-committee. The UMCG-GUIDE committee is requested to make sure that the assessment of the GRIP research programmes is clearly recognizable in the GUIDE evaluation.

2. Composition of the committee

The composition of the five subcommittees was as follows:

B&C

- Prof. dr. Sohee Park (chair, Vanderbilt University, USA)
- Prof. dr. An Goris (KU Leuven, Belgium)
- Prof. dr. Bernard Sabbe (University of Antwerp, Belgium)

CRCG

- Prof. dr. Nicol Keith (chair, University of Glasgow, UK)
- Dr. Lindsay Morton (National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute, USA)
- Prof. dr. Claudia Baldus (University Medical Center Schleswig Holstein, Germany)

GUIDE

- Prof. dr. Guy Joos (chair, Ghent University, Belgium)
- Prof. dr. Kim Brouwer (University of North Carolina, USA)
- Prof. dr. med. Ulrich Förstermann (Johannes Gutenberg University Medical Center, Germany)

Kolff

- Prof. dr. Cornelia Lee-Thedieck (chair, Leibniz University Hannover, Germany)
- Prof. dr. Matthew Libera (Stevens Institute for Technology, USA)
- Prof. dr. Frauke Alves (University of Göttingen, Germany)

SHARE

- Prof. Em. Dr. Lou Garrison (chair, University of Washington, USA)
- Prof. dr. Danielle van der Windt (Keele University, UK)
- Prof. dr. Bernard Sabbe (University of Antwerp, Belgium)
- Prof. dr. Stephan Swinnen (KU Leuven, Belgium)
- Prof. dr. Jacky Boivin (Cardiff University, UK)

The composition of the UMCG-wide committee was as follows:

- Prof. dr. Willy Spaan (chair, LUMC, the Netherlands)
- Prof. dr. Nicol Keith (vice-chair, University of Glasgow, UK)
- Prof. dr. Guy Joos (Ghent University, Belgium)
- Prof. dr. Cornelia Lee-Thedieck (Leibniz University Hannover, Germany)
- Prof. Em. Dr. Lou Garrison (University of Washington, USA)

- Prof. Dr. Anders Backlund (Uppsala University, Sweden)
- Dr. Manon te Dorsthorst (RadboudUMC, the Netherlands)

The assessment committee was supported by dr. Jesseka Batteau, dr. Jetje De Groof, and Peter Hildering MSc.

3. Independence

All members of the assessment committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the UMCG in an unbiased and independent way. Any existing personal or professional relationships between committee members and the research unit(s) under review were reported and discussed in the first committee meeting. The committee concluded that there were no unacceptable relations or dependencies and that there was no specific risk in terms of bias or undue influence.

4. Data provided to the committee

The committee received the self-evaluation report from the unit under review, including all the information required by the SEP. To those committees that requested it, additional information was provided. The Committee also received the SEP 2021-2027 and the Terms of Reference for the assessment.

5. Procedures followed by the committee

The evaluation took place in seven parts. During an online kickoff meeting on November 8th 2021, all (sub)committee members were introduced to the UMCG by the Dean. The committee was also briefed on research reviews according to the SEP.

After that, each of the five institutes was evaluated by a subcommittee with specific expertise in the research domain of the institute. The site visits took place consecutively in the months November and December of 2021:

- CRCG: 10-12 November 2021
- GUIDE: 29 November-1 December 2021
- SHARE: 5-7 December 2021
- B&C: 8-10 December 2021
- Kolff: 12-14 december 2021

During the final part of the evaluation, the UMCG as a whole was evaluated. The site visit took place on 16, 17 and 20 december. During this seventh and final part, the observations from the individual institute evaluations were taken into account. The committee consisted of the chairs of all the subcommittees, supplemented with a PhD student (Manon te Dorsthorst) and a graduate school expert (Prof. dr. Anders Backlund). Prof. dr. Willy Spaan acted as chair of this committee.

Due to restrictions as a consequence of Covid-19, all site visits took place online.

Each of the committees proceeded according to the SEP. Prior to the first meeting, all committee members independently formulated their preliminary findings of the unit under review, and additional questions for clarification based on the written information that was provided prior to the site visit. During a preparatory meeting, the committee discussed the preliminary findings and questions, decided upon a number of comments and questions, and agreed upon procedural matters and aspects

of the review. After the interviews the committee discussed its findings and comments, allowing the chair to present the preliminary findings and the secretary to draft a first version of the review report.

Special attention was paid to the coordination of the subcommittees to ensure comparability of approaches and calibration of findings. First, the chair and/or vice-chair of the overarching committee were present during the sessions in which the committees drafted their preliminary conclusions. Second, the chairs of each of the subcommittees were a member of the overarching committee. Third, the three secretaries compared approaches and reports at set times. Finally, the chair, vice-chair and secretaries checked the final reports for inconsistencies.

The draft report was presented to the UMCG for factual corrections and comments. In close consultation with the chair(s) and other committee members, the comments were reviewed by the secretary and incorporated in the final report. The final report was presented on 19 April 2022 to the Board of the University of Groningen.