

Vision Document Committee Talent and Appointments

May 7, 2021

Committee for Talent and Appointments

The Committee for Talent and Appointments (CTA) has been established by the Deans of VU-VUmc and UvA-AMC at Amsterdam UMC to harmonize their talent policy for academic careers, as well as the appointments policy for associate and full professors (UHDS/HLs).

For the harmonization of talent policy, the Principal Investigator system as well as career instruments like Tenure Track (AMC), Career Track (VUmc), and the Amsterdam UMC Fellowship can be considered for integration. In the CTA, a policy regarding academic career steps and their evaluation will be set up in line with current ideas and visions concerning academic talent evaluation in the Netherlands. After the first year, the CTA will be evaluated by the Amsterdam Research Board (ARB), of which the CTA is a subcommittee.

Members

Yvette van Kooyk (Chair), Jolanda Kluin (Vice-Chair), Christa Boer, Saskia Peerdeman, Monique Jaspers, Elga de Vries, Brenda Penninx, Marjolein van Egmond, Harm Jan Bogaard, Gert Kwakkel, Danielle Timmermans, Colin Russell, Joost Wiersinga, Connie Bezzina, Max Nieuwdorp.

Mission

“The CTA strives to create an environment of talent coaching and evaluation to ensure a safe, level playing field and optimal attention and guidance for those pursuing an academic career at Amsterdam UMC.”

The goal of the CTA is to gain an independent overview of the academic talent at Amsterdam UMC, and to keep track of and help stimulate its development. To achieve this, the CTA evaluates talent when asked by a Head of Department and advises the Deans on the suitability of candidates for UHD or HL appointments.

Scope

Amsterdam UMC undertakes a broad spectrum of fundamental, translational, and clinical research. Its main research lines are: medicine and biomedicine; health, care, and nursing; epidemiology, occupational medicine, and public health; and methodology, medical technology, and artificial intelligence in health.

Research and development, education and medical specialist training, prevention and clinical work, social impact and outreach, economic and societal valorization, and leadership are all regarded as important aspects of an academic career. The basic principle at Amsterdam UMC is that a person pursuing an academic career here should excel in at least one of our core themes - research, education, or clinical work - and be satisfactorily developed in at least one other.

The NWO/VSNU/KNAW program “Recognition and Rewards for Academics” and acknowledgement of team science contributions in the Netherlands are important points of departure for Amsterdam UMC’s talent policy. The CTA recognizes the value of gender and ethnic diversity in the ranks of higher education, as well as contributions in team science.

Attracting and Fostering Talent

In the Amsterdam UMC strategy document, attracting talent in research, education, and patient care is one of the key elements. An inspiring research and education environment, with state-of-the-art facilities, is in place for talent to fully develop its potential. In this way, attracting new talent converges with preserving in-house talent. In-house talent profits from the coaching and evaluation system for the different career steps, whereas newly attracted talent enters this system at a random point. In both the departments and the research institutes, extra effort is therefore expected to help incoming talent to find its way.

Senior and junior academic staff alike form part of local, regional, national, European, and international networks in science. The importance of these networks is recognized in evaluating talent and in coaching academic careers.

Incentives for Talent

At the Amsterdam UMC Doctoral School, PhD and MD/PhD Scholarships are awarded to students who have shown an excellent talent for research.

Mid-career talents selected for prestigious grants - the NWO Vidi grant, ERC Starting Grant, or an EU coordinatorship - are rewarded with a budget for a PhD student position (Flexible Oio). NWO-NWA and Veni grant recipients are awarded an extra bench fee, and MSCA-ITN beneficiaries a fourth year for the PhD student (source: "Incentives Amsterdam UMC 2019," Governing Board, 11/22/2019).

Each year, an Amsterdam UMC Fellowship for mid-career researchers (clinical or scientific) at NWO Vidi level is awarded to outstanding talent from within or outside Amsterdam UMC. This has proven a powerful instrument and could be expanded to two awards per year, which would enhance the appeal of Amsterdam UMC for excellent mid-career talent from abroad.

The Head of Department plays a leading role in proposing talent for the Principal Investigator program, in deciding whether a tenured assistant professor (UD) position is granted, in proposing talent for UHD appointments, in enrollments on the Career Track, and in proposing talent for professorships.

Apart from those for UD positions, all proposals - for the Career Track and for UHDs, HLs, and professors by special appointment - are submitted to the Deans for their decision and require the written endorsement of the Chairs of the Divisions and the Directors of the Research Institutes.

The Deans also decide on the proposals for the Principal Investigator system, based on advice from the Amsterdam Research Board.

The CTA at Amsterdam UMC

The CTA is working on the harmonization of Amsterdam UMC policy on talent and will regularly revise or update this policy. The ARB and the Board of Directors (RvB) will be consulted concerning agreed policy changes. The Principal Investigator system, the Tenure Track (AMC), and the Career Track (VUmc) will be integrated into a renewed Amsterdam UMC talent policy and presented in a separate document.

The regulations for appointment as a UHD or HL are different at VU Amsterdam and the UvA. The CTA, together with the Offices of the Deans at the VUmc and AMC, will develop harmonized regulations for Amsterdam UMC. Appointment procedures for HL should be as open as possible.

The Deans will ask the CTA to advise on the following.

- The suitability of candidates nominated for a UHD appointment.
- The suitability of candidates nominated for an HL appointment or a professorship by special appointment.
 - If there are only internal candidates: immediately after the recruitment phase, all CVs¹ are submitted to the CTA for advice. There is no CTA member on the BAC.

¹ CV and Qualification Portfolio information.

- If there is at least one external candidate: one CTA member sits on the BAC.
- Evaluation after the first five years of a professorship, and every five-yearly evaluation of a professorship by special appointment.

The CTA is to maintain the Career Track (originated at VUmc) procedure, from UHD to HL level, and will perform both the pre-enrollment evaluations and the annual progress evaluations.

A Head of Department can ask the CTA to conduct an informal evaluation of a career path or of the next academic career step for excellent talent.

Once a year, the Chair of the CTA submits an overview of its activities to the ARB.

Academic Careers at Amsterdam UMC

The career-step evaluations by the CTA, ARB, BAC, and other relevant committees together form a coaching system at Amsterdam UMC to recognize and enhance academic talent. Information on individual accomplishments and career development is gathered in the Qualification Portfolio (see below), originally developed in 2019 by the ARB working group “Talent Policy and Appointments”, chaired by Guus van Dongen.

The table below shows the various steps in talent development and coaching at each stage in an academic career. The CTA is to work on harmonizing the evaluation of each of these steps. It will also be developing a more detailed vision of educational and clinical academic career paths. Clinical career paths should be available for medical researchers and allied professions.

The ARB advises on admission of a researcher to the Principal Investigator (PI) system.

A Head of Department or a candidate can always seek informal advice from the CTA on how best to organize coaching and training for each subsequent step in an educational, clinical, or research career trajectory. The CTA will contact Heads of Department once a year to invite them to do this.

Example of evaluation moments in scientific* academic career steps towards UHD and HL appointments at Amsterdam UMC

	Postdoc	UD	PI (Postdoc, UD)	UHD (PI)	UHD on Career Track**	HL	First*** five- yearly evaluation of HL
<i>Evaluation by:</i>							
Head of Dept.	X	X					
ARB			X				
CTA				X	X	X	X

*) Educational and clinical careers are also possible

**) The CTA evaluates candidates enrolled on the Career Track once a year.

***) In the case of professorships by special appointment, the CTA participates in every five-yearly evaluation. The chair’s curatorial panel is also involved in this procedure.

- The CTA respects the early recognition of an academic talent by her/his Head of Department (HoD). In view of the limited availability of tenured positions and each department’s policy on research domains and education, the HoD is best placed to decide who is eligible for a permanent UD position. This can be awarded in recognition of the candidate’s output as part of a team or for the furtherance of their academic career.
- A Postdoc becomes a PI after being proposed by the HoD, and evaluation is carried out by the ARB. The PI role is awarded by the Dean/Board of Directors.

- When a HoD recognizes an excellent talent, a proposal for their UHD appointment can be sent to the Dean with letters of endorsement from the Division Chair and the Directors of the relevant research institute(s). The Dean asks the CTA to evaluate and advise on the candidate's suitability.
- When an HoD finds a UHD eligible to advance to HL level, a proposal for their Career Track can be sent to the Dean with letters of endorsement from the Division Chair and the Directors of the relevant research institute(s). The Dean asks the CTA to evaluate and advise on the candidate's suitability for enrollment on the Career Track (CT). Each year, candidates on a CT submit their annual progress report to the CTA via their HoD. The CTA then advises the HoD (with a copy to the candidate) whether the candidate is on track to achieve the required level of performance for a professorship.
- Clinicians do not always follow the career steps as presented in the table. For them, too, however, it is important for their career visibility and eventual right to become a PhD supervisor (promotor) that they become a PI and UHD.
- The Tenure Track is not yet included in the table. The CTA will advise in due course on its harmonization at Amsterdam UMC. The evaluation for the TT is conducted by the AMC Fellowship Committee, chaired by Mat Daemen, Vice-Dean, Research.

Qualification Portfolio

A broad vision on the evaluation of an academic career is set out in the Qualification Portfolio (QP). This broadly documents a person's career progression as well as praise they have received, both internally and externally, for their research output, educational efforts, clinical work, societal impact, and leadership and management experience. The information is gathered in a standardized manner, by means of a web-based electronic form (soon to be developed), in order to provide a level playing field for candidates engaged in fundamental and clinical research. The portfolio facilitates the recording of as much essential information as is desired by a candidate, so as to give ample information to be evaluated for a subsequent career step or appointment. Narrative sections are included in order to value each individual career path.

For evaluation purposes, the electronic QP form will present the information on a candidate in a concise manner and in line with the accents (current or past) in their career. Roles in team-based efforts are clearly documented, as are leadership roles. In principle, evaluation encompasses the most recent 10 years of a career.

Portfolio information will be made available to the CTA, but also to Heads of Department, the ARB (PI candidates), and to candidates themselves to help generate their CV, as input for grant applications, etc.

The five sections of the QP connect with the Amsterdam UMC's strategic research plan. Amsterdam UMC has a strong basis in fundamental and translational research and in state-of-the-art core facilities and research infrastructure, and it attracts and fosters research (clinical and scientific) and educational talent. This forms the basis of its strategic research plan for 2021-2026, in which four major ambitions are described.

- A. We use research and data to improve health worldwide.
- B. Together with VU Amsterdam and UvA, we explore the interaction between molecule, patient, and population.
- C. We invest in talented teams.
- D. We value science on societal impact.

The CTA will focus on these research ambitions in the evaluation process - but, where applicable, always in the context of the candidate's performance in education (eg. from BKO University Teaching Qualification registration to involvement in curriculum development or educational research) as well as in clinical work and research. For the evaluation of educational performance, the strategic educational ambitions of VUmc and AMC will be used as references.

Together with the information in the Qualification Portfolio for candidate HLs, a five-year plan for their intended strategy and activities is required. In medical specialist careers, a 360° evaluation is

mandatory for “re-registration”. Candidates for UHD and HL appointments not on a clinical (medical specialist) career path will also require a 360° evaluation in the near future; a guideline for this is in development. The CTA will check that a candidate has performed this evaluation within the past three years. It is not required of external candidates.

Further development of the CTA

The CTA has begun working on evaluations by means of consensus in advice, based on its members’ experience. It will also be developing a transparent system of criteria and evaluation for academic careers in team science and education. The sections in the Qualification Portfolio will form the basis of this system, along with the candidate’s regional, national, and international impact.

Once a year, the CTA will write to the Heads of Department to invite them to submit the CVs and portfolios of potential candidates for advice on their suitability for a next step in their academic career.

The CTA will continue to consult the ARB and RvB about further developments in the harmonization of talent policy at Amsterdam UMC, in particular the adaptation of Principal Investigator system and of the Tenure Track. In achieving this harmonization, attention will be paid to talent development in educational and/or clinical academic work. In addition, the CTA is to develop guidelines for promotion to UD.

In 2022, the CTA will perform a self-evaluation and will send the results to the ARB and RvB. As part of this exercise, the CTA will assess whether it has accomplished its assignment from the Board of Directors.