

Teaching Staff (OP)

The integration staff is vital for our university's future. Academic education and research fully depend on the efforts and creativity of people. The track for the transfer of OP3 members to the level of Senior Academic Staff is a very important process in this transition process, which we oversee with the greatest care. The further development of the members of our teaching staff also merits the greatest attention however. I refer to the chapter on Senior Academic Staff for such topics as career planning and appraisals. The proposals I formulated in this chapter also apply here.

The new campuses form an integral part of our university. These employees joined our university with their own expectations, desires, expertise, a great commitment and a lot of enthusiasm. We reaped the benefits of this in recent years and were able to build upon this. We took a lot of initiatives with the utmost respect for the major change that the integration of all these employees, including those who had already joined KU Leuven, represented. We gave these integrated employees a voice in the university's policy bodies and on the local employee councils. It goes without saying that they have been fully integrated. We will gladly discuss any additional wishes and desires.

1. APPOINTMENTS AND PROMOTIONS OF TEACHING STAFF

We signed an appointment and promotion policy for teaching staff with criteria for transferring OP3 members into the Senior Academic Staff framework to clarify their career prospects. The Teaching Staff Regulations were implemented. This is an important step forward in the campuses' integration. We tried to achieve a delicate balance between the established rights of employees and the option to follow existing or adapted tracks within the university as part of this integration process. We launched an annual call for transferring into the Senior Academic Staff framework and for tenure track. We organised rounds of permanent appointments and promotions among OP3 staff, while always taking into account the available financial margin. We started to define an own reference framework for the weighting of research and services, in addition to education. In all promotions, we ensured the equal treatment of professors of the original and the integrated programmes.

We also defined and applied the criteria and the procedure for promotions and the tenure of OP1 members for the first time. Henceforth OP1 can no longer transition to OP3. That is why we planned a formula for a seamless transition from OP1 to Senior Academic Staff. We also enforced a new consultation structure and the representation of these employees in the various advisory and administrative bodies has been assured across all campuses.

But the work does not end here. On the one hand, there are the annually returning calls for promotions and appointments. There will only be one more call for candidates for the Senior Academic Staff track, as the remaining number of candidates for this is extremely limited. It is important that the existing KPIs for the evaluation of entities and professors of the integrated programmes be supplemented with specific, own KPIs, such as design achievements for architects and service contracts with businesses for industrial engineers. We prefer that these are defined in consultation with other Flemish universities.

Their aim must be to maintain the programme's profile and ensure the correct evaluation of the achievements, in line with the expected objectives.

The integration represented a major change for the employees on the new campuses. At the same time, they also had expectations about adequate staffing and about their career prospects. In the future, we will further develop this and fully integrate the employees in KU Leuven's current structure, while bearing in mind the campuses' own specific strengths. The specific situation of a number of employees requires a more adequate integration in the university staff, based on their position and competences. We will closely monitor the appointment and promotion policy of teaching staff, the transfer into the Senior Academic Staff framework out of the integration staff, the evaluation of Senior Academic Staff tracks, and the evolutions within teaching staff and administrative and technical staff of the newly integrated staff and adapt this where necessary. The legitimate career prospects of OP3 members of staff who chose not to transfer into Senior Academic Staff framework, or whose track does not culminate in a position as Senior Academic Staff should not be curtailed.

2. RATIONALISATION AND GROWTH

In all cases where we have been confronted with an imbalance between expenditure and revenue, we have developed rationalisation plans, which should culminate in healthy finances in the foreseeable future. Within Humanities and Social Sciences, we have remediated the situation on the Brussels and Antwerp campuses and have developed a financial recovery plan for the Faculty of Arts. We achieved this without having to resort to compulsory redundancies and with the greatest respect for all levels of staff. In the future, we will always combine our attention to the financial health of our campuses with the greatest possible attention to the situation of the employees involved. We will inform them and involve them in every step of the decision-making process.

HR has developed a model for the sizing of the unit of accounts of the integrated programmes, in close consultation with the Groups. The three Groups accepted this model, paving the way for an HR policy for these integrated programmes that is based on sufficient staffing (a zero line). The recent decision by the university's administrators to not eliminate the compartments between KU Leuven 'sensu stricto' and the integrated campuses from 2019 onwards but to maintain them instead from the period from 2019 until 2023 has a strategic bearing on the university's future. The integrated programmes thus have the opportunity to continue their progress to becoming academic programmes, increase their capacity for conducting research while also developing and validating research parameters in line with their profile. The use of the additional resources of the Government of Flanders for achieving academic status (the 'growth track') provides additional strategic options for the financial support of this process of 'academisation'. The implementation of a contingency of 'FLOF' scholarships is a first important step in this frame, for which this growth track will be partially deployed. Other programmes are also being prepared for the further development of academic research and infrastructure on the various campuses.