

QANU Research Review
Leiden Institute for Area Studies
(LIAS)

QANU, March 2013

Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities (QANU)
Catharijnesingel 56
PO Box 8035
3503 RA Utrecht
The Netherlands

Phone: +31 (0) 30 230 3100
Telefax: +31 (0) 30 230 3129
E-mail: info@qanu.nl
Internet: www.qanu.nl

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Contents

1. The Review Committee and the review procedures	4
2. Institute level	5
3. Programme level	15
School of Asian Studies	15
School of Middle-Eastern Studies	17
Appendices	19
Appendix A: Curricula vitae of the Committee members	21
Appendix B: Explanation of the SEP scores	23
Appendix C: Overview of specialisations and languages	25
Appendix D: Schedule of the site-visit	27

1. The review committee and the review procedures

Scope of the Assessment

The Review Committee was asked to perform an assessment of the research in the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS), 2006 through 2011. In accordance with the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015 for Research Assessment in the Netherlands (SEP), the Committee's tasks were to assess the quality of the Institute and the Research Programmes on the basis of the information provided in the Institute's self-study and through interviews with the management and the research leaders, and to advise how the quality might be improved.

Composition of the Committee

The composition of the Committee was as follows:

- Prof. Sabine Frühstück, University of California, Santa Barbara, chair;
- Prof. Gavin Flood, University of Oxford;
- Prof. M. Sükrü Hanioglu, Princeton University;
- Prof. Marc Van De Mierop, Columbia University.

A profile of the committee members is included in Appendix A.

Roel Bennink of the Bureau of QANU (Quality Assurance Netherlands Universities) was appointed secretary to the Committee.

Independence

All members of the Committee signed a statement of independence to safeguard that they would assess the quality of the institute and research programmes in unbiased and independent ways. Any existing personal or professional relationships between Committee members and programmes under review were reported and discussed in the 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.

Data provided to the Committee

The Committee has received the following detailed documentation:

1. A self-evaluation of the units under review, including all the information required by the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP).
2. A selection of key publications of each research programme.

Procedures followed by the Committee

The Committee proceeded according to the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015. Prior to the Committee meeting, each programme was assigned to two reviewers, who independently formulated a preliminary assessment. The final assessments are based on the documentation provided by the Institute, the key publications and the interviews with the management and with the leaders of the programmes. The interviews took place on November 5–6 2012, in Leiden. The Committee used the rating system of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2009-2015. The meaning of the scores is described in Appendix B.

2. INSTITUTE LEVEL

1. The Institute

The Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) was founded in 2009 and builds on the centuries-old tradition of Oriental Studies, i.e. the study of Asia and the Middle East, with a central role of philology and classical humanities subjects, including archaeology, the arts, history, language, philosophy, and religion. Another part of the “genealogy” lies in the application of modern Western social science disciplines to ‘Non-Western’ data, mostly for the study of politics, economics, and society, which began in full force after World War II. Recent developments in the local environment of LIAS have enabled it to transcend the confines of both traditions mentioned above and create a current-day, globally conscious vision of area studies:

Area studies is an approach to knowledge that starts from the study of *places* in the human world from antiquity to the present, through the relevant source languages, with central regard for issues of positionality. It is a dynamic synthesis of area expertise and disciplines in the humanities and social science, relying on sensitivity to and critical reflection on the situatedness of scholarship, and foregrounding the areas studied as not just sources of data, but also sources of theory and method that challenge disciplinary claims to universality. It should be inherently interdisciplinary, by testing the boundaries of the disciplines; and actively but carefully comparative, by treating the why, how, and what of comparison as anything but self-evident. This vision draws on both tradition and innovation in scholarship. It is informed by the history of the field, and its ongoing development in a postcolonial, multi-polar, globalising world.

LIAS has as its aim the advancement of this vision at Leiden University and in the wider academic community, with emphatic attention to the relevance of education and research for society at large. The vision recognises that language, translation and spatialisation are never innocent.

The self-assessment report states that as a research community, LIAS is a meeting-place for multiple:

- fields of inquiry in the humanities and social science;
- approaches, i.e. a variety of (inter)disciplinary theories and methods, such as classical philology, textual and archival research, in-depth fieldwork, quantitative social science analysis and critical theory after the linguistic turn;
- historical periods from antiquity to the present;
- geographically and/or culturally and/or linguistically and/or politically defined areas in Asia and the Middle East, and the global presence of these areas, including their diasporas.

The focus on Asia and the Middle East reflects that Oriental studies has been part of Leiden University since its foundation in 1575. Especially for Asian studies it also reflects Dutch national history, specifically the history of colonialism and trade.

Since the establishment of LIAS in 2009, human resource management has had high priority: community-building, establishing effective procedures, addressing a backlog in individual case-work, and recruitment. Other priorities were establishing a PhD programme and advancing LIAS contributions to (new) teaching programmes.

Assessment/remarks

We were charged with reviewing LIAS, a unit that is home to the schools of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, and that is in the process of developing three of its four areas of concentration along thematic-disciplinary lines, namely Arts and Media, Religion and Philosophy, and State and Society. LIAS researchers working on Language, the fourth concentration, hold concurrent appointments in LUCL, the Institute for Linguistics, and partake in LUCL research programmes.

Formal establishment of LIAS happened in April 2009, after a major restructuring of the Faculty of Humanities. The current director took office in June 2009 and faced extraordinary challenges with respect to cohesion, organisation, and morale. We were impressed with his leadership, vision and creativity. The management team in general appears to collaborate enthusiastically. All faculty members hold a high opinion of the management team and particularly of the director, which we share.

While apparently in line with university funding in the Netherlands, the funding structure of 63% direct funding, 28% research grants, and 5% contract grants put undue pressure on faculty to apply for grants that substantially contribute to the operation of LIAS. While we are aware that these are issues determined by national policy, we are worried by the heavy impact grants have on the direction of research, the ability of individuals to conduct research, and the importance of outside grants for the proper functioning of LIAS in all its aspects.

2. Quality and Academic Reputation

The broad fields of Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies inform, structure and synergise research in LIAS. The formation of new research programmes within the institute was not a top priority after the establishment of LIAS in 2009. A large number of fairly small programmes that had existed previously (often defined by nation and discipline) that had existed in CNWS, predecessor to LIAS in many ways, were terminated. The fields of Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies informed, structured and synergised the work. In 2012, the question of research programmes was revisited and the wealth and interconnectedness of scholarly expertise across the breadth of the institute was reaffirmed. This has resulted in the designation of programmes concentrations in Arts and Media, Language (see above), Religion and Philosophy, and State and Society.

LIAS focuses on the two 'super areas' Asia and the Middle-East. Area specialisations within Asian Studies include Chinese, Japanese, Korean, South Asian and Tibetan, and Southeast

Asian studies; South Asian studies faculty include several Buddhist studies scholars, with various linguistic-cultural specialisations.

Within Middle-Eastern studies, the area specialisations include Arabic studies, Assyriology, Egyptology, Hebrew and Aramaic studies, Papyrology, Persian and Iranian studies, and Turkish studies.

A detailed list of the specialisations and the languages is provided in Appendix C.

LIAS faculty have disciplinary expertise in anthropology, archeology, art history, development studies, economics, film studies, history, international relations, language pedagogy, law, linguistics, literary studies, material culture studies, media studies, philology, philosophy, political science, religious studies, theatre & performing arts studies, and sociology. A disciplinary field they hope to strengthen is that of (international) political economy.

The self-assessment report gives evidence that the institute produces rich and varied research with a clear international outlook and relevance to ongoing debates. Publications include articles in top journals, authored books and (chapters in) edited books from top publishers, annotated source text editions, research-driven and research-advancing translations, research tools (dictionaries, annotated bibliographies, catalogues, encyclopaedias, handbooks); and research-based books that address specialist and general audiences alike, such as art books and exhibition catalogues with well-known general presses such as Prestel and NAI. The great majority of publications are in English. Other languages of publication include Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, and Turkish.

The self-assessment report also gives evidence of international recognition (journals, editorships, etc.)

Assessment/remarks

Leiden has always been internationally well-known as a center for more traditional, text-oriented analyses. We appreciate the enormous difficulty of the ongoing efforts to integrate these with newer interdisciplinary and social science approaches across Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies without compromising Leiden's longstanding stronghold. LIAS is currently transitioning to a three-programme structure that is designed to overcome the boundaries of the two schools in Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies, instigate interdisciplinary and transregional research, and produce a more coherent unit. While we admire the enthusiasm and energy with which the director and all faculty members pursue this vision, we are currently not in the position to assess its success.

As noted in more detail below, a number of faculty members are strong international players or even among the leaders in their respective fields. At the same time, several younger ones appear to be emerging as such as well. Collectively, the significance and impact of faculty members' contributions to their fields are substantial, particularly for those faculty members who publish in peer-reviewed international journals and academic presses in the Netherlands and internationally.

3. Resources

LIAS is currently housed in several locations, which is not regarded as conducive to collaboration and a community feeling.

The self-assessment report states that the financial resources and expenditure of LIAS are inflexible, as a result of the allocation models at the level of the university and the faculty. Unica funding (27% of direct funding for LIAS in 2012) mitigates the effects of the teaching-driven direct funding model, and enables the University to maintain internationally competitive research and teaching on a number of 'little-studied' linguistic-cultural areas. Direct funding of this type supports the following areas, with parenthesised numbers in the table below indicating the minimum number of fte that the Faculty of Humanities has committed to maintaining by deploying and matching unica funding. Typically, unica funding for a given area amounts to funding for half of the number of fte that the Faculty has committed to minimally maintaining, at lecturer-level. E.g. unica funding for Assyriology roughly suffices for one lectureship, and unica funding for Japanese studies, for a little over two lectureships.

Unica in LIAS (with guaranteed fte)
Assyriology (2)
Egyptology (2)
Persian studies (2)
Turkish studies (2)
Korean studies (2)
South Asian and Tibetan studies (4,5)
Arabic studies (4,5)
Chinese studies (4,5)
Hebrew and Aramaic studies (2)
Japanese studies (4,5)

The distribution of rank, gender, and age across faculty is problematic in several respects. Opportunities for promotion are limited in the absence of a functional tenure track system. Regulations do in fact enable tenure track recruitment, and LIAS is experimenting with this and exploring possibilities for its structural implementation.

Assessment/remarks

We believe that with two administrative staff members and a couple of student assistants LIAS lacks administrative staff support. It is fair to say that most institutions of similar size and calibre would have at least four full-time administrative staff members. Increasing the number of administrative staff would go a long way towards mitigating the palpable administrative burden that is now carried by faculty members who, as a result, lack research time.

The faculty body appears somewhat top-heavy with a substantial number of professors and insufficient numbers of senior lecturers, a situation that seems to be exacerbated by the absence of a functional tenure track system and limited opportunities for promotion. LIAS is also unbalanced in terms of gender, particularly on the professorial level.

With regards to earning capacity, we note that with the shifting proportions of direct funding (mostly based on student numbers on all levels) and indirect funding (NWO and ERC grants), the importance of external project funding has rapidly increased. While overall LIAS faculty members have been quite successful at securing such large grants, the pressure of increasing quantity (student numbers) in order to enhance LIAS's earning capacity is likely to undermine the quality of teaching and research.

With respect to research facilities, LIAS is in a very good position. Faculty members benefit from an excellent library as well as the resources of partner institutions, including AMT, LUCIS, NINO and LIGA. We share the concerns of faculty members about the move to a mostly closed stacks library system.

4. Productivity

The self-assessment report provides quantitative data on the output of Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies, and of LIAS as a whole. The output is subdivided into 16 categories or types of publication. LIAS notes that some of these categories are problematic, for instance because it is hard to distinguish between professional publications and publications aimed at a general audience, and because conference presentations are not conventionally viewed as hard output (and hence rarely listed by faculty). LIAS notes that some categories are missing in the current information system, such as reference works, literary translation, textbooks and structural editorships of journals and book series. For that reason, some of the quantitative totals across categories are regarded as problematic.

The overviews show that in the year 2011 there was a steep drop in the number of articles and books, especially in Asian Studies. (As several other institutes in the Faculty show a dip in output in 2011, part of the explanation may lie in the 2008-2009 restructuring and its fallout.) The overall input-output ratio is higher for Middle-Eastern Studies than for Asian Studies, but the reason seems to lie in the amount of teaching and teaching-related administration. The proportion of research time for the tenured staff per full-time equivalent is 20%. This percentage can be increased by the acquisition of external grants.

Academic output Asian Studies

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
<i>Articles</i>	51	43	43	40	42	17	236
<i>Books</i>	13		10	4	4	2	33
<i>Book chapters</i>	12	19	29	32	30	22	144
<i>PhD theses</i>	9	11	12	10	4	6	52
	85	83	88	86	78	78	465

Academic output Middle-Eastern Studies

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total
<i>Articles</i>	53	76	50	59	44	27	309
<i>Books</i>	8	16	9	4	8	6	51
<i>Book chapters</i>	10	30	10	23	37	37	147
<i>PhD theses</i>	6	4	4	5	6	25	25
	77	126	73	91	95	95	532

Tenured staff AS (research input in fte)

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total	academic output	input-output ratio
6,1	6,3	6,6	5,7	5,7	5,4	35,8 fte	465	13 per fte

Tenured staff MES (research input in fte)

2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	Total	academic output	input-output ratio
3,5	3,6	3,9	4	3,8	3,6	22,4 fte	532	23,8 per fte

The above tables show a ratio of 13:24 or roughly 1:2 for Asian and Middle-Eastern Studies. The director notes that if professional publications are taken into account, this ratio is 19:28 or roughly 2:3, and submits that this offers a more accurate picture, which would be a straightforward reflection of the inverse ratio in teaching workloads, which is roughly 3:2.

Assessment/remarks

We are pleased to see the success rate of faculty in obtaining substantial grant funding. At the same time, we observe a vicious circle between teaching overload, success in securing grants, and research output. The preparation of grant applications limits research time. We recognise that LIAS as a unit makes an admirable effort to support the fine-tuning of grant proposals in order to improve the chances of success. While we haven't seen examples of such proposals there seems to be a lack of funding available in general and the operation of LIAS seems to be dependent on such outside funding to an alarming degree. In 2012, 22% or almost one fourth of the Institute's budget came from grants.

We are also concerned by the apparently uneven distribution of teaching loads across the two schools. The School of Asian Studies carries 70% of the teaching load. Once this number is correlated to fte's, it yields a teaching workload ratio of 3:2 for Asian and Middle-Eastern Studies, or roughly 50% more work for faculty in Asian Studies. This seems to be directly correlated to lower research output. The input-output ratio of tenured staff in Asian Studies is 13 per fte whereas in Middle-Eastern Studies it is 23.8 per fte, or 19:28 if professional publications are taken into account (see above). Hence, we welcome and strongly support the management team's ongoing efforts to assess the current teaching load distribution that should result in the development of strategies to address this issue.

One such strategy would be the establishment of a sabbatical system. The absence of such a formalised sabbatical system exacerbates the difficulty to conduct research and publish at an internationally competitive level. This is particularly the case for faculty in Asian Studies who carry a heavier teaching load. We also welcome the current initiative to establish a tenure-track system for incoming junior faculty in order to encourage publishing. It is important to note, however, that such a measure will only be successful if faculty members are given time to actually focus on research and publishing.

5. Societal Relevance

The self-assessment report states that evidence for the societal relevance of research has become progressively more important, and that pressures on funding make the issue all the more acute. From the perspectives of outreach, valorisation and/or impact, the report lists activities relevant for society, grouped under training, events, publications, media, policy advice and community service. These are presented as evidence that LIAS faculty actively

and effectively take their work into the world, with a balanced distribution across Asian studies and Middle-Eastern studies, and subject matter ranging from today's economic crisis to cultural forms in antiquity.

The list includes museum exhibitions, symposiums, lectures, books (e.g. on Japanese cuisine, an introduction to modern Japan, 400 years of Dutch-Turkish relations, Japanese cuteness culture, history of imperial China, history of modern Turkey), articles, textbooks, translations, dictionaries, databases, media contributions, consultancy, etc.

The education of new generations of students is mentioned as by far the most important valorisation of humanities and social science research. Academics are 'produced' who operate in a range of professional spheres that are essential to the well-being of society, on local, national, and transnational levels. The PhD graduates, but also Bachelor's and Master's graduates, take the benefits of being trained by researchers into the cultural sector, education, government, the media, NGOs, and business. This highlights the significance of teaching people how to read the world.

The LIAS management notes that more attention should be paid to demand – i.e. what potential partners need, and how this can be made compatible with what LIAS has to offer – and to establishing structural partnerships with cultural institutions, media, NGOs, government, and business. LIAS wants to strengthen its media presence, and more generally make structural collaboration with partners in society part of the habitus.

Assessment/remarks

LIAS engages in academically, socially and culturally productive interactions with an impressive number of other research institutes, libraries, museums and similar institutions whose common characteristic is a multi-layered mission, including the education of a wide, non-academic public. A number of faculty members have been instrumental in organising special events such as exhibitions and workshops, thus contributing to the production and distribution of knowledge as a public good. Others have been consulted by media representatives as experts who are able to put current events, ranging from natural disasters to wars, in a global or historical context.

6. Strategy for the future

The broad fields of Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies will continue to inform, structure and synergise research in LIAS. As noted above, in 2012, the question of research programmes was revisited and the wealth and interconnectedness of scholarly expertise across disciplinary and regional boundaries across the breadth of the institute was reaffirmed. This has resulted in the designation of concentrations in Arts and Media, Language, Religion and Philosophy, and State and Society. LIAS will actively develop Arts and Media, Religion and Philosophy, and State and Society as programmes. For Language, see points 1 and 2, above.

- *Arts & Media*: includes scholars working in archaeology and linguistic anthropology, and those working on 'purely' art topics do so with rich contextualisation of the area studies kind.

- 19 faculty members + 30 PhD students.
- *Religion & Philosophy*: combines the interdisciplinary, thematic field of religious studies with the discipline of philosophy.
15 faculty members + 25 PhD students.
- *State and Society*: includes scholars in history, sociology and anthropology.
34 faculty members + 60 PhD students.
- *Language*: The researchers in question partake in the LUCL programmes Formal Theoretical and Experimental Linguistics, Language and History, and Language Description and Language Use.
8 faculty members + 5 PhD students.

The self-assessment states that the new LIAS programmes will be organised as a network of scholars, with programme coordinators rather than programme leaders. This is because of the organisational complexity of LIAS, and a general administrative overload, and it is in line with a vision in which the said concentrations intersect with the categories of Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies. Programme coordination involves community building, chairing the debate, and monitoring programme content and activity. Allocation of (extra) funds will be informed by the management team's assessment of individual and collective professional development in terms of building stimulating research communities whose local presence raises visibility and societal relevance, teaching quality, and general contributions to the quality of the workplace.

Since 2010, the heads of the Schools of Asian and Middle-Eastern Studies have organised regular research meetings, bringing together researchers from Asian studies and Middle-Eastern studies with shared interests. Topics have included cinema and the city, crime and cultural values, diasporas, maps and nation-states, orality, pilgrimage, history through objects, and the nature of present-day philology. These so-called Double Vision meetings have already highlighted the inter-area kinship that is central to the new programmes, and the Double Vision slots can be assigned to the new programmes.

Assessment/remarks

There is a great deal of enthusiasm for the creation of these programmes that seems to be shared by everyone. The conceptualisation process of these programmes already seems to have a function towards the greater integration of LIAS as a more coherent unit. Our impression is that these programmes will help individual scholars to apply more interdisciplinary approaches to their research. This appears to have energised the faculty across both schools.

From our own experiences in our institutions, we know how difficult it is to find a balance between interdisciplinary approaches and more traditional, text-oriented analyses for which Leiden University is internationally well-known. When we asked faculty about this dilemma they responded that the two approaches are not mutually exclusive (which is indeed the case) and they demonstrated full awareness of the challenges their merger involves. We encourage them to pursue this direction, keeping the challenges they face in mind. In the light of Leiden's reputation in the areas of premodern Asia, we recommend LIAS to maintain the existing balance between premodern and modern fields across the categories of Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies.

7. PhD Training

In the years 2006-2011, LIAS faculty took about sixty-five PhD students based in LIAS to graduation (with the ratio of Asian studies to Middle-Eastern studies at a little over 3:2), and co-supervised about twenty successfully completed projects based in other institutes.

There are three types of PhD student associated with the Institute: employed or 'standard' PhDs; stipendiates, who come to Leiden with scholarships from elsewhere; and self-funding students of which there are those who rely on private means, and others whom combine their work on a doctorate with employment elsewhere, care duties, etc., with a small number residing abroad. The self-funding students are by far the largest category numerically, and it is the most difficult group to manage in a structural way. LIAS has built a database of projects started before 2009, and ensured that new ones are documented from the start. The database shows a rich and diverse collection of research projects, but uneven progress and completion rates.

The self-assessment report states that PhD research at LIAS stands to gain from the increased coherence that will come with building a true programme, in both academic content and organisation. There is no national research school, since the abolishment of the School of Asian, African, and Amerindian Studies (CNWS) in 2009.

By law, only PhD-employees are allowed to teach, for up to 15% of their time across four fulltime years, under the aegis of their advisors. PhD students without employee status are not allowed to teach, unless the institute temporarily appoints them as instructors.

The University offers generic courses in teacher training. A recent curriculum review for programmes staffed by LIAS has shown that better planning and coordination by faculty and the institute management is needed here, for the benefit of students and advisors alike.

Graduation rates are low across the Faculty of Humanities, with the institute for linguistics as a positive exception. LIAS is about average. This is a concern, for professional, human, and financial reasons.

A large number of the graduates find academic employment in many places around the world and related work, often in the cultural sector (museums, translation, consultancy) and/or media. Career destinations also include the civil service.

Assessment/remarks

The placement data indicate that the current organisation and structure of the graduate programme are poor. While we are aware of restrictions imposed by national and university laws and support the programme-building plan in principle, we encourage LIAS to modify and enhance that plan in the following ways:

1. Make attempts to minimise the differences among the three categories of graduate students.
2. Establish an office for PhD students to assist them with obtaining residency and health care as well as other necessary practical elements of integrating in the Netherlands and the academic community of Leiden University.
3. Designate one faculty member as a faculty liaison for graduate students.

4. Implement a more rigorous admission and selection process underwritten by a faculty committee.

3. PROGRAMME LEVEL

Programme 1: School of Asian Studies

Coordinator:	Nira Wickramasinghe (previously: Chris Goto-Jones, Ivo Smits)		
Research staff 2011:	38 tenured, 27 total fte		
Assessments:	Quality:	3.5	
	Productivity:	3.5	
	Relevance:	3	
	Viability:	3	

The research programme deals with the linguistic and literary as well as the anthropological, sociological and historical study of China, Japan, Korea, South Asia and Tibet, and South-east Asia.

Quality

This programme is very diverse in a number of ways, including methodologies, periods, and theoretical frameworks, which makes it extremely difficult to assess. There are a handful of individual scholars who appear to have published no more than two articles over the last six years or so and/or have yet to publish monographs based on their PhD theses that were completed about ten years ago. That said, each subfield has well-established scholars who are internationally competitive or even among the leaders in their fields and publish highly regarded monographs as well as articles in the most reputable journals. Others are successfully pursuing high-quality scholarship while also addressing a wider readership. We are also impressed with the success of some faculty members to obtain substantial research grants that facilitate a focus on their research projects while also contributing to the funding of the graduate programme and the operation of LIAS more generally.

Productivity

The self-assessment report divides productivity into 16 types of publication. The distinction between professional publications and publications aimed at a general audience is somewhat unclear and LIAS notes that some categories are missing in the current information system, such as reference works, literary translations, textbooks and structural editorships of journals and book series. That said, the output of pure research publications (journal articles, books, and book chapters) is substantial and in many cases internationally competitive. The overall productivity is lower than in the School of Middle-Eastern Studies. The core reason seems to lie in the amount of teaching and teaching-related administration. Members of the School of Asian Studies perform 70% of all teaching within the Institute. The number of PhD theses completed in the last 6 years is more than 35.

We recommend measures to increase research time for faculty members. As noted above, we welcome the ongoing assessment of teaching and administrative loads and recommend the introduction of a sabbatical system in order to regularly offset these burdens.

Societal Relevance

As the self-assessment report states, evidence of the societal relevance of research has become progressively more important, and pressures on funding make the issue all the more acute. From the perspectives of outreach, valorisation and/or impact, the report lists activities relevant for society, grouped under training, events, publications, media, policy advice and community service. There is certainly evidence of faculty members reaching out to wider publics through means ranging from art exhibitions to symposia on timely subjects. While it is difficult for us to assess the actual impact of such activities, it is clear that a substantial number of faculty members take this mission seriously. Given the traditional prominence of the study of premodern Asia at Leiden and the increasing importance of Asia in our globalising world, Asian Studies faculty might consider more proactive and systematic ways of identifying and engaging a broader circle of stakeholders and constituencies, including companies with Asian connections, schools with an interest in teaching Asian languages, and Asian-heritage communities with a general interest in Asian cultures.

Vitality, Feasibility and Vision for the Future

Faculty members are clearly and energetically engaged in teaching and research. Similar to faculty in Middle-Eastern Studies, Asian Studies faculty seem energised by the potential of the new “area studies” approach and envision that approach as a way to bridge gaps between their various fields of expertise. In marked contrast to Middle-Eastern faculty, however, there is also a sense of wariness about potential additional burdens. The Asian Studies faculty appears overworked and exhausted due to the disproportionately high teaching load and administrative commitments.

We agree with the self-assessment that highlights the distribution of gender as problematic. Currently, only 2 full-time professors in Asian Studies are female! The gender imbalance in Middle-Eastern Studies is somewhat less dramatic. While the low number of women in across the faculty across Asian Studies and Middle-Eastern Studies appear to be in line with the low gender integration rate at institutions of higher education across the nation, it is in contrast to the existing standards and direction at most other leading universities around the world. Hence, we support the current leadership’s efforts to pay particular attention to establishing gender equality through the hiring process and careering mechanisms.

Programme 2: School of Middle-Eastern Studies

Coordinator: Olaf Kaper
Research staff 2011: 25 tenured, 17.9 total fte

Assessments: Quality: 4
 Productivity: 4
 Relevance: 4
 Viability: 4

This programme primarily deals with the region of the Middle East from earliest antiquity to contemporary times, with a strong focus on Hebrew and Aramaic, Assyriology, Egyptology, Papyrology, Arabic studies, Persian and Iranian studies, and Turkish studies. The approaches are primarily textual and use different disciplines, such as history, literature, linguistics, and politics.

Quality

The programme is too diverse to evaluate it as a single unit, but its component parts all include leaders in the field. Most of the work is highly original and well regarded in the respective fields. All of the established scholars have impressive publication records, and the younger ones promise to make similar contributions. The academic reputation of Leiden in these fields is strong, and the resources available to many of them (especially in Papyrology, Assyriology, and Egyptology) are exceptional. Although there does not appear to be a single organisation of the school (which is impossible considering the diversity of fields), there seems to be a desire for coherence, for example in the focus on papyrological sources.

Productivity

The general output of the school and its individual faculty members is high, sometimes very high. They produce scholarly works in a consistent fashion. There seems to be a focus on publishing monographs, some of which have become standard textbooks in the field. The publication of articles tends to be in specialised journals, which may not have a wide readership but are highly regarded by scholars. We cannot comment on productivity strategy as this is in the hands of individuals. The number of PhD theses completed in the last 6 years is more than 25.

Societal relevance

This category is difficult to assess as it depends heavily on the individual fields. Some members are more involved than others because their subjects have a greater contemporary appeal. There seems to be a general effort to interact with the media, popular organisations, and policy makers, but it is hard for us to evaluate the extent of this. In certain parts of the Middle East, the publications of certain faculty members serve as standard textbooks and monographs used by a large number of students. Leiden does not seem to be the first place to which media, etc. turn for information on current events in the Middle East, while faculty members seem to be more than willing to render such services.

Viability, feasibility, and vision for the future

The school has a critical mass of scholars to remain a high level institution of learning. Obviously there are gaps in their geographical and chronological expertise, and we imagine

that over time there will be changes in the distribution of faculty in the different fields. They seem to be aware as a group that such changes will occur and are willing to take the priorities of the entire school into consideration. There is great enthusiasm for the new “area studies” approach and the intended research programmes (arts & media, etc.), which all members we interviewed fully support and view as an added dimension to their scholarship and cooperation.

Overall, we encountered a group of highly motivated, engaged, and confident scholars, who are eager to maintain the established reputation of Leiden University in Middle Eastern studies. They are aware of the necessity to continue their strengths in traditional approaches while combining them with new interdisciplinarity. The absence of tension between the two often seen at other universities is reassuring and suggests that they will move forward with confidence. Their success will depend to a great extent on institutional support.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Curricula Vitae of the committee members

Prof. Gavin Flood, South Asia, premodern, religion (sacred texts, phenomenology, asceticism, and theory and method in the study of religion). Gavin Flood's research interests are in pre-modern Hindu traditions, particularly tantric traditions, comparative religion and theories of religion. He has published five single authored books and edited two. He is currently working on a book for Oxford University Press, *The Truth Within: A History of Inwardness in Hinduism, Christianity and Buddhism*.

Prof. Sabine Frühstück is Professor of modern Japanese cultural studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She engages the methodologies of history and ethnography to study modern and contemporary Japanese culture and its relationships to the rest of the world, focusing particularly on issues of power and knowledge, gender and sexuality, and military and society.

Prof. M. Sükrü Hanioglu, Garrett Professor in Foreign Affairs, Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Studies, Princeton University. He has done extensive research on the history of the CUP during the period from 1889 to 1908, i.e. from its foundation to the Young Turk Revolution using organisation's own papers (since it was an underground organisation), archival sources including those found in the Turkish, German, Austrian, French, Swiss, Italian, Greek, and British archives.

Prof. Marc Van De Mieroop is Professor of Ancient Near Eastern history at Columbia University. His writings deal with socio-economic issues and historical methodology, and recently he started a project on intellectual history. He is the author of several textbooks, including on the history of ancient Egypt and world history.

Appendix B: Five point scale of the Standard Evaluation Protocol (SEP)

<i>Excellent (5)</i>	Research is world leading. Researchers are working at the forefront of their field internationally and their research has an important and substantial impact in the field.
<i>Very Good (4)</i>	Research is considered nationally leading. Research is internationally competitive and makes a significant contribution to the field.
<i>Good (3)</i>	Research is internationally visible. Work is competitive at the national level and makes a valuable contribution in the international field.
<i>Satisfactory (2)</i>	Research is nationally visible. Work adds to our understanding and is solid, but not exciting.
<i>Unsatisfactory (1)</i>	Work is neither solid nor exciting, flawed in the scientific and/or technical approach, repetitions of other work, etc.

Quality refers to the level of the research compared to accepted (international) standards in the field. As a rule, quality is measured by judging the international academic reputation, the position and the output of the unit to be evaluated. In case of a *national* orientation of a research field, the point of reference consists of other groups in the country.

Productivity regards the relationship between input and output. Output should always be judged in relation to the mission and resources of the institute. When looking at productivity in terms of publications of scientific articles and the like, a verdict is usually cast in comparison with international standards of a quantitative nature. However, this is often not possible when looking at other forms of output (for example health protocols, designs, policy reports). Since many institutes will have variegated output and scientific activities, evaluators are asked to also include other forms of (qualitative) information in their assessment.

Relevance covers the social, economic and cultural relevance of the research. Evaluators are asked to consider one or more of the following three aspects.

- *Societal quality of the work.* This aspect refers primarily to the policy and efforts of the institute and/or research groups to interact in a productive way with stakeholders in society who are interested in input from scientific research. It may also refer to the contribution of research to important issues and debates in society.
- *Societal impact of the work.* This aspect refers to how research affects specific stakeholders or specific procedures in society (for example protocols, laws and regulations, curricula). This can be measured, for example, via charting behavioural changes of actors or institutions.
- *Valorisation of the work.* This aspect refers to the activities aimed at making research results available and suitable for application in products, processes and services. This includes activities regarding the availability of results and interaction with public and private organisations, as well as direct contributions such as commercial or non-profit use of research results and expertise.

Vitality and feasibility regards the institute's ability to react adequately to important changes in the environment. It refers to both internal (personnel, research practice) and external (developments in the field, in society) dynamics of the group.

Appendix C: Overview of specialisations and languages

Programme 1: Middle-Eastern Studies	
Area specialisations	Languages
1.1: Hebrew and Aramaic Studies	Biblical, Medieval, and Modern Hebrew; pre-modern Aramaic and Aramaic in the Ancient Near East; Ugaritic and Phoenician
1.2: Assyriology	Akkadian (all dialects), Sumerian, Hittite, Elamite, Hurrian, Urartian
1.3: Egyptology	Egyptian (Classical, Late, Neo-Middle, in the hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts), Coptic (all dialects), Demotic, Greek, Old Nubian.
1.4: Papyrology	Egyptian (in the Abnormal hieratic script), Demotic (Egyptian), Greek, Latin, Coptic; Arabic (see under Arabic studies)
1.5: Arabic Studies	Arabic (Epigraphic, Classical, Modern Standard, Middle, Levantine, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Maghrebine, Central Arabian, and Yemenite); Akkadian; Greek; Hebrew; Old South Arabian; Ancient North Arabian; Aramaic (Biblical, Nabataean, and Syriac); Old Ethiopic; Coptic; Indonesian, Malay (also in Jawi script, for Islam studies); French
1.6: Persian and Iranian Studies	Classical Persian, Modern Persian, Shughni-Rushani, Tajik
1.7: Turkish Studies	Ottoman Turkish, Modern Turkish

Programme 2: Asian Studies	
Area specialisations	Languages
2.1: Chinese Studies	Classical Chinese, Modern Chinese
2.2: Japanese Studies	Modern Japanese, Classical Japanese, Classical Chinese (kanbun), Ainu
2.3: Korean Studies	Classical Korean, Modern Korean, Classical Chinese, Classical Japanese, Modern Japanese (colonial period)
2.4: South Asian and Tibetan Studies	Bengali, Classical Tibetan, Hindi, Pali, Sanskrit, Sinhala; and for Buddhist studies, Classical Chinese, Classical Japanese; English
2.5: Southeast Asian Studies	Indonesian, Malay, Javanese, and several other Austronesian and Papuan languages in eastern Indonesia; Dutch

Appendix D: Schedule of the site-visit

Monday 5 November 2012

- 09:00-10:45: Committee meeting
10:45-11:15: Dean of the Faculty (short presentation, interview)
11:15-12:15: Institute management (short presentation, interview)
12:15-13:00: Lunch
13:00-14:00: **Asian Studies** (short presentation, interview)

China: Picke
Japan: Smits
Korea: Breuker
South Asia: Wickramasinghe
Southeast Asia: Arps

- 14:00-15:00: **Middle-Eastern Studies** (short presentation, interview)

Arabic: Sijpesteijn
Persian: Seyed-Gohrab
Turkish: Zürcher
Egyptology: Kaper
Assyriology: Van Soldt
[Hebrew & Aramaic: Gzella]
Papyrology: Hoogendijk

- 15:00-15:30: **Arts & Media** (short presentation, interview)
15:30-16:00: **Religion & Philosophy** (short presentation, interview)
16:00-16:30: **State & Society** (short presentation, interview)
16:30-17:00: Break
17:00-18:00: Interview with PhD students (limited number, selected by the Institute, with list of names and short description of their projects)
19:00: Committee dinner

Tuesday 6 November 2012

- 09:00-10:00: Committee meeting: conclusions, scores, problems, texts
10:00-11:00: **Combined session Asian Studies & Middle-Eastern Studies**
11:00-12:00: Second meeting with Institute management
12:00-13:00: Lunch
13:00-17:00: Further conclusions and tasks; writing session.