

Tuesday late morning session Track B, Tuesday, Sep 23 2025, 11:30-13:00

Location: Seminar 1

Session: Research Culture

Chair: Nina Peršak

OR-04

Assessing the perceptions, experiences and needs of researchers in Amsterdam for fostering a positive research culture

Rita Santos¹, Miriam van Loon¹, Krishma Labib², Janette Huijser¹, Joeri Tjeldink¹, Mariette van den Hoven¹

¹Amsterdam UMC, Netherlands

²Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands

Recently, helping to foster an academic environment where researchers feel valued, thrive in their work, and are fairly recognised and rewarded for their scientific merit has been prioritised for higher education institutions and national and transnational initiatives. In the Netherlands, all Higher Education Institutions are signatories of the Dutch Code of Conduct for Research Integrity. The Code specifies the duties of care that institutions should adopt to foster responsible research practices and to promote a positive research culture. Transnational movements such as the Coalition for Advancing Researchers Assessment (CoARA) and the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) have reinforced the urgency to rethink traditional metrics for assessing researchers' performance.

Despite these collective efforts, studies in the Netherlands still point out systemic issues in the way researchers conduct research and are assessed and rewarded. Reforming institutional policies to sustainably embed responsible research practices, along with fair recognition and rewards for academic careers, requires an evidence-based approach to assess how researchers perceive and experience their institutions' research climate and the concrete needs to foster a more positive institutional climate.

Building on a Horizon Europe project focused on institutional transformation pathways in higher education (CATALISI), we compared how researchers in two higher education institutions in Amsterdam, at different career stages, perceive and experience their institutions' research culture regarding responsible research practices and the recognition and rewards of scientific outputs (research question 1) and whether junior researchers have different needs in fostering a positive research culture compared to senior researchers (research question 2).

We conducted two studies. First, a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews, to understand how researchers perceive research culture and how they think it could be improved at different levels. Second, using a non-validated online survey, we assessed researchers' perceptions and experiences regarding responsible research practices and the recognition and rewards of scientific outputs. Furthermore, we explored the diverse needs of researchers, from early career researchers to senior researchers and those in leadership positions, to foster a positive research culture. We built and expanded our online survey based on similar studies. Our interview study involved 15 participants (including junior and senior researchers and policy advisors), and we will soon implement our online survey.

Our interview study confirmed the need to stimulate a positive research culture further. Participants reported that academia is still driven by an academic reward system focusing on academic output, where financial incentives may lead to questionable research practices or even scientific misconduct. During the presentation, we will further explore the results from the interview study and online survey. We will also reflect on the broader context of our findings for policy recommendations and explore ways to initiate dialogues on fostering a positive research climate with the audience.