

“Leiden Principles”

The role of research-intensive universities as the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic



GERMAN U15



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A decade ago, a group of associations of research-intensive universities from all over the world committed to a set of key values-based characteristics that distinguish research-intensive universities and establish them as essential anchor institutions in their respective local, national and global communities.

The goal was to promote a strong policy environment which protects, nurtures and cultivates the values, standards and behaviours which underlie these characteristics and support their further development.

Today, these characteristics, which focus on educational and research excellence, integrity and the advancement of individuals and knowledge (see **Annex A**), are equally, if not more vital to the health and prosperity of nations, and we reaffirm them with this new statement.

We are now looking ahead to identify and deliver solutions to the local, national and global challenges confronting society as the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing contributions our research-intensive universities make.

We have identified five critical principles to underpin our success and, in turn, ensure the continued and valued contribution of research-intensive universities:

- **TRUST – to deliver solutions in the face of major challenges**
- **DIVERSITY – to engage and draw on all available talents from all backgrounds**
- **OPENNESS – to ensure knowledge can flow globally without unnecessary barriers**
- **STEWARDSHIP – to ensure that research is conducted responsibly, with integrity, and employing appropriate safety and security practices, and**

- **FREEDOM – to research, teach, inquire and operate with appropriate institutional autonomy.**

This commitment, combined with the support of our governments, research and innovation partners, staff and students, will further enable research-intensive universities to play a significant role in the economic, social and cultural pandemic recovery.

Our researchers and partners will continue to develop new treatments and interventions to help defeat COVID-19, cancer and other diseases around the world. We will continue to educate and train the next generation of visionary leaders and innovators to meet the real-world demands of a 21st-century global economy. We will create jobs and growth in new industries that will lead to a more sustainable and safer future, tackling climate change and other global challenges as they arise.

We will provide independent, rigorous and evidence-based advice to policy and decision makers. Our communities will be enriched with new knowledge and insights essential to our sense of culture, humanity and well-being.

We will collaborate to ensure the best ideas from around the world can be used to create opportunity and solve local, national and global challenges as they arise. And, most importantly, we will prime the next generation with the research skills, knowledge, experience and opportunity to deliver the best possible future for them and for the world's population.

TRUST

Research-intensive universities have demonstrated their service and value in generating the fundamental knowledge required to advance critical medical and other scientific and technological advances throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. They are hopeful and confident that governments, the private and the public sectors, as well as citizens, will continue to put their trust in research-intensive universities to support and undertake research and educational programs to inform and address future societal challenges and crises, and to do what is required to support them in such endeavours. Continued support of basic research is society's best bet to be prepared for future crises.

DIVERSITY

Research-intensive universities invest in a positive academic culture that stimulates a diversity of talented people and which recognises a diversity of contributions, with strategic and practical attention paid to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion. This requires addressing inclusion of *all* underrepresented groups and aiming for the *entire* academic community of staff and students *together, to make the content of both* the research and the research-led educational curriculum more inclusive.

OPENNESS

Research-intensive universities are at the forefront of negotiating and assuring the open and transparent flow of the knowledge that is created within their walls and how that knowledge is used via education, research or commercialization. They must continue to support and advance public access to research results, the widespread dissemination of scientific knowledge, and international scientific collaborations vital to ensure maximum public benefit from research and the ongoing global advancement of knowledge. At the same time, it is critical that appropriate safeguards and controls be put in place to protect against the inappropriate transfer or use of such knowledge.

STEWARDSHIP

It is in the interest of universities, governments, private companies and all actors in the research ecosystem to serve as good stewards of publicly funded research efforts. This requires the development of clear institutional frameworks, government policies, and effective practices - appropriate to each national jurisdiction – to ensure that researchers conduct their research in a safe and secure manner, without compromising academic integrity and freedom, and protecting the sovereignty and security of their national communities. This must also be done with due regard for

climate and other sustainable development impacts. Research-intensive universities are committed to working in collaboration with governments and other stakeholders to achieve these essential aims.

FREEDOM

Research-intensive universities regard academic freedom and institutional autonomy as essential in their mission to serve and advance society. They consider that academic freedom consists of three main dimensions, which mutually reinforce one another and should be taken into account in case of conflict:

- Far-reaching individual rights to expressive freedoms for members of the academic community mainly as free enquirers and a responsibility to 'disagree well' and constructively with others;
- Collective or institutional autonomy for the academy in general and/or subsections thereof;
- An obligation for research-intensive universities and public authorities to respect and protect academic freedom.

Leiden, May 2022

Annex A – The ten key characteristics of a research-intensive university¹

1. **The pursuit of excellence across all its operations**, calibrated through informed, independent, non-conflicted assessments from peer organizations and individuals from outside the university; and a commitment to the use of transparent, meritocratic systems to select faculty, staff and students, creating an internal environment that nurtures learning, creativity and discovery, and which will unleash and develop the potential of its staff and students, both undergraduate and (post)graduate.
2. **A major research effort which has both depth and breadth**, producing internationally recognized research results which are broadly disseminated through publication, teaching and community engagement.
3. **A commitment to research training, especially through PhD programs**, which provides a continuing flow of highly competent and respected graduates (as assessed by researchers of international standing) who are able to advance the frontiers of knowledge and understanding and to contribute to national and international innovation and development across all sectors.
4. **A commitment to teaching at both the undergraduate and (post)graduate levels**, to consistently produce broadly educated, high quality graduates who are able to contribute to the national economic and societal welfare across a wide range of activities, having benefited from early and active immersion in research-rich educational settings and unique opportunities to engage with cutting-edge research within and across disciplines.
5. **A dedication to the highest standards of research integrity and its associated ethical obligations**, which ensures the probity of data collection, assessment and analysis independent of any considerations of funding sources or of personal or institutional benefit, and which is supported by explicit and effective processes to investigate and respond to any allegations or perceptions of unethical research or behaviour.
6. **The responsible exercise of academic freedom** by faculty, to produce and disseminate knowledge through research, teaching and service within a research culture based on open inquiry and the continued testing of current knowledge, and which extends beyond the vocational or instrumental, and looks beyond immediate needs to develop the understanding, skills and expertise necessary to shape the future and interpret our changing world.
7. **A tolerance, recognition and welcoming of competing views**, perspectives, frameworks and positions necessary to support progress, along with a commitment to civil debate and discussion to advance understanding and produce new knowledge and technologies.
8. **The right to set its own priorities**, on academic grounds, for what and how it will teach and research based on its mission, its strategic development plans, and its assessment of society's current and future needs; and the right (**within a culture of diversity**) to determine who it will hire and admit, including an ability to recruit internationally to attract the best people to achieve these priorities.
9. **A commitment to support its local and national communities and contribute to international well-being** by taking actions and developing a culture which maximizes the short- and long-term benefits of the research and education undertaken.
10. **An open and transparent set of governance arrangements** which protect and support a continuing commitment to the characteristics that define and sustain world-class research universities, while ensuring the institution meets its public responsibilities.

¹ A few phrases have been changed in the text below versus the 2013 statement. Without changing the intrinsic meaning of the ten characteristics, these amendments reflect the current context.

Dated on May 20th, 2022

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