Faculteit der Natuurwetenschappen, Wiskunde en Informatica
Faculteit der Aard- en Levenswetenschappen
Faculteit der Exacte Wetenschappen

Terms of Reference for the assessment committee of the Institute of Physics of the University of Amsterdam and the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam in 2017

The board of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam hereby issues the following Terms of Reference to the assessment committee of the Institute of Physics of the University of Amsterdam and the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, chaired by prof. dr. G. (Gerard) van der Steenhoven.

Assessment
The Institute of Physics (UvA) and Department of Physics and Astronomy (VU) will be evaluated by means of the evaluation of four research units:

a. Particle and Astro-Particle Physics (joint unit of UvA and VU groups, together an integral part of Nikhef, the national institute for subatomic physics);
b. "Instituut voor Theoretische Fysica Amsterdam" (ITFA, the Theoretical Physics division of the Institute of Physics, UvA);
c. Van der Waals-Zeeman Institute (WZI, the Experimental Physics division of the UvA's Institute of Physics);
d. LaserLaB (the Experimental Physics groups of the VU's Physics department).

You are being asked to assess the quality and relevance to society of the four research units as well as its strategic targets and the extent to which it is equipped to achieve them. You should do so by judging the unit's performance on the three SEP assessment criteria (a. to c.) below. Be sure to take into account current international trends and developments in science and society in your analysis.

a. research quality;
b. relevance to society;
c. viability.

For a description of these criteria, see Section 2 of the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015 – 2021.

Please provide a written assessment on each of the three criteria and assign the four research units to a particular category (1, 2, 3 or 4) in each case, in accordance with the SEP guidelines. Please also provide recommendations for improvement. In this protocol, indicators of research quality explicitly include such output as instruments and infrastructure developed by the research unit.

In addition, we would like your report to provide a qualitative assessment of Institute of Physics (UvA) and Department of Physics and Astronomy (VU) as a whole in relation to its strategic targets and to the governance and leadership skills of its management. Please also make recommendations concerning these two subjects. In accordance with the SEP, please also reflect on the following three aspects in your report:
a. PhD programmes;
b. research integrity;
c. diversity.

Documentation
The necessary documentation will be sent to you about 6 weeks prior to the site visit. The documents will include at least the following:

- four self-assessments with appendices;
- the Standard Evaluation Protocol 2015 – 2021;

- an updated version of the terms of reference;
- the program for the site visit.

Site visit
The site visit at will take place on 11-15 December. The provisional programme for the site visit is enclosed with this letter. We will contact you about logistical matters over the summer.

Statement of impartiality
Before embarking on your assessment work, you will be asked to sign a statement of impartiality. In this statement, you declare that you have no direct relationship or connection with the Institute of Physics of the University of Amsterdam and the Department of Physics and Astronomy of the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.

Assessment report
We ask you to report your findings in an assessment report drawn up in accordance with the SEP guidelines and format. The draft report will be send to the Institute of Physics and Department of Physics and Astronomy no more than 8 weeks after the site visit. They will check the report for factual inaccuracies; if such inaccuracies are detected, you will see that they are corrected. The corrected version of the assessment report will then be sent by you to the board of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam.