



Netherlands Initiative for Education Research

3. Call for Proposals

Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education

2019 - 2020

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Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

In 2015, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science published the 2015-2025 Strategic Agenda for Education and Research, 'The Value of Knowledge' (*De waarde(n) van weten*). In this agenda, a budget was announced for research into higher education. The aim of this research is to improve the quality of higher education.

From 2018, this budget will be made available in phases. The Netherlands Initiative for Education Research (NRO) is responsible for programming and expenditure of the budget for research into higher education. To this end, the NRO Steering Committee set up the Higher Education Programme Committee.

The aim of the Higher Education Programme Committee is to draw up a coherent programme for expenditure of the budget for research and innovation (the Comenius Programme). In doing so, it strives not only for coherence between the funding instruments it draws up itself, but also explicitly for coherence and collaboration between institutions and researchers in higher education.

The *2019-2020 Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education* funding round is the first funding instrument of the Higher Education Programme Committee.

This funding round is divided into three phases:

1. Selection of project leaders. The conditions and procedure for this phase are described in the Call for Project Leaders.
2. Recruitment of consortium partners. The conditions and procedure for this phase are described in the Call for Consortium Partners.
3. Preparation of a final research proposal. The conditions and procedure for this phase are described in this Call for Proposals.

1.2 Available budget

A total of €2,625,000 is available for the 2019-2020 Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education funding round. This will be allocated to three projects, with a maximum of one per theme. A maximum of € 875,000 can be requested for each project.

1.3 Validity of the Call for Proposals

The deadline for submitting applications is **26 March 2020**, 14:00 hours CEST.

2 Aim

With this funding round, the NRO Higher Education Programme Committee aims to finance practice-oriented research into higher education.

The main objective of practice-oriented research into higher education funded by NRO is to find answers to questions from educational practice, thus contributing to improvements and innovations in education. The research must meet the criteria for scientific research. Scientific insights will be used in this process.

The research must take place in an educational practice setting and in close collaboration between researchers and practitioners throughout the entire process, from formulating the research question to implementation and further dissemination of research results. This means there is always a two-way flow of knowledge and results. The research must produce new insights and concrete products. These must be relevant and – as much as possible – useful for educational contexts other than those in which the research takes place.

The budget will be divided over three projects in which research will be conducted on three themes that are relevant to the entire field of higher education in the Netherlands:

- 1. Professional development of teachers**
- 2. International and inter-cultural education**
- 3. Flexible education**

The themes will be further detailed by the project leaders selected in the first phase of the funding round. After announcing who the project leaders are, an updated version of the Call for Consortium Partners will be published, including the project leaders' essays.

The research should be set up and conducted by consortia of researchers, lecturer-researchers and other education professionals associated with Dutch universities and colleges of higher education, and possibly other organisations associated with higher education.

The funding round is organised in three phases:

1. In the first phase, experienced researchers are invited to apply as project leaders for one of the three projects. The Assessment Committee selects the project leaders according to the procedure and on the basis of the assessment criteria laid down in the Call for Project Leaders (see Section 4.2.2).
2. In the Call for Consortium Partners, individual or collaborating researchers, lecturer-researchers and other education professionals are invited to state their reasons for participating in one of the consortia. These consortia will be formed at a matchmaking day; one for each theme. If there are too many applications, the Assessment Committee will make a pre-selection for the matchmaking day and invite the parties that have the best chance of forming a good match with each other and the project leaders.
3. After the consortia have been formed, NRO will organise work conferences at which each consortium can work on refining its application and the consortia can coordinate the applications with each other. The Assessment Committee will evaluate the final proposals on the basis of the evaluation criteria laid down in this Call for Proposals.

With this procedure, the Higher Education Programme Committee wants to contribute to the creation of new partnerships in the field of higher education in the Netherlands. After the

selection of project leaders, consortium partners and the formation of the consortia, there will no longer be any competition between the consortia themselves. This will enable coherence and possible cooperation between the projects.

The conditions and assessment criteria for project leaders and applications are intended to stimulate further definition of the research activities during the research project. In this way, NRO aims to contribute to flexible education research.

3 Guidelines for applicants

3.1 Who can apply?

Applications can be submitted by research consortia consisting of education researchers, lecturer-researchers and other professionals working in institutions of higher education.

The following conditions apply to the composition of a consortium:

- The main applicant/project leader has been appointed project leader in the first phase of this funding round;¹
- The consortium partners must meet the requirements set out in the Call for Consortium Partners for this funding round;
- The consortium partners have been selected for the work conferences and were present at the work conferences associated with this funding round;
- The consortium partners are jointly associated with at least four institutions of higher education, of which at least two are universities of applied sciences and two are research universities;
- The consortium must include at least two education researchers who are jointly associated with at least one university of applied sciences and one research university;
- The lecturer-researchers in the consortium are jointly associated with departments in two different fields of study;²
- At least three of the members of a consortium are involved in an innovation project at the time of the start of the research project, the objective of which must be consistent with one of the three themes.³

The project leader must submit the proposal through ISAAC and is the contact person for NRO during the application and assessment procedure. After the proposal is awarded, the project leader is responsible for the research project to be funded by NRO. If desired, the main applicant may appoint another person as project coordinator of the research project. This project coordinator may act as the contact person for NRO with the project leader's approval. However, the project leader will continue to be responsible for the project and will make agreements with the project coordinator in this respect.

¹ NRO will announce the project leaders on or around 7 October 2019.

² This condition does not apply to the consortium submitting a research proposal on the theme of 'professional development of teachers'. The various research fields are: humanities, social sciences – including teacher training programmes, technical & natural sciences, medical and health sciences and the performing and visual arts.

³ These can be projects that have already started and are financed by one of the national incentive schemes (Comenius Programme, Students4Students, CityDeal Meetings, SURF Open & Online, etc.), or projects that have started within an institution of higher education in the Netherlands with funds from an innovation fund of their own institution. New innovation projects may also be started as part of this round. The budget to be applied for is intended to cover the costs of research into these projects, so if developing new innovations is part of the project, funding for the development must come from another source (see also 'What can be applied for' in This Call for Proposals).

3.2 What can be applied for?

A total of €2,625,000 is available for this funding round. A maximum of €875,000 can be requested for each project. Projects funded in this round have a minimum duration of three years (36 months) and a maximum duration of four years (48 months).

A grant can be requested to cover both direct staff costs and the material costs associated with the project. All costs must be substantiated. Staff and material costs must be specified for the first two years of the project and, where necessary or required, also for the third and fourth years (e.g. when a PhD candidate or postdoc is appointed). Costs can be reserved for the third and fourth year without requiring further specification.⁴

Grants may only be requested for the costs of persons and institutions established in the Netherlands.

When awarding a grant, the Higher Education Programme Committee reserves the right not to assign the full amount for requested costs for budgetary or substantive considerations.

The project leader is responsible for distributing the budget among the members of the consortium.

3.2.1 Staff costs

Grants can be requested for the remuneration of the staff to be appointed for the research. This concerns in any case the remuneration of academic staff and, on an ad-hoc basis, that of non-academic staff. A distinction is made for staff costs between staff at publicly-funded educational and research institutions and staff at other organisations.

The project leader must have an active role in the project. The budget must reflect that the project leader's time investment is at least 0.3 FTE throughout the project. In the case of shared project leadership (application by a pair), this is a total of 0.4 FTE.

Staff of publicly-funded education and research institutions (including research universities and universities of applied sciences)

For staff of publicly-funded education and research institutions, the following distinction is made:

PhD students and postdocs (appointed at a university)

Funding can be requested for both a regular four-year programme and a shortened three-year programme, depending on the planned date of the PhD defence.

The appointment of PhD students and postdocs to the project is subject to the Agreement on Funding for Scientific Research with the VSNU, including the most recent salary rates <http://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/salary+tables>. A separate salary scale applies for the three-year PhD programme.

In the event of full-time employment, a benchmark fee of up to €5,000 will be made available. In the event of part-time appointments, the benchmark fee is awarded pro rata. This bench fee can be used for costs aimed at furthering the academic career of the researcher funded by NRO (such as attending conferences and publishing the dissertation).

⁴ See Section 3.5 After grant award – third work conference. The conditions as to which costs may be covered by the requested budget remain valid.

The costs of supervising a PhD candidate or postdoc are not eligible for reimbursement.

Other staff

Other staff at publicly-funded education and research institutions, including staff with a permanent employment contract, must be remunerated according to the following maximum rates (hour/day) based on the Guide to Government Fees for 2017:⁵

Secretariat	€53/424
Junior/research assistant for academic and non-academic staff/teaching staff	€72/576
Mid-level/university teaching staff/ lecturer-researchers	€87/696
Senior/associate professor	€95/760
Director/professor/lecturer	€119/952

The stated fees are based on the cost-effective fee plus additional fees. The cost-effective fee includes the average gross salary plus expected wage development, holiday pay, year-end bonus, employer's charges and an additional fee for overhead costs.

Staff at other organisations

Staff at other organisations must be remunerated according to the following maximum rates (hour/day) based on the Guide to Government Fees for 2017:⁶

Support	€55/440
Junior	€81/648
Mid-level	€130/1,040
Senior/executive	€139/1,112

The stated fees are based on the cost-plus fee exclusive of VAT and inclusive of the additional fees. The cost-plus fee includes the average gross salary plus expected wage development, holiday pay, year-end bonus, employer's charges and an additional fee for overhead costs and a cost-plus price.

These fees are explained in further detail in the Guide to Government Fees for 2017, which is available at www.nro.nl/projectbeheer (only available in Dutch).

The application should indicate how the requested staff costs will be allocated to the different members of the consortium (if applicable) and should include the reasons for this allocation. The application must specify the day rates per staff category, subject to a maximum of the above rates, and may specify a lower rate. These rates will be binding. This means that the day rates included in the application will be applied in the event of award and final grant determination.

3.2.2 Material costs

Funding can also be requested to cover material costs such as:

- procuring special equipment and consumables needed for the research;
- costs of holding surveys, conducting experiments and test research, and the procurement of datasets;

⁵ These amounts will be updated in the autumn of 2019. The principles behind the grant conditions will not change.

⁶ These amounts will be updated in the autumn of 2019. The principles behind the grant conditions will not change.

- trips necessary in connection with the research;
- student assistance;
- costs associated with the dissemination of project results, making research data available in an accessible way, knowledge transfer and knowledge utilisation.

Note: conference attendance by PhD students and postdocs is funded from the bench fee. The maximum amount of this fee is €5,000. Conference attendance by other staff members may be requested under the heading 'conference costs other staff'.

Only costs directly resulting from the research qualify for a grant, which means that accommodation, overhead, maintenance and depreciation costs may not be funded from the budget.

The costs of equipment, consumables or administrative or technical assistance that are part of the normal facilities package of a research institute and the costs of using laboratories and computers in data centres are not eligible for funding, unless the research requires the use of facilities that demonstrably exceeds normal use.

Knowledge utilisation

Costs related to knowledge utilisation include, for example:

- costs of developing a guide, checklist, app, website, testing or training materials (designs, drafts, printed matter, graphics, editing);
 - costs of organising meetings for (specific) target groups to present the final results.
- The costs related to knowledge utilisation should be specified and explained in the budget of the application. Staff costs in the consortium related to knowledge utilisation activities should be specified under 'staff costs' in the application form, and not as 'knowledge utilisation', which falls under 'material costs'

As a guideline, at least 5% of the costs will be assumed to be allocated to knowledge utilisation; this may concern both staff costs and material costs.

Material costs should be accounted for both financially and substantively.

3.2.3 Co-financing

NRO values public and/or private co-financing in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, on condition that the role and guarantee of public and/or private co-financing is clearly detailed in the budget and explained in the application. Co-financing may not exceed the budget requested from NRO, since NRO must be the main financier. See Article 1.5 of the NWO Grant Rules for the conditions for private co-financing. NWO's intellectual property policy <https://www.nwo.nl/documents/ew/projectbeheer-ew/nwo-beleid-inzake-intellectueel-eigendom> applies (page only available in Dutch).

Costs relating to the implementation of projects – both projects that have already started and innovation projects to be started within the framework of the research – cannot be reimbursed from the requested research grant. To make these costs transparent, it can be decided to include them in the budget as co-financing in cash or in kind.

3.3 When can applications be submitted?

Applications can be submitted after the second work conference for the Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education round, so after 12 February 2020.

The deadline for submitting the application is **26 March 2020**, 14:00 hours CEST.

Applications submitted before the second work conference or after the deadline will not be accepted.

3.4 Preparing the application

All consortium partners have an active role in preparing the application. The application should clarify the proposed role of the partners during the research project.

The application must in any case set out:

- The central question, including:
 - o Substantiation of the scientific relevance and relevance for educational practice of the question by means of scientific and other references (reflection on how answers to the questions asked can contribute to improving education and the scientific debate);
 - o How the question was formulated (consortium partners involved and involvement of students and any other stakeholders);
 - o Short reflection on the substantive coherence and relationship of this research with the research into the other two themes.
- Information on how to go about the research:
 - o Action plan for the first two years;
 - o Future outline on how the research can continue in the third and fourth years;
 - o Different roles of the consortium partners and how consortium partners will cooperate in the research;
 - o How students will be involved in the research.
- Information about disseminating knowledge, insights and products generated by the research:
 - o Plans for delivering and sharing interim results (in what form, through which media and for which target group).
- Information about the consortium partners:
 - o Expertise and experience of individual participants and/or parties.
- Data management section.
- Budget.
- Guarantee and explanation of the co-financing in cash and in kind by consortium partners, for example a commitment for the implementation of innovation projects.

An application form is available for preparing the application. This form can be downloaded from the grant page on the NWO website and via ISAAC. It is compulsory to use this application form. See Section 3.6 for the procedure for submitting the application.

Research field codes

You must specify one or more research field codes that apply to the proposed research on the application form. You can only use the NWO research field codes for this, which are available at <https://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/research+fields>. This information must also be entered in ISAAC (in the 'General' tab at 'Disciplines') before submitting the application. The research field code for 'Educational Sciences' (41.90.00) must in any case always be stated on the application form and in ISAAC. Below that, you should state the main research fields in order of importance.

3.5 Grant conditions

The [NWO Grant Rules 2017](#) and the Agreement on Funding for Scientific Research (2008) apply to all applications.

Open access

All publications resulting from research funded by grants awarded through this Call for Proposals must immediately (at the time of publication) be freely accessible worldwide (open access). There are several ways for researchers to publish through open access. A grant can be requested for open access publications in journals. A detailed explanation can be found at <https://www.nwo.nl/en/policies/open+science>.

Project results must be published as soon as possible, even in the event of expected exploitation rights.

Data management

Responsible data management is part of good research. Research data generated by publicly-funded research must be available freely and permanently, to the extent possible, so that other researchers can use it. Because responsible data management is essential, proposals must satisfy NWO's data management protocol. Researchers must therefore include staff and material costs for data management in their budget. This protocol consists of two steps:

1. Data management section

The data management section is part of the full research proposal. Researchers should answer four questions about data management within their intended research project. The researchers will therefore be asked - before the research starts - to consider how the data collected should be organised and categorised so that it can be made freely available. Measures will have to be taken frequently during production and analysis of the data to make subsequent storage and dissemination possible. Researchers can state which research data they consider to be relevant for storage and reuse.

2. Data management plan

After a proposal has been awarded funding, the researcher should elaborate the data management section into a data management plan. The data management plan is a concrete elaboration of the data management section. In the plan, the researcher must describe whether existing data will be used or whether it concerns a new data collection, and how the data collection will be made FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, Reusable).

The plan must be submitted to NRO through ISAAC, under 'reports', no later than four months after the proposal has been awarded funding. NRO will approve the plan as soon as possible. Approval of the data management plan by NRO is a condition for awarding funding. The plan can be modified during the research period.

Further information about NWO's data management protocol can be found at www.nwo.nl/en/policies/open+science/data+management. Information is also available on the website of the National Coordination Point Research Data Management (*Landelijk Coördinatiepunt Research Datamanagement*): www.lcrdm.nl/en.

NARCIS

NARCIS, the Dutch research database of Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), must be notified at the start of the research for the purpose of including the research description in the NARCIS database: www.narcis.nl. After notification, the research will be included in NARCIS within five working days and will receive a unique research number (OND number) so that it is known to other researchers.

DANS

The grant recipient must deposit all products and intermediate products, particularly data files containing research data suitable for multiple use, to the EASY online archiving system of Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS) of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW, www.easy.dans.knaw.nl) within three months of the publication of a report, stating the unique OND number. To this end, the products must be free of confidential information, classified information and information which may not be disclosed by law or regulation. Datasets must be accompanied by documentation in accordance with the DANS guidelines. After the datasets have been deposited in EASY, a Persistent Identifier of the dataset is assigned by DANS.

NCO

Comprehensive national representative datasets should be made available to Statistics Netherlands (CBS) for the National Education Cohort Study (NCO), which is part of NRO. NCO will decide whether it is appropriate to establish this link with NCO. This will be discussed with one of the NCO coordinators at the start of the project. If NCO decides to make the dataset an integral part of NCO, instructions and manuals will be provided on the basis of which the data collection can be adapted and information can be provided to respondents.

After the grant has been awarded*Latest start date*

A project that has been awarded funding must start within two months after notice of award, else the grant decision may be revoked.

Before the start of the project, please send the following documents to NRO:

- A completed and signed project notification form (Dutch acronym: PMF);
- For each PhD or postdoc position in the project, also send a completed and signed employee information form (Dutch acronym: PIF);
- A 'letter of intent' form signed by all consortium partners.

You can download all the required documents from www.nro.nl/projectbeheer (only available in Dutch).

Reporting interim changes

The project leader whose project has been awarded is obliged, in accordance with the grant conditions, to immediately notify the NRO bureau in writing of any deviations in the planning or implementation of the research, stating the reasons.

In the case of budget shifts relating to the budget drawn up for the first two years of the research, any budget shift between staff and material costs and within staff costs must always be submitted in advance to NRO for approval.

A shift within the budget for material costs need only be submitted for approval if:

- the shift has consequences for the content, schedule and/or intended research results;
- the budget shift exceeds 20% of the total material budget or is greater than €10,000.

Third work conference: interim reporting and start of second phase of the projects

Two years after project award (March-April 2022), NRO will organise a third work conference. Participation in this conference is compulsory for all consortium partners. At this work conference, the consortia will report on project progress and present their plans for the second phase of the project. The consortia and NRO may also invite external stakeholders of the projects to the presentations at these work conferences.

Within two weeks of the work conference, the project leader must provide NRO with written information on progress and the consortium's plans for the second phase, with an itemised budget for the next two years. The proposal for continuation of the project should be consistent with the activities already undertaken and the central question as formulated in the original application. In the event of any changes regarding the research questions or sub-questions, or if the composition of the consortium is changed, this must be explained in the proposal. The Assessment Committee reviews the progress report, the plans for the next phase of the project and the budget, after which payment for the next part/parts is determined. In preparation for the third work conference, the project leader will receive a more detailed review and evaluation procedure.

Knowledge utilisation

The application must contain details about the knowledge utilisation plan. The Higher Education Programme Committee expects the consortia to have a high degree of autonomy in determining the most appropriate way of disseminating the results of the research and making them usable in educational practice.

Nevertheless, the project leader can contact the NRO bureau for support in this area throughout the term of the research. More information about this support can be found in the Knowledge Utilisation Guide (only available in Dutch): <https://www.nro.nl/kennis-verspreiden/handleiding-kennisbenutting/>

Presentation of projects

NRO will regularly hold meetings at which research projects that have been awarded funding are presented. With these meetings, NRO aims to contribute to improvements and innovations in education. Project researchers are expected to contribute to these meetings if NRO requests this. They will also be asked to present, in consultation with NRO, their research at other meetings on the relevant theme and/or higher education.

Final report and financial accountability

Within three months of completing the research, the main applicant must submit a final report and financial accounts through ISAAC. The main applicant must register all output obtained thus far (in the context of the project and specified in the application) separately in ISAAC. After approval of the final report the grant period is closed and the final grant is determined.

3.6 Submitting the application

After the second work conference, the project leader submits the application through their ISAAC account. It is compulsory to use the application form.

After submitting your application, you will receive an automatic confirmation email at the email address registered as your preferred address in your ISAAC account. If you have not received confirmation of receipt, please contact the ISAAC Helpdesk. In case of other technical questions, please contact the ISAAC Helpdesk (see 5.1.2).

4 Assessment procedure

4.1 Procedure

Setting up the Assessment Committee

One Assessment Committee is set up for the entire duration of the funding round, which consists of three phases. This committee comprises:

- Experienced national and international education researchers (professors/lecturers) with expertise in the field of the relevant themes (two for each theme) and experience in cooperating with consortia. The researchers in the committee will be recruited from the entire spectrum of research fields in the educational sciences.
- Practitioners who work or have worked in higher education in the Netherlands, have experience in setting up and implementing educational innovation projects, and have affinity with education research.
- Students with experience in education policy, one from a university of applied sciences and one from a research university.

The NWO Code of Conduct on Conflicts of Interest applies to all individuals and staff members involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

The procedure consists of the following steps:

- Formation of the research consortia on the matchmaking day
- Establishing the consortia and drawing up the research proposals at the work conferences
- Submitting the application
- Processing the applications
- Assessment by the Assessment Committee
- Decision-making by the Higher Education Programme Committee

Because of the Assessment Committee's expertise, it was decided to make use of the option in Article 2.2.4 of the NWO Grant Rules 2017 to deviate from the standard selection procedure for the advisory, assessment and decision components. This deviation implies that the assessment procedure will be carried out without involving reviewers.

Formation of the research consortia on the matchmaking day

The matchmaking day, to be led by an independent chairperson, will give project leaders and interested research partners the opportunity to meet and discuss possibilities for collaboration. Only invitees may take part in the matchmaking day.

The aim of this day is to form one consortium per theme, and for each consortium to put together an action plan for joint preparation of the application in this phase of the funding round.

The project leaders must submit an overview of the (provisional) composition of the consortium to NRO no later than one week after the matchmaking day. The persons and parties mentioned here will be invited to the first work conference.

Establishing the consortia and drawing up the research proposals at the work conferences

During the work conferences, the consortium partners will jointly prepare a research proposal. There will also be the opportunity, during the work conferences, for coordination with the two consortia of the other themes.

Participation in the two work conferences is compulsory for all members of the consortia.

If, during the work conferences, a consortium decides that specific researchers, departments, projects, professional groups, etc. not involved in the process so far could still be part of the consortium, they can be added to the consortium. This can only be done at the explicit request of the consortium; a party that was not previously involved cannot request to be admitted to the consortium, nor can a third party or NRO request the consortium to admit a new partner to the consortium. The new party involved must meet the conditions set out in Section 3.1 of 2. *Call for Consortium Partners for the 2019-2020 Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education Programme*.

At the end of the second work conference, the consortia will present the draft proposals to each other and to the Assessment Committee. The Assessment Committee will give a brief initial assessment based on the presentations.

Processing the applications

The project leaders must submit the final applications in ISAAC by **26 March 2020**, before 14:00 CEST.

The NRO secretariat will assess the applications on the criteria for admissibility as set out in Section 4.2.1. An application that does not meet one of these criteria will not be processed. As soon as possible after submitting the application, the project leader will be notified of whether or not the application will be processed.

Assessment of the applications by the Assessment Committee

The Assessment Committee receives the three proposals and assesses these on the basis of the assessment criteria set out in 4.2.2.

The Assessment Committee assigns a score to each criterion. These scores correspond with the following qualifications:

- excellent
- very good
- good
- insufficient

For more information about the qualifications, see:

<https://www.nwo.nl/en/funding/funding+process+explained/nwo+qualification+system>.

The Assessment Committee advises the Higher Education Programme Committee on the qualification of the applications and the granting of the applications. The NWO Code on Conflicts of Interest applies to all individuals and NWO employees involved in the assessment and/or decision-making process.

Decision by the Higher Education Programme Committee

The Higher Education Programme Committee checks whether the procedure was conducted correctly and determines the final qualification of the proposals. Only proposals that score 'good' on all criteria qualify for a grant.

The project leaders receive written notification of the Programme Committee's decision, which also sets out the reasons behind the Assessment Committee's opinion.

Clause on non-exhaustion of the research budget

If an application does not score 'good' on all criteria, the application will be handed back to the consortium. The consortium then has two weeks (ten working days) to modify the application, after which it will be assessed again by the Assessment Committee.

If the application does not score 'good' on all criteria the second time round, the application will not be granted. In that case, the Higher Education Programme Committee will allocate the budget that was available for this project to practice-oriented research into higher education in some other way.

Objection and appeal

Objections against decisions in the context of the 2019-2020 Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education funding round can be made in accordance with the applicable objection and appeal procedures.

4.1.1 Timeline 2019-2020 Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education funding round

February 2019	Call for Project Leaders published and procedure for applications for project leaders opened. Framework of the Call for Consortium Partners (excluding essays) and Call for Proposals published
19 March 2019	Deadline for submitting the letter of intent
23 April	Deadline for submitting the application for project leader
May	Assessment of applications by the Assessment Committee
June	Opportunity to respond to the first written assessment
End of August	Meeting of the Assessment Committee
Around 9 September	Notification of invitation to the interview
Around 18 September	Interviews with up to nine project leaders
Around 7 October	Announcement of project leaders; publication of the full Call for Consortium Partners
12 November	Deadline for submitting the application for consortium partners
2 December	Latest notification of invitation to the matchmaking day (where applicable: notification of exclusion following pre-selection)
11 December	Matchmaking day
15 January 2020	Work conference 1
12 February 2020	Work conference 2
26 March 2020	Deadline for submitting full applications
Around 6 April 2020	Announcement of decision

4.2 Criteria**4.2.1 Eligibility criteria**

For an application to be eligible for admission to the assessment procedure it must meet a number of formal conditions, as described below. The applications will first be reviewed against these eligibility criteria.

Only applications that meet the following criteria will be admitted to the assessment procedure:

- The application has been submitted by a consortium that meets the requirements set out in Section 3.1. as regards its composition;
- The application form is – after any requests to supplement or amend it – correct, complete and has been duly completed in accordance with the instructions;
- The budget has been prepared according to the guidelines set out in Section 3.2;
- The application has been submitted through the project leader's ISAAC account;
- The application has been submitted on time;
- The application is submitted in one of the themes mentioned in Section 2;
- The lead applicant was appointed a project leader for this theme in the first phase;
- The application has been written in English.

4.2.2 Assessment criteria for the applications

The applications in this Call for Proposals will be substantively assessed on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Practical relevance (40%)
2. Scientific quality (40%)
3. Quality of the consortium (20%)

The criteria have the following sub-components:

1. Practical relevance (40%)

A. Consistency with the Call

- The application is consistent with the purpose of practice-oriented research as described in Section 1 of the Call, and the theme as specified in the essay by the project leader published in the Call for Consortium Partners.

B. Demand articulation and collaboration

- The description of the demand articulation shows that:
 - the application has been formulated in consultation with the members of the consortium;
 - the central question in the application arises directly from the questions and problems encountered by the members of the consortium who work in educational practice, and therefore that the question is motivated by the desire to improve higher education;
 - students were also consulted in formulating the question.

C. Results and knowledge utilisation

- The research leads to useful insights and products for educational practice and offers concrete solutions for the identified problem;
- The results of the research (results, insights, products) contribute to improvement and innovation of education;
- The insights and products can also be used by institutions of education and/or other users outside the consortium; The research proposal makes a good case for the need of the insights and products among these other users and describes how these will be disseminated;
- The research proposal contains a concise knowledge utilisation plan for mid-term dissemination of the results and products to other users (such as institutions of education outside the consortium, educational publishers, educational training services and welfare organisations);

- Implementation of the research (the research process) contributes to development of the programme and professional development of education professionals. They are actively involved in the implementation.

2. Scientific quality (40%)

D. Problem analysis

- A good practice-oriented problem analysis provides a systematic and comprehensive overview of the problem in the practical context, based on the following questions:
 - What is the problem and what is the relevance of the problem?
 - How significant is the problem and to what practice does it relate? ('Significance' may refer to both quantitative and qualitative aspects, 'practice' refers, for example, to the kind of education, the age and profile of the pupils and the kind of staff, etc.).
 - What is already known about the possible causes?
 - Which (scientific) knowledge and solutions are already available to achieve improvements/innovation? How does this research relate to this knowledge and these solutions? What makes this research essential?
 - What are the gaps in the knowledge and solutions that are already available?
 - How does this research contribute to solving this practice problem? What are the aims and objectives of this research?

E. Central research question and sub-questions

- The central research question and any sub-questions are consistent with the problem analysis. Answering these questions will contribute to existing knowledge, result in new insights and deliver concrete products;
- The central research question and sub-questions are limited, clearly defined and answering them is feasible and realistic.

F. Research plan

- The research plan is consistent, feasible, sufficiently well-founded and it is suitable for answering the research question;
- The research will be conducted according to scientific research methods that will provide a reliable and valid answer to the research questions;
- The research design is flexible so that unexpected, situational changes in practice will not cause insurmountable obstacles;
- The estimated budget for material and staff costs is reasonable for the proposed research and sufficiently substantiated. The same goes for any co-financing.

G. Research results

- The outcome of the research contributes to the scientific knowledge base on education and provides clear directions for further research;
- The research plan includes the delivery of a research report that describes the method, the execution and the results of the research.

3. Quality of the consortium (20%)

H. Quality of the consortium

- The research is planned and will be conducted in close cooperation with all members of the research consortium. This becomes clear from the active role that all members fulfil, both in setting up and carrying out the research project and in knowledge utilisation. The research proposal explains how the roles are divided between the various members of the research consortium;
- The consortium members are demonstrable experts in conducting practice-oriented research and in using research results in educational practice; this expertise implies that research members have the required training in terms of methodology, have a lot of experience in collaborating with education professionals on an equal footing and are experts in using research results in educational practice. In addition, there is sufficient expertise regarding the themes of the research proposal. All of the above can be proven by relevant publications, products and presentations for practice (including guidelines, checklists, websites, examples of teaching material, apps or tests) and for academia (including PhD theses, professional publications and peer-reviewed journal articles);
- The scientific quality and the practical relevance of the results are safeguarded by:
 - The composition of the consortium (the experience and expertise of these partners)
 - The role that each member of the consortium plays (how the workload is divided)
 - Collaboration within the consortium

The application must have at least the **qualification 'good'** for **all criteria** to qualify for a grant.

5 Contact details and other information

5.1 Contact

5.1.1 Specific questions

For specific questions about the Practice-Oriented Research into Higher Education funding round and this Call for Proposals, please contact:

Pia Hindriks MSc

Phone number: +31 (0)70 349 42 16

Email: opro@nro.nl

5.1.2 Technical questions about the electronic application system, ISAAC

If you have any technical questions about the use of ISAAC, please contact the ISAAC Helpdesk. Please read the ISAAC manual before consulting the helpdesk. The ISAAC Helpdesk can be contacted from Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 17:00 hours CEST on +31 (0)20 346 71 79. You can also send your queries by email to isaac.helpdesk@nwo.nl. You will receive a response within two working days.

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