



# LERU in a nutshell

## Who we are

The League of European Research Universities, better known as LERU, is a network of 23 leading research-intensive universities based in 12 countries around Europe. LERU universities share the values of high-quality teaching within an environment of internationally competitive research and are committed to the advancement of knowledge and the promotion of research across a broad front.

## What we do

LERU is a prominent advocate for the promotion of basic research at European research universities. We strongly believe that basic research plays an essential role in the innovation process and significantly contributes to the progress of society. We aim at furthering politicians', policy makers' and opinion leaders' understanding of the important role and activities of research-intensive universities. LERU maintains a dialogue and cooperates with the EU institutions and EU-related organisations active in the higher education and research arena on topics such as Open Science, Horizon 2020, FP9, Erasmus+ and the European Research Area. We do this through direct communication and discussions within the policy community, sound proposals for improvement and progress, and carefully considered publications on fundamental issues affecting Europe's research universities.

Furthermore, our 23 members bring together representatives to work on LERU policy development and mutual learning in a number of areas. There is a constant exchange of knowledge, expertise and good practice in interesting projects on such topics as academic careers, doctoral education, gender issues, research management, assessment and funding, education, open scholarship, enterprise and innovation, and many more.

Aiming at the creation of a Global Council of Research-Intensive Universities, LERU has been gradually intensifying its contacts with sister organisations worldwide such as the Association of American Universities, the Group of Eight in Australia, the Russell Group in the UK, the C9 in China, the Association of East Asian Research Universities, the RU11 in Japan, the U15 in Canada, and the U15 in Germany.

## How we work

### Rectors' Assembly and Board of Directors

Each member university is represented in LERU by its head of institution. The Rectors' Assembly is the highest decision-making body of the organisation. It meets twice a year at a different member institution.

## LERU Contact



PUSHING  
THE FRONTIERS  
OF INNOVATIVE  
RESEARCH



The Rectors' Assembly appoints three of its members to serve as the Board of Directors (BoD) and elects a chairperson among them. The Chair of the Board of Directors also presides over the Rectors' Assembly. Presently, the LERU Directors are:

- Prof. Bert van der Zwaan (Chair),  
Rector Magnificus of Utrecht University
- Prof. Alice Gast,  
President of Imperial College London
- Prof. Jukka Kola,  
Rector of the University of Helsinki

#### **BoD+**

Once a year the BoD meets in an enlarged BoD+ configuration, i.e. together with the chairs of the nine Policy Groups. The twelve-person BoD+ group is responsible for overall LERU policy positions, commissioning, discussing and reviewing papers and coordinating where necessary cross-group policy.

#### **Policy Groups**

Policy Groups bring together representatives from all member universities to work on LERU policy issues in certain areas. They operate on a continuous basis and are led by a steering group working in collaboration with a LERU Office member. Typically their work results in public policy papers used for advocacy, but internal papers, reports and other kinds of output are possible too. The groups maintain good links with each other, as topics may overlap or be relevant across groups.

There are presently nine LERU Policy Groups: Doctoral Studies, Enterprise & Innovation, EU Research Projects, Information & Open Access, Learning

& Teaching, Life Sciences, Natural Sciences, Research and Social Sciences & Humanities.

#### **Thematic Groups**

Thematic groups are primarily responsible for contributing their expertise on specific topics related to their remit. They operate on an activity-driven, self-organising and voluntary basis. The range of possible activities is wide and open-ended, as long as they fall within the scope of LERU's mission. The choice of activity is up to the thematic groups themselves: it could be to examine a particular topic for identifying good practice, for mutual learning and exchange of information or people, or for contributing to policy development focused on their specific expertise or discipline(s), to organise a workshop on a specific topic of interest, etc.

There are 11 Thematic Groups: Alumni Relations, Animals Used for Scientific Purposes, Research Careers & HR, Charitable Funding, Crime & Social Control, E-Learning, Ethics, Gender, Research Integrity, Law and Theology & Religious Studies.

#### **Network Groups**

The main function of these groups is to optimise communication and information management of LERU business inside, between and outside of LERU universities, and to maintain close links with the LERU Office. They focus on maintaining a comprehensive understanding of LERU's goals and activities, and communicating inside and outside of the LERU network. They may also engage in mutual learning and exchange of good practice activities.

The two groups are the Directors of Communication and the Senior Officers.



## Our members

University of Amsterdam  
 Universitat de Barcelona  
 University of Cambridge  
 University of Copenhagen  
 Trinity College Dublin  
 University of Edinburgh  
 University of Freiburg  
 Université de Genève  
 Universität Heidelberg  
 University of Helsinki  
 Universiteit Leiden  
 KU Leuven  
 Imperial College London  
 University College London  
 Lund University  
 University of Milan  
 Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München  
 University of Oxford  
 Pierre & Marie Curie University  
 Université Paris-Sud  
 University of Strasbourg  
 Utrecht University  
 University of Zurich

## Impact

- LERU is firmly established as a network of top-level universities dedicated to the promotion of fundamental research across a broad front and the role of research-intensive universities in the knowledge society.
- LERU is a major stakeholder with an important voice in discussions with the EU institutions (European Commission, European Parliament, European Council) and other bodies about Europe's research policy and programmes such as ERA, Open Science, FP9, Horizon2020 and Erasmus+.
- LERU members influence national agendas and improve their expertise through mutual learning and exchange of good practice within LERU.
- LERU engages in regular dialogue with similar university networks worldwide to raise the profile and impact of research-intensive universities.

## Facts & Figures

- LERU member universities account for more than 550,000 students, including 50,000 PhD candidates.
- Approximately 55,000 academic staff and 55,000 non-academic staff work at the member institutions (hospital-only staff not included).
- The total research budget of LERU's members exceeds €5 billion.
- Over 230 Nobel Prize and Field Medal winners have studied or worked at LERU universities.
- LERU members had a combined economic impact of €71,2 billion Gross Value Added and 900,000 jobs across Europe in 2014.
- Research within LERU has supported the creation of 1,065 active spin out companies, employing 12,700 people.
- LERU members undertook €1,5 billion in contract research for private and third-sector organisations and won €334 million in consultancy contracts.





## LERU Office

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LERU's secretariat, known as the LERU Office, is based at the KU Leuven in Belgium. Professional staff assure the smooth operation of the organisation and handle the day-to-day management of LERU activities. The Secretary-General, Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, is the head of the Office.

## LERU publications

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LERU publishes its views on research and higher education in several types of publications, including position papers, advice papers, policy briefs and notes.

All LERU publications are freely available in print and online and [www.leru.org](http://www.leru.org).

## LERU Contact

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