

Performance Agreements in the Netherlands: Theory & Practice

Marian Wilts MA|HEIR 2015 Glasgow



**Universiteit
Leiden**
The Netherlands

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Central question

**What story do the
Performance Agreements tell
and did they indeed enhance
policy, practice & engagement?**



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The PA and their context



Content of PA (1)

General Agreement: four challenges

- Improving **quality and performance of education**
(5% budget)
- Increased **differentiation of education** (level and content)
- Continued **development of research profiles**
- More attention to **valorization of knowledge**
(2% budget)

Content of PA (2)

- **Quality and excellence**

- % of students in excellence programmes

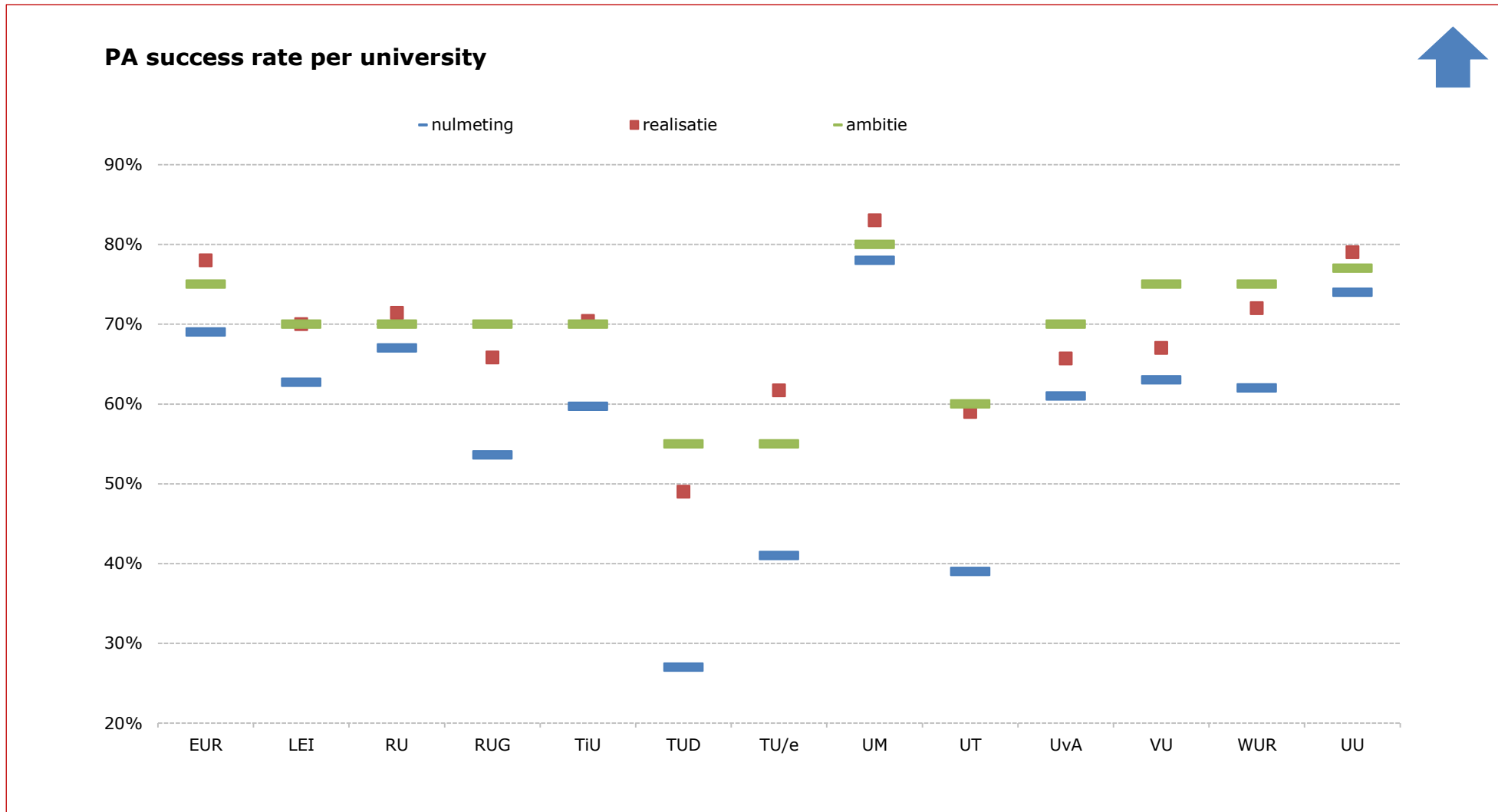
- **Study success**

- Dropout rates during year one
- Switching rates between studies after year one
- Success rates: % of students which complete their programme in 3 + max 1 years

- **Measures** to achieve the above goals

- % of lecturers with a **basic teaching qualification**
- Education intensity: **>12 contact hours** per week in year one

Content of PA (3)



Debate about 'output thinking' (1)

- public money
- accountability
- quantitative output / economism
- 'Bildung'

Debate about 'output thinking'(2)



Studenten en docenten van de UvA protesteren tegen het College van Bestuur
foto: Jerry Lampen - ANP in de NRC woe. 15 april 2015

Debate about ‘output thinking’(3)

Quote joint universities:

“The increasing attention for study success has led us to enter into performance agreements with the government. Those have caused universities to be perceived as steering towards success rates only. Even though this perception is inaccurate, clearly it is time of a new balance between steering towards output and safeguarding the quality of the content. Therefore universities are not eager to enter another round of overly detailed performance agreements.”

Practice at Faculty of Humanities (1)

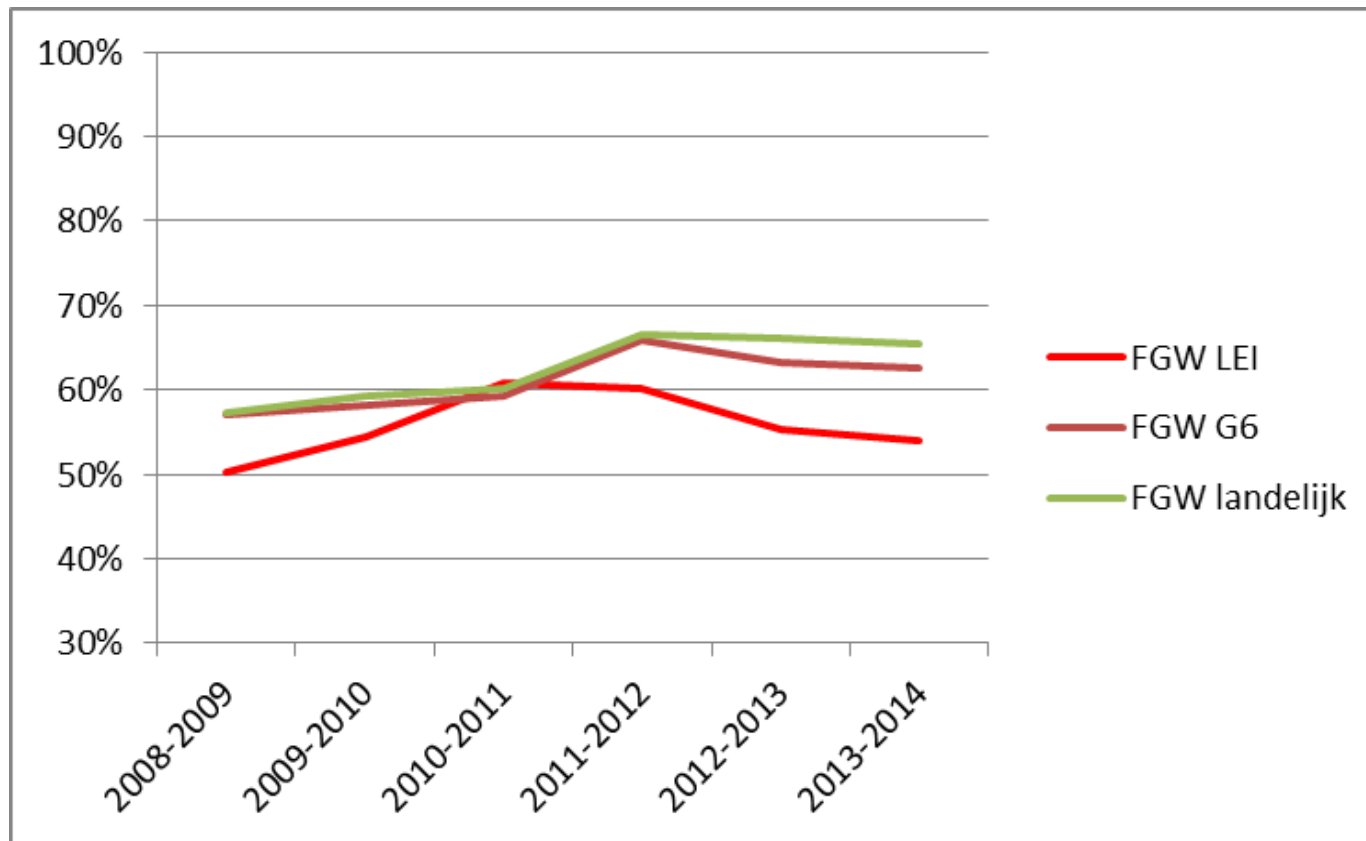
Faculty of Humanities	PA 2015		Result 2014	Starting point 2011
Dropout rate	≤	17%	15%	20%
Switch rate	≤	8%	7%	11%
Success rate in 4 years	≥	70%	54%	61%
Participation in excellence programs	≥	10%	6%	3%
contact hours year 1	=	100%	100%	60%
% certified teachers	≥	80%	74%	-

Practice at the Faculty of Humanities (2)



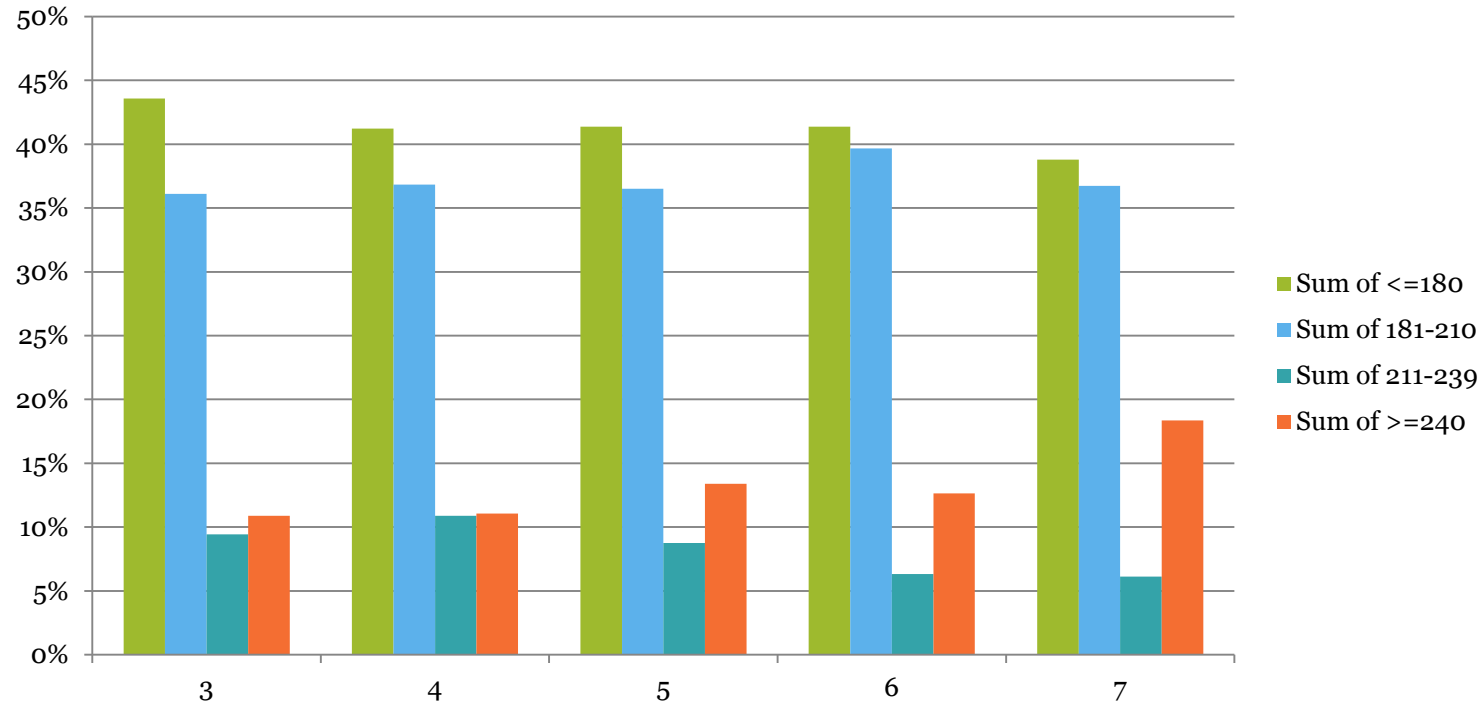
Contribution of institutional research (1)

- Success rate Faculty of Humanities Leiden compared to Humanities in the Netherlands



Contribution of institutional research (2)

- Number of credits in relation to years of study



Conclusion and questions (1)

- PA not quite a fairy tale
- Central position of quantitative targets
- No focus on improving quality
- But: we do not really know how our students progress
- Institutional research > insight in progress of our students > enhance the quality of our policy making.

Conclusion and questions (2)

- Questions on your side?
- Questions to you:
 - what do you think of performance agreements as an instrument for education policy?
 - Is there a similar instrument within the UK?
 - What can we do to shift the focus back to the qualitative aims behind the quantitative targets?



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