

POSITION STATEMENT TU DELFT EXECUTIVE BOARD REGARDING THE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT OF CIVIL ENGINEERING 2017-2022

The Executive Board of Delft University of Technology has commissioned an assessment of the research carried out by the departments Engineering Structures (ES), Hydraulic Engineering (HE), Transport and Planning (T&P), Water Management (WM), and Materials, Mechanics, Management and Design (3MD) of the Faculty of Civil Engineering and Geosciences in the period 2017-2022. The assessment was carried out in 2023 by an international peer review committee, using the Strategy Evaluation Protocol 2021-2027. The chair of the peer review committee was Prof.Dr. G. (Geert) Dewulf (University of Twente). The full report of the peer review committee is available on the TU Delft website.

The Executive Board has accepted the report and wishes to express its gratitude to the committee for their work and for delivering a valuable assessment report. On the basis of the assessment report, additional information and the fruitful conversations during the on-campus site visit, the committee has provided comprehensive insights and recommendations that the departments can use to their advantage.

The Executive Board is pleased that the committee reports the five civil engineering departments to be world-class with excellent staff, state-of-the-art facilities, and a vibrant energy. In addition, the committee concludes that the departments all possess the essential resources to make a significant societal impact and fulfil their mission of 'creating a better living environment for society'. This is further underlined by the strong commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals, which, according to the committee as well as the Executive Board, could benefit from a comprehensive, overarching strategy to enhance contributions to these goals. Furthermore, the committee reports the duration of PhD programmes and graduation rates as serious areas of concern. The Executive Board supports the committees recommendation to develop a structured approach to address these challenges, while taking into consideration suggestions from the PhD community.

The committee also offered valuable observations and recommendations for each department, some of which are highlighted below. The committee considered the department of Engineering Structures to be highly praiseworthy, describing their lab facilities as excellent and achieving high impact. Nonetheless, the Executive Board recognizes it remains important to monitor if facilities needs match utilisation within the department. The committee concludes that the Hydraulic Engineering department is well positioned to play a pivotal role in the transition to renewable energy. The Executive Board understands that there remains room for greater clarity within the strategy to achieve this transition. The department of Transport and Planning impressed the committee with its outstanding, highly qualified and diverse team of staff. Their efforts in creating a flatter organizational structure with room for junior faculty is noteworthy. The Executive Board highlights the recommendation to continue discussing the breadth of the strategy in the department. The department of Water Management is performing very well in terms of research and collaboration with stakeholders, showcasing a well-defined strategy and governance structure. The Executive Board underlines the importance of developing a realistic approach to PhD supervision. Finally, the committee reports the department of Materials, Mechanics, Management and Design showcases high-level research and a close link between research and education. The Executive Board understands the broad spectrum of disciplines within the department also ask for close collaboration with other departments to ensure synergy in the future.

The Executive Board will discuss further the Faculty-level recommendations, as well as the observations and remarks concerning the five departments, with the management of the Civil Engineering and Geosciences Faculty.

On behalf of the Executive Board of Delft University of Technology,

Prof.dr.ir. Tim van der Hagen
Rector Magnificus/President TU Delft

