

# Summary Pre-investments @ UvA

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# Introduction

The Algemene Rekenkamer (AR) has researched the spending of pre-investment at all major universities in The Netherlands. With their research they aim to answer the question: Do the institutions spend the promised €200M annually, and do they invest this in matters of which can be expected that they will improve the quality of education?

A pre-investment is defined by the AR as follows:

1. A decision has been made to do something extra that has previously not been budgeted before, or;
2. These plans were supposed to happen a year later and have been expedited, or;
3. More money is being allocated to a project than previously has been budgeted;

And:

4. It's not a subsidy, but a spending on own expense; and
5. The spending did not come at the cost of current plans to improve quality; and
6. The spending (also) improves the quality of education for students of 2015, 2016 and/or 2017 e.g. the 'current' students

In their research, the AR qualified spendings as either "pre-investment", "no pre-investment", "partially a pre-investment" and "unclear if pre-investment".

## Comments of the Executive Board

The Executive Board (CvB) has some concerns with the report and the research in general, namely:

- The research first focused on the participation in the general outline of the budget with the pre-investments as an example, but is in practice reversed.
- In doing so, the AR incorrectly narrowed the concept of 'head line' to something that preceded the 'head line' budget and could not be fixed in the budget.
- The AR then gave its own interpretation to the concept of pre-investment in order to establish whether it was extra money for education. No such definition had been agreed upon by VSNU and OCW. The UvA has chosen the definition of a pre-investment as being 'on top of the allocation model' and 'with the consent of the participation council / student council ', to avoid - as the AR did - that extra expenses could not be properly separated from regular coincidences and setbacks in the implementation of the budget.
- The AR incorrectly assumed that a letter from the VSNU to the Minister of OCW should be read as a legally binding agreement, whereas the intention was that institutions could

decide upon the definition of a pre-investment themselves together with their student council.

- Subsequently, the AR has only designated expenditure as a pre-investment if such were labeled in the budget. In the opinion of the Executive Board, it is only important whether the spendings meet the definition of pre-investment. When the agreement between OCW and VSNU was made, the 2015 budget was already set, so only for that reason expenses that were incurred that year did not qualify as a pre-investment according to the AR.
- The AR applied the criterion that the expenses must already show results in 2017. This criterion can not be found in the agreements and misunderstands the use of the word investment, which also allows destination in educational improvements that will only start having a noticeable effect in 2018.
- A number of faculties had combined the pre-investments with initiatives in the field of blended learning, for which the UvA separately made extra money available. The AR has wrongly disregarded these expenses.

For the CvB, the approval of the respective faculty student councils on the spending goals holds as main criterion. The CvB recognizes that the time it took for the faculties to reach this agreement caused a delay in actually issuing the money. Moreover the Executive Board notes that the pre-investments amounted to 4 million euros per year, on the one hand nice amount but on the other hand less than 2% of the educational benefits of the UvA.

# Findings Algemene Rekenkamer

General overview of findings, x€1.000

UvA	bedrag opgave instelling	voorinvestering	geen voorinvestering	deels een voorinvestering	onbekend of het een voorinvestering is
<b>2015</b>					
Centraal	4.399				4.399
<b>Totaal 2015</b>	<b>4.399</b>				<b>4.399</b>
<b>2016</b>					
AUC <sup>2</sup>	45				45
FdG	67	67			
FdR	125	125			
FdT	59				59
FEB	223		18		205
FGw	520				520
FMG	546 <sup>3</sup>	39		253	253
FNWI	231	59			172
<b>Totaal 2016</b>	<b>1.816<sup>4</sup></b>	290	18	253	1.254
<b>2017</b>					
AUC*	62				62
FdG	585	262			323
FdR	655 <sup>5</sup>	478	67	89	20
FdT	61	41			20
FEB	1.102				1.102
FGw	1.039		230		809
FMG	1.461 <sup>6</sup>	68		346	1.048
FNWI	1.725	663		140	922
<b>Totaal 2017</b>	<b>6.690</b>	1.512	297	575	4.306
<b>Totale omvang voorinvesteringen UvA 2015-2017</b>	<b>12.905<sup>7</sup></b>	<b>1.802 (14%)</b>	<b>315 (2%)</b>	<b>828 (6%)</b>	<b>9.959 (77%)</b>

<sup>2</sup> Amsterdam University College (AUC) is per 1 september 2016 opgegaan in de FNWI.

<sup>3</sup> Totaalbedrag opgave instelling is € 545.591. Door afronding bedraagt de optelsom van de deelcategorieën € 545.000.

<sup>4</sup> Totaalbedrag opgave instelling voor 2016 is € 1.816.000. Door afronding bedraagt de optelsom van de deelcategorieën € 1.815.000.

<sup>5</sup> Totaalbedrag opgave instelling is € 654.700. Door afronding bedraagt de optelsom van de deelcategorieën € 654.000.

<sup>6</sup> Totaalbedrag opgave instelling is € 1.461.413. Door afronding bedraagt de optelsom van de deelcategorieën € 1.462.000.

<sup>7</sup> Totale omvang voorinvesteringen opgave instelling is € 12.905.000. Door afronding bedraagt de optelsom van de deelcategorieën € 12.904.000. De percentages tellen door afrondingsverschillen op tot 99% in plaats van 100%.

## Amsterdam University College (AUC)

The AR could not determine of any of the supposed pre-investments whether they were actual pre-investments, since the fact that AUC had received these funds as well was communicated too late to the AR. This concerns the following projects:

- Undergraduate Research Projects (2016 and 2017)
- Professional Development Programmes (2016 and 2017)
- International Class Link-Ups (2017)
- Student-Staff Extension Projects (2017)
- Faculty International Experience Grants (2017)
- Student International Experience Grants (2017)
- Who's Back in Town (2017)

## Faculty of Medicine (AMC)

The AR concludes that 50% of the supposed pre-investments actually are pre-investments. Of the other 50% it's unclear whether these are actual pre-investments - reason for this is a lack of response from the faculty. This includes the following projects:

- Strengthening examination
- Research intensive education
- Internationalisation

## Faculty of Law (FdR)

The AR concludes that 77% of the supposed pre-investments actually are pre-investments. According to them, 9% is not a pre-investment, namely the following projects:

- 'Wegwijzer' for students
- New bachelor tracks

Reasoning for this is that these projects will only affect educational quality after the period 2015-2017.

Of 11% are concluded to be partial pre-investments as they only partially overlap with the period 2015-2017. This includes the following projects:

- Feedback writing assignments (2017)
- Strengthening master education (2017)
- New master programmes (2017)

Of the remaining 3% it is concluded to be unclear whether these are actual pre-investments. This concerns:

- Moot court masters (2017)
- Digital teacher guide (2017)

## Faculty of Dentistry (ACTA)

The AR concludes that 34% of the supposed pre-investments actually are pre-investments. Of the remaining 66% it was concluded to be unclear whether these are pre-investment, as their added effect on the quality of education is questionable. This includes:

- Teacher professionalisation (2016)
- College Tour

## Faculty of Economics and Business (FEB)

The AR concludes that 1% of the supposed pre-investments is not a pre-investment. This concerns the project 'Purchase of hardware & software conference attendance (2016)'. Material expenses are not explicitly adopted in the plans for the pre-investments in 2016. Administratively these expenses have not been processed properly either.

Of the remaining 99% the AR concludes it is unclear whether these are actual pre-investments, since the faculty claimed these projects were but did not provide any supporting documents, leading to unclarity as of whether these projects were expensed on central Blended Learning posts or on faculty-level posts. This concerns the following projects:

- Strategic curriculum change: curriculum projects
- Facilitation innovation: incidental projects
- Facilitation innovation: ICTO support
- Professionalisation: training, events & seminars
- Dissemination: communication, monitoring & evaluation

## Faculty of Humanities (FGw)

The AR concludes that 15% of the supposed pre-investments is not a pre-investment, since they will only have effect after the period 2015-2017. This concerns the following projects:

- Development of examination policy
- Faculty diversity policy
- Development international classroom

Of the remaining 85% the AR concludes it is unclear whether these are actual pre-investments. Reason for this is either unclarity if these projects have and/or will affect quality of education and to what extent, and in some cases if they were not already part of the Investment Agenda Sustainable Humanities (Investeringsagenda Duurzame Geesteswetenschappen). This includes the following projects:

- Languages in transition (2016)
- English bachelor programmes (2016)
- Research intensive education (2016)
- Redesign master programmes (2016)
- Division of programme clusters (2017)
- Teacher professionalisation (2017)

## Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences (FMG)

The AR concludes that 5% of the supposed pre-investments actually are pre-investments. Of 30% the AR concludes it is partially a pre-investment. This concerns the supposed pre-investment 'Activating education, work and examination'. Reason for this is that this projects

entails a lot of subprojects, some of which match the conditions of a pre-investment as stated by the AR, but not all of them.

Of the remaining 65%, the AR states it is unclear whether these projects are actual pre-investments, namely the following:

- Blended Curriculum research methods
- Digital workbook
- Digital examination year 1
- Intensification working groups year 1
- Study groups year 1 continuation and expansion
- Bonus working groups for statistics year 1
- More feedback to students in specialization phase
- Intensification guidance bachelor project
- Introduction collective thesis group Master thesis
- Investment in examination policy
- Research on educational quality and student satisfaction
- Follow-up project renewing educational material clinical activities
- Support for writing skills master POW
- Civic education workshop in curriculum ILO
- Remaining budget 2016

Reasons provided are either administrative ambiguity or a lack of supporting planning or results.

## Faculty of Science (FNWI)

The AR concludes that 37% of the supposed pre-investments actually are pre-investments. Of 7% the AR concludes it is partially a pre-investment. This concerns the supposed pre-investment 'Deployment extra teachers IW (2017)'. Reason for this is that besides being able to offer more intensive education, this expense also partially falls under the regular funding for programme growth.

Of the remaining 56%, the AR concludes they cannot say whether these are actual pre-investments. Reason for this is a lack of supporting documents. This includes the following projects:

- Senior Qualification Education (2016 and 2017)
- Training educational guides (2016 and 2017)
- Digitalisation (Mathematics) education (2016)
- Other educational innovation (2016)
- Matching Blended Learning (2017)
- Remaining budget 2016