Who we are

The League of European Research Universities, better known as LERU, is a network of 21 leading research-intensive universities based in 10 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.

Furthermore, our 21 members bring together representatives to work on LERU policy development and collaborative issues in a number of areas. There is a constant exchange of knowledge, good practice and collaboration in interesting projects on such topics as academic careers, doctoral training, gender issues, research management, assessment and funding, open scholarship, social sciences and humanities, enterprise and innovation, e-learning 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.

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 Horizon 2020, 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.

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

- Prof. Alain Beretz (Chair), President of the University of Strasbourg
- Prof. Andrew Hamilton, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford
- Prof. Bert van der Zwaan, Rector Magnificus of Utrecht University

Policy Committee

The Policy Committee (PC) is a standing committee consisting of rectors, vice-rectors and senior academic managers from LERU universities. The PC develops LERU research policy positions along a broad range of topics which are defined by or elaborated in collaboration with the Rectors’ Assembly. The PC also acts as a review board for LERU publications.

Communities

LERU Communities bring together representatives from all member universities to work on LERU policy or collaborative issues in certain areas. Communities may be created at the request of the Rectors’ Assembly, by a proposal to the BoD/RA from one or more LERU members or by the LERU Office. They operate on a continuous basis and are led by a steering group working in collaboration with a LERU Office member. They lead on or contribute to the development of LERU publications.

Every member university has one LERU Senior Officer (SON), appointed by the Rector. This person is LERU’s primary contact person and represents LERU at his/her university. He/she is informed about LERU’s activities and helps the LERU Office when it needs specific information about the university or its people.

There are presently ten LERU Communities: Chief Information Officers, Directors of Communications, Doctoral Studies, Enterprise and Innovation, European Research Project Managers, Research Careers, Senior Officers’ Network, Social Sciences and Humanities, Vice-Rectors for Learning and Teaching, Vice-Rectors for Research.

Working Groups

LERU Working Groups are set up on an ad hoc basis to develop a policy view in a specific area. They bring together high-level experts from LERU universities. Generally in response to or in anticipation of specific initiatives at the European level, the experts develop common views through meetings and discussion, which LERU often publishes as papers.

Recent examples include the Working Groups on alumni relations, charitable funding, gender, law and e-learning.

Expert Groups

LERU Expert Groups are set up with a limited task and for a limited time to provide expertise to an existing LERU representative body. Their creation is usually requested by one of these bodies and their remit defined within this context. LERU has Expert Groups on research integrity, research data and legal expertise.
Our members

University of Amsterdam
Universitat de Barcelona
University of Cambridge
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

Why being a member

• LERU established itself 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.
• LERU is a major stakeholder with an important voice in the discussions with the EU institutions (EC, EP, ERC) about Europe’s research policy and programmes such as Horizon2020 and Erasmus+.
• LERU’s members can influence national agendas and improve their expertise through mutual learning and exchange of good practice.
• LERU is gradually intensifying contacts with sister organisations worldwide to raise the profile and impact of research-intensive universities.
• LERU membership can be used in an international strategy to exchange more researchers and students.
Facts & Figures

• LERU member universities account for more than 550,000 students, including 50,000 PhD candidates.
• Each year about 55,000 master’s degrees and 12,000 doctorates are awarded at LERU universities.
• The total research budget of LERU’s members exceeds €5 billion.
• More than €1 billion is granted by research councils, while over €1.25 billion comes from contract research.
• The total sum of research grants from EU projects to LERU universities is approximately €300 million per year.
• More than 20% of ERC grants have been awarded to researchers at LERU universities.
• Over 230 Nobel Prize and Field Medal winners have studied or worked at LERU universities.
• 55,000 academic staff and 55,000 non-academic staff work at the member institutions (hospital-only staff not included).

LERU Office

LERU’s secretariat, known as the LERU Office, is based at the KU Leuven in Belgium.
The Secretary-General, Prof. Kurt Deketelaere, is the head of the Office and LERU’s external face.
He is responsible for the daily management of the organisation and is assisted by the LERU Office staff.

LERU publications

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

LERU publications are freely available in print and online and www.leru.org.

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