

# GROW Regulations

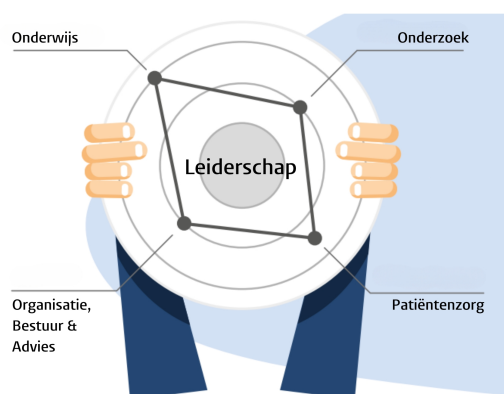
Conversations on Performance, Development and Well-being



Universiteit  
Leiden

# Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction to GROW	2
1.1 The purpose of GROW	2
1.2 Basic principles of GROW	2
1.3 What is important in GROW?	3
1.4 Related topics	3
Chapter 2. GROW interview cycle	4
2.1 Joint responsibility	4
2.2 Types of interviews	5
2.3 Procedure of interview	5
2.3.1 Invitation	5
2.3.2 Preparation	5
2.3.3 The interview	6
2.3.4 The report	7
2.3.5 Revision of the report	7
Chapter 3. GROW-Toolkit	8
Chapter 4. Other provisions	8
Appendix	9
Framework of the GROW regulations	9



*Framework Academia in Motion*

**Together for a culture where  
we recognize & reward  
everyone's contribution**



**Universiteit  
Leiden**

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Version 1.0  
Date: 16-05-2024



# 1. Introduction to GROW

## 1.1 The purpose of GROW

Within Leiden University we work together every day on contributing to society, the university and our staff, while the university changes accordingly. We do all this on the basis of our strategy and our four core values: connecting, innovative, responsible and free. Leiden University aims to be a healthy, engaged and learning community, where there is ample scope for talent, development and innovation. We recognise and reward everyone's contribution to the organisation and to our shared ambitions. We appreciate everyone's efforts for the organisation, the team and themselves: with the aim of working together and achieving personal development. GROW (Gesprekken over Resultaat, Ontwikkeling en Welzijn; Conversations on Performance, Development and Well-being) supports this by means of regular interviews and conversations about (team) performance, personal development and well-being. The purpose of the GROW Regulations is to create transparency and provide direction and clarity.

## 1.2 Basic principles of GROW



### **Conversations and Interviews (Gesprekken): holding regular conversations**

All employees<sup>1</sup> have a start interview within three months of entering employment or starting a new position and an annual interview at least once a year with their supervisor. In this interview, the supervisor and employee discuss the (team) performance and the employee's development and well-being. They also make agreements about these topics for the year ahead. Speaking regularly about performance, development and well-being has a positive effect on the relationship between the employee and the supervisor, and on the employee's development. GROW therefore encourages them to additionally hold regular informal discussions, known as interim interviews (see section 2.2).



### **Performance (Resultaat): organisation goals, team goals and personal goals go hand-in-hand**

There is a connection between employee's development and the envisaged results of a team<sup>2</sup> and the organisation. The supervisor ensures that the shared goals and mutual expectations are communicated clearly in the team. GROW is an instrument for discussing everyone's contribution to these (team) goals and talking about the different activities performed by the employees.



### **Development (Ontwikkeling): talent-oriented approach**

Employees are encouraged to develop, for example in the areas of (personal) leadership, professionalism, innovation, sharing, teamwork and achieving results. Employees' development may work towards greater breadth or depth within the current position, or towards a different position or role. GROW aims to help them recognise and know their own talent and to reflect on this. Regularly requesting, giving and receiving feedback has added value for reflection.



### **Wellbeing (Welzijn): attention to employees' well-being**

An important pillar of GROW is that performance and development should be in equilibrium with the work pressure, vitality and work-life balance of the employee. Well-being is therefore a required topic in the interviews.

<sup>1</sup>All employees of Leiden University with a permanent contract and all employees with a temporary contract for not less than one year, unless the intention is to enter into a longer employment contract.

<sup>2</sup>The appendix gives more information about working in teams within Leiden University.



## 1.3 What is important in GROW?

As well as the four basic principles of GROW, there are several additional factors that are important for the quality of the interviews in particular and for the interview cycle as a whole. These are explained below.

### Joint responsibility

The supervisor and the employee have a shared responsibility for initiating the interviews, the quality of the interviews, writing the report and achieving the agreed results, based on their own role and position. The quality of the GROW interviews depends on how much attention the employee and the supervisor devote to preparing and participating in these interviews.

### Broad perspective on performance

GROW is aimed at recognising and rewarding individual talents, reflecting on these and being able to grow further, also in relation to others. It is therefore important to take a broad perspective when considering employee's' performance. Looking specifically at the assessment of performance, the focus is on the tasks that are most frequently performed by the employee. A descriptive assessment is more important here than a score-based rating (see also section 2.3.2). While evaluations, key performance indicators (KPIs) and other quantitative measurements may support the assessment, they will never be the starting point; rather, this will be the team and individual goals and the reflection on development.

### Supportive report

The purpose of the report is to support the interviews and to facilitate their follow-up. Therefore the frameworks of the report have a simple design: the main focus is on the three pillars of GROW: performance, development and well-being. Outside of these, there is space for additional aspects based on individual requirements, such as reflection reports, evaluations and feedback.

### Freedom within the frameworks

The GROW interview cycle applies to all employees.<sup>1</sup> In addition to this, the various organisational units are free to structure the annual cycle of interviews themselves, in line with strategic staff planning and the rhythm of their activities (for example, teaching and financial annual plan). The GROW interviews may give important information for these.

## 1.4 Related Topics

As already mentioned, GROW interviews focus on performance, development and well-being. Nevertheless, a number of related topics may also be discussed during these interviews.

### Remuneration

The Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities (CAO-NU) specifies the procedure for periodic and non-periodic remuneration. The various organisational units may also have additional guidelines for non-periodic remuneration for exceptional performance or achievements.

### Career development

If the employee and/or supervisor feel that the employee is ready for promotion or the next step, this may be discussed within the GROW interviews. The specific procedures for this may differ according to the faculty or expertise centre.

### Improvement plan

If an employee's performance is unsatisfactory, the need for improvement will be quickly established and the supervisor will introduce an improvement programme. As part of this process, the supervisor, employee and HR adviser will produce a clear plan (see the toolkit in chapter 3) for how and within what timeframe the employee may bring their performance (back) to the desired standard.

<sup>1</sup>All employees of Leiden University with a permanent contract and all employees with a temporary contract for not less than one year, unless the intention is to enter into a longer employment contract.



# 2. GROW interview cycle

## 2.1 Joint responsibility

GROW emphasises the joint responsibility for the quality of the interviews; particularly of the employee and the supervisor, but also of other relevant parties. The roles are explained in more detail below.

### Role of employee

GROW provides employee's with an opportunity to speak regularly with their supervisor about goals, development and wellbeing. Employee's prepare for GROW interviews with a reflection on the past year and a plan for the year ahead, where necessary, supplemented with feedback<sup>1</sup> from their colleagues. They are responsible for fulfilling the agreements and informing their supervisor about the status and progress of these in good time.

### Role of supervisor

Supervisors guide teams and employee's, facilitate GROW interviews and make connections between organisation goals, team goals and personal goals, while involving the employees in these goals during the year and discussing mutual expectations for them. Supervisors play a crucial role in supporting employee's creating a positive interview environment, and regularly monitoring and discussing progress. Good preparation for the interview is essential for the descriptive assessment of the employee's performance (see also the toolkit in chapter 3). Supervisors will also discuss at least one shared leadership competence on which the team focuses in a specific period. In addition, they keep their own supervisor informed about the insights arising from the GROW interviews. Finally, although GROW emphasises joint responsibility, supervisor remain accountable for ensuring that the interviews take place.

### Role HR-advisor

The HR adviser's role is to act as a sounding board. The HR adviser will also be involved, where necessary, in drawing up an improvement plan. Additionally, HR has the role of observing and monitoring the quality and quantity of the interviews. Patterns that emerge on the basis of this observing and monitoring role will be presented for discussion to the relevant management team by HR. The HR team is free to choose how these patterns are identified.

### Role third party

The basic principle is that the interviews take place between the employee and the supervisor. However, a third party may also be asked to attend an interview to provide assistance. This may be on the initiative of the employee and the supervisor. The person who takes the initiative will inform the other interview partner at least one week in advance that the third party will be attending, also stating the reason(s) for their participation. The third party is not permitted to conduct the interview on behalf of the employee and the supervisor; after all, GROW is the discussion between the employee and the supervisor.

### Role management team

The management team (MT)<sup>2</sup> of an organisational unit has an important role in identifying the central theme that emerges from GROW interviews. For example, this theme could be a general training need, strategic staff planning or other important issues that require attention. The MT may also make the necessary resources available for the development of teams and employee's.

<sup>1</sup>Feedback of various kinds may be obtained, including 360-degree feedback. See the toolkit in chapter 3 for more information.

<sup>2</sup>This refers to inter alia a faculty board, institute board or management team of a unit (such as an expertise centre).



## 2.2 Types of interviews

The GROW cycle consists of three types of interviews: the start interview, the annual interview and interim interviews.

### Start interview

The start interview is an interview between the supervisor and the employee that marks the end of the onboarding period. The interview takes place within three months after the employee enters employment or moves to a new position. This interview is compulsory and lays an important foundation for the employee with regard to the required (team) performance, envisaged development and well-being of the employee. The content of the start interview is different for PhD candidates.<sup>1</sup> Supervisors are responsible for scheduling this interview.

### Interim interviews

Interim interviews<sup>2</sup> are interviews between the supervisor and the employee that may include discussion of progress with previously made agreements and the employee's well-being. If necessary, agreements may be adjusted in line with relevant developments. Any adjusted agreements are also set down in writing. Holding regular interim interviews is highly recommended, but these interviews are not compulsory. Their frequency is agreed between the supervisor and the employee on the basis of wishes or requirements.

### Annual interview

Het jaargesprek is een gesprek tussen leidinggevende en medewerker waarin er teruggekeken wordt op de behaalde (team)resultaten, ontwikkeling en het welzijn van de medewerker. Daarnaast worden er op deze onderwerpen nieuwe afspraken gemaakt voor het komende jaar. Het jaargesprek is niet vrijblijvend en vindt één keer per jaar plaats<sup>3</sup>. Het plannen van dit gesprek is een gezamenlijke verantwoordelijkheid van medewerker en leidinggevende.

## 2.3 Procedure for the interviews

The procedure for every GROW interview consists of a number of elements: invitation, preparation, the interview and the report. These different elements are explained in more detail below, from the perspective of the **annual interview**. As mentioned in section 2.2, the focus of a **start interview** lies on looking ahead to the coming year. The content of **interim interviews** is open and may include topics from the structure described below.

### 2.3.1 Invitation

The initiative for scheduling the annual interview may lie with either the employee or the supervisor. However, the supervisor retains the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the annual interview takes place. The annual interview must be scheduled at least three weeks in advance. To assist with this, the HR system sends a reminder to the employee and the supervisor when the time has come for an annual interview to be arranged.

### 2.3.2 Preparation

#### Employee

The employee prepares the interview on the basis of the Annual Interview Report (see the toolkit in chapter 3).

- The employee reflects on the performance and results achieved at the individual and team level, and their personal development and well-being.
- For the reflection, the employee is free to use other relevant information sources, such as evaluations and feedback, and to append them to the report.
- The employee looks ahead and reflects on: the envisaged performance and results that the employee would like to achieve in the coming year and how these relate to team goals; the desired personal development and well-being.

<sup>1</sup>PhD candidates normally work with a Training & Supervision Plan, which will provide the guidelines for a start interview, instead of the Start Interview Report.

<sup>2</sup>This is a collective term for various informal or formal discussions held by the employee and the supervisor in between the annual interviews. In practice, these may also be referred to with the terms 'bila' (bilateral meeting), periodic discussion, coffee chat, catch-up, check-in and suchlike.

<sup>3</sup>If an employee moves to a different position within the university, the annual interview between the supervisor and the employee must be completed before the date of the move. The employee will have another start interview with the new supervisor in the new position



- As a tool for personal development, the employee selects at least one leadership card that will be the main focus of development during the year ahead.
- The employee may also make use of the UNL Job Classification System (UFO) profiles when preparing for the interview.
- The employee shares the report with the supervisor no later than one week before the interview.

### Supervisor

- During the year, the supervisor involves the employee in the strategy and team goals, and what the mutual expectations are for these goals. The supervisor also discusses at least one shared leadership competence on which the team will focus in the year ahead.
- Before the interview, the supervisor looks at the employee's preparation in the report. Any additions to the report will be discussed during the interview.
- The supervisor reflects on the employee's performance and presents this in a descriptive assessment. If the employee's performance has been very good or conversely unsatisfactory, the supervisor will clearly substantiate and describe this in the assessment.

Many different tools and training courses are available for employees and supervisors, to help them prepare and participate in the interview (for example, preparation documents, report templates, competences and training courses on interview skills). For more information, see the toolkit in chapter 3.

### 2.3.3 The interview

During the annual interview, time is spent on both looking back over the past year and looking ahead to the coming year. The interview follows a standard structure,<sup>1</sup> giving attention to the following points in the areas of performance and results, development, well-being and follow-up.

#### Looking back:

- Performance and results: evaluation of the contribution to individual and team goals, teamwork and learning points.
- Development: discussion of talents, growth, reflection on innovation, sharing and teamwork, leadership competences displayed, challenges and the employee's motivation.
- Well-being: discussion of 'realistic set of duties' (article 6.7 of CAO) in equilibrium with work pressure, vitality and work-life balance; discussion of the social safety experienced in the team.
- Descriptive assessment: the supervisor gives an assessment of the employee's performance in the past year.

#### Looking ahead:

- Performance and results: discussion of the expected contribution to the organisation goals, team goals and personal goals, and what this requires from the organisation.
- Development: formulation of development goals, the envisaged development of leadership competences (both personal and for the team) and discussion of any existing training needs and their timeline, including in relation to the team.
- Well-being: discussion of 'realistic set of duties' in equilibrium with work pressure, vitality and work-life balance, and the assistance required from the supervisor and/or team.

<sup>1</sup>De volgorde waarin de onderwerpen aan bod komen in het gesprek kan vrij worden afgestemd. Zo kan er de behoefte zijn om eerst te spreken over het welzijn van de medewerker voordat er over resultaten en ontwikkeling gesproken wordt. Het advies is wel om te allen tijde eerst terug te kijken voordat er vooruit gekeken wordt.



### Follow-up:

The employee and the supervisor discuss how the interim interviews will be arranged and what the frequency of contacts between the employee and the supervisor will be.

### Individual arrangements

Within the interview structure described above, there is freedom to adjust the elements in line with different groups of employees within the university. For example, different goals may be set for employees who perform academic activities and those who perform supporting and/or operational activities. However, the three pillars of GROW (performance, development, well-being) are important elements of the interview for all employees.

#### **2.3.4 The report**

When preparing for the interview, the employee has already prepared much of the report. The supervisor has four weeks after the interview to make changes to the report and the assessment on the basis of the interview. It is also possible for additional documents to still be appended. Having ascertained that its contents are satisfactory, the supervisor approves the report (including the assessment) and sends it to the employee, who then has three options:

- The employee makes further changes to the report, and sends it back to the supervisor for approval.
- The employee signs the report for approval within four weeks after receiving it, if the employee agrees with its contents and with the agreements made in the report.
- If the employee does not agree with the contents of the report (for example, the assessment or the results to be achieved) and, after discussion with the supervisor, the differing views cannot be reconciled (see also section 2.3.5 Revision of the report), the employee signs the report as seen. In this case, the supervisor informs their own supervisor (the 'next-higher supervisor') that the employee has chosen to sign the report in this way.

If the employee has not taken one of the above actions within four weeks after the form was received in the system, the form will automatically be signed as seen. The date on which the report was registered as received in the system is used as the date of receipt. More information on the report can be found in the Quick Start GROW Report (see the toolkit in chapter 3).

#### **2.3.5 Revision of the report**

If the employee and the supervisor are unable to agree on certain points that are set down in a report, then within the time limit of four weeks referred to in 2.3.4, a request to revise the report will be submitted to the next-higher supervisor. The next-higher supervisor will offer the employee the opportunity to give an oral explanation of this request, and will set down the final version of the report within four weeks after receiving the request. At the same time, the next-higher supervisor will inform the employee and the supervisor whether the request for revision was granted – either fully or partly – or not. The next-higher supervisor will also state how this decision was reached.





# 3. GROW-toolkit

The GROW toolkit provides support for both employees and supervisors in relation to the interviews. It contains a wide range of information: from how to ensure a good interview to personal development, available training courses and system support.

The toolkit can be found on the [GROW pages](#) on the employee website

## Contents Toolkit

The toolkit includes:

- Preparation documents for initial interview and annual interview for employee and supervisor
- 360 degree feedback form
- Quickstart GROW Report for the initial interview, annual interview and interim interview
- Digital set of leadership competencies
- Wellbeing iconversation tool
- GROW development menu with learning and development offerings

# 4. Other provisions

## Scope and exceptions

These Regulations relate to all employees of Leiden University with a permanent contract and all employees with a temporary contract for not less than one year, unless the intention is to enter into a longer employment contract.

## Final provisions

In special cases, the Executive Board may derogate from the provisions of these Regulations. In cases for which the Regulations do not provide, the Executive Board will decide.

## Official title

The Regulations may be cited as the Leiden University GROW Regulations.

## Commencement date

The Regulations were adopted by the Executive Board on **28-05-2024** after agreement in the Local Consultative Committee on **16-05-2024**.

The Regulations enter into force as from 1 September 2024. The Regulations replace the Regulations on Initial Interviews & Performance and Development Interviews, which fall within the employer's scope of authority.



# Appendix

## Framework of the GROW regulations

### Introduction to the framework

The purpose of GROW is to support supervisors and employees in achieving (team) performance, development and well-being by means of regular interviews and conversations. GROW is not a stand-alone initiative, but rather has been developed on the basis of various regulations, strategies and programmes. The essential foundations of these Regulations are explained below. The framework of the Regulations consists of the Collective Labour Agreement (CAO), Leiden University strategy and a number of programmes.

### Collective Labour Agreement for Dutch Universities (CAO-NU) 2023-2024

The CAO provides clear guidelines in the area of interviews between supervisors and employees and the assessment of employee's' performance. These guidelines are set down in the following articles:

Article 6.7 Annual consultation

Article 6.8 Assessment

### Strategy

*Innovating and Connecting: Leiden University Strategic Plan 2022-2027*

The university is faced with the challenge of innovation within a rapidly changing society. Guided by our four core values (connecting, innovative, responsible and free), the strategic plan focuses on making stronger connections between academic disciplines. Our goal is, together with others, to create new opportunities for research and teaching, further deepen our interaction with society and promote a strong university community, resulting in permanent innovation and a leading role with greater societal and academic impact. GROW has been developed in line with this strategy, with a particular focus on ambition 4 and ambition 6.



#### Ambition 4: A healthy, engaged and learning community

The university aims to ensure an open and learning environment for staff and students, with an emphasis on adaptive leadership, reducing work pressure, preventing problems in the area of student well-being, and promoting interaction and inclusion.



#### Ambition 6: Ample scope for talent and development

The university aims to achieve professional growth for all employees through better career paths, integrated talent policy and fewer temporary contracts, giving specific attention to career options in teaching and to redefining 'excellence in academia'.



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## Leadership

Conversations about our leadership behaviour are essential for our university as an open and learning organisation with a safe and inspiring environment for working and studying, where the talents of staff and students are optimally utilised. (Personal) leadership calls for self-reflection on our behaviour, (team) performance and challenges, in addition to our career ambition and well-being. In this context, the leadership model provides a framework for making agreements and reflecting on behaviour.

We believe that you show (personal) leadership when you:

- Make personal connection with others;
- Work together with others on a basis of trust and equality;
- Encourage innovation and development by looking across boundaries and being flexible;
- Take responsibility and create opportunities; do what is necessary for the group, the university and society;
- Apply our core values of 'connecting', 'innovative', 'responsible' and 'free' as the compass in how we interact with one another.



*Leadership competencies of Leiden University*

## Working in teams within Leiden University

There are many different kinds of teams within Leiden University; for instance, a department, project team, research or teaching group, research unit, management team or virtual team. What do all these teams have in common?

A team is a number of people who are brought together to achieve a common goal. When a team works well, the members complement one another and, to a greater or lesser extent, have the same individual interests that are in line with the team interest. A team is also characterised by a sense of shared responsibility and ownership.

Teamwork in academia takes place in teams with shared goals for research, education and 'organisation, administration & advice' (OAA) tasks, working to achieve positive synergy. This means that the collective performance level is higher than the sum of the individual performance levels. Team members contribute with their different (academic) disciplinary backgrounds, career emphases, career phases, genders, ages and ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Employees may often participate in multiple teams at the same time. Additionally, these teams may differ in terms of their 'location' and the degree of cooperation. Who has methodological strengths? Who is good in the theoretical area? Who knows how you can be relevant to society? Who can bring education into the mix? You work in a team and everyone makes their own contribution. You do it together.

