OO&R – Values

Quality, integrity & practicality

General

The Radboud Business Law Institute (OO&R) is a partnership between the Nijmegen Faculty of Law and sixteen law firms and notaries, financial institutions and companies (the partners). Two key objectives of the institute are the conduct of high-quality academic research in the area of business and law at the national and international level, and the education and coaching of young researchers and students during their research master and dual master in Business & Law who are interested in academic research. A special relationship exists between the OO&R, the research master, the dual master and legal practice in terms of knowledge, insight, methodology and research skills. There is a strong interaction between the research undertaken by the OO&R and the knowledge and expertise present in legal practice (especially amongst the partners of the OO&R). University scholars also publish for the legal practice, sometimes on the basis of information obtained from practice, whilst legal practitioners participate in OO&R research and also write articles themselves. Furthermore, the OO&R organises seminars on the premises of its partners on topics that are of interest to them. The partners provide suggestions for possible future research. Moreover, they are among the financial sponsors who make it possible to perform research in the realm of business and law. The research master and dual master students also share in the practical knowledge as they follow their traineeships and/or spend a period of time working at the partners as part of their study programme. The mutual exchange of knowledge, insight and skills within the triangular relationship between research, education and practice is known as the knowledge triangle. It contributes to the innovative strength and vitality of the OO&R, the research master and the dual master. The knowledge triangle is set out in the diagram below:

Academic Research (OO&R) ↔ Education (Research and Dual Master) ↔ Practice

In this context, and following the on-site visits at the OO&R, all (international) peer review committees of the OO&R have praised its leadership for the fact that research at the OO&R is state of the art through the interchange of knowledge, insights, skills and methodology, and reflects the need felt by both academia and legal practice. In 2008, the (international) peer review committees of the OO&R referred to the societal relevance of research at the OO&R by commenting:

"The societal relevance is without any question excellent. The relevance of the research by the OO&R is extremely relevant in the Netherlands. It is indispensable for government, legal practice and legal academia. The fact that the OO&R is broadly supported by the highest ranking businesses, law firms and governmental institutions in the Netherlands itself proves not only its excellence in its work and research but above all its relevance." ²

² Research Assessment OO&R 2008, p. 16.
In 2014, the international peer review committee has assessed the OO&R’s research as highly relevant from a societal perspective. The OO&R has been awarded a score of 5 on a five-point scale for ‘societal relevance’. Hence, the social relevance of its research is excellent. Research at the OO&R is characterised by three core values: quality, integrity and practicality. The partners endorse these values. The core values are the yardstick against which the OO&R Board and programme leaders measure all research conducted by the OO&R. Research that does not comply with these core values shall not be published. A partner that does not endorse these values will eventually leave the partnership.

Quality
The OO&R conducts academic research of high quality in the field of business and law. Various academic considerations, such as the enhancement of knowledge in the areas of law concerned, the filling of gaps, efforts to remove ambiguity and create synergies through the combination of academic areas or academic methods and/or participation in (academic) debate, apply primarily when writing for publication, putting together a collection of articles or books, or organising a seminar or conference. All types of publications from the OO&R meet the requirements of the academic area concerned, such as the search for originality, proper and adequate references to sources, willingness to engage in debate with scholars who hold different views, the ability to show one’s doubts, the ability to make a proper distinction between applicable law and socially desirable law, etc. One of the quality features of research at the OO&R is its diligence in setting up and conducting research studies. The OO&R Board determines in complete independence from its partners the research agenda, promotional topics, the contents of books and articles, and the topics covered by its seminars. The partners do not have any influence on the composition or design of the research programmes at the OO&R. These are determined by the requirements of academic urgency and quality. The OO&R Board of Directors fully endorses the Declaration of Scientific Independence of the KNAW.3

Staff employed by the partners (attached to the OO&R as a professor, a fellow or otherwise) write their contributions on the basis of the same academic criteria as the academic staff of the faculty. Their publications are subject to the academic requirements applicable to a specific field of law. The aim is to publish in ‘A-journals’ with an independent editorial board and in prestigious foreign magazines. In doing so, they contribute to the academic standing of the OO&R.

The OO&R conducts research commissioned by third parties (for example, ministries, the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC), financial institutions, etc.). This research is carried out in accordance with the requirements applicable to the academic area, or academic areas, concerned. Academic quality, independence and diligence are also paramount in third-flow funded research. The research is performed in accordance with recognised academic methods, provided with references and sources, etc. The results of the research are always published (preferably in one of the OO&R series). The OO&R Board and the programme leadership guard that the commissioning party does not exert undue influence on its research. This is also specified in the contract which both parties have agreed to and upon which the research is based.

Integrity
All researchers within the OO&R, regardless whether they are employed by the faculty or by a partner, conduct their research with academic integrity, i.e. honest, trustworthy and candid.4

3 This Declaration can also be found on the website of the OO&R.
4 See also the Netherlands Code of Conduct for Scientific Practice. Principles of good scientific teaching and research (2014).
They refrain from plagiarism or other types of fraud. If a researcher republishes earlier published findings for academic purposes, he or she shall clearly indicate this by providing an adequate reference to the source. The data on which the research is based are public and therefore verifiable. If research data are not publicly available, a justification shall be provided. If there is a specific involvement of the researcher, this will be acknowledged as well. A researcher, who contributes substantially to the research, or shares responsibility for the publication of a volume, is listed as the author or editor. Someone who is not involved in the writing process itself will not be listed as the author. A volume shall never have an editorial team consisting of just one single partner. Publications from the OO&R aim to stimulate debate and opposition. Publications shall never present the point of view of a sole partner. The subject of a thesis shall never focus solely on the interests of a partner or a particular segment among the partners. It will always serve a scientific interest. A research scholar at the OO&R is objective and impartial in his or her assessment. Each publication from the OO&R includes proper citation, and – in so far as relevant – a bibliography, an overview of case citations, or otherwise an adequate overview of information sources (literary sources, information obtained from archives, Statistics Netherlands (CBS), etc.). The topics of integrity and reliability, such as the prevention of fraud, how to quote and paraphrase correctly, the use of Internet resources, and proper and adequate references to other sources, are included in the study programme for students enrolled in the research master and the dual master Business & Law, and the doctor in law programme. The OO&R Board regularly organises and participates in meetings that are designed to discuss topics of integrity.

The OO&R Board and programme leaders oversee the (academic) integrity of the research and the researcher. The Nijmegen Faculty of Law at the Radboud University has a confidential counsellor for staff (head of the P&O department) and a confidential counsellor for PhD students (the PhD dean). The OO&R Board is well informed about the (primary or ancillary) roles of every OO&R researcher. Ancillary roles are made known to the outside world via the website of the Radboud University.

**Practicality**

One of the fundamental characteristics of research at the OO&R is the cross-fertilisation between theory and practice. The OO&R dedicates specific attention to practice and valorisation, making knowledge available for societal and possibly economic utilisation. Valorisation takes place through the excellent network of partners in legal practice, seminars and conferences, the OO&R book series, the case-law journal *Jurisprudentie Onderneming & Recht*, annotations and professional publications, and postgraduate education (amongst others at the Centre for Professional Legal Education (*Postacademisch Juridisch Onderwijs*, CPO) of the Radboud University). Part of the mission of the OO&R is ‘to encourage practicality in academic research, particularly by analysing the fundamental principles and foundations of (business-oriented) private law in the light of their practical application’. The OO&R distinguishes itself from many other comparable research centres in the Netherlands and abroad through its focus on practicality. It therefore considers it important to publish handbooks (in the Asser Series) and annotations because these aim to provide information on practice. The partners of the OO&R play a special role in identifying and elaborating new issues, needs and/or requirements of the legal practice. With their help, the OO&R is able to successfully conduct innovative academic research that is of high quality, diligent, reliable, independent, impartial and ethical. In the opinion of the OO&R Board, science and practicality are two sides of the same coin.