Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU) has high ambitions in scientific research. The university seeks to stimulate top-quality research and to make significant, tangible contributions to solving major societal issues. This strategy requires investment in human capital and greater attention to and recognition of the individual achievements of talented scholars.

The VU University Research Chair (URC) is a selective and privileged five-year position as a full professor with exclusive terms of appointment. The aim of this is to recognize and reward outstanding scholars who are acknowledged by their peers as upcoming leaders in their research field. Therefore the URC is both an appointment and an honorary distinction, and it be will actively profiled as such by the university. URC holders testify to the quality of research at VU and are expected to advance the university’s overall research reputation.

CRITERIA FOR APPOINTMENT
A candidate for a URC will be a scholar at the rank equivalent to associate professor who merits the rank of full professor based on his or her extraordinary accomplishments to date. A competitive candidate will meet and surpass the standard quality requirements for a full professor in five areas:

- a record of scholarly achievements well beyond that normally expected of a faculty member in the same rank;
- national and international recognition for pre-eminence in an area of expertise that fits the VU research profile;
- acknowledgement by peers as being among future world leaders in his or her research area;
- a demonstrable and continuing commitment to the support and development of emerging scholars;
- recognition by peers in the discipline in the form of grants, awards and/or other honours.

NOMINATION PROCEDURE
A candidate for a URC can be nominated by the deans only. The number of nominations is restricted and based on the size of the faculties:

- Faculty of Theology: 1
- Academic Centre for Dentistry Amsterdam: 2
- Faculty of Law: 2
- Faculty of Arts: 2
- Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences: 2
- Faculty of Social Sciences: 2
- Faculty of Behavioural and Movement Sciences: 3
- Faculty of Sciences: 3
- Faculty of Economics & Business Administration: 4
- VUmc School of Medical Sciences: 6

The nomination procedure is similar to the standard appointment procedure for professorial chairs at VU. Additionally a URC nomination form is required. This nomination form can be found on www.vu.nl/urc.
Deans can choose to select their nominees through an open international recruitment procedure or opt for an exclusive, yet transparent appointment procedure for an internal candidate. Deans can choose for a closed appointment procedure when the faculty and the candidate have agreed upon a career track and the candidate’s research line forms an integral part of the faculty’s long-term research plan.

The deadline for the submission of nominations to the Executive Board is 1 October 2017. The nominations can be sent by email to Institutional Affairs, i.e. Farand Laghaei (f.laghaei@vu.nl). The official date of appointment is 1 January 2018.

ASSESSMENT PROCEDURE
This year a maximum of four University Research Chair appointments will be made. A committee of the rector, a vice rector and three URC professors will select the best candidates and advise the Executive Board on the appointment of exceptionally promising URC academics. As of 2018, at least half of the selected candidates must be female.

The committee will only take eligible nominations into consideration. An eligible URC nomination must meet the standard quality requirements of a full professor as described in the policy document on professorial appointments, ‘Notitie Hooglerarenbeleid’. The selection of URC’s will then be made on the basis of the candidate’s potential to become the next research leader in his or her own discipline, based on outstanding research achievements to date. The selected candidates will be those who rise above their colleagues in the same rank and show the highest development potential compared to other nominees. The candidates will be invited to give a shore presentation for the selection committee on Thursday 19 October 2017.

TERMS OF APPOINTMENT
The URC is a privileged and selective full professor appointment at university level based on the outstanding research achievements of the candidate. The URC special privileges are threefold:

- a personal research budget
- a personal development budget
- guaranteed participation in two selective high-level introductory courses on personal and academic leadership (‘Leergang Persoonlijk Leiderschap’ and ‘Academisch Leiderschap’).

The VU University Research Chair shall be appointed for a period of five years, with the intention of offering the recipient a permanent position. If, at the end of this period, the URC holder still fulfills the expectations specified in the career track and meets the standard quality requirements of the full professor as described in the policy document Notitie Hooglerarenbeleid, the fixed-term appointment will be turned into a permanent position as a full professor.

The Executive Board will allocate special funding for the University Research Chairs. A lump sum of €125,000 will be assigned to the faculty of the selected candidate over the period of five years:

- €50,000 (€10,000 per year) designated for the salary supplement from associate to full professor
- €50,000 designated as a personal research budget for the URC holder
- €25,000 designated as a personal development budget for the URC holder

Participation in the above-mentioned training courses will be paid by the university’s central Human Resources Department.

The URC funding has the status of a personal grant which may not be transferred to another professor or another university. In the event that a selected URC holder leaves the university within five years, funding will cease upon termination of contract. After five years, the faculty will take responsibility for the full salary costs of the permanent full professor position.

2. The number of nominations is related to the total research FTEs in the category of assistant and associate professors based on Metis input 2015. Faculties can nominate one candidate for every 5% share in university’s total research FTEs in assistant and associate professor category.
3. ‘Notitie Hooglerarenbeleid’ is a policy protocol which describes appointment procedures for full professorships. The document is only available in Dutch – on VUnet.
4. Candidates who will not be selected as a URC professor, must be appointed on a regular chair by the nominating faculty.
5. Those candidates who do not meet the expectations or fulfill the criteria will either 1) resume their position as associate professor if they had a permanent appointment as such prior to URC selection or 2) leave the university if they worked on a fixed-term basis prior to URC selection.