

VU Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ)

Programme guide STQ VU NJ25

Autumn 2025

May 2025 – June 2026

For teachers, assistant professors, associate professors, and Full Professors engaged in the design, innovation, and quality assurance of teaching in programmes of study

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I Background

Current situation at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

The LEARN! Academy of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (the present Centre for Teaching & Learning) has been offering the STQ development programme at the university since 2013. Since 2016, VU has joined forces with the University of Amsterdam. Since then, the University of Amsterdam and Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam have been offering the same programme. The next tracks will be launched in May 2025 (two in Dutch and two in English) and will be concluded with certification in June 2026.

II STQ frameworks

Objectives

The aim of the STQ programme is to support lecturers who play a key teaching role in the degree programmes in the implementation of developments in the programme of study. It is assumed that the lecturer plays various roles at the level of the programme of study right from the start of the STQ programme:

- as a programme of study *developer*
- as a *supervisor* of (junior) lecturers
- as an *organizer* of programme components and modernization
- as a *connector* between employees and departments, and
- as a *visionary* in terms of quality improvement and assurance, with substantial educational knowledge.

The STQ programme helps both participants and degree programmes in their pursuit of further professional development, and thereby aims to enhance the quality of university education.



Figure 1 - The five roles of the STQ

STQ target group

The programme is targeted at teachers, assistant professors, associate professors, and Full Professors who stand out within the study programme through their commitment and dedication to teaching. In their endeavours, they look beyond their own courses and field, leading transdisciplinary projects or modernization of teaching, and are able to involve colleagues in new developments. These lecturers work together with colleagues to innovate university education, which they ensure is anchored in the degree programme so that the final attainment levels in the degree programme are achieved. They hold various roles in a programme of study. These may include:

- Director of Education or Director of Studies
- coordinator of a larger coherent part of educational components, such as a year or track coordinator
- member or chairperson of a programme committee and committee of a programme of study
- or chairperson of an assessment committee

Conditions of participation

Participants must comply with the following conditions in order to take part:

1. Participants should hold a University Teaching Qualification (UTQ). The STQ educational programme builds on the knowledge and skills acquired as part of the UTQ.
2. Participants already play various roles in a programme of study (please refer to *STQ Target group*).
3. Participants must be responsible for a project within their own degree programme or department. Participants must be able to invest sufficient time in both the STQ programme and the project, so that they can truly focus on their personal development and the development of the project within the department.
4. Participants will receive adequate support from supervisors, who will make time available for the STQ programme and provide interim guidance on the coordination of the project.
5. Participants are nominated by the Faculty Board, by the Director of Education or by their Director of Studies. Each Faculty decides by whom the nomination will take place.

The candidate provides his / her CV and a completed questionnaire. In the questionnaire, the candidate indicates his / her preference for the Dutch- or English-taught version of the STQ. The admission procedure includes an intake interview with the trainers, followed by a drawing of lots weighted according to faculty size if there are more suitable candidates than places available (the STQ Admissions Committee has final responsibility for admissions).

Position of the STQ in relation to the UTQ and the LOL (Educational Leadership course)

The UTQ, STQ, and the LOL for lecturers focus respectively on the course level, programme of study level, and the degree and supra-degree level.

In terms of content, the UTQ focuses on teaching qualities at course level. Those in possession of a UTQ qualification are able to implement the required teaching formats and to develop course activities, from learning activities to assessment, based on educational principles.

Those in possession of an STQ qualification are able to demonstrate teaching qualities within a programme of study. He/she possesses sufficient teaching knowledge and experience to ensure that changes within the degree programme are carried out properly and effectively. The STQ is reserved for employees who hold a key position in a programme of study from which they ensure the quality of teaching and/or improve teaching using innovative methods. It is therefore not the case that lecturers with a UTQ qualification naturally advance to a level that would be fitting of an STQ qualification. Whether or not a lecturer progresses to the STQ will depend on the tasks and roles of that lecturer.

Subsequently, the LOL is intended for people in a position of influence in a faculty. In practice, this means people responsible for a programme or a larger unit within the faculty. More specifically, this includes Directors of Studies, holders of educational portfolios, heads of department, or teaching staff who can grow to such a position. The module builds on the Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ). This qualification, or a proven ability to function at STQ level, is one of the criteria to be accepted to this track.

How do participants benefit from the STQ programme?

Participants will benefit from:

- ✓ support in and in-depth study of teaching
- ✓ individual coaching and supervision in relation to developing and implementing their project
- ✓ individual coaching and supervision in relation to their own individual learning objective
- ✓ discussion with and feedback from a selected group of peers from various faculties
- ✓ assignments that help them to develop and for the STQ portfolio
- ✓ feedback on the portfolio
- ✓ personal final assessment
- ✓ if the programme is successfully completed: the Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ) certificate

How does the degree programme or department benefit from the STQ programme?

The degree programme/department gain certified employees who are able to perform at the programme of study level within the degree programme:

- ✓ with a proven, extremely well-founded vision for the programme of study, related to the final attainment levels of the degree programme,

- ✓ who, in terms of educational innovation and quality assurance, act in a way that is substantiated by educational practice and quality control
- ✓ as part of which they can collaborate effectively and inspire, motivate, and galvanize colleagues,
- ✓ and are the point of contact in implementing and assuring teaching quality and improvement,
- ✓ with an interfaculty network of colleagues within the university, all of whom operate in a programme of study.

Participant feedback and example projects

"This was a very useful experience that I will continue to benefit from in the future."

"It was a pleasant environment in which I could gain in-depth knowledge"

"The meetings were very informative and well organized, and gave a behind-the-scenes glimpse of how other faculties work. They provided effective supervision and comprehensive feedback from colleagues and supervisors, which I found very useful. I also enjoyed the assessment discussion and the valuable tips."

Example projects:

- ✓ Structure the methodology line and theses track within a Master's programme in order to improve attainability and ensure that more students can graduate within time.
- ✓ Give further shape to a cohesive tutorial set-up (lecturers who stand in front of the group and coach and organize one-to-one conversations with students regarding their academic progress): quality assurance, formalize a conversation cycle, set up peer consultations, and similar.
- ✓ Developing learning pathways; modernizing programmes of study; strengthening connections to previous education, selection, and matching; promoting interdisciplinarity by reviewing programmes of study; re-profiling the degree programme; and promoting *blended learning* in programmes of study, development of Master's programmes, etc.

Part III STQ programme VU autumn 2025¹

Systematic Innovation of Education (SIE model)

Participants come to the STQ programme with their own project and individual learning objective, apply the content of the programme directly and are supervised extensively on the basis of the four phases of the SIE model (Systemic Innovation in Education) of Brouwer and In 't Veld (2018). During the programme and in the peer consultations, lecturers work on their own project; the individual learning objectives are addressed primarily by means of personal coaching.

¹ Cancellation conditions apply to this programme. These can be requested via ctl@vu.nl

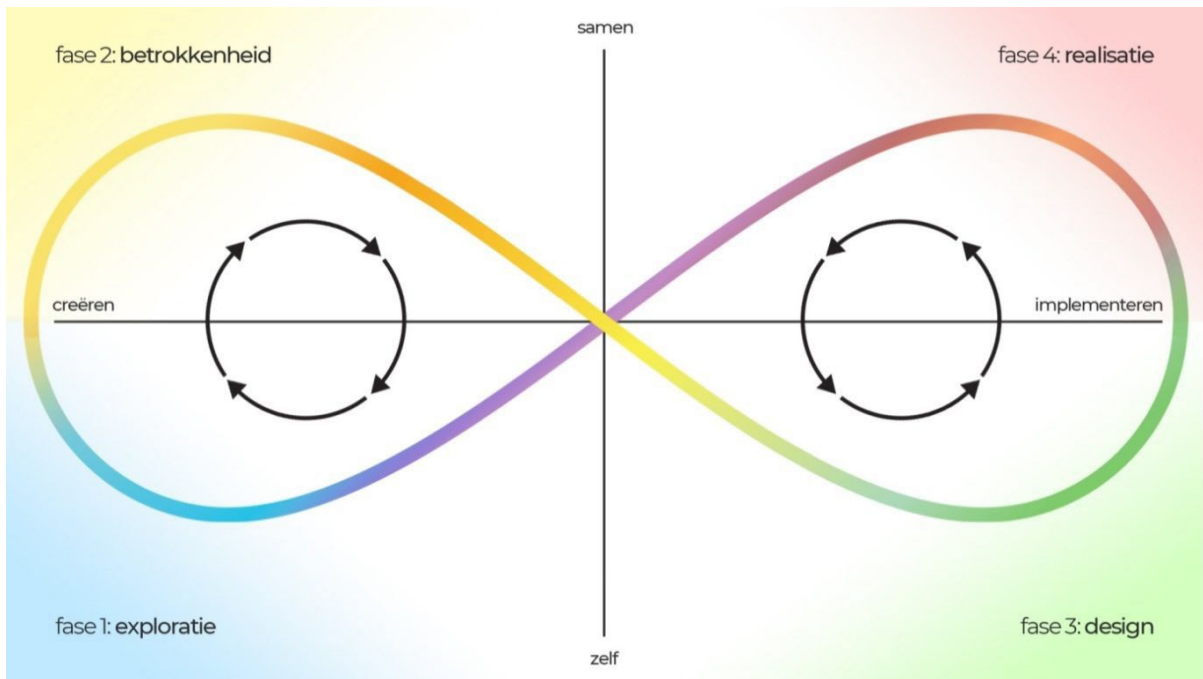


Figure 2 - the SIE model (Brouwer and In 't Veld, 2018)

Structure

During the STQ programme, which runs over one academic year, participants receive intensive guidance on completing the project and working on their individual learning objective. The programme consists of the following:

- ✓ an individual intake interview:
to assess to what extent the candidate meets the requirements; to what extent the candidate's expectations correspond with the objectives of the track; and whether the candidate has sufficient time to complete the track.
- ✓ four individual coaching sessions:
in which there is time and attention for the candidate's individual learning objective and the progress of his/her project.
- ✓ six programme days:
in which the different roles are further developed with the help of guest speakers, assignments and exercises.
- ✓ four peer consultations:
at which participants, in groups of four, work on assignments in their own programmes.
- ✓ interim assignments:
focusing on 360-degree feedback, vision development, project implementation, curriculum analysis, network reinforcement and portfolio development.
- ✓ a final assessment:
during which the candidate is assessed on STQ final attainment levels on the basis of their STQ file and an assessment interview with an STQ assessment committee.
- ✓ a celebratory conclusion:
at which colleagues and participants in the programme show how the STQ programme has benefited them as well as their degree programme.

STQ assessment

During the programme, candidates compile an STQ portfolio on the basis of various interim assignments. Candidates will receive feedback and coaching from the supervisors. At the end of the programme, the candidate must submit his or her STQ portfolio to the STQ assessment committee. The assessment committee consists of two assessors for each candidate:

1. an educational expert (STQ programme supervisor)
2. a previous participant in an STQ programme or suitable person from the network of assessors (Directors of Education, education portfolio holders, member of a teaching programme board, etc.)

Reliability

To ensure reliability, both assessors do not know, or hardly know, the candidate; they work in a different faculty to the candidate and the first assessor (an educational expert) will be present at several assessments to ensure continuity. All assessors have been (or are being) trained to assess STQ candidates.

Schedule Senior Teaching Qualification (STQ) VU | Autumn 2025

During the programme, participants meet 4 times in peer groups to discuss assignments.

Date	Time	Item	Location
May 8, 12, 15 & 16, 2025		Preliminary interviews ¹	To be announced
September 23, 25, 29, 30 & October 2, 2025		Coaching 1 ²	To be announced
Monday October 14, 2025	9:30 am – 17:00 pm	Plenary session no. 1 ³	To be announced
Monday November 11, 2024	9:30 am – 17:00 pm	Plenary session no. 2	To be announced
To be announced		Coaching 2	To be announced
Monday December 9, 2025	9:30 am – 17:00 pm	Plenary session no. 3	To be announced
Monday January 13, 2026	9:30 am – 17:00 pm	Plenary session no. 4	To be announced
Monday February 10, 2026	9:30 am – 17:00 pm	Plenary session no. 5	To be announced
Monday March 10, 2026	9:30 am – 17:00 pm	Plenary session no. 6	To be announced
To be announced		Coaching 3	To be announced
May 6, 2026		Deadline STQ dossier	
May 19 & 21, 2026		Assessment interviews ⁴	To be announced
June 11, 2026		Presentation of STQ certificates	To be announced

1. The preliminary interview lasts 45 minutes. Participants can sign up for timeslots.
2. Each coaching session lasts one hour. Participants can sign up for available timeslots.
3. Attendance at the plenary sessions is mandatory. Plenary sessions are from 9:30 to 17:00. Lunch is provided. After each plenary session drinks and snacks will be served.
4. The assessment interview lasts one hour.

Conditions

Scope : 160 hours, including 70 hours of contact time (training days and coaching) and 90 hours for assignments, peer consultations, and the project within the participant's own faculty.

Duration : May 2025 – June 2026

Group size : maximum 14 participants

Trainers : two programme supervisors per group

Part IV Quality assurance and organization

Participation in the STQ takes place on the recommendation of the faculty. An intake interview with one of the trainers is part of the admission procedure. This is to determine whether the candidate's participation is practical, in consultation with the candidate (candidates must be able to complete a relevant project during the STQ).

The STQ Admission Committee decides on the admission of participants from VU Amsterdam (if there are more suitable candidates than places, lots will be drawn, weighted according to faculty size).

The STQ Admissions Committee consists of: MSc J. Waelen (director Centre for Teaching & Learning) en S.K.K. Ramdas MA (program manager Centre for Teaching & Learning).

The Certification Committee Docentprofessionalisering Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam supervises the program and guarantees assessment of participants against the SKO criteria, by participation in the assessment phase, and awards certificates. The committee consists of: prof. dr. S. Bhulai (voorzitter), prof. dr. T.J. Akkermans, dr. I.J. van Wijk, dr. B. Allart, dr. P.H.F. Bos en J.H.M. Beks-Verdaasdonk MSc.

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