



Has the tide turned towards responsible metrics in research?

Northumbria Open Research Week, 4 July 2022
James Wilsdon, RoRI & University of Sheffield
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<http://www.researchonresearch.org/>



The Metric Tide Revisited Workshops

by [Research England](#)

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The Metric Tide Revisited: a series of roundtables to look afresh at the role of metrics in UK research assessment (4 July, 12 July, 19 July)

About this event

The possibilities and pitfalls of a greater reliance on quantitative indicators and metrics in research assessment continue to generate support

Date and time

Ends on Mon, 4 Jul 2022, 13:00 BST

Location

Online event



What I'll cover:

- The move from responsible metrics to responsible research assessment
- Movers and shapers
- Experiments in RRA: some interim results
- Global Research Council: funder survey
- Five priorities for the next five years
- Metrics in the next REF

A Celebrates Five Years!

18



Live Monday, May 14 – 10:00 to 10:30 EDT #sfDOR

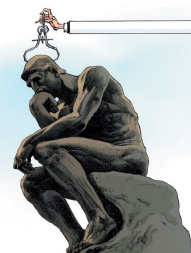


Sandra Schmid, PhD
Cecil H. Green Distinguished
Professor in Cellular and Molecular
Biology, Chair, Cell Biology
Department, UT Southwestern
Medical Center



Anna Hatch, PhD
DORA Community

declaration was published in 2013, it has collected signature
izations and 12,000 individuals. DORA has increased aware
the Journal Impact Factor and inspired change in the scient
ions have started referencing the declaration in [research ass](#)
at guide hiring, promotion, and funding decisions.



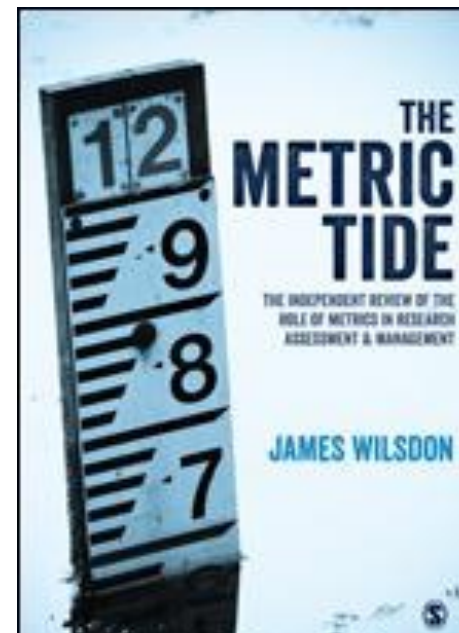
The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics

Use these ten principles to guide research evaluation, urge Diana Hicks, Paul Wouters and colleagues.

Data are increasingly used to govern science. Research evaluations that were once bespoke and performed by peers are now routine and reliant on metrics. The problem is that evaluation is now led by the data rather than by judgement. Metrics have proliferated: usually well intentioned, but always well informed, often ill applied. We risk damaging the system with the very tools designed to improve it, as evaluation is increasingly implemented by organizations without knowledge of, or

advice on, good practice and interpretation. Before 2000, there was the Science Citation Index or ISI, used by experts for specialist analyses. In 2002, Thomson Reuters launched an integrated web platform, making the Web of Science database widely accessible. Competing citation indices were created: Elsevier's Scopus (released in 2004) and Google Scholar (beta version released in 2004). Web-based tools to easily compare institutional research productivity and impact

were introduced, such as InCites (using the Web of Science) and SciVal (using Scopus), as well as software to analyse individual citation profiles using Google Scholar (published in 2005, released in 2007). In 2005, Jorge Hirsch, a physicist at the University of California, San Diego, proposed the h-index, popularizing citation counting for individual researchers. Later, in the journal impact factor grew steadily after 1995 (see 'Impact factor obsession'). Later, metrics related to social usage



Expert Group on Altmetrics

NEW: Final Report of the Expert Group on Altmetrics is available

Publication date: 20 March 2017

The Expert Group on Altmetrics outlines in this report how to advance a next-generational metrics in the context of Open Science and delivers an advice corresponding to the following policy lines of the Open Science Agenda: Fostering Open Science, Removing barriers to Open Science, Developing research infrastructures and Embed Open Science in society.

The report will be presented and discussed at the Open Science Policy Platform on 20 March 2017

[The report can be downloaded here](#) 796 KB

From responsible metrics....

CASE STUDY REPORT

Reimagining Academic Career Assessment: Stories of innovation and change

Bregt Saenen (EUA), Anna Hatch (DORA), Stephen Curry (DORA), Vanessa Proudman (SPARC Europe) and Ashley Lakoduk (DORA)

January 2021

RoRI Working Paper No.3 **The changing role of funders in responsible research assessment:**

progress, obstacles and the way ahead

Stephen Curry, Sarah de Rijcke, Anna Hatch, Dorsamy (Gansen) Pillay, Inge van der Weijden and James Wilsdon

November 2020

Produced in partnership with:

Responsible Research Assessment

Global Research Council (GRC)
Conference Report 2021

A virtual conference from the
Global Research Council | held in November 2020

...to responsible research assessment

Defining RRA

Responsible research assessment (RRA) is an umbrella term for approaches to assessment which incentivise, reflect and reward the plural characteristics of high-quality research, in support of diverse and inclusive research cultures.

RRA draws on broader frameworks for responsible research and innovation (RRI) and applies these to the development and application of evaluation, assessment and review processes.

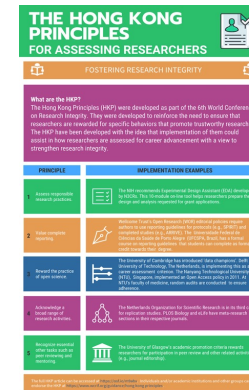
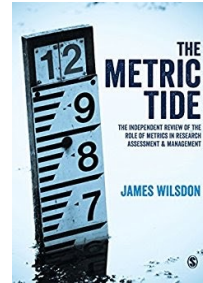
While RRI is commonly used as a broad framework for the governance of research and innovation, and notions of ‘responsible metrics’ can be applied at a micro level to indicators themselves, the idea of RRA encourages funders, research institutions, publishers and others to focus attention on the methodologies, systems and cultures of research assessment.

A moment of opportunity?

Concern has intensified over several long-standing problems linked to research assessment:

- the **misapplication of narrow criteria and indicators of research quality or impact**, in ways that distort incentives, create unsustainable pressures on researchers, and exacerbate problems with research integrity & reproducibility.
- this narrowing of criteria and indicators has **reduced the diversity of research missions and purposes**, leading institutions and researchers to adopt similar strategic priorities, or to focus on lower-risk, incremental work.
- **systemic biases against those who do not meet—or choose not to prioritise—narrow criteria and indicators** of quality or impact, have reduced the diversity, vitality and representative legitimacy of the research community.
- a **diversion of policy & managerial attention to things that can be measured**, at the expense of less tangible or quantifiable qualities, impacts, assets and values – a trend exacerbated by flawed university league tables.

Fifteen movers and shapers





**CHEERFUL
WHISTLING
PERMITTED**

Experiments in RRA: some interim results

- Cosmetic appropriation
- Calibrating the machine
- Advocacy coalitions
- Institutional culture change
- System change..?



RoRI Working Paper No.3

The changing role of funders in responsible research assessment:

progress, obstacles and the way ahead

Stephen Curry, Sarah de Rijcke, Anna Hatch, Dorsamy (Gansen) Pillay, Inge van der Weijden and James Wilsdon

November 2020

Produced in partnership with:



Home > Elsevier Connect > Advancing responsible research assessment

Advancing responsible research assessment

Elsevier signs Declaration on Research Assessment; implementation steps will include making reference lists of all articles openly available via Crossref

By Andrew Plume, PhD - December 16, 2020



Elsevier has long supported the responsible use of metrics and indicators in the assessment of research. We established the International Center for the Study of Research (ICSR) to work in partnership with the research community to help develop our approach to research assessment. It's vital that we work together to apply the same high standards of evidence to the evaluation of research as scientists apply in their own work.

To support these goals, Elsevier has signed the San Francisco Declaration on

Home > Elsevier Connect > New metrics will mak...

New metrics will make journal assessment more complete and transparent

CiteScore metrics reveal the citation impact of more than 22,200 academic journals on Scopus

By Andrew Plume, PhD and Lisa Colledge, DPhil - December 8, 2016

Elsevier Connect



Home > Rankings > Impact Rankings

Impact Rankings 2021

The *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We use carefully calibrated indicators to provide comprehensive and balanced comparison across four broad areas: research, stewardship, outreach and teaching.

The 2021 Impact Rankings is the third edition and the overall ranking includes 1,118 universities from 94 countries/regions.

Read more...

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ELSEVIER



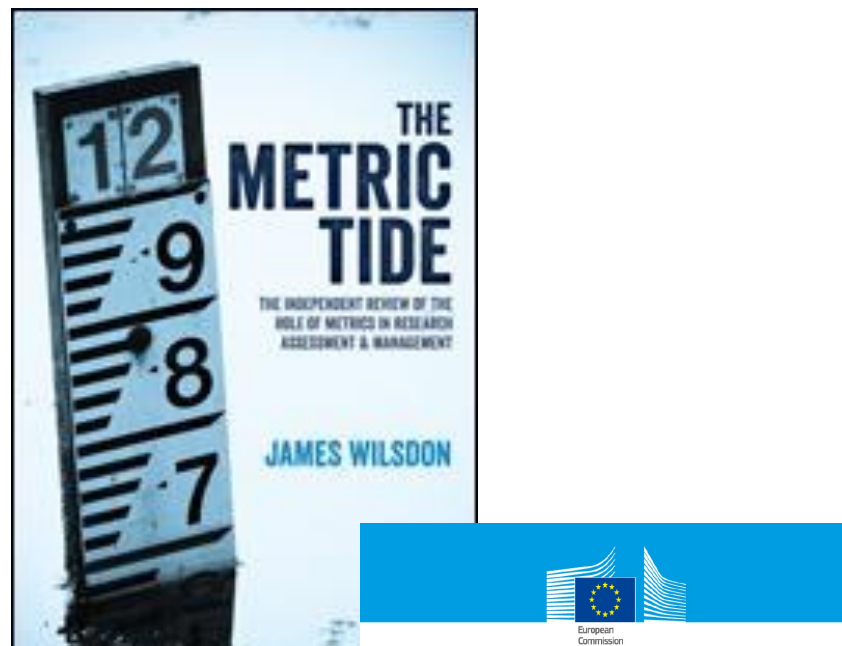
2021

How to get your uni ranked

EXPLORE IMPACT RANKINGS FOR INDIVIDUAL SDGS

 OVERALL RANKING	 1 NO POVERTY	 2 ZERO HUNGER	 3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	 4 QUALITY EDUCATION	 5 GENDER EQUALITY	 6 CLEAN WATER AND SANITATION	 7 AFFORDABLE AND CLEAN ENERGY	 8 DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH
 9 INDUSTRY INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE	 10 REDUCED INEQUALITIES	 11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES	 12 RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION	 13 CLIMATE ACTION	 14 LIFE BELOW WATER	 15 LIFE ON LAND	 16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS	 17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Cosmetic appropriation?



Calibrating the machine

RECOMMENDATIONS from Next-Generation Metrics (2017)

#1: Ahead of the launch of its ninth research framework programme (FP9), the EC should provide clear guidelines for the responsible use of metrics in support of open science.

#2: The EC should encourage the development of new indicators, and assess the suitability of existing ones, to measure and support the development of open science.

#3: Before introducing new metrics into evaluation criteria, the EC needs to assess the likely benefits and consequences as part of a programme of 'meta-research'.

#4: The adoption and implementation of open science principles and practices should be recognised and rewarded through the European research system

#5: The EC should highlight how the inappropriate use of indicators (whether conventional or altmetrics or next generation metrics) can impede progress towards open science.

##10: The EC should identify mechanisms for promoting best practices, frameworks and standards for responsible use of metrics in support of open science

Next-generation metrics:
Responsible metrics and evaluation for open
science



Support for more responsible research

11.11.2020



Responsible Research

inorms
Research Evaluation Working Group

What makes a fair and responsible university ranking?
Rating the rankings criteria
Version 2. August 2019

Introduction

The International Network of Research Management Societies (INORMS) established a two-year Research Evaluation Working Group (REWG) in 2018. It consists of representatives from a range of global member research management societies all seeking to work towards better, fairer and more meaningful research evaluation. One of our two areas of focus is the burgeoning influence of University Rankings on the behaviours of universities and the often poor methodological approaches and practices. The purpose of this work-package is to consider what an international group of research managers, think the characteristics of a fair and responsible University Ranking should look like. The idea is to then 'turn the tables' on the rankings and rate them against our agreed criteria.

The UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics

A group of research funders, sector bodies, and infrastructure experts are working in partnership to promote the responsible use of research metrics.

The Forum for Responsible Research Metrics, chaired by Professor Max Lu (Vice-Chancellor at the University of Surrey), supports the responsible use of research metrics in higher education institutions and across the research community in the UK. The Forum have a programme of activities, including:

- Advice to the higher education funding bodies on quantitative indicators in the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021
- Advice on, and work to improve, the data infrastructure that underpins metric use
- Advocacy and leadership on the use of research metrics responsibly
- International engagement on the use of metrics in research and researcher assessment

Advocacy coalitions

Institutional culture change



EDUCATION RESEARCH UNIVERSITY LIFE JOBS ABOUT US INFORMATION FOR

Home > News > Ghent University is changing course with a new career model for professorial staff

Ghent University is changing course with a new career model for professorial staff



(07-12-2018) Ghent University dares to think. Ghent University also dares to push its own boundaries.

On December 7 the Board of Governors has approved a new career and evaluation model for professorial staff (ZAP) as well as the accompanying regulations.

Rik Van de Walle, Rector: "This is a very important decision for Ghent University and its staff. With the new career and evaluation model, our aim is to restore the confidence of our professorial staff instead of excessively measuring and controlling their activities. The starting point is that those who perform well will be promoted - with a minimum of formal procedures for accountability and administrative inconvenience."

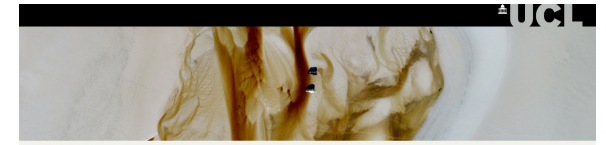
"A predominantly quantitative and output-driven academic evaluation process makes way for talent development and growth, prioritizing vision development and strategy - at the personal as well as the group level. Quality prevails over quantity. Needless to say, we are confident that the intrinsic motivation of each ZAP member ensures that no one needs a priori objectives in order to perform well in the core tasks of our university: education, research and institutional or social engagement."



The Declaration Signers Case Studies Resources Blog

Reimagining academic assessment: stories of innovation and change

Case studies of universities and national consortia highlight key elements of institutional change to improve academic career assessment.



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UCL Home > UCL Research > Strategy and policy > Bibliometrics at UCL > UCL Bibliometrics Policy

UCL Bibliometrics Policy

UCL Bibliometrics Policy

In early 2020, UCL's academic committee approved a policy on the responsible use of bibliometrics at UCL. Below you will find an introduction to the policy, and the policy's eleven principles

Introduction

Step ahead to the policy's principles

Bibliometrics is a term describing the quantification of publications and their characteristics. It includes a range of approaches, such as the use of citation data to quantify the influence or impact of scholarly publications. When used in appropriate contexts, bibliometrics can provide valuable insights into aspects of research in some disciplines.

Policy Link

UCL's Bibliometrics Policy

Quick Links

- Bibliometrics at UCL: draft
- Bibliometrics Training
- External Initiatives
- Help and Guidance
- Bibliometrics at UCL: Eprints
- UCL's Strategy and Policy
- UCL Office for Open Science and Scholarship

44. Research England encourages providers to support the principles of open research in their research environment. Most Research England funding is deployed by universities at their discretion and is not intended to lead to specified outputs. In such cases, outputs cannot be attributed directly to Research England funding and no acknowledgement of Research England funding is expected or necessary. Such outputs are therefore out of scope of the UKRI Open Access policy. Where funding is given for particular purposes, and where that funding leads directly to particular research outputs, those outputs will be subject to the UKRI Open Access policy and providers will be required to include acknowledgement of Research England's funding.

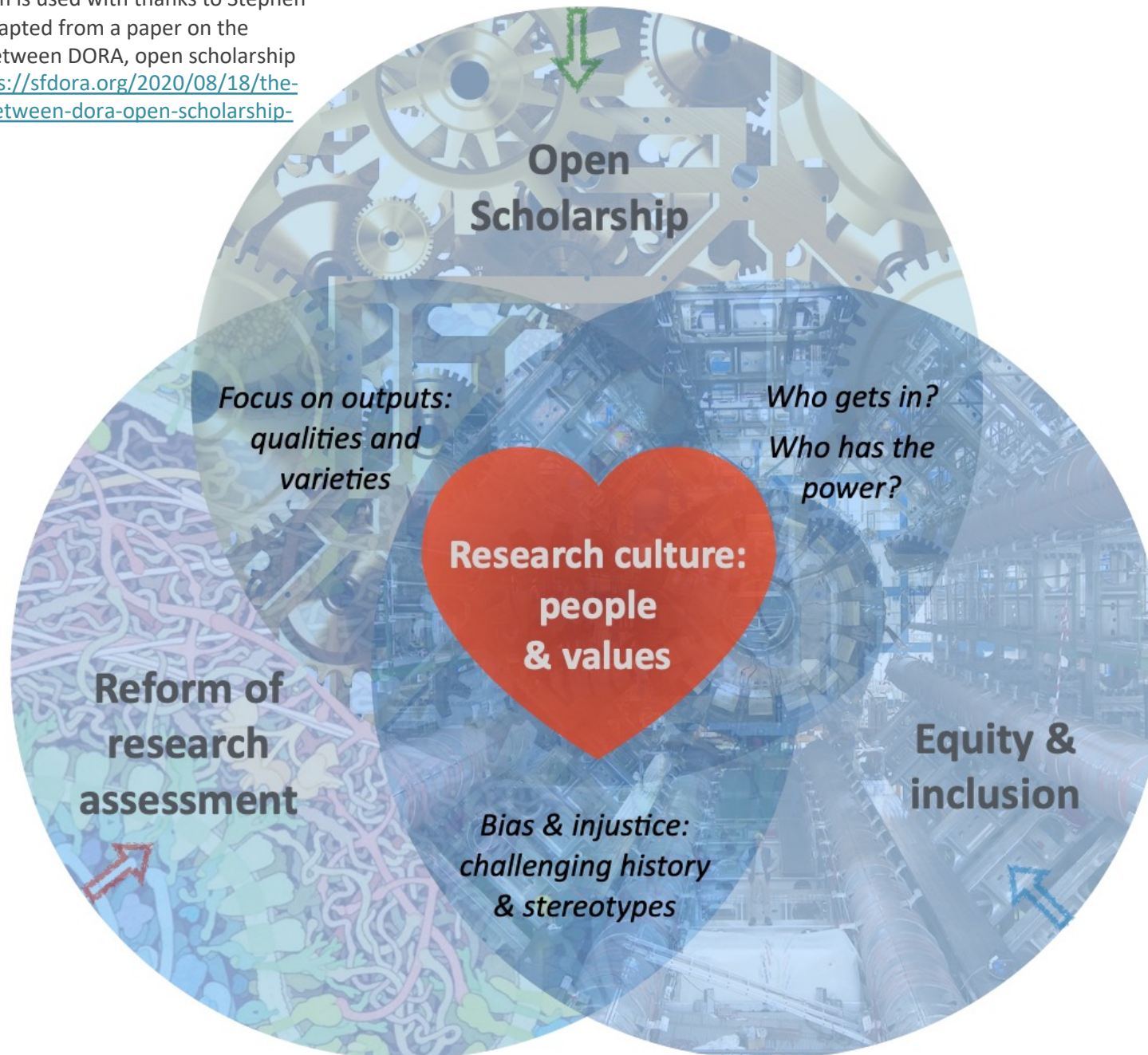
Responsible research assessment

45. Our expectation is the providers we fund will comply with the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)⁸, Leiden Manifesto⁹ or equivalent. Research England commits to assessing the intrinsic merit of research and will not consider the publication channel, its impact factor (or other journal metrics), or the publisher when assessing quality.

Equality, diversity and inclusion

46. We expect higher education providers to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion is considered and supported in the use of our funding, taking into account UK Research and Innovation policies and principles¹⁰ for equality, diversity and inclusion. Providers' approaches to supporting equality, diversity and inclusion are expected to exceed all relevant legal obligations, including but not limited to those of the Equality Act 2010.

NB. This diagram is used with thanks to Stephen Curry, and is adapted from a paper on the intersections between DORA, open scholarship and equity <https://sfdora.org/2020/08/18/the-intersections-between-dora-open-scholarship-and-equity/>



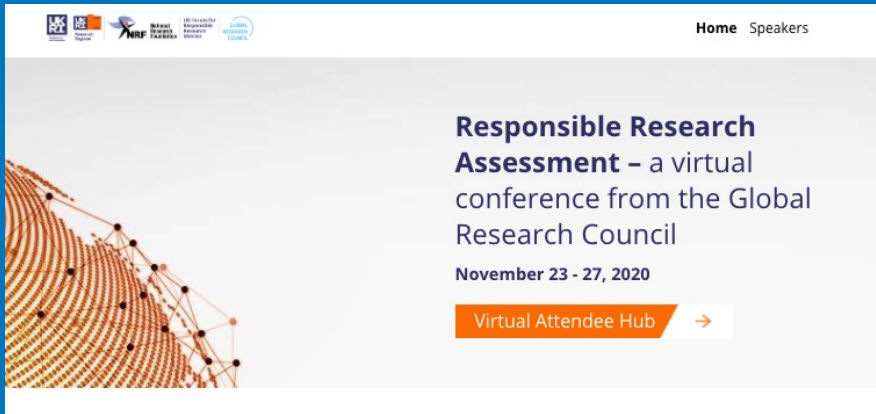
Culture & system change

 Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy

R&D People and Culture Strategy

People at the heart of R&D

Global Research Council Survey methodology



Online survey: 23 questions

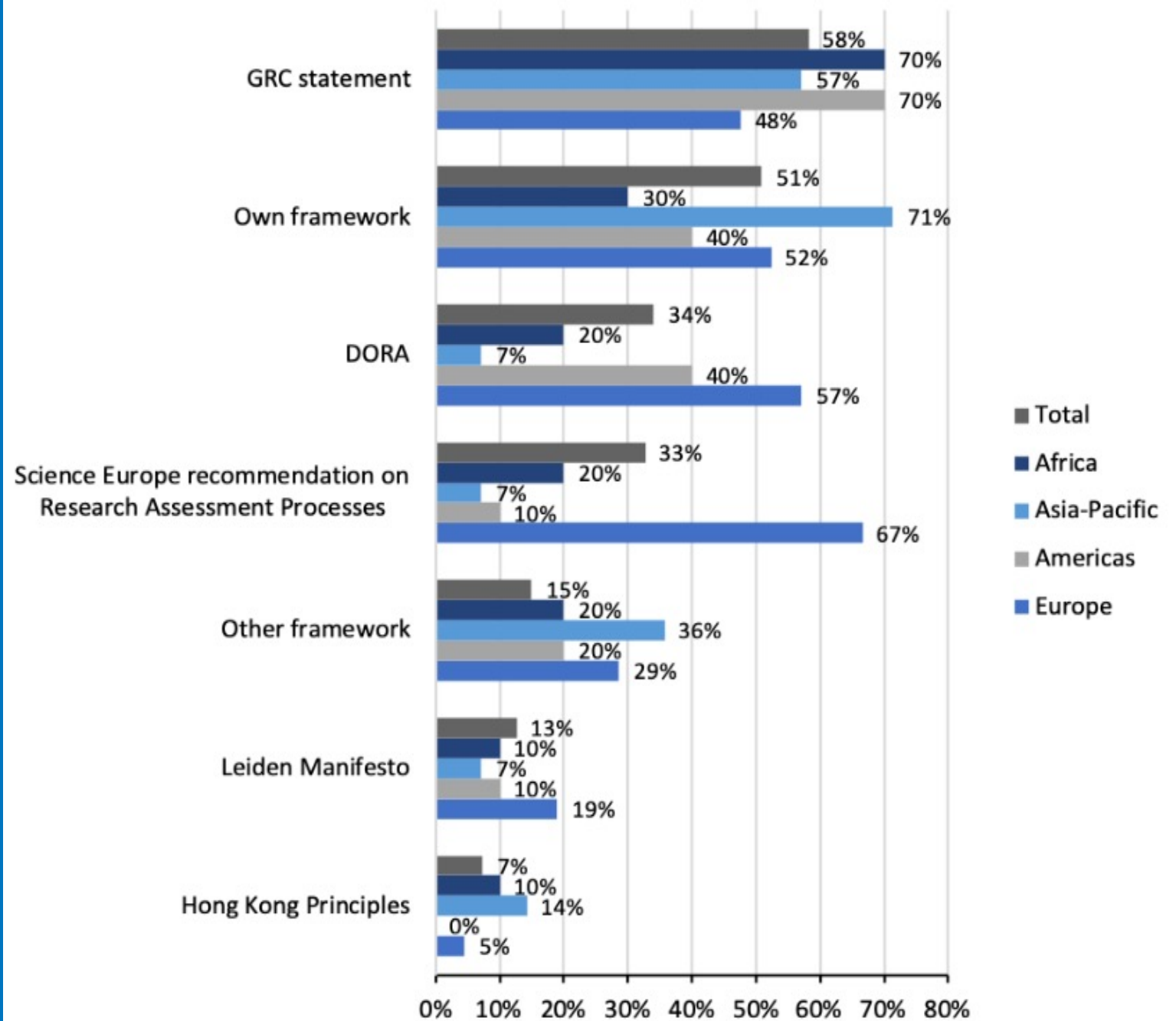
Open from September-October 2020

Completed by 55 organisations / 46% response rate

	N	%
Africa and Middle-East <i>(Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa & Middle East)</i>	10	18.2
Asia-Pacific	14	25.5
Americas	10	18.2
Europe	21	38.2
<i>Total</i>	<i>55</i>	<i>100</i>

Table 1: Respondents by geographical region

Endorsements of existing RRA Frameworks



Research Assessment Indicators

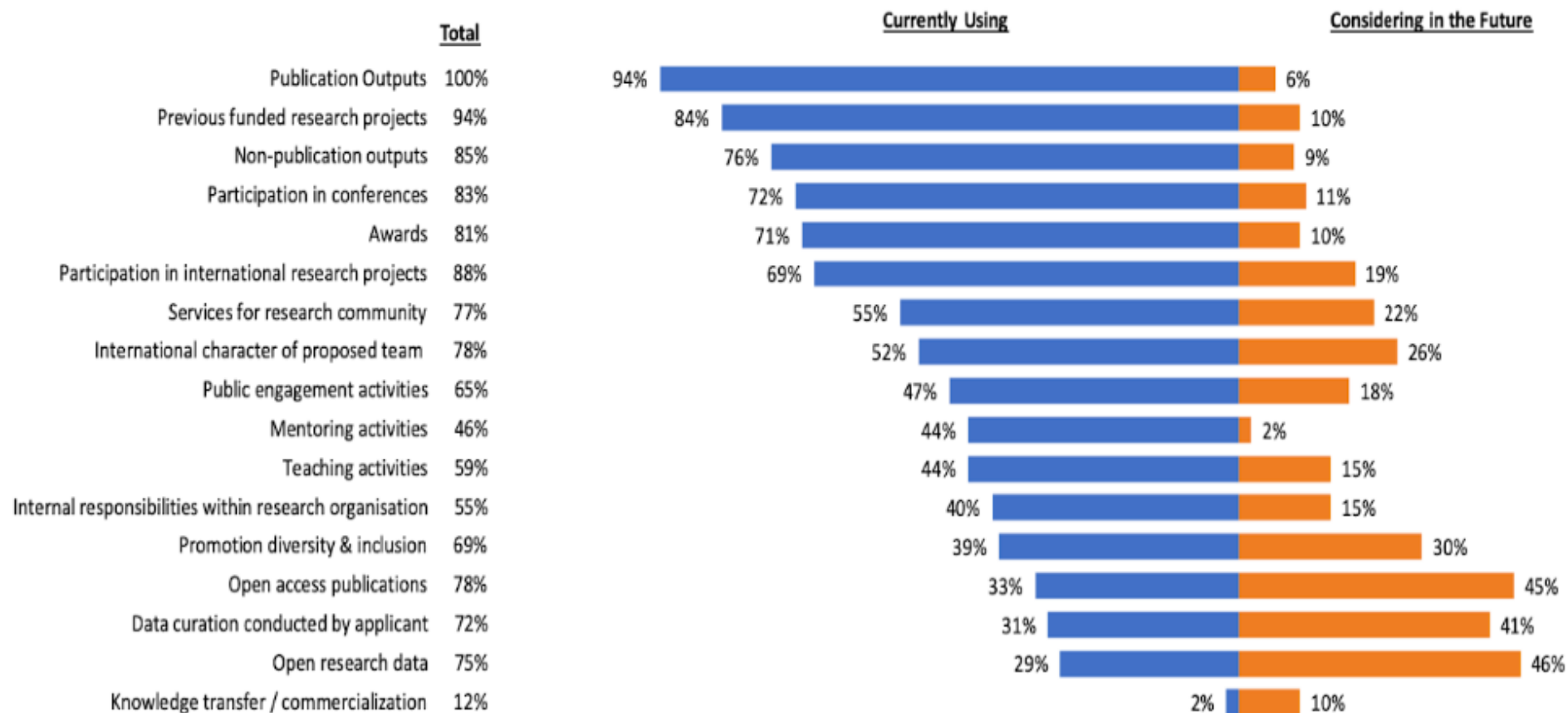
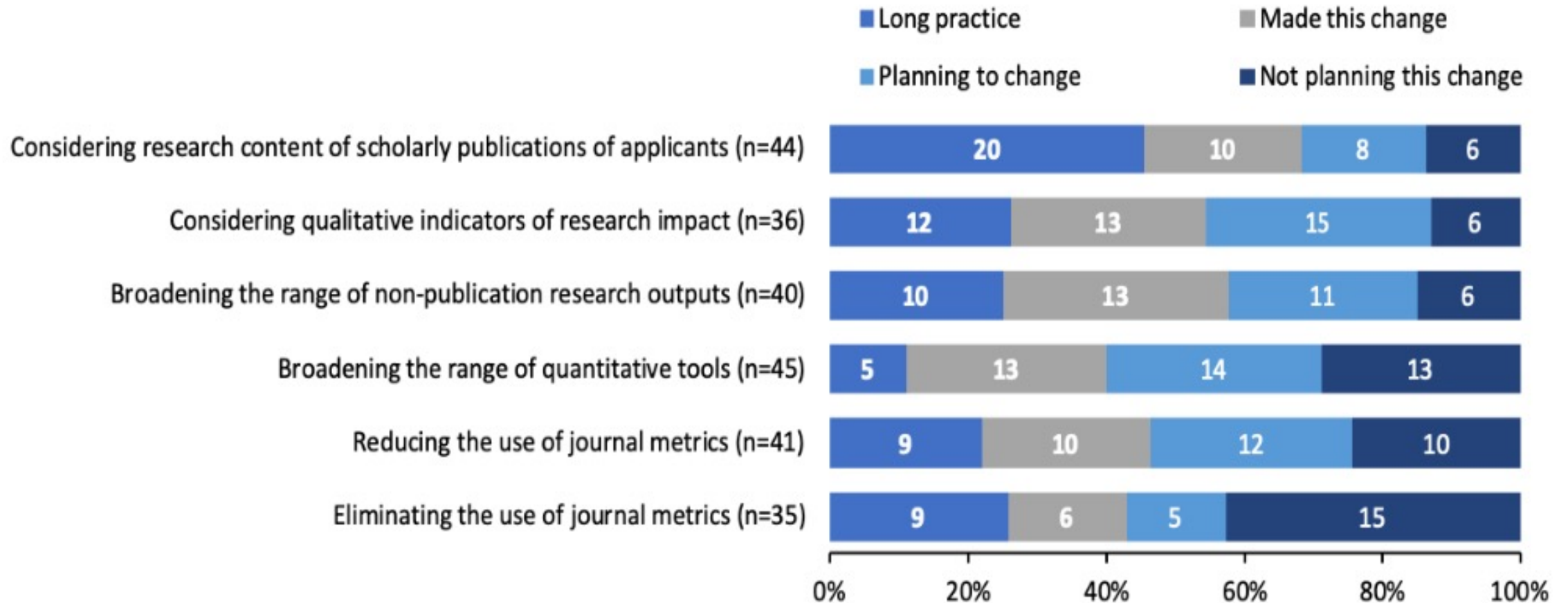


Figure 3: Research assessment indicators (to be) used by GRC participating organisations who responded to the survey (n=50, missing n=5)


Changes in the way research proposals are assessed



Timeline of The initiation of The Working Group







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[Find a scheme](#)[Guidance](#)[Develop your research](#)

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Responsible and fair research assessment

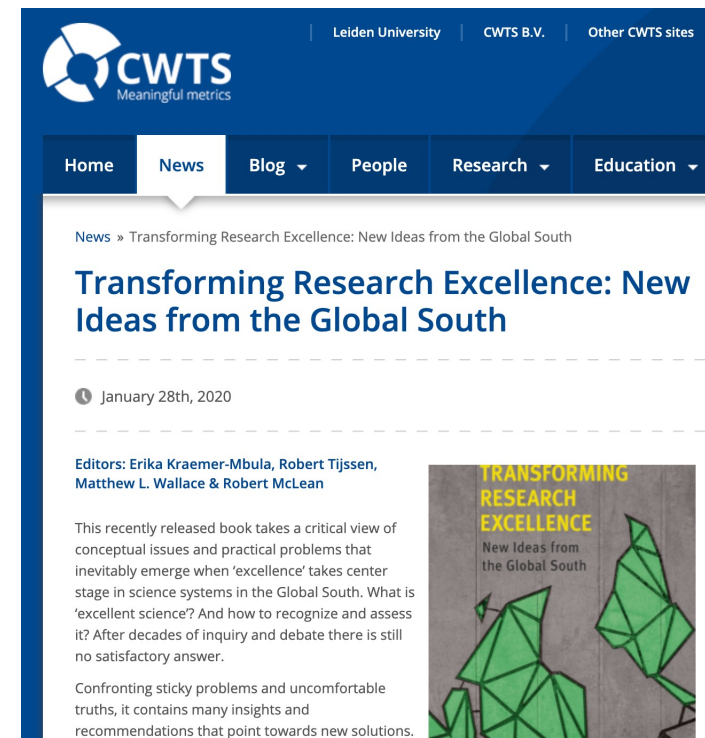
We are committed to making sure that when we assess research outputs during funding decisions, we consider the intrinsic merit of the work, not the title of the journal or publisher.

All Wellcome-funded organisations must also publicly commit to this principle. For example, they can sign the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, Leiden Manifesto or equivalent. We've produced guidance for organisations on responsible and fair approaches for research assessment, that sets out three high-level requirements and other activities they could consider to support these.

We may ask organisations to show that they're complying with this as part of our organisation audits.

Compliance and sanctions

Researchers and organisations who do not comply with this policy will be subject to appropriate sanctions. These may include Wellcome:




Priority 1: Continue to build national and international coalitions for responsible research assessment

Priority 2: Strengthen guidance & templates to translate principles into institutional policies & practices

RETHINKING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

SPACE TO EVOLVE ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

A RUBRIC FOR ANALYZING INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS INDICATORS AND CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS



Research and researcher assessment is a systems challenge, suggesting that institutions that prioritize developing infrastructures to support their efforts may be better positioned to achieve their goals than those focused only on individual solutions.

<div><div>FROM FOUNDATION...</div><div>Core definitions and shared clarity of purpose</div><div><div>STANDARDS FOR SCHOLARSHIP</div><div>How are new definitions of "quality scholarship" formulated and applied?</div></div><div><div>ALIGNMENT ON VALUES AND GOALS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Standards are explicitly designed and articulated to align with institutional mission and values, such as increasing equity and support for traditionally underrepresented, minoritized groups</div><div>New standards for scholarship consider the balance across research, teaching, and service contributions including training, mentoring and good citizenship</div><div>Specific definitions and standards of "quality" with regard to scholarship are articulated and shared across disciplines and review/promotion committees</div></div></div>	<div><div>TO EXPANSION...</div><div>Increased traction and capability development</div><div><div>DIVERSIFICATION OF STANDARDS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Scholarship is assessed using diverse indicators (e.g. societal impact), units of assessment (e.g. full body of work v. individual articles), and forms of output (e.g. non-journal contributions)</div><div>Indicators of quality recognize non-individualized activities and accomplishments like team science</div><div>New definitions of "scholarship" are deployed across the full range of institutional disciplines</div></div></div>	<div><div>TO SCALING</div><div>Accelerated uptake and continuous improvement</div><div><div>ADOPTION OF NEW PRACTICES</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Faculty have the ability to customize success measures to reflect their research interests and goals</div><div>New standards, definitions, and criteria for evaluating the quality and impact of scholarship are integrated into the language and processes of new assessment practices</div></div></div>
<div><div>PROCESS MECHANICS AND POLICIES</div><div>How are new practices incorporated into review structures, processes, and institutional policies?</div></div> <div><div>DEBIASING DELIBERATIVE JUDGMENTS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Meaningful and appropriately rigorous qualitative structures for academic assessment, such as narrative CVs, are given due weight</div><div>Structures and processes are applied consistently across assessment activities, taking into consideration alternate paths and starting points</div><div>Use of new assessment mechanics extend beyond traditional evaluative contexts into ensuring equitable opportunities, mentoring, and retention to increase research and researcher diversity</div></div>	<div><div>CAPACITY TO SUPPORT NEW ACTIVITIES</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Training on the goals and procedures of assessment processes and practices are accessible and continually maintained</div><div>Institutions design processes take into account the resource capacity of committee members to effectively adopt new assessment practices, such as additional burdens on time</div><div>Institutions have designated senior functions or offices to ensure faculty capacity for new assessment practices and principles</div></div>	<div><div>INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING SYSTEMS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Assessment mechanics can be flexibly applied and adapted to accommodate diverse disciplines</div><div>Mechanisms to support practices are codified and written into institutional policies</div><div>New processes and practices are seamlessly integrated and widely adopted</div></div>
<div><div>ACCOUNTABILITY</div><div>How are individuals and institutions held liable for executing on new assessment practices?</div></div> <div><div>TRANSPARENCY AND CLARITY OF GOALS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>The goals, principles, and practices of academic assessment and review, promotion, and tenure (RPT) activities are transparent and clearly articulated, and agreed upon by all participants</div><div>Institutions have clearly defined expectations for adherence to academic assessment practices</div><div>Examples of "what good looks like" are collected and shared to more concretely illustrate target outcomes and behaviors</div></div>	<div><div>ADHERENCE THROUGH COMMITMENT</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Research evaluators self-monitor adherence to academic assessment principles and practices</div><div>Senior leaders and committee members actively stipulate equitable assessment practices during both formal and informal career development contexts</div><div>Institutions model ecosystem-level accountability, such as ensuring that system-level incentives align with and support agreed-upon principles and practices</div></div>	<div><div>PROACTIVITY IN ENGAGEMENT</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Individuals actively contribute to the development and review of new practices and principles</div><div>Departments proactively broaden and conduct outreach activities to include new or minoritized applicants</div><div>Faculty serve as "ambassadors" for new academic assessment practices, such as when serving as external committee members</div></div>
<div><div>CULTURE WITHIN INSTITUTIONS</div><div>How are assessment practices perceived and adopted both within and outside of formal evaluation activities?</div></div> <div><div>INCLUSION AND ACCESS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>More diverse types of individuals are involved in both defining and participating in career advancement processes, such as including early career researchers on RPT committees</div><div>Representation of minoritized applicants meets or exceeds equity goals for both new hires and researcher retention</div><div>Career growth and mentoring systems are intentionally designed to provide ongoing support for underrepresented hires</div></div>	<div><div>ADVOCACY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Adoption of new assessment mechanisms is supported and advocated for by departmental and institutional leaders</div><div>All individuals actively contribute to building more equitable practices—not just minoritized ones</div><div>New research assessment norms are increasingly adopted as a default by faculty, administrators, and applicants</div></div>	<div><div>REFLEXIVITY THROUGH REFLECTION</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>"Positive friction," or intentional pause points to reflect on assessment practices and slow down business-as-usual processes is incorporated into both formal and informal assessment practices</div><div>All participants in assessment activities feel processes achieve a balance of effectiveness and efficiency</div></div>
<div><div>EVALUATIVE AND ITERATIVE FEEDBACK</div><div>How are intervention outcomes and progress toward institutional values captured and continually improved upon?</div></div> <div><div>ARTICULATION OF DIVERSE INDICATORS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Goals and success criteria for individual academic assessment interventions are well-defined and shared</div><div>Use of leading indicators (e.g. increased diversity of inquiries for open positions) supplements lagging indicators (e.g. increased diversity of hires) when gauging intervention efficacy</div><div>Goals and success criteria are automatically reviewed whenever institutional strategy is updated</div></div>	<div><div>SYSTEMATIZATION TO GAIN CONSISTENCY</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Quantitative and qualitative data from interventions are captured in a standardized way</div><div>Mechanisms that capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback are explicitly designed and embedded into assessment processes from the outset</div><div>Best practices and examples of measurement and/or gathering feedback are codified and shared across disciplines within the institution</div></div>	<div><div>IMPROVEMENT USING FEEDBACK LOOPS</div><div>THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...</div><div>Interventions that don't achieve desired outcomes are considered learning opportunities, not failures</div><div>Outcomes and data are collected and monitored to ensure high standards of evaluation quality and identify unintended consequences or adverse effects</div><div>Feedback and other indicators are refined and/or examined in aggregate to identify and investigate patterns or opportunities for course-correction</div></div>

RESOURCE

SPACE to evolve academic assessment: A rubric for analyzing institutional conditions and progress indicators

ADVOCACY RESOURCES TOOLS FOR: RESEARCH INSTITUTES


This is part of DORA's toolkit of resources to support academic institutions that are improving their policies and practices. Find the other resources in the toolkit [here](#).

Improving research and scholarship assessment practices requires the ability to analyze the outcomes of efforts and interventions. However, when conducted only at the unit level of individual interventions, these evaluations and reflections miss opportunities to understand how institutional conditions themselves set the table for the success of new efforts, or how developing institutional capabilities might improve the effectiveness and impact of these new practices at greater scale. The SPACE rubric was developed to help institutions at any stage of academic assessment reform gauge their institutional ability to support interventions and set them up for success.

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Responsible assessment faces the acid test

The University of Liverpool is planning lay-offs using controversial measures. How should the movement for responsible research respond?

A leading UK university has become mired in a public dispute over how it is assessing researchers' performance. The evolving situation at the University of Liverpool is being watched closely by concerned academics around the world – and is raising questions about whether more needs to be done to ensure that universities assess their researchers equitably. At the end of last month, the leaders of some of the world's foremost responsible-research initiatives – the Hong Kong Principles, the INORMS Research Evaluation Group, the Leiden Manifesto and the Metric Tide – wrote a strongly worded letter arguing that the University of Liverpool's proposals remain

“Does the research community need a body with the

redundancy. In response to the threat of redundancies, researchers took industrial action during May, June and July.

One influential initiative is choosing to negotiate privately with the university. This is the organization behind the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), an international voluntary agreement through which research organizations vow to conduct research assessment responsibly.

DORA's signatories pledge not to use metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor to evaluate researchers, and to be transparent in the criteria used to make decisions on matters such as hiring and promotion. Liverpool is one of some 2,200 organizations that have signed the declaration. DORA is in talks with the university, but choosing not to reveal further details. A statement on DORA's website says that it expects signatories to abide by their pledges, while also reiterating that it is not a regulatory body.

DORA's approach – to resolve disputes constructively but without publicity – has had some effect. Liverpool initially included the field-weighted citation metric on its criteria for redundancies, but dropped that after consultation with DORA. However, there are conflicting views of whether this puts Liverpool in the clear. The university told *Nature* its amended criteria are “in keeping with the principles of DORA”. In response, a DORA spokesperson said there are “ongoing concerns”. Such mixed messages show

LEIDEN MANIFESTO FOR RESEARCH METRICS



To: Professor Dame Janet Beer, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Liverpool.

cc: Professor Anthony Hollander, Pro-VC for Research, University of Liverpool
Professor Louise Kenny, Executive Pro-VC for Research, Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, University of Liverpool
All members of the Senate of the University of Liverpool.

25th June, 2021.

Dear Professor Dame Janet Beer,

We write as recognised experts in the responsible use of research metrics.

We note from the published document '[Managing Change: Project SHAPE Phase 2 Amended Proposals](#)', that the primary metric used by the University of Liverpool in the 'rounded assessment' used for redundancy selection is research grant income. We further note that a range of other qualitative metrics are used in the selection process, along with some broader categories such as "evidence of significant non-research income."

However, we remain highly concerned that those proposals remain very squarely out of line with accepted practice in the sector.

First, we do not see it as acceptable that a University can remove staff *en masse* primarily because of a failure to meet a specified research income threshold. We believe that any issue of research performance must be dealt with using established procedures that have broad support of academic staff, and that those procedures should take into account the full range of contributions to research. We note, in particular, that none of the published criteria recognise essential research tasks like peer review, supervision and mentoring. This narrow view of research contribution does not address the need for humility and diversity, set out in *The Metric Tide*, and is in breach of principle 5 of the *Hong Kong Principles for Assessing Researchers* and principle 2 of the *Leiden Manifesto*.

How should Dora be enforced?

By Stephen Curry

Share f t in e



Image: *Shdora* (CC BY-SA 4.0) via Wikimedia Commons

Dispute over Liverpool's use of metrics is best resolved through dialogue, says Stephen Curry

This January, reports emerged that the University of Liverpool was using research metrics to identify academic staff at risk of redundancy in its restructuring of the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences. Such processes are always painful, but Liverpool's methods—notably its use of the field-weighted citation index (FWCI) and grant income targets—saw the issues spill beyond the normal boundaries of industrial disputes.

Priority 3: Develop more sophisticated frameworks for compliance, accountability & enforcement

Priority 4: RRA needs to anticipate and keep pace with new tools and technologies of assessment and evaluation

The AI revolution in scientific research

The Royal Society and The Alan Turing Institute

The Royal Society is the UK's national academy of sciences. The Society's fundamental purpose, reflected in its founding Charters of the 1660s, is to recognise, promote, and support excellence in science and to encourage the development and use of science for the benefit of humanity.

The Alan Turing Institute is the UK's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence. Its mission is to make great leaps in research in order to change the world for the better.

In April 2017, the Royal Society published the results of a major policy study on machine learning. This report considered the potential of machine learning in the next 5 – 10 years, and the actions required to build an environment of careful stewardship that can help realise its potential. Its publication set the direction for a wider programme of Royal Society policy and public engagement on artificial intelligence (AI), which seeks to create the conditions in which the benefits of these technologies can be brought into being safely and rapidly.

As part of this programme, in February 2019 the Society convened a workshop on the application of AI in science. By processing the large amounts of data now being generated in fields such as the life sciences, particle physics, astronomy, the social sciences, and more, machine learning

Data in science: from the t-test to the frontiers of AI

Scientists aspire to understand the workings of nature, people, and society. To do so, they formulate hypotheses, design experiments, and collect data, with the aim of analysing and better understanding natural, physical, and social phenomena.

Data collection and analysis is a core element of the scientific method, and scientists have long used statistical techniques to aid their work. In the early 1900s, for example, the development of the t-test gave researchers a new tool to extract insights from data in order to test the veracity of their hypotheses. Such mathematical frameworks were vital in extracting as much information as possible from data that had often taken significant time and money to generate and collect.

Examples of the application of statistical methods to scientific challenges can be seen throughout history, often leading to discoveries or methods that underpin the fundamentals of science today, for example:

- The analysis by Johannes Kepler of the astronomical measurements of Tycho Brahe in the early seventeenth century led to his formulation of the laws of planetary motion, which subsequently enabled Isaac Newton FRS (and others) to formulate the law of universal gravitation.

GRANTS

AI is selecting reviewers in China

The tool is already saving time for the country's major grant funding agency.

BY DAVID CYRANOSKI

China's largest funder of basic science is piloting an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that selects researchers to review grant applications, in an attempt to make the process more efficient, faster and fairer. Some researchers say the approach by the National

Natural Science Foundation of China (NSFC) is world-leading, but others are sceptical about whether AI can improve the process.

Choosing researchers to peer review project proposals or publications is time-consuming and prone to bias. Several academic publishers are experimenting with AI tools to select reviewers and carry out other tasks. And a few

funding agencies, including some in North America and Europe, have trialled simple AI systems, some of which match keywords in grant applications to those in publications of other scientists to identify potential reviewers.

The NSFC is building a more sophisticated system that will crawl online scientific-literature databases and scientists' personal



ARTICLE

<https://doi.org/10.1038/s43589-020-00709-4>

OPEN

AI-assisted peer review

Alessandro Checchi¹, Lorenzo Bracciale², Pierpaolo Loreti², Stephen Pinfield³ & Giuseppe Barchi²

The scientific literature peer review workflow is under strain because of the constant growth of submission volume. One response to this is to make initial screening of submissions less time intensive. Reducing screening and review time would save millions of working hours and potentially boost academic productivity. Many platforms have already started to use automated screening tools to prevent plagiarism and failure to respect formal requirements. Some tools even attempt to flag the quality of a study or summarise its content, to reduce reviewers' load. The recent advances in artificial intelligence (AI) create the potential for (semi-)automated peer review systems, where potentially low-quality or controversial studies could be flagged, and reviewer-document matching could be performed in an automated manner. However, there are ethical concerns, which arise from such approaches, particularly associated with bias and the extent to which AI systems may replicate bias. Our main goal in this study is to discuss the potential, pitfalls, and uncertainties of the use of AI to approximate or assist human decisions in the quality assurance and peer-review process associated with research outputs. We design an AI tool and train it with 3300 papers from three conferences, together with their reviews evaluations. We then test the ability of the AI in predicting the review scores of a new, unpublished manuscript, only using its textual content. We show that such techniques can reveal correlations between the decision process and other quality proxy measures, uncovering potential biases of the review process. Finally, we discuss the opportunities, but also the potential unintended consequences of these techniques in terms of algorithmic bias and ethical concerns.

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The Responsible use of Technology-Assisted Research Assessment

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PERSPECTIVE

Assessing scientists for hiring, promotion, and tenure

David Moher , Florian Naudet, Ioana A. Cristea, Frank Miedema, John P. A. Ioannidis, Steven N. Goodman

Version 2 Published: March 29, 2018 • <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pbio.2004089>

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Abstract

[Introduction](#)
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Reader Comments (2)

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Abstract

Assessment of researchers is necessary for decisions of hiring, promotion, and tenure. A burgeoning number of scientific leaders believe the current system of faculty incentives and rewards is misaligned with the needs of society and disconnected from the evidence about the causes of the reproducibility crisis and suboptimal quality of the scientific publication record. To address this issue, particularly for the clinical and life sciences, we convened a 22-member expert panel workshop in Washington, DC, in January 2017. Twenty-two academic leaders, funders, and scientists participated in the meeting. As background for the meeting, we completed a selective literature review of 22 key documents critiquing the current incentive system. From each document, we extracted how the authors perceived the problems of assessing science and scientists, the unintended consequences of maintaining the status quo for assessing scientists, and details of their proposed solutions. The resulting table was used as a seed for participant discussion. This resulted in six principles for assessing scientists and



[The Declaration](#)
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Reimagining academic assessment: stories of innovation and change

Case studies of universities and national consortia highlight key elements of institutional change to improve academic career assessment.

What should we do with research ‘excellence’?

30.09.2021 PROJECT UPDATES



Over the last 20 years, the notion of ‘excellence’ has permeated almost every inch of the research ecosystem - from research funding schemes, evaluation frameworks to publishing decisions. Once believed to be a way to measure the best of the best, ‘excellence’ is now more likely to be viewed as too ambiguous, the source of undesirable behaviours and a barrier to an inclusive research culture.

To dig into this, RoRI’s [EXCELLENCE project](#) is exploring how the concept of ‘excellence’ is defined and used when it comes to research funding and evaluation. The project has two parts: the first is an [extensive literature review analysing how ‘excellence’ has evolved and been understood](#); and the second is an empirical study looking at the use of ‘excellence’ by funders.

Priority 5: Experiment, evaluate & amplify what works

An explosion of engagement in research on research



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Science of Science: Discovery, Communication, and Impact (SoS:DCI)

CONTACTS

Name	Email	Phone	Room
Josh Trapani	jtrapani@nsf.gov	703-292-6760	

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Home / Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application / Volume 7, 2020 / Hardwicke

Calibrating the Scientific Ecosystem Through Meta-Research

Annual Review of Statistics and Its Application

Vol. 7: Volume publication date March 2020

Review in Advance first posted online on November 1, 2019. (Changes may still occur before final publication.)

<https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-statistics-031219-041104>

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Abstract

While some scientists study insects, molecules, brains, or clouds, other scientists study science itself. Meta-research, or research-on-research, is a burgeoning discipline that investigates efficiency, quality, and bias in the scientific ecosystem, topics that have become especially relevant amid widespread concerns about the credibility of the scientific literature. Meta-research may help calibrate the scientific ecosystem toward higher standards by providing empirical evidence that informs the iterative generation and refinement of reform initiatives. We introduce a translational framework that involves (a) identifying problems, (b) investigating problems, and (c) evaluating solutions. In each of these areas, we review key meta-research endeavors and discuss several examples of prior and ongoing work. The scientific ecosystem is perpetually evolving; the discipline of meta-research presents an





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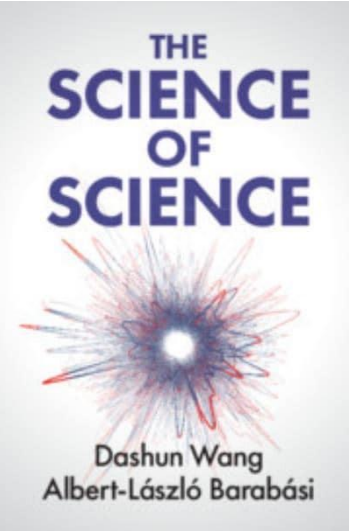
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Science of Science Funding

BACKGROUND RESEARCH | RESEARCH PROJECTS | DATA RESOURCES

Science of Science Funding is an NBER Initiative, supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which seeks to improve understanding of effective methods of supporting scientific research. Its goal is to promote analysis of the links between research funding models, management strategies, and scientific outcomes that can inform decision-making by both private and public funders. The initiative strives to nurture a community of researchers, funders, and research administrators who can interact with and learn from each other, and who can develop a research agenda in this area. The initiative convenes research meetings, disseminates research, and supports small-scale projects which further community building.





W

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Research on research

Research on research (also known as meta-research, the science of science and meta-science) is the study of research itself.


It's an evolving discipline that aims to produce evidence on how to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, fairness and impact of research.

Why it's important to us

Welcome, and the research we support, aims to be a social good. We're acutely aware of the influence we have on research culture and systems. This influence can be used positively to drive change, and we want to help [build a better research culture](#) – one that is creative, inclusive and honest.

However, our own systems can have unintended consequences – such as sometimes creating a focus on outputs and increased productivity at the expense of how research is achieved. This is often underpinned by the decisions we make and how we make them at the strategic and individual funding level.

Research on research is important to help us better understand and improve our own funding practices and policies, and those of other funders.



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The Science of Science

The Kellogg Center for Science of Science & Innovation is the first academic hub of its kind to bring together the world's foremost experts in complex systems and network science to uncover fundamental patterns in careers, collaboration, the progress of knowledge, and more.

Here is a collection of faculty research and insights related to the science of science. For more information about the Kellogg Center for Science of Science & Innovation, visit kellapp.kellogg.northwestern.edu.



For Teams, What Matters More: Raw Talent or a History of Success Together?

A study of professional sports teams suggests that one factor is clearly more important, but the best teams combine them both.

Satyam Mukherjee, Yun Huang, Julia Neidhardt, Brian Uzzi and Nozair Contractor

JUNE 3, 2019

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Research on research gains steam

New metascience institute aims for larger studies

by [Dalmat Singh Chawla](#), special to *C&EN*
OCTOBER 1, 2019

In 2005, John Ioannidis, a professor of medicine at Stanford University, opened a can of worms. In a paper published in *PLOS Medicine*, he argued that most published scholarly literature is false ([DOI: 10.1371/journal.pmed.0020124](#)).

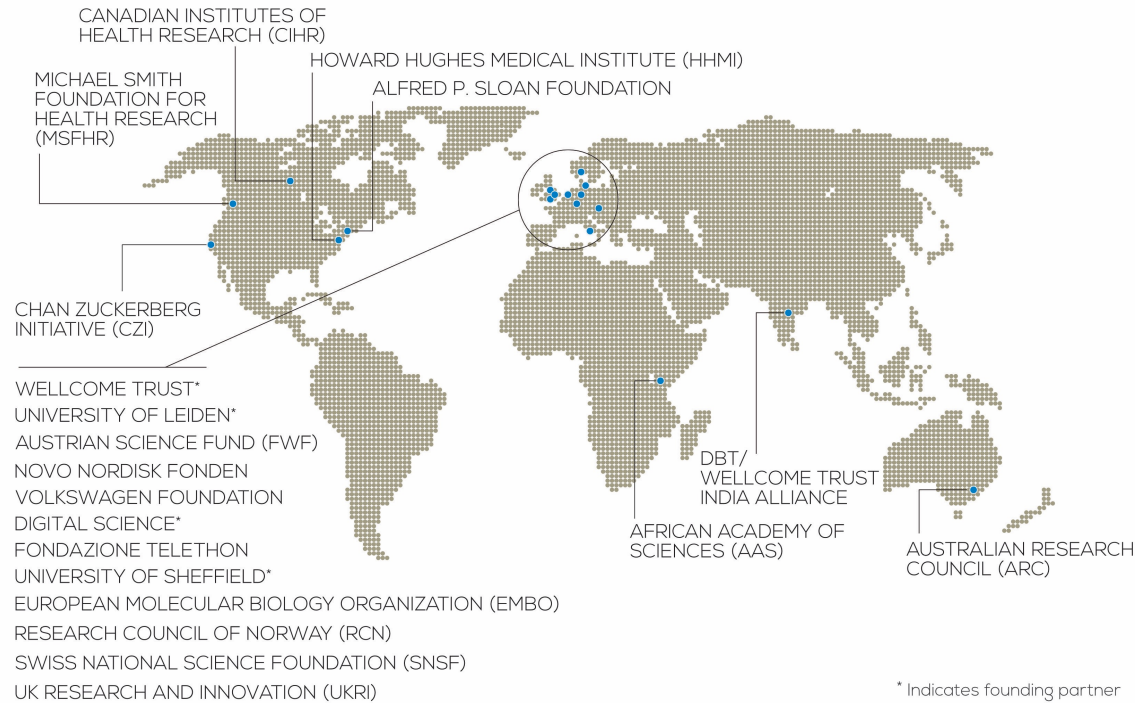
To date, Ioannidis's "landmark study" has attracted thousands of citations and helped solidify a whole field in its own right, says Jelte Wicherts, who studies research methodology at Tilburg University.

The use of scientific methodology to study science itself is called metascience. The discipline has become mainstream in recent years, tackling some of the thorniest problems science faces, including a lack of reproducibility of academic literature, biases in peer review, and the fair allocation of research funding. "Metascience is now a distinct species," although it has ancestors in medical science, psychology, and other disciplines, Wicherts says.

Ioannidis, who launched the [Meta-Research Innovation Center at Stanford \(METRICS\)](#) in 2014, however, is hesitant to frame metaresearch as a separate field. "In a way, every researcher is a metaresearcher, since the issues involved are at the core of how to do science and apply the scientific method and maximize the yield of reproducible and useful information," he says.



Credit: Courtesy of James Wilson
James Wilson, founding director of the Research on Research Institute



The RoRI consortium

RoRI RESEARCH ON RESEARCH INSTITUTE

New partners, new projects and a new nonprofit: RoRI embarks on its next five years of research on research

20.06.2022 RORI UPDATES



Full information in this update is under embargo until 2pm BST/3pm CET Monday 20th June 2022.

Today marks the start of RoRI's Phase 2. With our international consortium of partners, we're excited to launch another five years of generating, synthesising and translating ideas and evidence into practical solutions to improve research.

Launched in 2019 by the universities of Sheffield and Leiden, Wellcome Trust, and Digital Science, the Research on Research Institute (RoRI) has grown into one of the world's largest platforms for meta-research collaboration. Today marks the start of our second phase, which will run until 2027.

Speech

Science Minister on ‘The Research Landscape’

Amanda Solloway spoke at a Higher Education Policy Institute webinar about improving the way we evaluate research.

From: [Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy](#) and [Amanda Solloway MP](#)
Published: 20 October 2020

Delivered on: 20 October 2020 (Transcript of the speech, exactly as it was delivered)

Brexit
[Check what you need to do](#)



It's truly fantastic to be with you today – and thank you to Nick for the invitation.

With the disruption we're all facing, it's so important that we can keep meeting virtually like this.

Future Research Assessment Programme

This information is hosted by Jisc on behalf of the four UK higher education funding bodies.


About the programme

The Future Research Assessment Programme aims to explore possible approaches to the assessment of UK higher education research performance. It has been initiated at the request of the UK and devolved government ministers and funding bodies. This significant piece of work will be led by the four UK higher education funding bodies:





- [Research England](#)
- [Scottish Funding Council](#)
- [Higher Education Funding Council for Wales](#)
- [Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland](#)

This programme of work is expected to conclude by late 2022.





PROFESSIONAL CAMPUS JOBS EVENTS RANKINGS STUDENT



4

REF review ‘will focus on diverse outputs and research culture’

Minister’s attack on academic publication culture suggests a move towards more holistic and team-based assessments of excellence, say experts

October 26, 2020


Jack Grove

Twitter: @jgrove

Plans to reform the UK’s research excellence framework (REF) may lead to a radically different exercise in which research culture is valued as highly as outstanding publications, a policy expert has predicted.

Announcing a [review](#) of the REF, which is used to distribute about £2 billion in research funding annually, science minister Amanda Solloway focused on the “pressure to publish in particular venues”, which “wrongly suggests that where you publish something is more important than what you say”. She noted that 97 per cent of outputs in the 2014 REF were “text based” and mainly journal papers.

That criticism suggested that the REF review may seek to broaden the type of outputs submitted by researchers, explained James Wilsdon, Digital Science professor of research policy at the [University of Sheffield](#), who expected to see a push to include research datasets, thinktank policy papers, exhibitions and other diverse outputs in the next audit.



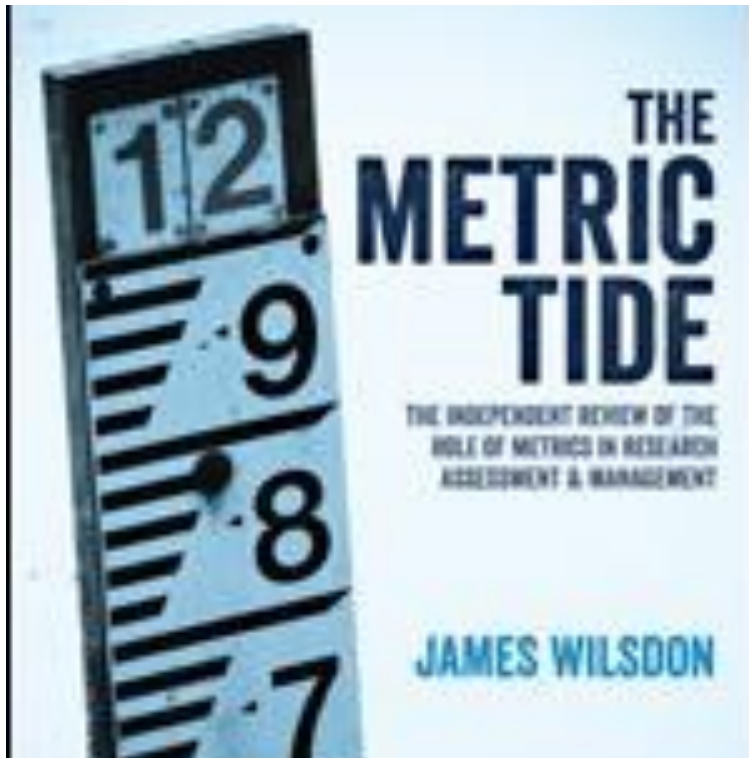
Source: Getty

For REF,
change is in
the air (again!)

“We must be prepared to look to the future and ask ourselves how the REF can be evolved for the better, so that universities and funders work together to help build the research culture we all aspire to.” Amanda Solloway, Oct 2020

The long road to REF 2021

Date	Exercise	Coordinating body	Key features
1986	Research Selectivity Exercise	Universities Grants Committee	37 cost-centres; 4-part questionnaire on research income, expenditure, planning priorities & output
1989	Research Selectivity Exercise	Universities Funding Council	152 units of assessment; 70 peer review panels; 2 outputs per member of staff
1992	Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)	HEFCE	HEIs select which staff to submit; 5-point scale; 2800 submissions to 72 UoAs; introduction of census date
1996	Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)	HEFCE	Up to four outputs per researcher; 69 UoAs
2001	Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)	HEFCE	2600 submissions to 69 units of assessment; 5 umbrella groups of panel chairs for consistency
2008	Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)	HEFCE	67 sub-panels under 15 main panels; results presented as quality profiles
2014	Research Excellence Framework (REF)	HEFCE	4 main panels; 36 sub-panels; introduction of 20% impact element
2021	Research Excellence Framework (REF)	UKRI (Research England + devolved funding councils)	All staff with significant responsibility for research included. Impact 25% weighting. Flexible number of outputs.



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- > Circular letter: Notice of reprofiling of payments relating to existing research funding
- > Circular letter: REF 2021 Codes of practice complaints and investigations process
- > Circular letter: GCRF QR notification
- > Circular letter: Knowledge Exchange Framework publication
- > Circular letter: Notification of funding - additional quality-related research (QR) research degree programme (RDP) supervision funding allocations
- > 2020-21 additional QR RDP supervision funding allocations - annex A

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Real-Time REF Review

The Real-Time REF Review (RTRR) is a longitudinal study which aims to understand the views of the higher education research community towards the Research Excellence Framework (REF) Pilot Study.

Pilot Study

The RTRR Pilot Study was commissioned by Research England and the University of Sheffield and Research England. The exercise gathers longitudinal study into academic and managerial attitudes towards the REF Pilot Study.

Data was collected in four UK Higher Education Institutions and centres across the country.

1. Phase 1 consisted of a survey study intended to understand the perceptions of the four universities.
2. Phase 2 consisted of semi-structured interviews with individuals within the four universities.

The findings of the pilot are outlined in the executive summary below, available here.

Full Study (2020/21)

Research England and the devolved funding bodies have commissioned a UK-wide study. Data will be collected in 'real-time' as institutions prepare for the next REF submission schedule due to COVID-19. Read this blog to find out more.

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Reviewing the role of metrics in research assessment

17 May 2022

As part of FRAP an expert panel has been invited to lead a review of the role of metrics in research management and assessment.

The Future Research Assessment Programme (FRAP) is led by the four UK higher education funding bodies.

Tightly-defined objectives

This review, The Metric Tide Revisited, will take a short, sharp, evidence-informed look at current and potential uses of metrics against a set of tightly-defined objectives to:

- revisit the conclusions and recommendations of the last detailed review of these questions, The Metric Tide (2015), and assess progress against these
- consider whether developments over recent years in the infrastructures, methodologies and uses of research metrics negate or change any of those 2015 conclusions or suggest additional priorities

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- > Future Research Assessment Programme: UKRI
- > Future Research Assessment Programme: JSC

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A few contributions to this debate

Function before form....

Before reforming the REF, we need to be clear about its **purposes**. Lord Stern identified **six purposes** in his 2016 review:


- Supporting the allocation of around £2bn of quality-related research funding each year;
- Informing strategic decision-making about national research priorities;
- Providing an accountability mechanism for public investment in research;
- Creating performance incentives for HE institutions, departments and academics;
- Giving HEIs information to inform decisions on resource allocation;
- Providing a periodically-updated reputational benchmark, that may be especially important for less known institutions.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-excellence-framework-review>






Option 1: Abolish



PROFESSIONAL CAMPUS JOBS EVENTS RANKINGS STUDENT



Now is a good time for the UK to ditch the REF and the TEF


Both are too resource-intensive to be sustainable during this crisis, and their objectives can be achieved through other measures, argues Dorothy Bishop

March 24, 2020

[Dorothy Bishop](#)

Twitter: [@deevybee](#)


At a time of crisis, universities must make best use of their limited resources. In the case of the UK, some people have suggested that the 2021 research excellence framework be postponed by a year, as so many things have been. In my view, it would be better to ditch it entirely – and the teaching excellence framework with it.



I am a long-standing critic of both the REF and the TEF, mainly on the grounds that they take up a disproportionate amount of time and energy of academic staff relative to their benefits. It is, of course, all very well to say we should ditch them, but the question then is what to put in their place.

To answer it, we have to consider what these frameworks are trying to achieve.

The REF has a long history, having developed since the 1980s as a transparent means of allocating block grant research funding to higher education institutions. Over the years, it has become increasingly complex and detailed, and has also suffered from mission creep, being used also to incentivise various types of research activity and institutional behaviours. Attempts to simplify it have always been resisted by academics themselves, who insist on a peer-review process in preference to metrics.




This article is more than 2 years old

DAVID PAYNE | LONG READ | 12/02/19

The universal basic research grant: funding research for the 21st century

David Payne introduces the idea of a universal basic research grant as a solution to the problems faced in funding early stage research.



David Payne
David Payne is a Reader and Royal Society University Research Fellow at Imperial College London.

Tags
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What is the future of the research funding landscape in the UK, and what changes should be made to the system to enable investment in research and development (R&D) to deliver the outcomes we all need and expect? Should we aspire to be different, to be bold and innovative?

These are crucial questions ahead of this year's government spending review, and issues that have grown in urgency since the UK government announced plans to increase the percentage of GDP spent on research from its current level of 1.7% to 2.4 % (the OECD average). This percentage equates to an uplift of around £21bn extra spent on R&D in the UK by 2027, assuming the current ratio of 2:1 industry to government funding, this would mean about an extra £14bn per annum from industry and £7.5bn per annum from the public sector.

A question of balance

This proposed uplift comes soon after recent large investments in UK research and development (R&D) by the government in strategically important areas for the UK economy, with schemes such as the Industrial Challenge Strategy Fund (ICSF) and the Global Challenge Research Fund (GCRF), to name just a few. But, on the other hand, the core budgets for research councils that underpin both fundamental and applied research activities are *shrinking* in the next few years.

It is critical that the government continues to support key aspects of the economy by investing in large-scale R&D, as well as funding effective innovation and translation pathways. But there is a debate to be had as to how very early stage research, performed mainly in universities, can be supported in a way that



A: Outputs
Recommendation 1: All research active staff should be returned in the REF.
Recommendation 2: Outputs should be submitted at Unit of Assessment level with a set average number per FTE but with flexibility for some faculty members to submit more and others less than the average.
Recommendation 3: Outputs should not be portable.
Recommendation 4: Panels should continue to assess on the basis of peer review. However, metrics should be provided to support panel members in their assessment, and panels should be transparent about their use.
B: Impact
Recommendation 5: Institutions should be given more flexibility to showcase their interdisciplinary and collaborative impacts by submitting 'institutional' level impact case studies, part of a new institutional level assessment.
Recommendation 6: Impact must be based on research of demonstrable quality. However, case studies could be linked to a research activity and a body of work as well as to a broad range of research outputs.
Recommendation 7: Guidance on the REF should make it clear that impact case studies should not be narrowly interpreted, need not solely focus on socio-economic impacts but should also include impact on government policy, on public engagement and understanding, on cultural life, on academic impacts outside the field, and impacts on teaching.

C: Environment
Recommendation 8: A new, institutional level Environment assessment should include an account of the institution's future research environment strategy, a statement of how it supports high quality research and research-related activities, including its support for interdisciplinary and cross-institutional initiatives and impact. It should form part of the institutional assessment and should be assessed by a specialist, cross-disciplinary panel.
Recommendation 9: That individual Unit of Assessment environment statements are condensed, made complementary to the institutional level environment statement and include those key metrics on research intensity specific to the Unit of Assessment.
D: Wider context
Recommendation 10: Where possible, REF data and metrics should be open, standardised and combinable with other research funders' data collection processes in order to streamline data collection requirements and reduce the cost of compiling and submitting information.
Recommendation 11: That Government, and UKRI, could make more strategic use of REF, to better understand the health of the UK research base, our research resources and areas of high potential for future development, and to build the case for strong investment in research in the UK.
Recommendation 12: Government should ensure that there is no increased administrative burden to Higher Education Institutions from interactions between the TEF and REF, and that they together strengthen the vital relationship between teaching and research in HEIs.

Option 2: Amend

The rise of the machines: Artificial intelligence meets scholarly content

Alex D. Wade, Kuansan Wang

First published: 20 June 2016 | <https://doi.org/10.1002/leap.1033> | Citations: 4

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Abstract

Key points

- New forms of human/machine dialogue are emerging as robots understand vast amounts of content rather than simply indexing content as strings of characters.
- Recognizing strings of characters as entities (e.g. = names = authors) allows for meaningful associations between entities and reasoning over these relationships.
- Web-scale adoption of the Semantic Web approach has been slow because it is too complex to implement and does not scale.
- User intent, discovered through conversational models of human-computer interaction, allows for a deeper understanding of exactly what researchers are looking for.
- Personal agents hold the promise of finding information that we will find useful before we have started to look for it.
- Publishers can use Academic Knowledge APIs to interpret academic user



Radical rethink of UK's excellence frameworks is needed

Merging metrics for the REF, KEF and TEF would free up time for academics to become researchers once again, says Robert MacIntosh

四月 16, 2021

[Robert MacIntosh](#)

Twitter: [@Rob_MacIntosh](#)

Designing assessments that adequately measure learning outcomes but do not absorb excessive amounts of students' time is always a tricky task for academics. After all, we are the ones required to mark the mountain of exam scripts and essays that follow.

With submissions entered for the research excellence framework (REF) and the results for the first knowledge exchange framework (KEF) due imminently, academia's own outputs are now under scrutiny and many scholars are wondering if the balance between effort expended on assessment versus the insight gained has drifted out of kilter.

Since the first research assessment exercise in 1992, the level of scrutiny applied to UK university sectors has increased exponentially. The original policy intention to improve performance, enhance accountability and, in the case of the REF, to provide a basis for dispersing billions of pounds of research funding, is widely accepted. The teaching excellence framework (TEF) was introduced in 2017 to offer similar insights to current and future students about teaching, while the KEF aims to monitor how universities are addressing real-world problems.

For all their good intentions, however, the cumulative and unintended effect of the REF, TEF and KEF on the sector have been seismic. The main challenge is the amount of effort involved; every hour spent reporting, managing and monitoring performance



Source: iStock/BrianJackson

Option 3: Automate

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What the FRAP happens next? Four priorities for reforming the REF

The next exercise should clarify its purpose and language, relax its disciplinary focus and refine research culture, says James Wilsdon

May 26, 2022
James Wilsdon
Twitter: @jameswilsdon

There is, it seems, no rest between Research Excellence Frameworks.

Barely 72 hours after the release of the [REF 2021 results](#), the first email landed. Sent on behalf of an anonymous university working group "set up to look specifically at data capture for the next REF cycle", it linked me to an Excel spreadsheet. This contained 27 columns, each with a detailed question about research collaborations, talks and lectures, public engagement, media appearances, contributions to the discipline, PhD training – the usual jazz – over the past 18 months. To be filled in and returned "if possible" within three weeks.

I mention this not to criticise or poke fun at my own university. Tens of thousands of academic researchers across the UK could share a similar story. And there is, of course, a managerial logic to such efforts. As a former "impact lead" for my faculty, I know the importance of strategies, plans and support structures. And as someone [who researches research](#), I applaud efforts to improve the patchy data and limited understanding we have of so many aspects of research cultures and impacts.



Source: Getty (edited)

OPINION 12 OCT 2021

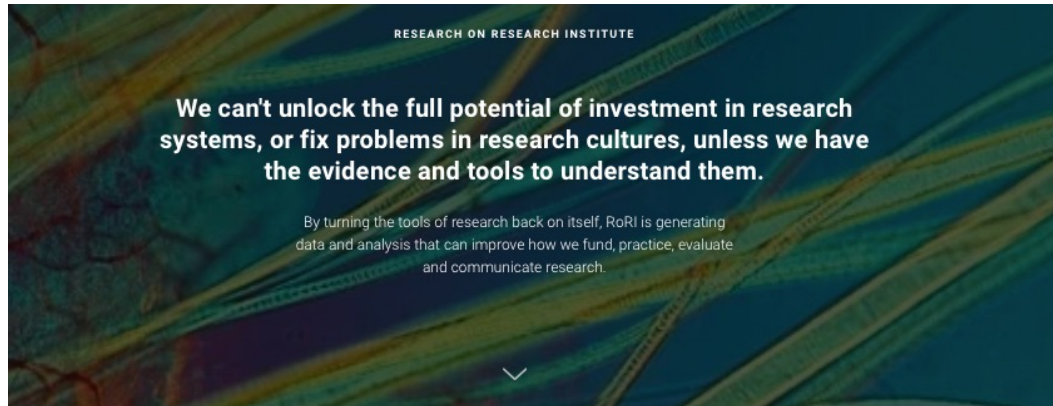
The next REF can drive a better research culture

By Tanita Casci, Miles Padgett, Grace Gottlieb and David Price

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Option 4: Accelerate change



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