

Responsible Research Assessment Guidelines for Hiring, Evaluations and Award Panels

The University of Groningen (UG) has approved [principles to promote the responsible assessment of research](#). The points below summarize evaluation practices that should be avoided and positive alternatives that should be adopted in research assessment and in the recruitment, recognition and reward of researchers.

These guidelines are intended for all UG members who are involved in the assessment of researchers, research proposals or research units, as well as for those who are the subject of such assessments.

Practices that should be avoided

- Avoid the 'quick and dirty' assessment of research based solely on narrow quantitative metrics such as:
 - journal name, ranking or Journal Impact Factor,
 - h-index or
 - number of publications and raw citation counts taken in isolation.
- Do not use metrics that are designed to evaluate journals as a surrogate measure of article quality or in hiring and promotion decisions.
- Do not rank on the basis of insignificant decimal places.
- Do not take a lack of available quantitative data as an indicator of performance.

Best practices

- When assessing researchers, consider individual differences and the highlights of their entire portfolio of activities and contributions.
 - Ask applicants to highlight their key contributions.
 - Emphasize quality over quantity.
 - Ensure a more balanced assessment of researchers by taking into account the diverse contributions they make in domains from teaching to research, societal impact, leadership and, where relevant, patient care.
- When using metrics, make sure to:
 - balance quantitative assessment with expert peer review,
 - use more than one metric to ensure robustness,
 - use normalized metrics to account for field, date and output type,
 - account for years active in academia when assessing Early Career Researchers.
- If research metrics are used in recruitment, promotion, nominations or other processes, clearly outline this in the application documents.

For further information please refer to the full text of the [Responsible Research Assessment Principles](#).

For an example of best practices, we recommend the [2023 Evidence-based NWO CV](#). You can find more information about the new format [here](#).

Responsible Research Assessment Principles: Background

Brief description: The University of Groningen (UG) is committed to building a culture of collaboration and creating a research environment founded on academic freedom, integrity, inclusivity and transparency. These core values should also guide the assessment of research.

The UG Responsible Research Assessment Principles, as well as these Guidelines, are a distillation of best practices in research assessment. They have been created as a guide to the appropriate use of research metrics at the UG and to promote best practices when conducting any form of research assessment, especially when it concerns and affects individuals.

Why is this important? The misuse of narrow quantitative indicators and the impact of this on the wellbeing of researchers, research quality and overall institutional research performance have been well documented. In an effort to correct this, numerous initiatives have been launched both worldwide and in the Netherlands, most notably the [Leiden Manifesto](#), the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), the [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#) and the [Position paper of the national programme for Recognition & Rewards](#).

All of these initiatives have a simple aim:

- to encourage consideration of individual differences and the highlights of a researcher's entire portfolio of activities, and to avoid research assessment practices which introduce bias,
- to promote the assessment of research publications based on their content and individual merit, rather than on the publication metrics of the journal they are published in,
- to avoid the use of narrow or biased quantitative metrics such as the Journal Impact Factor and h-index, or raw citation counts and number of publications taken in isolation in hiring, promotion or funding decisions.

As responsible research assessment practices become more prevalent, failure to embrace them may lead to difficulty in attracting and retaining top candidates.

Where are we now? The University of Groningen is a signatory of the [Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#). The Responsible Research Assessment Principles of the University of Groningen are aligned with all of the initiatives above, as well as with the [Strategy Evaluation Protocol \(SEP\) 2021-2027](#) and the University of Groningen Strategic Plan 2021-2026, [Making Connections](#).

How can I find out more? This initiative is led by the Research & Impact Cluster of University Services and supported by [Research Intelligence Services \(RISe\)](#), the University Committee for Academic Practice (UCW), the UG Expert Network for Research Analytics (ENRA), HR, the Young Academy Groningen (YAG) and the Recognition and Rewards Workgroup, which have all provided valuable input and feedback. For more information on research intelligence in general, please consult:

- [Responsible Research Assessment Principles of the University of Groningen](#),
- [Research Intelligence Services](#),
- [Dr Ana Ranitovic](#), Societal Impact Coordinator of Research Intelligence Services.