



# Responsible Metrics Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University of Leicester is a signatory to the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA), signalling our commitment to use publication and citation metrics in a responsible manner.<sup>1</sup>
- 1.2 In November 2019, the Executive Board and the Responsible Metrics Task and Finish Group approved five principles, listed below, to inform our approach to evaluating academic research, and the use of bibliometrics. This policy document restates those principles and clarifies the scope and governance of responsible metrics policy at the University.

## 2. Scope

2.1 The principles should be used in academic promotions and recruitment, and other research evaluations where publication track record is taken into account. They should inform decision-making where evidence of research outputs quality or bibliometrics have been provided. Bibliometrics may be required or requested by panels in order to provide contextual evidence. The principles should be applied in the selection, presentation and interpretation of publication and citation metrics.

## 3. Governance

- 3.1 The Research and Enterprise Committee (REC) will be responsible for reviewing the policy (initially, annually, thereafter triennially), checking that the principles, scope and related guidance are up-to-date and aligned with funder and sector policies. Input may be sought from the Library and the Research and Enterprise Division.
- 3.2 Suspected significant breaches of the policy will be investigated in the same way as allegations of academic misconduct.

## 4. Principles

4.1 The application of bibliometrics in academic recruitment and promotion should be understood and informed by five principles. The principles are outlined in DORA, The Leiden Manifesto, The Metric Tide Report and the UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics. The primary focus of DORA is on practices relating to research articles published in peer-reviewed journals, but Principle 1 in particular applies more broadly.

1. **Quantitative metrics-based evaluation should support – but not supplant – expert assessment.**
  - a. Assessment of individual researchers will be based on an evaluation of the quality of their research outputs.
  - b. The University's Output Quality Policy provides the mechanism for review-based assessment of outputs quality.

- c. Decision-makers using bibliometrics will understand their proper uses, and any limitations or deficiencies. Support in the attainment of this commitment will be available.

**2. Metrics used should be based on the best possible data in terms of accuracy and scope.**

- a. Bibliometrics will be selected from sources that are considered accurate and comprehensive.
- b. Where there are limitations in available metrics these will be noted as part of any formal use.
- c. Journal metrics are not a robust measure of the quality of individual articles.

**3. Data collection and analytical processes must be open and transparent, so that individuals being evaluated can test and verify the results.**

- a. The assessment criteria, bibliometrics selected for use, and sources of the quantitative data will be recorded and made available, on request, to those being evaluated.
- b. Those conducting assessments will ensure that the datasets used to evaluate research quality for an individual researcher can be accessed, on request.

**4. To account for the diversity of disciplines and career paths, a range of indicators should be used.**

- a. Individuals at different career stages, and individuals who differ in status regarding protected characteristics, will not be disadvantaged by the selection of bibliometrics. Use of metrics must take into account, for example, career stage, career breaks, and careers outside academia.
- b. A 'basket of metrics' approach may be taken to contribute to the evaluation of research engagement, quality and rigour within the context of disciplinary publication and citation practice.
- c. Bibliometrics will be omitted where it is appropriate to do so.

**5. Use of indicators and metrics will affect behaviours, and their use must be reviewed and updated to anticipate and recognise this.**

- a. An awareness will be maintained that methods of evaluation may influence the behaviour of researchers in intended and unintended ways, in particular those at early career stages.
- b. The potential undesirable consequences of a strong reliance on bibliometrics will be recognised.
- c. Best practice that focuses on the quality, value and relevance of individual research outputs will be promoted.

4.2 The Responsible Metrics Group has developed guidance documents to help candidates and panels use bibliometrics, and these principles, in practice. They can be [found on sharepoint](#). Further advice can also be sought from the Library and the Research and Enterprise Division (RED).