

# Statement of Principles for the Responsible use of Bibliometrics

## Introduction

The University of Leicester is a signatory to the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#), and we take our commitment to, and implementation of, principles for the responsible use of research metrics seriously.

The principles below shall be underpinned by policy and guidance. They are based upon **transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity**, and follow the lead of principles outlined in DORA, [The Leiden Manifesto](#), [The Metric Tide Report](#) and the [UK Forum for Responsible Research Metrics](#).

## Principles:

The application of bibliometrics in research hiring, tenure and promotion should be understood and informed by the following five principles.

1. **Robustness: basing metrics on the best possible data in terms of accuracy and scope.**
  - Bibliometrics will be selected from sources that are considered accurate and comprehensive.
  - Where there are limitations in available metrics these will be noted as part of any formal use.
  - The University of Leicester recognises that a journal metric is not a robust measure of the quality of an individual article.
2. **Humility: recognising that quantitative evaluation should support – but not supplant – expert assessment.**
  - Assessment of individual researchers will be based on an evaluation of the quality of their research outputs.
  - The University's *Policy for ongoing evaluation of research output quality* shall be the go-to source for the evaluation of outputs.
  - Decision-makers using bibliometrics will understand their proper uses, and any limitations or deficiencies. Support in the attainment of this commitment will be available.
3. **Transparency: keeping data collection and analytical processes open and transparent, so that those being evaluated can test and verify the results.**
  - The assessment criteria, bibliometrics selected for use, and source of the quantitative data will be recorded and made available, on request, to those being evaluated.
  - Those conducting assessments will ensure that the datasets used to evaluate research quality for an individual researcher can be accessed, on request.

4. Diversity: accounting for variation by field, and using a range of indicators to reflect and support a plurality of research and researcher career paths.
  - Individuals at different career stages, and individuals who differ in status regarding protected characteristics, will not be disadvantaged by the selection of bibliometrics. For example, the H-index metric does not account for early career stage, career breaks or careers outside academia.
  - 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.
  - There will be cases where the omission of bibliometrics entirely is appropriate.
5. Reflexivity: recognising and anticipating the systemic and potential effects of indicators, and updating them in response.
  - 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.
  - A strong reliance on bibliometrics in general may have undesirable consequences.
  - Those in positions of influence will promote and teach best practice that focuses on the quality, value and relevance of individual research outputs.

#### Acknowledgments

This statement was written with help from the [Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics](#) (Hicks et al. (2015), Nature 520, 429-431, doi: 10.1038/520429a), [The Metric Tide](#) (Wilsdon et al. (2015), doi: 10.13140/RG.2.1.4929.1363), [Bibliometrics for Research Management and Research Evaluation](#) (Waltman, L. and Noyons, E. (2018), [CWTS Leiden University](#)), and responsible metrics statements from the [University of Reading](#), [University of Bristol](#) and [London South Bank University](#).