



Responsible Research Evaluation Policy

CU-RIO-POL-12.0 V4

Introduction

Cranfield University is a research intensive institution with world-class expertise, facilities and partnerships. We understand the importance of being able to assess, manage and benchmark our research, researchers and students in order to fully unlock the potential of our people (and capabilities) and achieve our strategic ambitions. However, it is crucial that the evaluation approach we take is fair, objective and transparent with metrics being used in a responsible fashion to support expert judgement.

The key principles of this approach are outlined below and are fully aligned to our [Research and Innovation Strategy 2022-2027](#), which recognises that '*the true significance of the University's research will be judged according to its novelty, dissemination of outputs, and positive impact*' and that we will embrace diversity in all its forms and recognise and reward all those that contribute to research excellence.

Expert opinion is the foundation of research evaluation

The qualitative assessment of research by thought leaders, academic peers and specialist authorities is core to the Cranfield approach. It allows for local, disciplinary, career and individual diversity to be accounted for within evaluations.

Metrics can be valuable, when used appropriately

The careful selection of quantitative indicators can inform and support expert opinion and decision making when the limitations, bias and robustness associated with each are recognised and considered. However, metrics should not be used as a standalone substitute for qualitative assessment.

For further information on research metrics and responsible use, please see the [Metrics Toolkit](#) and the [Snowball Metrics](#) initiative.

Evaluation inputs are transparent to the individual, community and organisation

The basis for evaluation in terms of data collection, information sources and analytical processes is made open, simple and transparent to allow independent verification and review. The value and impact of all possible research activity and outputs will be considered.

Our approach engenders a responsible evaluation ethos and remains fit for purpose

Clear and consistent guidance will be frequently communicated to academic and research staff on how to support this ethos. Cranfield will regularly assess and review our evaluation approach,

taking into account sectoral best practice and the changing priorities of the institution alongside alignment with the principles outlined above.

Responsibilities as a signatory to DORA

Cranfield University is a signatory of [The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) and we are committed to upholding the key principles for Institutions, which include:

- Ensuring that journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, are NOT used as a surrogate measure of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions.
- Being explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting that the content of a research output is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.
- Considering the value and impact of all types of research outputs, as well as a broad range of impact measures, when assessing research quality.

Cranfield University has a distinct research portfolio arising from our multi-disciplinary [Themes](#) and a diverse community of staff, students and collaborators representing over 100 countries, backgrounds, and career paths; thus we recognise and celebrate the importance of individuality and creativity within our research activities. It is therefore crucial that the approach we take for research evaluation upholds our [Institutional Values](#) and is consistent with our [Ethics Code](#).

In summary, our research assessment processes will focus on the content and quality of research outputs and impact, recognising and rewarding novelty, contribution to academic knowledge and the applied benefits of research.

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Document Review

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V3	Document control updated with details of new PVC R&I, link to ethics code added. Reviewed November 2023 – no changes	RIO	28.11.22
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