



Employing a responsible approach to the evaluation of research within Cranfield University

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Introduction

Cranfield University is a research intensive institution with world-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 reflect the ideologies outlined in the [Leiden Manifesto](#), [The Metric Tide: Report of the Independent Review of the Role of Metrics in Research Assessment and Management](#) and the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#).

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, discipline, career and individual diversity to be accounted for within evaluations.

Metrics are 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.

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, with an annual review of progress conducted through structured Performance and Development Reviews on an individual basis.

Cranfield will regularly assess and review our evaluation approach, taking into account sectorial best practice, the emergence of new indicators and the changing priorities of the institution alongside alignment with the principles outlined above.

Cranfield University is the UK’s only exclusively postgraduate university with a specialist focus on technology and management. We deliver transformational research, postgraduate education and professional development in partnership with industry, governments and other organisations. We have a distinct research portfolio arising from our cross-University multi-disciplinary [Themes](#) and a varied 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, and continue to take, for research evaluation marries with our ideals and values.

For further information on the range of metrics that can be used, please review the [Snowball Metrics](#) initiative and the [Metrics Toolkit](#).

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