

King's College London's commitment to fair and responsible research assessment

Introduction

King's College London, in our effort to incentivise and reward outstanding research across disciplines and across formats, and to ensure the fair and equal access to opportunity and recognition among our research students and staff, commits to the core principles of fair and responsible research assessment. These are:

- assessing research outputs and other contributions based on their intrinsic merit; and
- discouraging the inappropriate use of proxies or metrics – such as the title or impact factor of the journal in which the work was published – as a substitute for research quality.

Responsible assessment and King's organisational values

Research is a core element of King's College London's identity, and plays a central role in everything we do, care about, and teach. It follows, therefore, that institutional practice related to the assessment, reward, and incentivisation of research must reflect our values and overarching mission.

King's core research mission, as expressed in our [Strategic Vision 2029](#), is to make the world a better place through enquiry-driven, disciplinary research. In the face of this aspiration to world-leading (and world-improving) research, evaluating and assessing research performance and impact is a worthwhile and necessary endeavour; research indicators can be a helpful tool to inform strategic and operational ambitions and monitor institutional progress toward specific ambitions. At the same time, King's recognises that such indicators are limited in nature, and must be used carefully, transparently, and in concert with qualitative assessment, in order to fairly assess and reward research practice, and to ensure equality of access to opportunity for all research practitioners.

This commitment to fair and responsible assessment aligns furthermore with specific ambitions set out since the publication of Vision 2029. The [King's Race Equality Action Plan](#) commits to addressing the systemic barriers to BME

representation in our research pipeline, focusing on disciplines with low numbers of BME researchers. An example of such a systemic barrier might be overreliance on traditional research output metrics such as Journal Impact Factor, which can serve (if used irresponsibly) to entrench systemic inequality by using indicators of past performance disproportionately in order to determine suitability for future opportunity. Ensuring that such indicators are applied responsibly, and that assessment practices as a whole are made to reflect a diversity of research activity, will help ensure that our research can benefit from the contributions of researchers which reflect the diversity of our institution and the city in which we are based.

Implementation plan

King's signed DORA (the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) in July 2017, to demonstrate commitment to fair, transparent, and responsible research assessment practices across the university.

A more detailed and specific policy on responsible research assessment has been submitted to the College Research Committee and will be reviewed in the January 2021 meeting. This process will culminate in a comprehensive, organisation-wide policy on responsible assessment to ensure that our recruitment, promotion and career-advancement policies and practices reflect commitment to the principles of fair and responsible research assessment.

Our commitment to these principles will also see the establishment of a working group on fair and responsible research. This body will engage in community consultation, outreach and education, and pursue partnerships across existing initiatives at the College, including the King's Open Research Group Initiative (KORGI), to develop open and transparent guidelines for assessment which also reward a commitment to open and reproducible research, across all disciplines and formats.

Monitoring progress and ensuring delivery

King's is committed to ensuring that members of our community are treated fairly and responsibly in all practices related to research performance assessment, and specifically where such assessment impacts recruitment, promotion, or career-advancement opportunities. The steering group for responsible assessment will supply regular reporting on our progress in enshrining this commitment in policy and practice across the institution.