

Responsible Research Assessment: Applicant Guide

The University of Exeter is committed to ensuring the responsible use of numerical indicators (metrics) in research assessment and management. This aims to ensure the promotions/recruitment process is fair, but also supports our commitments to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity – and to supporting high quality research of all kinds.

Watch our animations to find out more about the [responsible use of metrics](#) and our associated [guiding principles](#). Examples of research metrics which are sometimes provided in CVs/applications include Journal Impact Factors, *h*-indices and other measures of citation, publication, Altmetric scores, or the number/value of research grant applications and awards.

Those assessing your application are asked to base their judgements primarily on a qualitative assessment of all evidence provided, and to use their expert judgement when assessing CVs and applications. Decisions will be based on a range of information with your discipline(s) considered.

To help ensure your application is assessed fairly, please consider the following:

1. How can you best convey the originality, significance and rigour of your research outputs beyond citation-based measures? Incorporate a range of indicators – not only quantitative – to highlight the value of your contributions to research.
2. What impact has your research had, for example on policy, practice, communities, wider society or the economy? How did you shape/contribute to the research endeavour? If relevant, highlight non-traditional research outputs (e.g. such as software, datasets or practice-based research).
3. For your most important publications, you should indicate your particular contribution to them (see the [CRediT taxonomy of research Contributor Roles](#) for keyways people contribute to publications).
4. Where available, provide a link to full publications (e.g. DOI) to enable the panel to review your research publications or other outputs. Avoid including proxy or aggregate indicators to denote quality, such as where your research has been published
5. The University is a signatory of the [San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment \(DORA\)](#) and a member of the [Coalition on Reforming Research Assessment \(CoARA\)](#). So **please do not include Journal Impact Factors or *h*-indices as these should not be considered**. Find out more about why we believe [h-indices are an unfair measure](#) of academic productivity and impact.
6. 6. How do you contribute towards a thriving research culture? For example, have you mentored other research staff or undertaken any internal or external citizenship roles? Perhaps you have contributed to peer review processes, or can demonstrate how you comply with/exceed the expectations of our Open Research policies?
7. References to ‘world-leading’ or ‘internationally excellent’ research or outputs, in promotion criteria or person specifications, refer to quality standards of the research - not the nature or geographical scope of subjects, nor to the locus of research, nor its place of dissemination. For example, research which is focused within one part of the UK might be of ‘world-leading’ standard and significance.

Additional Information

CoARA commitments which are most relevant to recruitment and promotion decisions

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.
3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index.

Commitments within the DORA declaration that are most relevant to recruitment and promotion decisions

For research institutions:

4. Be explicit about the criteria used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics or the identity of the journal in which it was published.
5. For the purposes of research assessment, consider the value and impact of all research outputs (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and consider a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

For researchers:

15. When involved in committees making decisions about funding, hiring, tenure, or promotion, make assessments based on scientific content rather than publication metrics.
17. Use a range of article metrics and indicators on personal/supporting statements, as evidence of the impact of individual published articles and other research outputs.
18. Challenge research assessment practices that rely inappropriately on Journal Impact Factors and promote and teach best practice that focuses on the value and influence of specific research outputs.

Version: V3 January 2026