



**Contributions for innovative institutional  
research quality assessment  
practices and processes**

Ana Paula Cabral & Isabel Huet





## Scope

- Increased demand for a wider understanding of the higher institutions' role on the management of change, diversification, accountability (ESF 2010).
- new governance and accountability approach, highly professional management and a rethinking of the way in which the university creates and assesses its value mainly in what concerns research competitiveness and innovation (Brennan & Teichler, 2008).
- demand for studies about the use of evaluative and regulatory tools not only for accountability purposes but also to monitor or propose strategies to promote the quality of research starting at an institutional level.





## Objectives

- Design an evaluation framework to be used as the starting step to monitor and regulate the quality of research in a Portuguese universities with a special emphasis in the educational field.
- Identify what institutions can do to promote the quality of research





## Methodology

The present study combines the guidelines presented in the

*Multidimensional Research Assessment Matrix*  
(general conceptual framework)

with good practices and recommendations from the  
*Research Assessment Exercise* (UK - RAE)  
(reference case study)

aiming to find some answers to the guiding question about what  
institutions can do to evaluate, monitor and promote the  
quality of research and face assessment.





## *Multi-dimensional Research Assessment Matrix (E.C.2010)*

Guidelines and good practices about:

- Research Engagement
- Resources and Institutional Culture
- Performance
- Productivity
- Innovation
- Quality, Merit and Impact
- Sustainability and Support





## Methodology

*Case study -semi-directed interviews* conducted with:

- two members from the UK RAE panels (2008) (Cases A and B)
- two institutional representatives
  - a world-leading research-intensive/led teaching approach institution (education/soc. sciences) - case C
  - a teaching-led/research informed institution) (Case D)
- two senior researchers (experts in the area of educational research)(Cases E and F).

The respondents were invited to present their perceptions, good practices and recommendations based on the roles played in the assessment experience, contributing for the design of a combined and intertwined perspective.





## Methodology

The respondents were invited to present their perceptions in the context of the research assessment experience (RAE) following a SWOT-style approach:

Strengths

Weaknesses

Threats

Opportunities





## Data analysis

### *Research Engagement, Resources and Institutional Culture*

- “the highest quality of research” (case B).
- RAE is considered to have the support of most of its academic community, for being based on peer review and on the evaluation of outputs (cases A and B).
- According to the wide experience on peer-review of the RAE panel members, should be introduced within the institutional culture and teams “should be made clear, transparent and following rigorous standards of equality/moderation and expertise recognition always providing an accurate idea about the criteria and their implications” (case B) in order to promote the “confidence in the system” (case A).





## Data analysis

In fact, a good practice to embrace would be the encouragement of the contribution of all the intervenients to the evaluation of the system itself (case A).

- need “to promote moderation in the procedures, especially when there are different people doing different activities” (case A).
- creation/development of a strong “collegial and inclusive culture” and on the “identification of the key areas of strength” as argued by the top-rated research institution representative (case D)





## Data analysis

### *Performance, Productivity and Innovation.*

- “establishment of a wider conception of research and forms of scholarly outputs (such as textbooks, e-learning)” (Case F).
- maintenance of an open internal discussion about what constitutes international research and the scientific communication language to be used (Case B).

### *Quality, Merit and Impact*

- concept of impact and should only be considered as “a second moment after assessing quality” (case A). The main objective should be to achieve “the highest quality of research” (case A) and then, impact or “significance” may be assessed.
- “quality in Education is about changing people’s questions rather than giving them narrow answers” and that in this area it very often takes 20 years to have an impact and mostly an indirect one”. (case B)





## Data analysis

### *Sustainability and Support*

- encouragement of new researchers to become involved in the production of high quality research (case D)
- need for support and investment, the top-rated university representative (case C).





## Conclusions

### **Good practices and recommendations at an institutional level**

#### ***who develops research***

- develop tools to identify the researchers'/ research teams' profiles (habits, motivations and expectations, publication behaviours and productivity,...);
- promote a strong research culture and invest in building research capacity.





## Conclusions

### *what is being produced*

- define the conceptions and forms of research outputs;
- create research portfolios, institutional repositories and internal databases for the collection of outputs/ publications, *bibliometric* data, and information about projects, patents, partnerships ...);
- promote the of collaboration/partnerships/trans, multi and inter disciplinary in/ across departments and nationally/ internationally.





## Conclusions

### ***how research is assessed***

- plan *strategically* at all levels in the institution (based on the definition of its research identity and areas of strength/differentiation);
- use of peer review as a mechanism for quality control and the basis for the development of internal assessment exercises where all the intervenients contribute for the regulation and control of the system;
- create dedicated structures and mechanisms to invest in rigour, innovation and creativity.





## Conclusions

### *how it is supported*

- promote the *highest quality of research*, with a clear emphasis on training (research skills, publication techniques and peer review);
- engage researchers and the academic community in a common effort to achieve excellence and a constant and open debate about what constitutes international research, the constraints associated with research communication language as well as the notions of impact and significance;
- recognize merit and reward with funding and rely, not only on international commercial ranking and benchmarking tools, but also on its research capacity and impact on policy and practice and future developments;
- invest and support young researchers and make the research career attractive.





## Contacts

THANK YOU

Ana Paula Cabral - [apcabral@ua.pt](mailto:apcabral@ua.pt)

Isabel Huet [huet@ua.pt](mailto:huet@ua.pt)



**METU**  
Northern Cyprus  
Campus

