



UNIVERSITY OF  
LINCOLN

## ACADEMIC POLICY FRONT COVER SHEET

<b>Name of Policy:</b>	Responsible Metrics Policy
<b>Scope of Policy:</b>	The intended purpose of this policy is to support the responsible use of metrics in research-related evaluation at individual and collective levels.
<b>Author:</b>	The Policy is owned by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) and was drafted by the Deputy Head of Research and Industrial Partnerships.
<b>Applicable to:</b>	Staff
<b>Consultation Process:</b>	Data Management Working Group
<b>Approval Body:</b>	Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG)
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## **Responsible Metrics Policy**

Version 1.0

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This policy outlines a set of principles on the responsible use of quantitative data/metrics on research activity by which research evaluation and assessment should be conducted at the University of Lincoln. Whilst this policy focussed on research evaluation it is intended that the University will implement these principles across all areas of academic activity, irrespective of role profile.

The policy has been informed by (and aligns with) the San Francisco Declaration of Research Assessment (DORA) and the Leiden Manifesto. It is intended to act as an enabling code of good practice and provide clarity for staff on evaluation activities.

For the purpose of this policy, quantitative data, metrics and indicators refer to the range of numeric data available both within and outside the University on research activity, included but not limited to bibliometrics (citations analysis), application and award data, and research income.

Information on research activity is currently used in a variety of settings across the University, including but not limited to recruitment, promotion, Individual Research Plans, and in the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

The University of Lincoln acknowledges that no quantitative data source(s) alone can provide a complete measure of research quality or activity. Peer review remains the method of choice for assessment of research quality. By providing guidance on good practice, however, the principles outlined herein, based on the 10 principles in the Leiden Manifesto, support those who wish to use quantitative evaluation measures as a complement.

This policy is applicable to all staff and is intended to govern research assessment in its broadest sense across the University, both at individual and collective levels.

### **1. Quantitative evaluation should support qualitative, expert assessment.**

The University of Lincoln recognises the value of quantitative indicators (where available) to support qualitative, expert peer review. Indicators may be used in a variety of processes including recruitment, probation, Individual Research Plans, promotion and performance review but indicators will not supplant expert assessment of research outputs. Similarly, indicators may be used for collective assessments at levels from research groups or research centres to the institution as a whole.

### **2. Measure performance against the research missions of the institution, group or researcher.**

There will always be a clearly articulated rationale for the use of metrics. From a suite of core agreed university level metrics, Colleges and Schools will be able to choose to use all or sub sets of this as appropriate to the disciplinary context <sup>(1)</sup>. The expectation is that this alignment be specifically stated in any analysis.

### **3. Protect excellence in locally relevant research.**

(1) In alignment with the Snowball Metrics 'Recipe Book' approach.

It is recognised that the majority of citation databases are inherently biased towards English-language publications. It is important that academics producing work in languages other than English are not penalised for this.

**4. Keep data collection and analytical processes open, transparent and simple.**

The University of Lincoln will endeavour to strike a balance between simple transparent metrics that may disadvantage certain subject areas, and more complex metrics that normalise for differences, but which may be more difficult for researchers to replicate. Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG) will work to ensure that a suite of institutional indicators are available for Schools to choose to use all or sub sets of this as appropriate to the disciplinary context.

**5. Allow those evaluated to verify data and analysis.**

Assessment criteria and any quantitative data used will be transparent and available (on request) to those being assessed. The citation tools used to collect and monitor research publication data will continue to be made openly available to ensure that researchers can review data about their work.

**6. Account for variation by field in publication and citation practices.**

It is recognised that research practices in disciplines vary widely and bibliometric indicators serve some disciplines better than others. Indicators will be normalised where appropriate and not used in isolation or out of context.

**7. Base assessment of individual researchers on a qualitative judgement of their portfolio.**

The University of Lincoln acknowledges how indicators are affected by career stage, protected characteristics (included but not limited to gender, age, disability) and discipline and will seek to take these factors into account when interpreting metrics. It is acknowledged that indicators do not accurately reflect the nuances of a research communication activity, many of which do not lend themselves to simple quantitative measures. Data collection, evaluation and use will always be undertaken in a manner consistent with the University's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy.

**8. Avoid misplaced concreteness and false precision.**

Where possible, the University of Lincoln commits to using multiple indicators to provide a more robust and wide-ranging picture. There should be avoidance of false precision; for example, a particular indicator may, in theory, be calculated to three decimal places to avoid ties but, the nature of the underlying data can render discriminating between such values pointless.

**9. Recognize the systemic effects of assessment and indicators.**

Indicators have the potential to pervert the system they are designed to assess. To minimise this effect a selection of indicators will be used, wherever practical.

**10. Scrutinize indicators regularly and update them.**

The indicators used by the University of Lincoln will be reviewed annually by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Research and Innovation) in consultation with the Research and Employer Engagement Group (REEG).