# UNIVERSITY OF TURKU

# POLICY FOR RESPONSIBLE ASSESSMENT OF RESEARCH AND RESEARCHER

**University of Turku**

# 1. Introduction

The University of Turku is a high-quality science university that aims at high-level research that is scientifically and socially impactful. The outputs of scientific research are diverse and varied, which is why it is essential to pay attention to their responsible measurement and evaluation.

At the University of Turku, the assessment of research and researchers are open and diverse. Different evaluation situations provide the university a tool and an opportunity to identify the choices and efforts of researchers, the quality of their work and evolving skills, as well as the elements of high-quality research and future trends. The responsible assessment of research and researchers at the University of Turku is developed alongside research and is in line with the international and national principles of responsible assessment of research and researchers. Evaluations are carried out by experts and each evaluation is reviewed afterwards to develop the evaluation processes.

At the University of Turku, the basic premise for all assessments is the implementation of good scientific practice, equality and fairness, and recognising diversity. In addition, it is considered important in the multidisciplinary University of Turku that assessments recognise the differences between disciplines and take them into consideration. The principles of responsible assessment of research and researchers presented in this policy are followed at University of Turku. The principles reflect the strategic goals of the University of Turku and specify what responsible assessment of research and researchers means from the perspective of the University of Turku.

## 1.1 National context and initiatives

The most important national initiatives, policies and guidelines that the University of Turku is committed to and which form the basis for the University of Turku's policy for the responsible assessment of research and researchers include:

**Guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity**

In Finland, the ethics of research is promoted and monitored by The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. TENK has prepared guidelines for research ethics in collaboration with the Finnish scientific community.

**The University of Turku is committed to the TENK's guidelines and instructions.**

**The guideline on the responsible conduct of research and procedures for handling allegations of misconduct in Finland** presents practical principles for good scientific practice and the process for handling alleged violations of research misconduct.

**The guideline on ethical principles of research with human participants and ethical review in the human sciences in Finland** presents the ethical principles in human sciences research and criteria for the research plans sent for ethical review.

In addition to these policies, TENK has drafted **guidelines and models** for the supervision of doctoral dissertations and their review process, on agreeing on autorship, and researcher's CV template.

> **In its activities, the University of Turku follows the responsible conduct of research and promotes discussion on research ethics.**

**Declaration for open science and research 2020–2025**

**Declaration for open science and research 2020–2025**, published in 2020, is a national policy drafted by the Finnish research community and it defines how open science is promoted and developed in the Finnish research community. Through its vision, mission and strategic goals, the Declaration outlines the direction for the development of national application and development of open science. Along with the Declaration, several different recommendations have been published to implement and support the strategic goals, of which the Good practice in researcher evaluation and the Responsible publication metrics particularly concern responsible assessment.

**Good practice in researcher evaluation - Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher in Finland**

**The Recommendation for the Evaluation of the Responsible Researcher in Finland** published in 2020 lists five overarching principles for the assessment of researchers, which are transparency, integrity, fairness, competence and diversity. In addition, it gives thirteen recommendations for best practices in researcher assessment. These recommendations have been written for the context of individual researcher assessment, but the same principles are applicable in the assessments of research organisations, research units and research.

**National recommendation on the responsible use of publication metrics**

The National recommendation on responsible publication metrics, which was published in Finnish in 2020, lists nine recommendations for the responsible use of publication metrics. The recommendation is based on international recommendations and it takes the Finnish operational environment into account.

> **The University of Turku has signed the national 'Declaration for open science and research' on 15 May 2020. By signing the Declaration, the University of Turku is committed to implementing the practices of the responsible assessment of research and researchers presented in the Declaration and the related guidelines.**

## 1.2 International context and initiatives

The most important international initiatives, policies and guidelines that the University of Turku is committed to and which form a basis for the University Turku's policy for the responsible assessment of research and researchers are listed below.

**San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)**

The DORA Declaration published in 2012 aims to improve the quality of evaluation of research outputs. The Declaration consists of 18 recommendations directed at different actors, such as funding agencies, universities, colleges and academic institutions, publishers, organizations producing evaluation metrics and researchers.

> **The University of Turku has signed the DORA Declaration on 27 February 2020 and is committed to promoting the implementation of the research evaluation practices presented in the declaration.**

**Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics**

The Leiden Manifesto for Research Metrics published in 2015 was designed so that researchers can review the methods that are used to assess their work and that the evaluators can justify the used indicators. The manifesto consists of 10 principles that guide the research assessment.

**The Hong Kong Principles for Assessing Researchers**

The Hong Kong Principles for Assessing Researchers published in 2019 lists six principles aiming to develop researcher assessment so that it is more sustainable in regard to research ethics and more versatile and of a higher quality.

**European Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment**

In 2019, the European University Association (EUA) carried out a survey Research Assessment in the Transition to Open Science, which resulted in a comprehensive overview of the state of the evaluation of research in European universities. The report has been a basis for the development of responsible assessment of research and researchers in Europe. On the basis of the report, Science Europe, an association of major public organisations that fund or conduct excellent and ground-breaking research in Europe, gave its own statement in 2020 Position Statement and Recommendations on Research Assessment Processes, which offers examples of best practice and gives recommendations e.g. for universities and funding agencies for the development of their own criteria and practices in the responsible assessment of research and researchers. On the basis of these documents, the European Commission started an initiative in 2022 (European Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment) and its purpose is to create, establish and develop a joint European evaluation system for research.

> **The University of Turku has signed the European Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment on 22 September 2022, and by signing the agreement, joined the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). As an active member of CoARA and European University Association (EUA), the University of Turku is committed to international development work and to integrating the policies and guidelines developed in this work in the best possible way in the local context.**

# 2. General principles of responsible assessment of research and researchers at the University of Turku

The following principles for responsible assessment of research and researchers are followed at the University of Turku in all assessment situations. The implementation of the principles is ensured with the detailed policy programme.

## Assessments promotes ethical, scientifically excellent and impactful research

The assessment shape and direct research and therefore the University's strategic goals for research are included in all assessment processes. The assessment is conducted only when necessary. In addition, all assessments are conducted so that they help the University of Turku in developing research prerequisites in accordance with the selected strategic goals (ethical, scientifically excellent and impactful research).

## Assessments take into account the discipline and the purpose of the evaluation

The assessment is steered by a set goal, and only purposeful data for the set goal is collected and used in the assessment. The assessment process and all its phases are described clearly and openly so that the goals, methods, materials and interpretation of the results are understood by all the parties in the evaluation. Each assessment is designed on a case-by-case basis, and the different goals and the versatility of assessment targets as well as the differences between disciplines require expert understanding and application of the assessment methods and indicators. In addition, the choices that are made in the assessment must be justified and the process is documented reliably.

## Assessments consider academic output comprehensively

The diversity of research and research output is taken into account in the assessments, and it is also considered that research is very varied between different disciplines and conducted with different methods and in divergent research cultures.

## Assessments requires the application and interpretation of essential knowledge

Assessment requires a reliable and purposeful knowledge base, balanced use of qualitative and quantitative methods and materials, fair and transparent processes, and strong expertise in conducting the assessment. In the assessments, metrics, such as the h-index and other quantitative indicators, are used only to supplement the qualitative assessment when it is justifiable.

## Assessments are effective

Resources are used efficiently in the assessments, and they are planned so that the assessments create additional value to all the parties. In addition, the assessments encourage to present factors that diversely reflect expertise and which are taken into consideration and recognised in the assessments.

# 3. Responsible assessment in practice

## 3.1 Assessment situations and processes

The principles for responsible assessment are followed in all assessment situations and processes at the University of Turku. The assessment is carried out 1) only in situations where the assessment is necessary, 2) in collaboration with the persons who are assessed, 3) professionally, and 4) often as an academic peer review.

Examples of the most important research assessment situations and processes:

> Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)
> Assessment of Quality Management
> International accreditations
> University rankings
> Mid term or periodic assessment of projects
> Assessment related to external funding
> Annual reporting
> Internal division of funding
> Internal funding calls
> Assessment related to roadmap for research infrastructures at the University of Turku
> Ethical Review
> Faculty-specific assessments

Examples of the most important researcher assessment situations and processes:

> Recruitment
> Academic career assessment
> Tenure Track Assessment
> Evaluation for a title of docent
> Development discussion
> Personal performance evaluation
> Annual reporting of doctoral researchers
> Performance evaluation related to an accreditation
> Case-specific assessments

## 3.2 Framework for the responsible assessment

At the University of Turku, the assessment processes are realised according to the five-stage **SCOPE framework** for research evaluation that is widely used in Finnish universities.
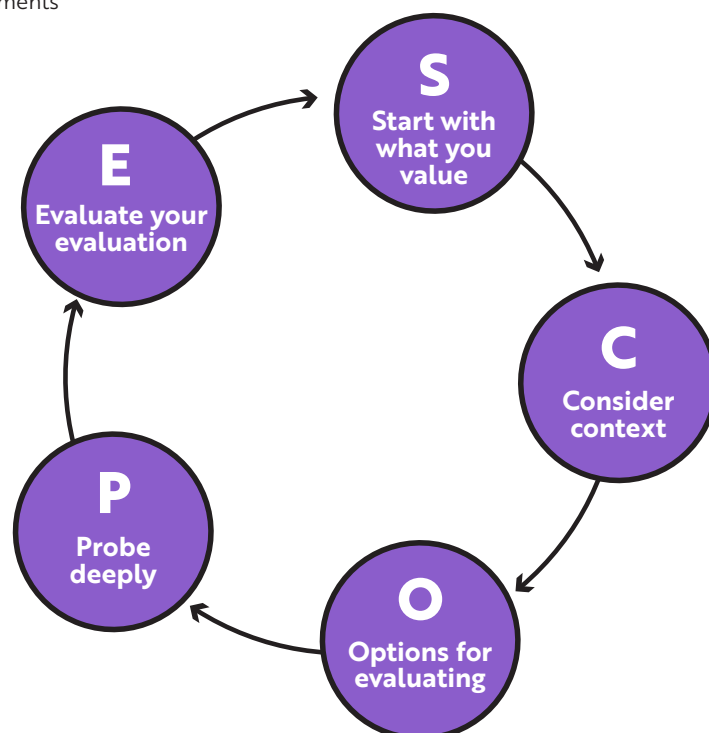


**Figure 1 SCOPE framework**

By using the SCOPE framework, it can be ensured that the assessment 1) focuses on and measures matters that are truly valued, 2) considers the context of the assessment target(s), 3) utilizes carefully selected and purposeful methods and indicators, 4) aims for deep understanding of the assessment target, and 5) ensures that the principles of responsible assessment are followed.

Part of responsible assessment is to give recognition and rewards for accomplishments. At the University of Turku, giving recognition and rewards is planned as part of the assessment process. Different kinds of material and immaterial acknowledgements work as incentives and rewards for good performance. With the appropriate carefully considered rewards, the University of Turku supports high-level and impactful research and builds internationally attractive career paths for gifted researchers, research managers and administrators.

# 4. A Toolbox for responsible assessment

A diverse and extensive selection of outputs, activities and impacts of academic work is used in the assessments at the University of Turku, which is in line with the principles of responsible assessment. The toolbox offers a menu and enable the comprehensive assessment of the different aspects of research as well as the researcher's merits in different evaluation situations. A detailed policy programme specifies indicators that support the use of these components and their usage is developed through systematic follow-up. Examples of the different assessment categories that are part of the toolbox are listed below.

| ASSESSMENT CATEGORY | COMPONENTS OF ASSESSMENT |
| --- | --- |
| **Research outputs** | > Publications<br>> Research materials and research data<br>> Software development<br>> Hardware development<br>> Methodology<br>> Research reports and policy recommendations |
| **Research process** | > Research ethics<br>> Multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activities<br>> Development of the discipline<br>> Participation in research groups<br>> Editorial activity<br>> Peer review<br>> Establishment of research consortia<br>> Networking<br>> Mobility<br>> Acquisition of external funding<br>> Development of research infrastructures<br>> Academic positions of trust and memberships in academies of science<br>> Creating and developing research infrastructure<br>> Participation in maintaining research infrastructure<br>> Participation in clinical trials |
| **Teaching and pedagogy** | > Teaching<br>> Supervision<br>> Mentoring<br>> Development of learning materials<br>> Development of learning tools and methods<br>> Development of teaching methods and pedagogical skills<br>> Participation in the development of education in academic communities<br>> Educational activities outside the academic community |
| **Impact and innovations** | > Popularisation of science<br>> Media coverage<br>> Interaction with decision-makers and other stakeholders<br>> Citizen science<br>> Business collaboration<br>> Inventions and patents<br>> Commercialisations<br>> Entrepreneurship<br>> Experience and merits gained from outside the academic community<br>> Merits related to expertise and personal performance gained in a specific context<br>> Awards and recognitions |
| **Leadership** | > Academic leadership<br>> Institutional and administrative leadership<br>> Leadership in business life or public sector or corresponding leadership experience |

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