

## Working Group on Reforming Academic Career Assessment

### Case study “Good practice in researcher evaluation. Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher in Finland”

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<b>Country</b>	<b>Country/Region/International</b> Finland
<b>Name</b>	<b>Official name of the initiative</b> Good practice in researcher evaluation. Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher in Finland (hereafter “the Recommendation”)
<b>Institution</b>	<b>Name of the institution(s) responsible for the initiative</b> The Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher in Finland was prepared by a broad-based working group set up by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (TSV) in 2018
<b>Stakeholders</b>	<b>Names of other organisations/communities involved</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (TSV)</li> <li>• Finnish Union of University professors</li> <li>• Finnish Association of Research Managers and Advisors</li> <li>• Finnish Education Employers (Sivista)</li> <li>• National Board of Research Integrity (TENK)</li> <li>• Association of Finnish Foundations (SRNK)</li> <li>• Finnish University Libraries’ Network (FUN)</li> <li>• National Library of Finland</li> <li>• Tulanet – Cooperation of government research institutes</li> <li>• National Open Science Coordination</li> <li>• Universities Finland UNIFI</li> <li>• Rectors’ Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences</li> <li>• Finnish Union of University Researchers and Teachers</li> <li>• Finnish Association of Adjunct Professors</li> <li>• CSC – IT Center for Science</li> <li>• Publication Forum (JUFO)</li> <li>• Young Academy Finland</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Committee for Public Information (TJNK)</li> <li>• Research Council of Finland</li> <li>• Ministry of Education and Culture</li> </ul> <p>The Recommendation for responsible evaluation of a researcher also includes recommendations from the responsible metrics working group within the Finn-Arma network.</p> <p>The scientific community was also invited to comment on the draft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries</li> <li>• Universities</li> <li>• Universities of Applied Sciences</li> <li>• Public Research Institutes</li> <li>• Public research funding agencies</li> <li>• Private foundations</li> <li>• Learned societies</li> <li>• Individual researchers</li> </ul>
<b>Year</b>	<b>When the initiative was launched</b>  2020
<b>Documentation</b>	<b>Link to the main document describing the initiative</b>  Full version: <a href="https://edition.fi/tsv/catalog/view/170/128/567-1">https://edition.fi/tsv/catalog/view/170/128/567-1</a>
<b>Website</b>	<b>Link to the website of the initiative (if available)</b>  <a href="https://vastuullinentiede.fi/en/responsible-research/responsible-assessment">https://vastuullinentiede.fi/en/responsible-research/responsible-assessment</a>
<b>Summary</b>	<b>Brief description of the initiative</b>  In 2020, a task force formed by the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies published the “Good Practice in Researcher Evaluation: Recommendation for Responsible Evaluation of a Researcher in Finland.” A major driver for the national recommendation was the need to make conscious decisions in evaluation processes. The working-group, which started in 2018, built on international initiatives, such as DORA and the Leiden Manifesto, and on national initiatives, such as the structured CV template published by the National Board of Research Integrity in 2012.
<b>Target audience</b>	<b>Description of the main target audience of the initiative</b>  Target audience can be understood as

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Evaluators and individuals who plan and conduct assessments in organisations, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ministries</li> <li>○ Universities</li> <li>○ Universities of Applied Sciences</li> <li>○ Public Research Institutes</li> <li>○ Public research funding agencies</li> <li>○ Private foundations</li> </ul> </li> <li>2) Individuals subject to evaluations, such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ recruitment</li> <li>○ promotion</li> <li>○ funding</li> <li>○ performance</li> </ul> </li> </ol>
<b>Geographical Scope</b>	<b>Description of the geographical application</b>  Finland
<b>International potential</b>	<b>Description of the international potential for adaptation</b>  <p>The Finnish national recommendation for responsible evaluation of researchers was one of the first national guidelines in the world. It has been produced primarily for the use in the context of the Finnish higher-education and research system, however it could be adapted to other local, national or international settings.</p> <p>Cooperation to develop the evaluation in Finland will now continue in close cooperation with international partners. The Federation of Finnish Learned Societies has signed the international Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment and is a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA). International networks also include participation in EU-funded projects, such as GraspOS (Next Generation Research Assessment to Promote Open Science).</p>
<b>Goal</b>	<b>Description of the intended change</b>  <p>The Recommendation focuses primarily on the structures and processes of research evaluation. These reflect the principles of the design and implementation of evaluation. The goal is a responsible evaluation process from start to finish.</p>
<b>Relevance</b>	<b>Description of the key elements that are relevant for reforming career assessment</b>  <p>The recommendation has been drafted from the point of view of an individual researcher evaluation. The same principles should be followed when evaluating research organizations, research units, and research in a broader context. A researcher is a person who is a</p>

member of the teaching and research staff of a Finnish university or research institute or is primarily engaged in research or applying for research funding

The Recommendation contains five general principles of researcher evaluation

1. Transparency
2. Integrity
3. Fairness
4. Competence
5. Diversity

These principles should be applied to each good practice (in total 13) identified in the Recommendation and related to:

a) Building the evaluation process

The first aspect of the recommendation concerns good practices in building the evaluation process. Care must be taken to ensure that the objectives and criteria of the evaluation are transparently available to all parties involved. The materials used in the evaluation must be both collected and used appropriately and comprehensively. The evaluators must be free of conflict of interest and the pool of evaluators must be diverse. Equality must be ensured in the selection of criteria, datasets and evaluators.

b) Evaluation of research

The second aspect of the recommendations on good practice focuses on the evaluation of research, which takes into account scientific quality, open access and research integrity. The scientific quality of research can be assessed by studying both its contents and using research metrics as an aid for the qualitative evaluation. The recommendation includes nine specific recommendations for the responsible use of publication metrics.

	<p>c) Diversity of activities</p> <p>The third aspect of the recommendations deals with the diversity of the researcher's activities. Teaching and tutoring is seen as an essential part of the researcher's work and must be appropriately emphasised in the evaluation. The evaluation takes also into account societal interaction and impact, as well as the researcher's activities in research and other environments. Since researcher activities are implemented differently in different research fields, their indicators must be defined in each evaluation context to take into account the specific characteristics of the fields of research.</p> <p>d) Researcher's role in the evaluation process</p> <p>The fourth aspect of the recommendations invites the researcher into the assessment process. In responsible evaluation, the researcher must be allowed to provide context and explanation of the objectives, significance and effectiveness of his/her research. It would be a good idea to plan the evaluation in such a way that the evaluated researchers also benefits from being evaluated.</p>
<p><b>Qualitative</b></p>	<p><b>Description of recommendations regarding qualitative assessment</b></p> <p>Researchers are evaluated by making an overall assessment of the scientific quality of their activities and outputs. Both qualitative evaluation and research metrics involve challenges such as transparency, objectivity, comparability and equity. Consequently, the various methods often complement each other.</p> <p>In order to achieve fairness in the selection of evaluators, sufficient diversity must be sought to make it more likely that different perspectives are taken into consideration.</p> <p>Good practice no. 12. Researcher self-evaluation: "The researcher's self-evaluation is combined with the evaluation by giving an opportunity to express an understanding of the objectives, significance and effectiveness of their work." "In self-evaluation, researchers can, for example, justify the decisions they have made in their work, such as choice of publication channels, participating in editorial work or working groups, organising meetings, and</p>

	submitting funding applications. Self-evaluation gives researchers an opportunity to describe their skills from their own perspective. In evaluation, attention must be paid to fair treatment of self-evaluations”.
<b>Quantitative</b>	<p><b>Description of recommendations regarding quantitative assessment</b></p> <p>Evaluation of scientific quality is primarily carried out by examining the scientific output of the research. Research metrics may also be used to support the overall evaluation when relevant to the researcher’s field of study. Societal interaction and impact can be evaluated qualitatively by looking at the content of activities and outputs. Quantitatively these can be evaluated by using various metric tools, such as altmetrics.</p> <p>The Recommendation contains nine recommendations for responsible use of research metrics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Quantitative indicators can be used to support qualitative peer review of scientific activity. Peer review should be the primary approach for evaluating individual researchers.</li> <li>b) Publication metrics should be based on data that is relevant for the unit of assessment. The known limitations of the data should always be disclosed.</li> <li>c) Being as open and trans-parent as possible in data collection, analytical processes and results is necessary. Those being evaluated should, as far as possible, be able to check both the data used and the results of the analysis.</li> <li>d) Disciplinary differences and interdisciplinarity should be taken into account in the app-lication of publication metrics.</li> <li>e) The indicators used in assessment should be chosen to support the aims of the evaluation.</li> <li>f) Results should be reported with an accuracy relevant for the unit of assessment, methods and the data. Inapp-licable indicators should not be reported.</li> <li>g) Specific expertise is needed in the production and interpretation of publication metrics.</li> <li>h) Organisations committed to this recommendation should provide</li> </ul>



	<p>sufficient resources and expertise needed for producing and interpreting publication metrics. Organisations should offer training for responsible use of publication metrics for their faculty and staff.</p> <p>i) Organisations committed to this recommendation should name the responsible party in their organisation who can be contacted in cases of irresponsible use of publication metrics.</p> <p>The national recommendation for responsible use of publication metrics has been prepared by a multidisciplinary working group. The group initiated its work in September 2018 and the recommendation was finalised in February 2020. The working group was set up as part of the network for research management TUHA and was also part of the Open Science Coordination in Finland through the expert panel in Culture for Open Scholarship.</p>
<b>Diversity</b>	<p><b>Description of how initiative recognizes and supports consideration of diversity contributions, outputs and impacts</b></p> <p>The Recommendation takes into account the diversity of researcher's activities, such as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Teaching and supervisory activities</li> <li>2) Societal impact and interaction</li> <li>3) Activity in research and other communities</li> <li>4) Since researcher activities are implemented differently in different research fields, their indicators must be defined in each evaluation context to take into account the specific characteristics of the fields of research.</li> </ol>
<b>Intersectoral</b>	<p><b>Description of how initiative recognizes and supports consideration of intersectorality</b></p> <p>Good practice no. 10: "Activity in research and other communities: Researchers' activities in research and other communities are to be considered in the evaluation. Researchers' contribution in various roles and the significance of this contribution to the researchers' own work and the research community should be considered"</p> <p>Further specification: "Researcher's activities in research and other communities: Researchers' activities in research and other communities are an integral part of their work. Evaluation should clearly define how activity in the research community and experience in other sectors of society is taken into account and how it supports the development of the researcher, the organisation and</p>

	<p>science in general. The evaluation process appreciates the diversity of activities for the research- and other communities. The impact of different community-based responsibilities is evaluated in terms of personal skill development and the ability to manage these tasks. It is important to enable diverse work and community positions as part of researchers' careers. Inclusion of work done for the research community is thus included in the overall evaluation in addition to research quality and societal interaction".</p>
<b>Career-stage</b>	<p><b>Description of how initiative recognizes and supports consideration of career-stage</b></p> <p>The Recommendation may be used on all career stages.</p> <p>Good practice no. 4: "Ensuring equality: In the selection of criteria, methods, evaluation evidence, and experts, it must be ensured that the selection is not discriminatory in terms of gender equality or impartiality. Evaluation process takes into account career breaks, such as parental leave."</p> <p>Further specification: "To ensure the non-discrimination, researchers should not be unfairly discriminated against on the basis of their field of research, multidisciplinary status, or career stage.</p>
<b>Career-path</b>	<p><b>Description of how initiative recognizes and supports consideration of career-paths</b></p> <p>The Recommendation does not define career-paths or models but emphasizes the importance of recognizing diversity of skills, roles, contributions and impacts, thereby offering flexibility for diversification of career-paths..</p>
<b>Toolbox</b>	<p><b>Description of related practical guides and toolkits</b></p> <p>(1) <a href="#">The researcher's curriculum vitae (CV)</a></p> <p>The Recommendation is recommended to be used in conjunction with The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity's (TENK) template for a researcher's curriculum.</p> <p>The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK, Universities Finland UNIFI, Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied</p>



Sciences Arene and the Academy of Finland prepared the first template for the researcher's curriculum vitae (CV) in accordance with the responsible conduct of research for Finnish research organisations in 2012. This curriculum vitae template was updated in 2020.

The aim of the template is to provide guidelines for the writer of a CV so that the individual's merits are presented as comprehensively, truthfully and comparably as possible.

- 1. Personal details and the date of the CV
- 2. Degrees
- 3. Other education and expertise
- 4. Language skills
- 5. Current employment
- 6. Previous work experience
- 7. Career breaks
- 8. Research funding and grants
- 9. Research output
- 10. Research supervision and leadership experience
- 11. Teaching merits
- 12. Awards and honours
- 13. Other key academic merits, such as:
- 14. Scientific and societal impact
- 15. Other merits

(2) [Policy for open scholarship](#)

The Policy for Open scholarship brings together the previous policies and recommendations made within the framework of the Open science and research coordination. The policy focuses on the culture of open scholarship of an organisation. In addition, previous policies will be supplemented with perspectives related to services, incentives, and interaction.

The policy includes broad themes not previously addressed in former policies for open science and research. Services, corporate cooperation, citizen science and evaluation have been chosen as essential promoters for openness. The policy objectives for evaluation development are based in comprehensive national and international work to promote responsible evaluation for researchers. As an objective, it has been stated that organisations would have access to practices and criteria supporting the responsible

evaluation of researchers as well as the knowledge base for documenting diverse outputs and merits. Through policy objectives, the needs for development should form as clear functions for the organisations. The policy is supported by three recommendations published with the policy. The policy and the recommendations form a unique whole, which supports, facilitates and promotes the work researchers and organisations do for a greater openness in science and research.

(3) [Self-evaluation tool for culture of open scholarship services](#)

A self-evaluation tool for services has been developed to support the Policy for Open Scholarship. The purpose of the tool is to assist research organisations in the self-evaluation and development of services and making them available. Measures promoting the openness of evaluation, learning, research data and publishing, which are also included in the Policy for Open Scholarship currently being prepared, are made concrete with minimum and ideal criteria. These criteria facilitate different target levels for different types of research organisations at different starting levels. Self-evaluation tool contains a checklist for responsible evaluation based on the national recommendation for responsible evaluation of researchers (Appendix I).

(4) [Guidelines for the Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

The objective is to promote the responsible conduct of research while ensuring that the alleged violations are handled with competence, fairness and expediency.

The principles of responsible conduct of research apply to evaluations as well.

(5) [User guide for the Publication Forum classification](#)

The Publication Forum is a publication channel classification system implemented by the Finnish scientific community that supports the evaluation of the quality of research output. This user guide contains the recommendations of the Publication Forum Steering Group set by

	<p>the Board of Directors of the Federation of Finnish Learned Societies (TSV) on the responsible use of the Publication Forum classification system to assist in the evaluation of research output.</p> <p>The Publication Forum classification system was originally meant (i) for the evaluation of the average quality of a large number of publications produced by universities. The classification is not meant for (ii) the evaluation of the quality of a smaller number of publications produced by the units of universities or other research organisations or individual publications – articles or monographs – nor for (iii) the evaluation or comparison of individual researchers.</p> <p>(6) <a href="https://research.fi">Research.fi</a></p> <p>Research.fi is a service offered by the Ministry of Education and Culture that collects and shares information on research conducted in Finland. At the moment, the service contains information on the Finnish research system, publications by Finnish organizations, projects funded by public and private research funders, information on researchers operating in Finland and their research activities, and statistical information on the development of research resources and impact. Research.fi provides comprehensive information of diverse research output of research organisations, and facilitates creation of researcher profiles and CVs based on TENK CV template.</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p><b>Description of implementation process</b></p> <p>Tasks for implementing the recommendation were included in the Recommendation. The Steering Group for Responsible Assessment of The Researcher is responsible for the implementation of these:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Developing an organisational measure for capability and maturity in evaluation.</li> <li>2. Each research organisation and funder committed to the recommendation creates its own guidelines for implementing the recommendations for the responsible evaluation of a researcher and monitors their implementation.</li> <li>3. A researcher portfolio model (e.g. Acumen) and a portfolio portal compatible with the TENK curriculum vitae model will be developed and implemented nationally.</li> <li>4. At national level, a sufficiently diverse research knowledge base will be developed to support evaluation.</li> </ol>

5. Adequate guidance and instruction on responsible evaluation is provided at national and organisational levels.
6. Recognition of evaluation carried out by experts and the resources required are guaranteed in all evaluation work.
7. The Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher is updated and its implementation monitored

The steering group is to assess the need to update the national recommendation and to monitor and promote the implementation of the action plan. The steering group has been appointed for the period 2021-2024 and will meet at least once a year.

Over 70 Finnish organizations, including all universities, are signatories of the Declaration for Open Science and Research (AVOTT, 2020), which means that they are committed to the vision, strategy and policies approved formally by AVOTT steering-group. The Policy for Open Scholarship (AVOTT, 2022) has a strategic objective for responsible assessment that “the organization has at its disposal practices, criteria and a knowledge base for documenting diverse outputs and merits that promote open science and its culture as part of the assessment and merit of Finnish research organizations and their personnel”. To achieve this objective by 2025, the policy also outlines seven required actions:

1. Responsible practices: ensure evaluation of research and a researcher in accordance with the national recommendation.
2. Incentives: take into account the research output with different formats and languages (e.g. publications, data, software), merits and effectiveness as well as activities to promote open science.
3. Knowledge base: is produced to support the evaluations, which enables comprehensive and comparable documentation of research outputs, merits and impact in different forms.
4. Qualitative evaluation support: enables the production and utilisation of qualitative information, such as narratives and case descriptions of quality and research impact, in evaluations.
5. Transparency and monitoring: ensures that the evaluations are conducted in an open and transparent manner in all

	<p>evaluation processes from the organisational level to the individual level.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Guidelines and local support: ensures that all parties of the evaluation have adequate guidance, guidelines and resources for responsible assessment.</li> <li>7. Responsible party: that researchers can contact should there be shortcomings in the responsibility of the evaluation.</li> </ol> <p>Finland has also established the CoARA national chapter for Finland, including 29 organisations (13 universities, 13 universities of applied sciences). 4) facilitate effective and timely implementation of CoARA commitments and other supporting and related recommendations (e.g. DORA, ERA Policy Action 3 &amp; 4 and Recommendation for the responsible evaluation of a researcher in Finland) within and across signatory organisations.</p>
<b>Uptake</b>	<p><b>Description of implementation uptake</b></p> <p>Both the Finnish universities' rectors conference (UNIFI) and Academy of Finland – the main basic research funding agency – have publicly expressed their commitment to the Recommendation but it does not have formal signatories.</p> <p>The activities of Finnish organizations in responsible assessment are, however, promoted and monitored through the self-regulated organization of the Open Science coordination in Finland at TSV (AVOTT[gp1] ).</p> <p>The objective of <a href="#">the monitoring of open science and research</a> is to support the development of open science and research in organisations, support and verify the achievement of the objectives agreed in the Declaration and policies, and form an overall view of the state of openness in Finnish science and research.</p> <p>The monitoring was carried out for the first time in 2022, including questions on Responsible assessment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Does the organisation have internal guidelines to support the implementation of the Recommendation for the</li> </ul>



	<p>responsible evaluation of researcher in Finland?" 2022: 26/45 responses YES (58%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitoring also indicates that 28% of the Finnish organisations, 71 % of universities, use TENK CV template in data collection</li> </ul> <p>We have not collected systematic evidence of implementation, however random checking shows that many universities state in their recruitment announcements a commitment to the national recommendation.</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p><b>Description of identified implementation challenges/obstacles.</b></p> <p>No critical comments have been raised in public discussion but there are certainly many potential challenges.</p> <p>The Recommendation does not have official signatories and implementation policies in different organizations, disciplines and career stages may vary. It is also crucial to raise awareness of responsible assessment among different stakeholders, which requires resources (such as learning, planning and training). The documentation of competences and results might also be a challenge as well as the difficulties in career-planning.</p>
<b>Benefits</b>	<p><b>Description of identified implementation benefits.</b></p> <p>Good practice 13 is aimed at ensuring the benefits of researcher evaluation: "The evaluation is designed to also benefit the researcher. The work they have done for the purpose of the evaluation and/or the feedback they have received should enable them to improve their own work".</p> <p>There is no empirical evidence on implementation benefits from organisations, other than the fact that many higher-education and research organisations have produced or updated their internal assessment policies and indicated reliance on the national recommendation. The national initiative apparently has also well-prepared the Finnish research community, at policy level, to become early adopters of CoARA agreement.</p>