

CoARA ACTION PLAN

IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca



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1. INTRODUCTION

The IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca is a Public University School for Higher Education and Research with a special statute that focuses on the analysis of economic, societal, technological and cultural systems.

The IMT School promotes the full integration of research and education. Since its institution by ministerial decree of November 18th 2005, the School has distinguished itself thanks to the quality and innovativeness of its research, and doctoral and master programs through its interdisciplinary nature, characterized by the complementarity and discourse between methodologies drawn from economics, engineering, computer science, applied mathematics, physics, archeology, art history and the analysis and management of cultural heritage.

The fusion between art, heritage and technology is also reflected in the School state-of-the-art Campus, located principally in the newly restored San Francesco Complex. The entire campus is found within the historic city center of Lucca, which is surrounded by a fully intact Renaissance-era walls. The campus includes spaces for research and laboratories, courses, and living and recreation.

IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca is committed to improving research assessment practices in alignment with the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) principles. As a signatory of the CoARA Agreement, IMT actively contributes to shaping a research evaluation framework that prioritizes qualitative assessment, responsible metrics, and the promotion of open science.

2. INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH STRATEGY AND VISION

IMT School's strategic research framework is built on interdisciplinarity, innovation, internationalization, and engagement with societal and economic stakeholders. As a doctoral-granting institution with a special statute, IMT promotes a unique academic model that integrates research and education through interdisciplinarity and collaboration across fields such as economics, cognitive, computational and social neurosciences, cultural heritage, systems engineering, and computer science.

Our research vision is to foster a diverse and inclusive research environment—one that actively promotes responsible research assessment and enhances IMT's role in the national and international efforts to reform research evaluation.

To achieve this, IMT aims to:

- **Advance interdisciplinary and field-sensitive research** by fully recognizing the distinct nature of different disciplines, from the impact of exhibitions and artistic outputs to domain-specific metrics like the H-index.
- **Prioritize and promote quality over quantity in research evaluation**, ensuring that assessment systems acknowledge diverse research outputs—including datasets, software, and societal impact—without compromising academic rigor and excellence.
- **Strengthen knowledge transfer and third mission activities**, actively engaging with stakeholders such as SMEs, policymakers, and industry partners to foster meaningful collaborations.
- **Integrate responsible research assessment practices** through continuous internal reflection and structured evaluation mechanisms that align with institutional strategy.

2.1. Internal Research Assessment and the Role of the Research Commission

IMT has long been committed to developing a fair and high-quality research assessment framework that supports the strategic objectives of the School. The Commission on Open Science, Artificial Intelligence, Research, Library Services, and Orientation (Commissione OS.IA.R.B.O. - Commissione Open Science, intelligenza artificiale, ricerca, biblioteca e orientamento), composed of experts across disciplines and career stages, plays a key role in shaping evaluation policies that are transparent, inclusive, and tailored to the diversity of research fields.

The School's internal incentive and reward system is designed to recognize excellence beyond mere publication counts, encouraging impactful and innovative research contributions. This framework reflects three core priorities:

1. **Scientific Excellence** as a baseline criterion for all faculty and researchers.
2. **Collaborative, interdisciplinary, and externally visible research**, including acquisition of competitive projects, organization of public initiatives (e.g., exhibitions, conferences), internationalization and partnerships in education and research.
3. **Institution building and third mission engagement**, encompassing activities like institutional governance, community outreach, gender equality, digital transformation, teaching innovation, and strategic development.

The reward system introduced in 2023 and refined for 2025 has further institutionalized these values by:

- Recognizing excellence across different disciplinary and institutional missions;
- Encouraging engagement in collaborative and third mission activities;
- Supporting career development and institutional resilience, especially in a young, inclusive and dynamic academic environment.

This flexible, multidimensional framework values contributions across basic and applied research, external engagement, public communication, and strategic organizational roles. The system avoids replicating metrics-driven evaluations by external bodies and instead emphasizes alignment with its diverse research landscape and strategic priorities, cultural diversity, and career development pathways.

Reflections on the CoARA principles have been deeply embedded in this institutional process. A more structured implementation strategy was formalized in 2024, strengthening alignment with national and European research policy. In 2024, IMT launched a more structured effort to fully align its research assessment framework with CoARA, building on existing practices and institutional values. Moving forward, IMT will further refine its framework to contribute actively to the national reform agenda through its role in the CoARA National Chapter of Italy and its commitment to ongoing dialogue with working groups, policymakers, and peer institutions. Through these efforts, IMT aims to actively contribute to the broader research assessment reform movement at an international level.

3. KEY PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS

IMT School has long been committed to a high-quality, discipline-sensitive approach to research assessment, recognizing the diverse evaluation needs of different academic fields. Through its interdisciplinary OS.IA.R.B.O. Commission—comprising experts from various disciplines and career levels—IMT School has developed and continuously refined a robust internal assessment framework to ensure fairness, transparency, and qualitative excellence.

Building on this strong foundation, IMT now seeks to further align its practices with the principles of CoARA, actively contributing to national and international discussions on research assessment reform and fostering external collaboration. As a member of the CoARA National Chapter of Italy, IMT School will engage in coordinated efforts to advance responsible research assessment practices in line with both national and institutional roadmaps.

To pursue its research strategy and vision and implement CoARA-aligned principles effectively, IMT has identified the following priorities and actions:

- **Deepening Alignment with CoARA Principles:**
 - Conduct an internal review to map existing IMT research assessment practices against CoARA principles, identifying areas for refinement.
 - Further integrate qualitative evaluation approaches that reflect disciplinary diversity while ensuring coherence with responsible assessment standards.
 - Strengthen recognition of Open Science, interdisciplinarity, public engagement and societal impact in assessment frameworks.

- **Commitment to Open Science and Research Integrity:**
 - Promote open access to publications and research data.
 - Encourage adherence to FAIR (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable) data principles and responsible data stewardship.
 - Participate in initiatives that support reproducibility and transparency in research through training and policy alignment.

- **Fostering Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research:**
 - Develop evaluation criteria that recognize and support interdisciplinary, practice-based, and applied research.
 - Engage in European and national initiatives promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration.
 - Incentivize collaboration through internal reward criteria that recognize joint projects, exhibitions, conferences, and visibility-enhancing initiatives.

- **Capacity Building and Knowledge Sharing:**
 - Organize training sessions and facilitate dialogue and peer learning to support the academic community in understanding and applying new research assessment methodologies and research assessment reform within IMT.
 - Collaborate with other institutions to exchange best practices and align with CoARA objectives and international standards.

- **Transparency, Monitoring, and Institutional Commitment:**
 - IMT School Commissions to monitor and guide implementation of research assessment reforms, ensuring alignment with CoARA and national guidelines.
 - Establish annual reporting practices on progress, providing transparent updates to the IMT community and contributing findings to the National Chapter's knowledge-sharing initiatives.

- Foster an internal culture of responsible research assessment by raising awareness and engaging faculty members in the reform process.
- **Institutional Engagement with the CoARA National Chapter and International Network:**
 - Actively participate in the Italian National Chapter of CoARA to share best practices, contribute to discussions on reforming assessment criteria, and engage with political decision-making bodies on national policies.
 - Establish structured bidirectional communication with CoARA Working Groups, ensuring that their recommendations are critically assessed and implemented where relevant in the IMT School's research evaluation processes.

Priority Area	Planned Actions	Timeline	Lead Responsible
Alignment with CoARA Principles	Internal review of research assessment practices	2025–2027	Delegate to CoARA + OS.IA.R.B.O. Commission
Open Science & Research Integrity	OS and FAIR principles training and integration in policies	Ongoing since 2021	Library + OS.IA.R.B.O. Commission + Research Units
Interdisciplinarity & Societal Impact	Revise evaluation criteria; incentivize joint projects and impact reports	Ongoing since 2021	OS.IA.R.B.O. Commission + Research Units
Knowledge Sharing & Capacity Building	1 training event/year on evaluation reform	2025–2027	OS.IA.R.B.O. Commission
Monitoring & Transparency	Annual CoARA implementation progress report; community updates	2025–2027	Delegate to CoARA + OS.IA.R.B.O. Commission
External Engagement	Active role in CoARA National Chapter & WGs; share results	2025–2027	Delegate to CoARA

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING PLAN

To ensure the effective implementation of the CoARA principles, IMT will:

- Conduct an internal review to align research assessment policies with CoARA objectives.
- Organize annual workshops and training sessions to enhance awareness among faculty and researchers.
- Share experiences on research evaluation methods within CoARA working groups.
- Monitor progress through periodic internal evaluations and annual reporting on CoARA-related activities.
- Foster collaboration with national and international partners to support broader reform initiatives.

5. CONCLUSION

IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca reaffirms its commitment to research assessment reform through active participation in CoARA and strategic engagement at the regional, national, European, and international levels. By implementing this action plan, IMT seeks to contribute to a more inclusive, transparent, and responsible research evaluation ecosystem, aligning with global best practices and the evolving needs of the research community.

