

University of Warwick – Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) Action Plan

The University of Warwick became a signatory of [CoARA](#) in the summer of 2023. In the following months, it formed a working group to develop an action plan and oversee its implementation over the next five years.

About the University:

The [University of Warwick](#) is a leading UK institution known for its innovative approach to education and research. Founded in 1965, it has become a globally recognised university with a strong focus on interdisciplinary research and international collaboration. Warwick offers various undergraduate, postgraduate, and research programs across various disciplines. The university is committed to fostering an inclusive and dynamic community, with an emphasis on the importance of professional development and diverse career opportunities for its staff and students.

Research Culture at Warwick:

The university's [research strategy](#) prioritises the following six areas that underpin the research undertaken at Warwick with the goal of providing a positive research culture that is both inclusive and collegiate:

- Enhance disciplinary and interdisciplinary excellence
- Excellence with impact through real-world changes
- Foster a positive, inclusive, collegiate and dynamic research culture
- Communicate our research on the world stage through showcasing via multi-media communications.
- Partnership with the industry, regional, national and international organisations, institutes and other higher education providers.
- Innovation & sustainability in every step and action.

The [National Centre for Research Culture \(NCRC\)](#) is central to the university's research strategy, which aims to improve the research environment across UK higher education by bringing people together to share ideas and best practices. The NCRC network has been created as a solutions-focused group designed to exchange, debate, and challenge ideas surrounding research culture, with a view to remove inequities in conversation and engage collaboratively in opportunities to identify gaps, create new knowledge and effect change.

Responsible Research Assessment at Warwick:

The University’s current research assessment practices are guided by [a set of evaluation principles](#) based on the Leiden Manifesto. The University is committed to the critical role that peer review and expert judgement play in the assessment of research but also recognises the value that quantitative metrics can play in complementing and supporting decision-making.

The CoARA Action Plan:

Within the university's research culture context, the CoARA working group developed the following action plan to implement the CoARA commitments. The action plan has been created with careful consideration of the existing strategies at the university such as the [Concordat](#) and [HR Excellence in Research](#), ensuring alignment with ongoing initiatives and activities. The action plan is a live document that will be reviewed annually and updated to reflect the continued engagement of the working group with our academic community, researchers at all levels and disciplines, research enablers and professional services.

Commitment	Action	Start	End
1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers, in research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research.	1.1. Review guidance and policy on academic and academic-related promotions, rewards and recruitment activities against the CoARA commitments in collaboration with colleagues in Human Resources who lead on promotions and rewards.	Oct-24	Mar-25
	1.2. Develop a policy and guidance on ‘Responsible Research Assessment’ for University activities.	Aug-25	Jan-26
	1.3. Engage the research community about their disciplines' current and developing output practice. Ensure the outcomes of this engagement are publicised widely and contribute to the development of University research systems and processes.	Sep-24	Jun-25

	1.4. Work with the Arts and Social Sciences faculties to develop guidance on the fair assessment of the range of practice and non-traditional outputs that can be applied across the faculties.	Sep-24	Jun-25
	1.5. Review and revise the guidance on Publication Ethics included in the University of Warwick Open Access Policy - ensuring the inclusion of all individuals involved in the research reported by the output.	Oct-24	Mar-25
	1.6. Conduct training sessions to expand researchers' understanding of diverse career paths by explicitly referencing HR excellence in research, focusing on its major thrust of training and professional development.	Feb-25	–
	1.7. Implement and promote the newly piloted promotional pathway for technical specialists to provide them with career advancement opportunities within the university.	Ongoing	–
	1.8. In collaboration with the academic community investigate the possibility of implementing the Helsinki Initiative for multilingualism into University activities.	Aug-25	–
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators.	2.1. Ensure that the new research administration systems are configured to capture and display all relevant research activity according to discipline best practices and researcher needs.	Mar-25	May-25
	2.2. Commit to ensuring that all publishing activities at the University have the facilities and support to use best practices in open research and responsible metrics.	Sep-24	–
	2.3. Within the University ensure that all of our academic review processes consider the full range of academic and research activity undertaken by staff members.	Mar-26	–

3. Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular, inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index.	3.1. Engage the research community about their disciplines' current and developing use of metrics. Ensure the outcomes of this engagement are publicised widely and contribute to the development of University research systems and processes.	Sep-24	Jun-25
	3.2. Embed COARA principles into existing researcher development provisions and produce a summary map of how and where this is embedded.	Aug-24	Oct-24
	3.3. Using the expertise from within our academic community, contribute to the development of international, interdisciplinary research assessment and responsible research measures.	Ongoing	–
	3.4. Once approved, develop mechanisms to ensure adherence to the University of Warwick policy on Responsible Research assessment.	Sep-25	–
4. Avoid the use of rankings for research organisations in research assessment.	4.1. Working with our academic community on what they find most valuable, develop a policy on how the University will assess the various rankings that we are contributing our data to and how they can be made as 'fair and responsible' as possible.	Aug-25	Jan-26
	4.2. Investigate becoming a signatory of the INORMS 'More than our Rank' initiative.	Sep-24	Nov-24
	4.3. Work with Marketing and Communications to ensure the use of rankings in the University marketing is made with consideration of the policy on responsible research metrics.	Aug-25	Jan-26
5. Commit resources to reform research assessment as needed to achieve the	5.1. Review and revise the University of Warwick's Principles on Research Assessment' to ensure that they align with the CoARA commitments and define Warwick's strategic objectives.	Oct-24	Mar-25
	5.2. Ensure that new roles developed in this area have an explicit alignment to support the work of the University in implementing CoARA in their various areas of responsibility.	Oct-24	Jan-25

organisational changes committed to.	5.3. Develop internal training for research enabling, professional services staff on the issues of 'responsible research assessment' and the University's commitment to CoARA.	Oct-24	Jan-25
6. Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes	6.1. Extend the mentoring support available in promotions to enhance engagement with narrative CVs.	Mar-26	–
	6.2. When looking at any form of research assessment, ensure that, where possible, our activities align with our 'Principles for the Evaluation of Research' and CoARA.	Mar-25	–
7. Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use.	7.1. Develop a Research Assessment contribution for the 2024 International Research Culture Conference to engage researchers and research enabling staff, as well as establishing this as a regular part of the programme.	Aug-24	Annual action.
	7.2. Advertise the opportunity and provide support to allow projects on the evaluation of research to bid for Enhancing Research Culture funding.	Apr-25	Annual action.
8. Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition.	8.1. As a member of the UK National Chapter, engage with its activities and promote membership to other institutions.	Ongoing	–
	8.2. Adopt a policy of openness in relation to the activities of the CoARA Working group to share documents and other outputs with the Coalition and the wider community.	Aug-24	–
	8.3. Working with the other members of the UK National Chapter, contribute to the work of the CoARA working Groups and share that work with other chapter members.	Ongoing	–

9. Communicate progress made on adherence to the principles and implementation of the Commitments.	9.1. Publish the action plan on the University’s website with a publicly visible RAG status against each major action.	Aug-24	Aug-24
	9.2. Annually report on progress against the action plan to the University’s Research Committee.	Oct-24	_
	9.3. Standing item for the group to report back to ORG.	Sep-24	_
Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state-of-the-art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence-gathering and research.	10.1. Actively contribute to the work of the CoARA Coalition, Working Groups and the UK National Chapter.	Ongoing	
	10.2. Actively engage with national research assessment processes to ensure they are, wherever possible, aligned with the CoARA principles.	Ongoing	
	10.3. Work with the ORG to suggest process and policy amendments as required to introduce the use of new activities, such as the use of narrative CVs, reverse mentoring, open peer review, etc.	Sep-24	Feb-25

If you’d like to find out more about our work implementing the CoARA commitments, please see our [website](#) for more information or contact us at scholarlycomms@warwick.ac.uk.