In metrics we trust?
Impact, indicators & the prospects
for social science

Oxford Impact & KE Seminar series 6 May 2015

James Wilsdon @jameswilsdon David Walker @Exauditor77







What we do Y

Publications & Reports

Data & Statistics News & Events

Search





Home > Research > Review of metrics

Policy Guide

Independent review of the role of metrics in research assessment

We are reviewing the role of metrics in the assessment and management of research. This affects anyone with a professional interest in research assessment and funding.

Review of metrics

Call for evidence

Stakeholder workshops

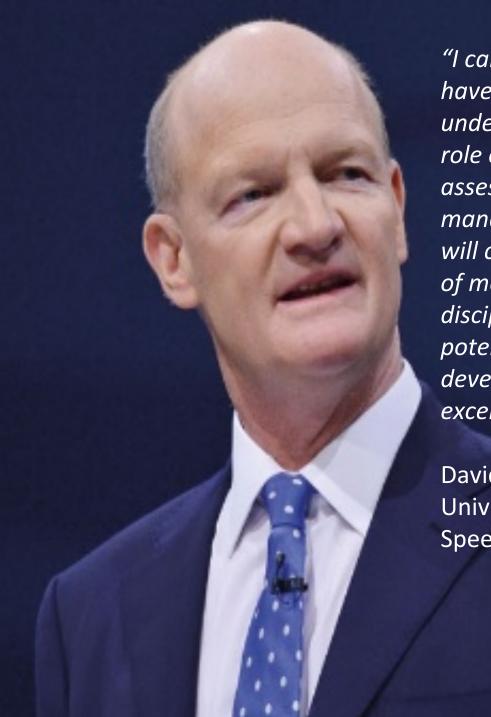
What is metrics-based research assessment?

Metrics is the quantitative analysis of scientific and scholarly research outputs and their impacts. Metrics include a variety of measures and statistical methods for assessing the quality and broader impact of scientific and scholarly research.

Related content

Research Excellence Framework

Review of REF2014



"I can announce today that I have asked HEFCE to undertake a review of the role of metrics in research assessment and management. The review will consider the robustness of metrics across different disciplines and assess their potential contribution to the development of research excellence and impact..."

David Willetts, Minister for Universities & Science, Speech to UUK, 3 April 2014

Steering Group

The review will be chaired by **James Wilsdon**, Professor of Science and Democracy at the Science Policy Research Unit (SPRU), University of Sussex. He will be supported by an **independent steering group** and a secretariat from HEFCE's Research Policy Team:

Dr Liz Allen (Head of Evaluation, Wellcome Trust)

Dr Eleonora Belfiore (Associate Professor of Cultural Policy, University of Warwick)

Dr Philip Campbell (Editor-in-Chief, Nature)

Professor Stephen Curry (Department of Life Sciences, Imperial College London)

Dr Steven Hill (Head of Research Policy, HEFCE)

Professor Richard Jones FRS (Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Research and Innovation,

University of Sheffield) – representative of the Royal Society

Professor Roger Kain FBA (Dean and Chief Executive, School of Advanced Study,

University of London) – representative of the British Academy

Dr Simon Kerridge (Director of Research Services, University of Kent) -

representative of the Association of Research Managers and Administrators

Professor Mike Thelwall (Statistical Cybermetrics Research Group, University of

Wolverhampton)

Jane Tinkler (London School of Economics and Political Science)

Dr Ian Viney (Head of Evaluation, Medical Research Council) – representative of

Research Councils UK

Professor Paul Wouters (Centre for Science & Technology Studies, University of Leiden)



Our approach and evidence sources

- Steering group: diverse expertise and extensive involvement;
- Broad-based TORs: opening up, rather than closing down questions;
- Transparent: publishing minutes & evidence in real time;
- In-depth literature review;
- Formal call for evidence, open 1 May to 30 June 2014;
 - 153 responses; 44% HEIs; 27% individuals; 18% learned societies; 7% providers; 2% mission groups; 2% other
- Stakeholder engagement
 - 6 'review' workshops, including on equality & diversity, A&H.
 Invited fiercest critics!
 - Intensive, ongoing stakeholder engagement;
 - Social media, especially #hefcemetrics;
- Quantitative exercise relating REF outcomes to indicators of research;
- Linkage to HEFCE's evaluations of REF projects;
- Interim findings; followed by full report in July.





Why Metrics Cannot Measure Research Quality: A Response to the HEFCE Consultation

JUNE 16, 2014 / MEERA

EnCompass

Geofacets

illumin8

Engineering Village



Update 24th June: 7,500+ views, 100s of shares, 200+ signatories! And a new post with some responses to further issues raised.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England are reviewing the idea of using metrics (or citation counts) in research assessment. We think using metrics to measure research quality is a terrible idea, and we'll be sending the response to them below explaining why. The deadline for receiving responses is 12pm on Monday 30th June (to SOME NOTES ON RHETORIC



SUBSCRIBE!

Join 3,927 other followers

Enter your email address

Yes please!

RECENT POSTS

Resistance to Global LGBT Norms

DC's Improbable Science

Truth, falsehood and evidence: investigations of dubious and dishonest science



SEARCH THIS BLOG

META

Register

Comments RSS

WordPress.org

PLOS.ORG PLOS JOURNALS

← From Open Buttons to OpenCon -Building a student community

To search, type and hit enter

← Bad financial management at Kings College London means VC Rick Trainor is firing 120 scientists What is meant by the "accuracy" of screening tests? →

Should metrics be used to assess research performance? A submission to HEFCE

June 18th, 2014 - 10 Comments

- Log in Jump to follow-up

Entries RSS

The Higher Education Funding Council England (HEFCE) gives money to universities. The allocation that a university gets depends strongly on the periodical assessments of the quality of their research. Enormous amounts if time, energy and money go into preparing submissions for these assessments, and the assessment procedure distorts the behaviour of universities in ways that are undesirable. In the last assessment, four papers were submitted by each principal investigator, and the papers were read.

In an effort to reduce the cost of the operation, HEFCE has been asked to reconsider the use of metrics to measure the performance of academics. The committee that is doing this job has asked for submissions from any interested person, by June 20th.

RECENT POSTS

- UCL's senior common room and the Boston marathon emancipation in the 1960s
- Some more pharmacological history: the legend of the Brocken and the statistics of purity in heart
- . What is meant by the "accuracy" of screening tests
- · Should metrics be used to assess research performance?
- A submission to HEECE Bad financial management at Kings College London means
- VC Rick Trainor is firing 120 Deadly Medicines and
- Organised Crime: a review

On the hazards of significance

ABOUT CONTACT LOGIN

Search RSS FEED 🔊

Thursday, September 25, 2014 | Views, Policy and News on the Transformation of Research Communications

A license to please

Home STAFF BLOGS ↓ BLOGS NETWORK ↓ COMMUNITY ↓ **PLOS Opens**

PLOS Response to the HEFCE RFI on Metrics in Research Assessment

SHARE E ST

The Higher Education Funding Council for England, the body that manages the UK's Research Excellence Framework recently announced an enquiry on the use of metrics in research assessment. HEFCE's views on research assessment matter a great deal to UK Universities because the REF distributes a substantial proportion of the UK's research funding as block grants on the basis of that assessment. As part of this process the enquiry committee issued a call for evidence. The covering letter and summary of the PLOS submission are provided below, you can find the full PLOS RFI response at Figshare.

Dear Committee Members

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your call for evidence. PLOS has been at the forefront of experimenting with and advocating for new modes of research assessment for a decade. Recent developments such as DORA and your own enquiry suggest that the time is appropriate for a substantial consideration of our approaches and tools for research assessment.



Search

Recent Posts

- Policy Design and Implementation Monitoring for Open Access
- #NoNewLicenses Update
- · The rise and rise of Creative Commons: Over 1.2M CC Licensed Scholarly Articles
- Momentum growing in support of Creative Commons framework Wikimania: We need to choose the
- main stream over our small pool

Recent Comments

· On the Subject of Creative Commons | Y Mi Mamá También on The rise and rise of Creative Commons: Over 1.2M CC Licensed Scholarly Articles

About PLOS Opens

The PLOS Opens blog provides news and views on the ongoing transformation of research communication. We talk about open access, policy, and approaches to open research. Posts will cover evidence and data, opinions and critical analysis from the PLOS Advocacy Team, other PLOS staff and invited guests.

The PLOS Advocacy Team Catriona MacCallum studied

evolutionary biology at Edinburgh. She joined PLOS in July 2003 as a launch editor of PLOS Biology and was also involved in the development of the Community Journals and PLOS ONE. As part of the advocacy team, she focuses on EU policy. She is also a Consulting Editor on PLOS ONE and a member of the Board of OASPA





Report structure

- Chapter 1: Setting the context
- Chapter 2: The use and abuse of metrics
- Chapter 3: Research management in HEIs
- Chapter 4: The research funding system
- Chapter 5: The future of the REF
- Chapter 6: Conclusions & recommendations



But first, a few headlines on context:

- The description, production and consumption of 'metrics' is contested, complex and open to misunderstandings;
- There are deep feelings within the community; diverse and strong opinions voiced throughout the review (e.g. 57% of those responding to our call for evidence were 'sceptical');
- Research assessment needs to be implemented with due regard for the variable geometry of research (specific to disciplines & contexts);
- Need to respect the value of expert judgement, and continue to draw on it where appropriate;
- High quality data/inputs are essential, with greater emphasis on transparency, openness and interoperability;
- Need to behave responsibly, considering and pre-empting negative consequences.

However:

- There is significant appetite and potential for greater/different use of indicators, metrics, data in the future, and...
- If improvements can be made to the indicators themselves, the ethics of their use, and data infrastructure (which is currently too unsophisticated).

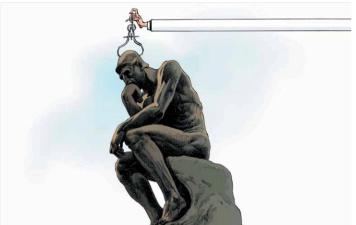


SUSTAINABILITY Data needed to drive UN development goals p.432



EEOLOGY Questions raised over proposed Anthropocene dates p.436

Newton to add more colours to the rainbow p.436



The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics

Use these ten principles to guide research evaluation, urge Diana Hicks, Paul Wouters and colleagues.

ata are increasingly used to govern science. Research evaluations that were once bespoke and performed by peers are now routine and reliant on metrics1. The problem is that evaluation is now led by the data rather than by judgement. Metrics have proliferated: usually well intentioned, not always well informed, often ill applied. We risk damaging the system with the very tools designed to improve it, as evaluation is increasingly implemented by organizations without knowledge of, or

advice on, good practice and interpretation. Before 2000, there was the Science Citation Index on CD-ROM from the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI), used by experts for specialist analyses. In 2002, Thomson Reuters launched an integrated web platform, making the Web of Science database widely accessible. Competing citation indices were created: Elsevier's Scopus (released in 2004) and Google Scholar (beta version released in 2004). Web-based tools to easily compare institutional research productivity and impact

were introduced, such as InCites (using the Web of Science) and SciVal (using Scopus), as well as software to analyse individual citation profiles using Google Scholar (Publish or Perish, released in 2007).

In 2005, Jorge Hirsch, a physicist at the University of California, San Diego, proposed the h-index, popularizing citation counting for individual researchers. Interest in the journal impact factor grew steadily after 1995 (see 'Impact-factor obsession').

Lately, metrics related to social usage

23 APRIL 2015 | VOL 520 | NATURE | 429







and Judgment Report

Canadian Academy of Sciences (2012) Informing Research Choices: Indicators and Judgment report Informing Research Choices: Indicators

Key principles: Context matters; Do no harm; Transparency is critical; The judgment of scientific experts remains invaluable

Royal Society Science as an Open Enterprise (2012)

https://royalsociety.org/policy/projects/sciencepublic-enterprise/Report/

Identified 6 areas for action:

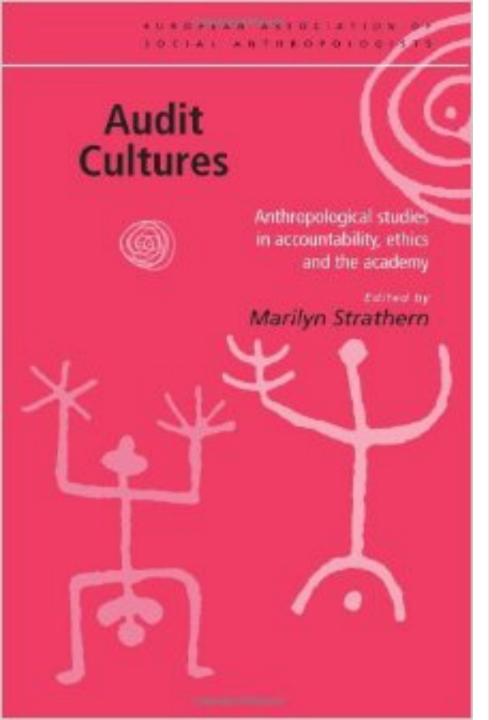
- Scientists need to be more open among themselves and with the public and media
- Greater recognition needs to be given to the value of data gathering, analysis and communication
 - Common standards for sharing information are required to make it widely usable
 - Publishing data in a reusable form to support findings must be mandatory
 - More experts in managing and supporting the use of digital data are required
 - New software tools need to be developed to analyse the growing amount of data being gathered

San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, 2012

http://www.ascb.org/dora-old/files/ SFDeclarationFINAL.pdf

A number of themes run through DORA's recommendations, which are to be found in full at the above webpage:

- --- the need to eliminate the use of journalbased metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, in funding, appointment, and promotion considerations;
- --- the need to assess research on its own merits rather than on the basis of the journal in which the research is published; and



Your first name and initial	Last name		Sex F
Street address and unit no. (if applicable)		Social security number of	or taxpayer ID (EIN)
City, or town, state, and ZIP Code		Daytime phone number	

The Utopia of Rules

On Technology, Stupidity, and the

Secret Joys of Bureaucracy

David Graeber

Author of Debt: The First 5,000 Years

"A brilliant, deeply original political thinker." -Rebecca Solnit

Your signature		Date	
(
Email address			
Comments			
1		THIS SECTION FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	
	For	mat: Hardcover Paperback	
	Trir	Trim size: 5-3/4" x 8-3/4"	
		And the second s	



Format:	☑ Hardcover □ Paperbaci
Trim size:	5-3/4" x 8-3/4"
ISBN-13:	978-1-61219-374-8
BISAC S	bject Code: POL010000
Publisher	Melville House

REF chapter: general points

- Diverse views on:
 - purposes of the REF (& need for a richer account of these)
 - how and whether quantitative indicators of research quality should feature in the assessment;
- Concerns over perceived and actual burden of REF, including opportunity costs;
- Some see metrics and indicators as a means to reduce burden/costs;
- Recognition that there are increasing opportunities to gather and use indicators and quant data within research assessment than in the past;
- Metrics as well as peer review?
 - A majority feel that peer review should remain central. So adding metrics means burden increase, rather than dilution!
- Concerns over unintended consequences of metrics/indicators;
- Concerns that some disciplines will be disadvantaged.



Outputs

- It is not currently feasible to assess the quality of research outputs using quantitative indicators alone;
- Disciplinary coverage of citation databases still falls short of what is required, especially for outputs that are not journal articles;
- Real concerns over bias and resultant effects on equality and diversity;
- No set of numbers, however broad, is likely to be able to capture the multifaceted and nuanced judgments on the quality of research outputs that the REF currently provides;
- However, quantitative data do have a place in informing peer review judgments. This approach has been used successfully in REF2014, and we recommend that it be continued and enhanced in future exercises.



Correlation project

Why?

 To establish the extent to which the outcome of the REF assessment correlates with a range of metrics-based indicators of research

Analysis/data

- Analysis by Analytical Services Directorate, HEFCE;
- Analysis is being undertaken at the level of individual outputs., using article level scores from REF for all outputs with a DOI (149,670 out of 191,080 REF outputs);
- Article level metrics were provided by Scopus/Elsevier;
- The data was linked into staff characteristics from HESA;
- Data anonymised [DOIs and staff identifiers removed, HEI identifiers anonymised].



List of indicators

Variable name	Description	Туре
citation_count	Absolute number of citations per publication	Numeric, continuous
fwci	Field weighted citation impact - this normalises citations in a field using the world benchmark in that field	Numeric, continuous, bounded
Percentile	Top 1st, 5th, 10th, 25th, 50th, over 50th percentile of highly cited publications	Categorical, numeric
SNIP	Source normalized impact per paper	Numeric, continuous, bounded
SJR	SCImago Journal Rank	Numeric, continuous, bounded
Collaboration	Single author, Same institution, Same country, At least one author from outside UK	Categorical, character
Authors	Number of distinct authors	Numeric, continuous
AuthorCountries	Number of distinct countries associated with authors	Numeric, continuous, bounded
CrossAcademicCorporate	At least one author from academia and one from the corporate sector	Binary
WIPO_patent_citations	Number of times cited by World Intellectual Property Organization	Numeric, continuous
MendeleyRead	Number of Mendeley article bookmarks/article sharing	Numeric, continuous
SciDir_Dwnld	Number of ScienceDirect publication downloads or full-text views	Numeric, continuous
ScopusFullTextClicks	No of full text requests on scopus.com (user must be subscribed to journal)	Numeric, continuous
Tweet	No of times tweeted (this is not restricted to the reference REF dates)	Numeric, continuous
GS_count	No of times cited on Google Scholar (this is not restricted to the reference REF dates)	Numeric, continuous

Correlation project

What we have established to date and what next?

- Unsurprisingly, there is limited coverage in some disciplines within the citation database used, especially for Panel D subjects and law;
- Raw correlations vary in strength depending on UOA and metrics examined;
- However we need to look at practical predictive power rather than statistical correlations;
- We are therefore building a model to ascertain the potential predictive ability of the metrics. Once built, the model will be run at UoA level, and will also consider gender and ECR;
- Our analysis is yet to be completed but will be published as an annex alongside out main report in July.



Impact

- It is not feasible to assess the quality of research impact using quantitative indicators alone;
- Research impact in the REF is broadly defined, however, quantitative data and indicators are highly specific to the type of impact concerned;
- Viewing quantitative data about impact needs to be seen in context, and is likely to require a narrative element;
- There is potential to enhance the use of quantitative data as supporting evidence within a narrative case-study-based approach to impact assessment;
- HE Funding Bodies should build on the analysis of the impact case studies from REF 2014 to develop a set of guidelines on the use of quantitative evidence of impact (cf Digital Science/KPI study);
- These guidelines should provide suggested data to evidence specific types of impact and could also include standards for the collection of data.



Environment

- There is scope for enhancing the use of quantitative data for the assessment of research environment if:
 - panels are provided with sufficient context to enable their interpretation. As a minimum this needs to include information on the total size of the unit to which the data refers, and in some cases the collection of data specifically relating to staff submitted to the exercise may be preferable, albeit more costly.
- The HE Funding Bodies should consider increased use of quantitative data for the assessment of research environment in the next national exercise. As well as collecting data on PhD student numbers and research income, consideration should be given to other sources of data including, but not limited to:
 - the age profile of staff; the representation of people with protected characteristics; bibliometrics measures of the academic impact of the whole set of publications from the assessed unit; quantitative data on broader research impact that is collected in the Higher Education Business and Community Interaction Survey (HEBCIS).



Costs of metrics-based research

- Common assumption that a metrics-based exercise would cost less;
- The collection of quantitative data and its processing to produce metrics and indicators is not itself cost free;
- Experience from REF2014 suggests that even relatively straightforward data sources often require considerable effort to validate and sometimes correct (eg citation data & HESA statistics);
- The review of the costs of the REF (Technopolis, 2015) indicate that the use of citation data in REF2014 encouraged HEIs to use this information in their preparations for the exercise, which resulted in additional costs locally;
- Some costs of assessment are related to the structure, rather than the mechanism of assessment, e.g. significant costs to HEIs associated with selecting staff or outputs to be submitted for assessment (Technopolis, 2015);
- If these features remain, the reduction in cost that resulted in using bibliometrics to assess outputs might be rather modest.



Underpinning infrastructure

- If metrics are to be used, it is critical that they are as accurate & reliable as possible, otherwise they will be mistrusted
- How underlying data is collected/processed is very important
- We therefore need:
 - Unique, disambiguated, persistent, verified identifiers
 - Agreed standard data formats
 - Agreed standard data semantics
- If we are to end up with:
 - Agreed standard metrics

















Our provisional recommendations on REF

Outputs

- Continue providing panel members with bibliometric and other data to support peer review judgments;
- Increase sophistication of information provided;
- Provide information to all panels, but leave them to decide how much (if any) if used.

Impact

 Encourage use of quantitative evidence to support case studies; build on DS/KCL work to specify sets of quant data that can be used in specific types of case study.

Environment

- Considerably enhance the use of quantitative data in the environment section, such as....
- Increase the amount of contextual information to help panels interpret data.



What's next for the review?

- Still in listening mode...
- Final report out on 9 July, with launch event in London.

The full report will:

- Outline key findings (including but also beyond the REF);
- Set out a recommendations for target groups: HEIs; funders; research managers; publishers; data providers; libraries & information managers; government departments.
- Quantitative evaluation should support qualitative, expert
 assessment. Indicators do not substitute for informed judgment.
 Make data collection and analytical processes open, transparent and
 simple. Account for variation by field in publication and citation
 practices. Avoid misplaced concreteness and false precision.
- Neither 'pro-' nor 'anti-' but in favour of **responsible metrics** (link to RRI agenda);
- No instant solutions; a 15-year transition to a more mixed economy.





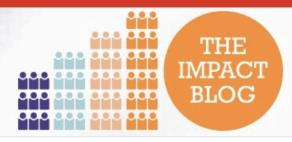
THE BUSINESS OF PEOPLE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE OVER THE NEXT DECADE









Home

Latest

About

Research Book

Podcasting

Resources

Past Events

LSE Comment

Popular





The Impact of the Social Sciences: How Academics and Their Research Make a Difference by Simon Bastow, Jane Tinkler and Patrick Dunleavy.

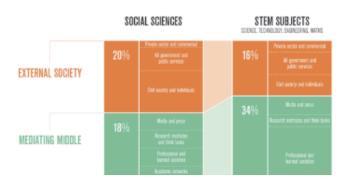
Find this book: amazon

The three-year Impact of Social Sciences Project has culminated in a monograph published by SAGE. The book presents thorough analysis of how academic research in the social sciences achieves public policy impacts, contributes to economic prosperity, and informs public understanding of policy issues as well as economic and social changes. This book is essential reading for academics, researchers, university administrators, government and private funders, and anyone interested in the global conversation about joining up and increasing

the societal value and impact of social science knowledge and research.

Resources:

- Read the preface and first chapter, The Social Sciences in Modern Research [pdf].
- View the data visualisations that appear in the book here.
- . Browse our Living Bibliography with links to further resources.













This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0 Unported License unless otherwise stated.







Social science shaping society



Social policy Education Capacit

Capacity building

About us Contacts News

Apply for funding

Improving social well-being through education, research and innovation

Nuffield Foundation » Capacity building » Q-Step

Q-Step

Q-Step is a £19.5 million programme designed to promote a step-change in quantitative social science training in the UK.

Funded by the Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and HEFCE, Q-Step was developed as a strategic response to the shortage of quantitatively-skilled social science graduates.

Q-Step is funding fifteen universities across the UK to establish Q-Step Centres that will support the development and delivery of specialist undergraduate programmes, including new courses, work placements and pathways to postgraduate study.

The resulting expertise and resources will be shared across the higher education sector through an accompanying support programme which will also forge links with schools and employers.

Further information:

Background to Q-Step

Q-Step Centres

Q-Step Centre current degree programmes

Q-Step Affiliates

Latest activities

New teaching posts

Support programme

Employers

Press and publicity



Highlights

Universities of Essex, Nottingham and Southampton awarded Q-Step Affiliate status

Read all about the 15 Q-Step Centres achievements since their launch in 'One year on' report

New Post! Cardiff Q-Step Centre is currently advertising for a Lecturer in Quantitative Methods closing date Thursday 19 February 2015

Read all about the launch of the Level 3 Pilot Scheme in Social Analytics delivered by Mr Rhys Jones, the schemes project lead and Lecturer in Quantitative Methods FE at Cardiff Q-Step Centre.

The Nuffield Foundation, ESRC and HEFCE are delighted to announce that the University of Leeds is to join the Q-Step Programme. For further details, please read our press release.

Watch and/or download the presentations from Counting them in, the inaugural Q-Step



A step-change in quantitative social science skills Funded by the

Nuffield Foundation

ESRC and HEFCE

Q-Step

Contact us:

QMenquiries@nuffieldfoundation.org

THIS WEEK



SOCIAL SELECTION If you build a crowd on social media, the money for your research will come go.naturo.com/t5ytxr

Time for the social sciences

Governments that want the natural sciences to deliver more for society need to show greater commitment towards the social sciences and humanities.

Dhysics, chemistry, biology and the environmental sciences can deliver wonderful solutions to some of the challenges facing individuals and societies, but whether those solutions will gain traction depends on factors beyond their discoverers' ken. That is sometimes true even when the researchers are aiming directly at the challenge. If social, economic and/or cultural factors are not included in the framing of the questions, a great deal of creativity can be wasted.

This message is not new. Yet it gets painfully learned over and over again, as funders and researchers hoping to make a difference to humanity watch projects fail to do so. This applies as much to business as to philanthropy (ask manufacturers of innovative crops).

All credit, therefore, to those who establish multidisciplinary projects — for example, towards enhancing access to food and water, in adaptation to climate change, or in tackling illness — and who integrate natural sciences, social sciences and humanities from the outset. The mutual framing of challenges is the surest way to overcome the conceptual diversities and gulfs that can make such collaborations a challenge.

All credit, too, to leading figures in policy who demonstrate their commitment to this multidimensional agenda. And all the more reason for concern when governments show none of the same comprehension.

Such is the case in the United Kingdom. Research-wise, the country is in a state that deserves a bit of attention from others and certainly merits some concern from its own citizens. Its university funders last month announced the results of a unique exercise in nationwide research assessment - the Research Excellence Framework (REF), which will have a major impact on the direction of university funding. Almost simultaneously, its government released a strategy document: 'Our plan for growth: science and innovation'. And in November, its government's chief science adviser published a wide-ranging annual report that reflects the spirit of inclusiveness mentioned above. Unfortunately, the government's strategy does not.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INCLUSIVITY

Whatever the discipline, a sensible research-assessment policy puts a high explicit value both on outstanding discovery and scholarship, and on making a positive impact beyond a cademia. In that spirit, the REF (www.ref.ac.uk) aggregated three discretely documented aspects of the research of each university department: the quality and importance of the department's academic output, given a 65% weighting in the overall grade; the quality of the research environment (15%); and the reach and significance of its impact beyond academia (20%).

The influences of the data and panel processes that went into the REF results will not be analysed publicly until March. The signs are that the impacts component of assessment has allowed some universities to rise higher up the rankings than they would otherwise. But the full benefits and perverse incentives of the system will take deeper analysis to resolve.

A remarkable and contentious aspect of UK science policy is the extent to which the REF rankings will determine funding. The trend has been for such exercises to concentrate funding sharply towards the upper tiers of the rankings.

Most important in the current context is whether an over-dependence on funding formulae will undermine the nation's abilities to meet its future needs. A preliminary analysis by a policy magazine, Research Fortnight, reaches a pessimistic conclusion for those

who believe that the social sciences are strategically important: given the REF results, the science to deliver social sciences will gain a smaller slice of the pie than the size of the community might have suggested. If that reflects underperformance in social science at a national scale, and given the strategic importance of these disciplines, a national ambition in, for example, sociology, anthropology and psychology that reaches

beyond the funding formula needs to be energized.

"If you want

for society, you

need to support

understand that

a capacity to

society."

A reader of the government's science and innovation strategy (go.nature.com/u5xbnx) might reach the same conclusion. Its fundamental message is to be welcomed: understandably focusing on enhancing economic growth, it highlights the need for support of fundamental research, open information, strategic technologies and stimuli for business engagement and investment. But there is just one sentence that deals with the social sciences and humanities: a passing mention in the introduction that they are included whenever the word 'science' is used.

Credit to both chief science adviser Mark Walport and his predecessor, John Beddington, for their explicit and proactive engagement with the social sciences. This year's report, 'Innovation: managing risk, not avoiding it' (see go.nature.com/lwflo7), demonstrates a commitment to indusivity: it is a compendium of opinion and reflection from experts in psychology, behavioural science, statistics, risk, sociology, law, communication and public engagement, as well as natural sciences.

An example of the report's inclusive merits can be found in the sections on uncertainty, communication, conversations and language, in which heavyweight academics highlight key considerations in dealing with contentious and risk-laden areas of innovation. Case studies relating to nuclear submarines, fracking and flood planning are supplied by professionals and advocates directly involved in the debates. This is complemented by discussions of the human element in estimating risk from the government's behavioural insights team, as well as discussions of how the contexts of risk-laden decisions play a part. Anyone who has a stake in science or technology that is in the slightest bit publicly contentious will find these sections salutary.

The report's key message should be salutary for policy-makers worldwide. If you want science to deliver for society, through commerce, government or philanthropy, you need to support a capacity to understand that society that is as deep as your capacity to understand the science. And your policy statements need to show that you believe

VILNIUS 24th September, 2013, Vilnius DECLARATION

Vilnius Declaration - Horizons for Social Sciences and Humanities

Europe will benefit from wise investment in research and innovation and Social Sciences and Humanities, SSH, are ready to contribute. European societies expect research and innovation to be the foundation for growth. Horizon 2020 aims to implement inter-disciplinarity and an integrated scientific approach. If research is to serve society, a resilient partnership with all relevant actors is required. A wide variety of perspectives will provide critical insights to help achieve the benefits of innovation. The effective integration of SSH requires that they are valued, researched and taught in their own right as well as in partnership with other disciplinary approaches.

The value and benefits of integrating Social Sciences and Humanities

European Social Sciences and Humanities are world class, especially considering their diversity. They are indispensible in generating knowledge about the dynamic changes in human values, identities and citizenship that transform our societies. They are engaged in research, design and transfer of practical solutions for a better and sustainable functioning of democracy. Their integration into Horizon 2020 offers a unique opportunity to broaden our understanding of innovation, realigning science with ongoing changes in the ways in which society operates.

- 1. Innovation is a matter of change in organisations and institutions as well as technologies. It is driven not only by technological advances, but also by societal expectations, values and demands. Making use of the wide range of knowledge, capabilities, skills and experiences readily available in SSH will enable innovation to become embedded in society and is necessary to realise the policy aims predefined in the "Societal Challenges".
- 2. Fostering the reflective capacity of society is crucial for sustaining a vital democracy. This can be achieved through innovative participatory approaches, empowering European citizens in diverse arenas, be it through participation as consumers in the marketplace, as producers of culture, as agents in endangered environments, and/or as voters in European democracies.
- 3. Policy-making and research policy have much to gain from SSH knowledge and methodologies. The latter lead to new perspectives on identifying and tackling societal problems. SSH can be instrumental in bringing societal values and scientific evaluation into closer convergence.
- 4. Drawing on Europe's most precious cultural assets, SSH play a vital role in redefining Europe in a globalising world and enhancing its attractiveness.
- 5. Pluralistic SSH thinking is a precious resource for all of Europe's future research and innovation trajectories, if it can be genuinely integrated. H2020 offers this opportunity for the first time.





INNOVATION: <u>Managing Risk, not avoiding it</u>

highly technical while, at the same time, being at least as much about values and choices, about who benefits and who pays. Social, political and geographical contexts matter hugely....When governance goes wrong, we can miss out on major potential benefits, or suffer needlessly.'

'Debates about risk are often

Sir Mark Walport & Claire Craig,

Government Office for

Science (2014)



What Works Network

Using evidence to make better decisions to improve public services.

Contents

Introduction

Background to the network

Core functions of the What Works evidence centres

About the centres

More information on What Works

See more like this



Introduction

The What Works Network is a new initiative to improve the use of high quality evidence when government makes decisions about public services.

The What Works Network is made up of 6 evidence centres covering health and social care, education attainment, ageing better, local growth, crime reduction and effective early intervention. They are hosted in the institutions listed below:

What Works thematic coverage	Institutional host
Health and social care	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) #
Improving education outcomes for school-aged children	Sutton Trust/Educational Endowment Foundation @
Tackling crime	College of Policing ₪
Effective early intervention	Early Intervention Foundation @
Fostering local economic growth	Currently being tendered (due to be operational September 2013)
Promoting active and independent ageing	Big Lottery Fund d (due to be created 2014)

What Works centres will summarise and share research with local decision-makers including commissioners, head teachers, police and crime commissioners. The centres will help decision-makers to invest in services that deliver the best outcomes for citizens and value for money for taxpayers. The centres will also engage with central government to inform national decision-making.



Search

Home Parliamentary business MPs, Lords & offices About Parliament Get involved Visiting Education

Lords Government & Opposition Parliamentary offices Members' allowances Standards & financial interests

You are here: Parliament home page > MPs, Lords & offices > Parliamentary offices > Bicameral offices > POST > Work programme > Social Sciences

Parliamentary offices

Bicameral offices

POST

Work programme

Minimum Living Standards

Social Sciences



In partnership with the Economic and Social Research Council and with the support of University College London, POST established a dedicated Social Science Section in September 2013 to provide parliamentarians with more access to social science research evidence. The new section has two broad roles:

- Integrate social science research evidence within all POST activity, and develop a dedicated strand of social science work within POST.
- Run a programme of activity to evaluate the use of research evidence within parliamentary debate and scrutiny, including the impact of POST. Please see the evaluation page for further details.

Meet the advisers



Abbi Hobbs

Abbi has a PhD in Science and Technology Studies from the University of York. Prior to joining POST, she worked for the Academy of Medical Sciences, and as an independent consultant on several social science research projects in science policy and health.



Caroline Kenny

Caroline has a PhD in Political Science from the University of Birmingham. Prior to joining POST, she worked at the Translitudes of Education

Building a stronger future

Research, innovation and growth









Introduction by Lord Stern Living better

A healthy, open democracy

Fuelling prosperity and growth

The value of the humanities and social sciences





How the humanities and social sciences enrich our lives

Download the booklet



Watch interviews



About the British Academy



search

Report Home Page Foreword and People

Summary & Recommendation

Part 1: Social Science Now Part 2: Thinking Ahead

- Cities case study
- Science case study
- Early years case study
- What Works case study
- Download

THE BUSINESS OF PEOPLE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE OVER THE NEXT DECADE



The Business Of People: The Significance of Social Science Over The Next Decade

Tackling infectious disease, coping with climate change, boosting growth – nearly all the major challenges facing our society and economy demand sharp social science.

This 2015 pre-election report makes urgent recommendations — on research funding, social science capacity and use of expert advice by government — to maximise social science's contribution. Read it <u>online in html</u>, <u>offline as a PDF</u>, on your <u>Kindle</u>, in <u>print</u> (published in partnership with SAGE).

- Professor James Wilsdon, Chair of the Campaign



Media about the Report



Making the Report

~











- Modelled on similar efforts in 2010 (e.g. Royal Society's 'Scientific Century' report);
- Inclusive working group and review group chaired by Paul Boyle;
- Keyed into science & innovation strategy and 2015 spending review;
- Wide distribution to policy, corporate, HE and other opinion formers.



- Challenges facing the UK trade, creativity, exchange, equity, and opportunity –met by deploying social science knowledge, skills and methods of inquiry
- To thrive we must marry progress in technology and the physical and life sciences with insights from studying behaviour, place, economy and society.
- Advancing and applying science depends on profits, policies, markets, organisations and attitudes...social science themes.



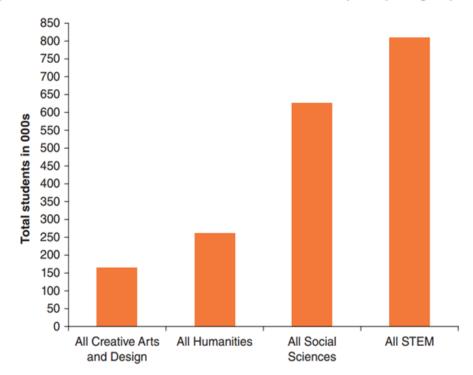
Figure I The size of the research community in social science

In 2010–11		
Academic and research staff in social science departments, engaged in research		
Estimated number of professional staff with social science qualifications working on translating or mediating social science research		
Government and public services	177	
Finance institutions and banking sectors	169	
Consultancy	38	
Total estimated staff in translation/mediation work		
Total population of social science 'research community'		

Source: Bastow et al., The Impact of the Social Sciences, SAGE, 2014, p. 274



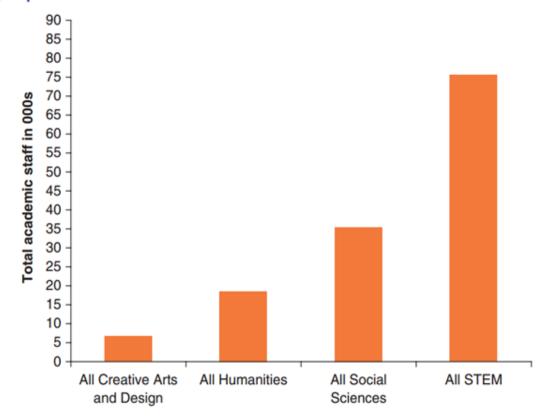
Figure 2a The numbers of students in UK universities, by discipline groups



Source: Bastow et al., The Impact of the Social Sciences, SAGE, 2014, p. 7



Figure 2b The numbers of academic staff in UK universities, by discipline groups





Recommendations I

- Ringfence and expand the public research budget by at least 10% above inflation over the next Parliament;
- Dedicate extra investment to interdisciplinary research (links to Nurse review);
- ESRC's share should reflect its value for money;
- Create Whitehall chief social scientist or equivalent;
- Invest in data, maintain birth cohort & longitudinal studies;



Recommendations II

- New strategic framework for social sciences needed combining research, data, supply & demand, including people;
- Strengthen UK Strategic Forum to coordinate this new strategy;
- Social scientists should be recruited on to all departmental scientific advisory committees;
- Departments should publish their research interests and needs.



SAGE publishes new report on UK social science impact

SAGE PUBLICATIONS





economy and socety.





London, UK (24 February 2014) - SAGE, a leading independent academic publis advocate for the social sciences, to-Campaign for Socal Sciences (CfSS

psychologist...

The business of people

Jon Sutton on a new report from the Campaign for Social Science

UK growth and prosperity will faiter without a better grasp of human behaviour and public attitudes especially in the service sector of the economy. That's according to a new report from the Campaign for



agination of social scientists. Growth, health y of social science that this report stakes its t parliament, adding that Within Whitehall, cross-

theguardian

Social science is vital too

Following the publication of a new report on The Business of People, Jam In the past, social science has often stood quietly by Walker set out the case that the social sciences will be making through the while big science and its advocates have made the noise review.

James Wilsdon and David Walker

Wednesday 25 February 2015 17.45 GMT

ehind graphene, or any other scientific breakthrough, there's societies are also members, representing 90,000 social social networks among researchers, commercial connections. This week, the campaign releases a report, The







AT THE HEART OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION DEBATE

Social scientists who wish to drive policy should 'think big'

20 February 2010 | Dy Maturew Rei62 (URL=/mathew-reisa/1022.bio)

Senior sector figures urge new cohort to engage, draw on large datasets, collaborate with science and tackie the era's major questions. Plus the latest higher education appointments



20 view

Research Fortnight, 25 February 2019

view from the top

walker & wilsdon

We can't afford to ignore the social component of science

and-not coincidentally-walked off with the money.

The Campaign for Social Science was set up four years ago to inform public policy, build coalitions and get a louder, positive message out there. The campaign sprang from the Academy of Social Sciences, which has 1,000 fellows who are academics and practitioners in business, government and civil society. Some 47 learned scientists in varied settings.

the government must complement the knowledge an experience of its chief scientist with a deep understand ing of human systems, behaviour and socioeconomics.

Mark Walport, the government's chief scientis acknowledged this in his recent annual report on ris and innovation. Walport needs an interlocutor, a ser ior figure from the social sciences who can assist him i tapping into the wealth of evidence and expertise that out there. The model needs to be worked through in th devolved administrations too, and in a revamping of th quality of social science data and analysis available t MPs and their analogues outside Westminster.



Search

Q

Departments Worldwide How government works Get involved Policies Publications Consultations Statistics Announcements

Open consultation

Nurse review of research councils: call for evidence

From: Department for Business, Innovation & Skills

First published: 9 March 2015

Part of: Nurse review of research councils and Investing in research,

development and innovation

This consultation closes at

17 April 2015 11:45pm

Summary

We're asking for evidence and views for Sir Paul Nurse to consider as part of his independent review of research councils.

THE BUSINESS OF PEOPLE

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE OVER THE NEXT DECADE

