

October 2022

ALLEA STATEMENT ON REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT WITHIN THE EUROPEAN ACADEMIES

The European research landscape is becoming increasingly hypercompetitive, resulting in a “publish-or-perish” culture where journal-based metrics are central to evaluating researchers and their work. This inappropriate use of quantitative indicators has a direct negative impact on the career opportunities and well-being of individual researchers. In addition, it demonstrably affects the quality of scholarly outcomes, the diversity of our research communities, and the trustworthiness of our research system as a whole.¹

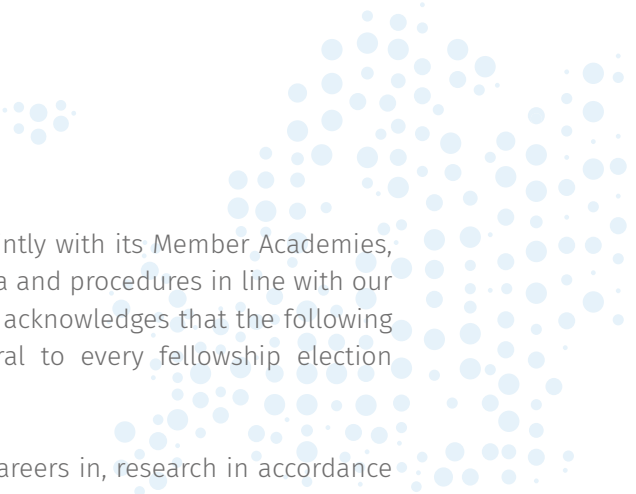
There are many reasons to reform, and ALLEA, the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, has therefore signed the European Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment and joined the associated coalition (CoARA)². In addition, ALLEA commits to further supporting its Member Academies in developing assessment criteria based on principles of quality, integrity, diversity, and openness.

National and regional Academies of sciences, arts, and humanities are no exception when it comes to the need to revisit how we promote and reward excellence and ethical research practices. Election to the fellowship of an Academy is considered an important career step for both early career and established researchers. It is therefore of utmost importance that the criteria and procedures used to make these decisions are transparent and in line with the standards set out in the Agreement and the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity.³

1 See “ALLEA’s Response to Council Conclusions on Research Assessment and Open Science” <https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/06/ALLEA-Response-to-Council-Conclusions.pdf>, as well as the event report on “Research Assessments that Promote Scholarly Progress and Reinforce the Contract with Society” together with the Global Young Academy https://allea.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Research_Assessments_Event_Report.pdf.

2 The “Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment”, together with information on the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) can be found here: <https://coara.eu/>. See also ALLEA’s News Post following the release of the Agreement <https://allea.org/european-science-organisations-reach-agreement-on-reforming-research-assessment/>.

3 See <https://allea.org/code-of-conduct/>.



ALLEA is committed to using this momentum to explore, jointly with its Member Academies, what can be done to further develop these selection criteria and procedures in line with our shared overarching European values. In this context, ALLEA acknowledges that the following core commitments from the Agreement should be central to every fellowship election procedure:

1. Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research; in the case of Academy fellows, selection procedures should (1) take into consideration gender balance and the unique challenges of early career researchers, (2) support diversity of cultures and disciplines, (3) value a variety of competency areas and talents, and (4) promote interdisciplinarity and multilingualism.
2. Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators; assessment of excellence and impact regarding candidate fellows' work should be based on qualitative peer review that meets the fundamental principles of rigor and transparency and takes into consideration the specific nature of the scientific discipline.
3. Abandon inappropriate use of journal- and publication-based metrics in research assessment; in particular, this means moving away from using metrics like the Journal Impact Factor (JIF), Article Influence Score (AIS) and h-index as dominant proxies for quality and impact.

Academies play a central role in recognising and connecting scientific excellence, and have a rich history in defining and adhering to the highest standards of research ethics and integrity. ALLEA highly values the diversity of its membership and the need for tailored assessment criteria, considering national regulations, disciplinary profiles, context and culture. To further support its Member Academies in developing or renewing such criteria in accordance with the aforementioned principles, ALLEA will establish a dedicated task force with the aim of collecting, exchanging and promoting best practices for admitting new Academy fellows, and to contribute to a meaningful cultural change of the research assessment system.

About ALLEA

ALLEA is the European Federation of Academies of Sciences and Humanities, representing more than 50 academies from over 40 countries in Europe. Since its foundation in 1994, ALLEA speaks out on behalf of its members on the European and international stages, promotes science as a global public good, and facilitates scientific collaboration across borders and disciplines.

Learn more: www.allea.org