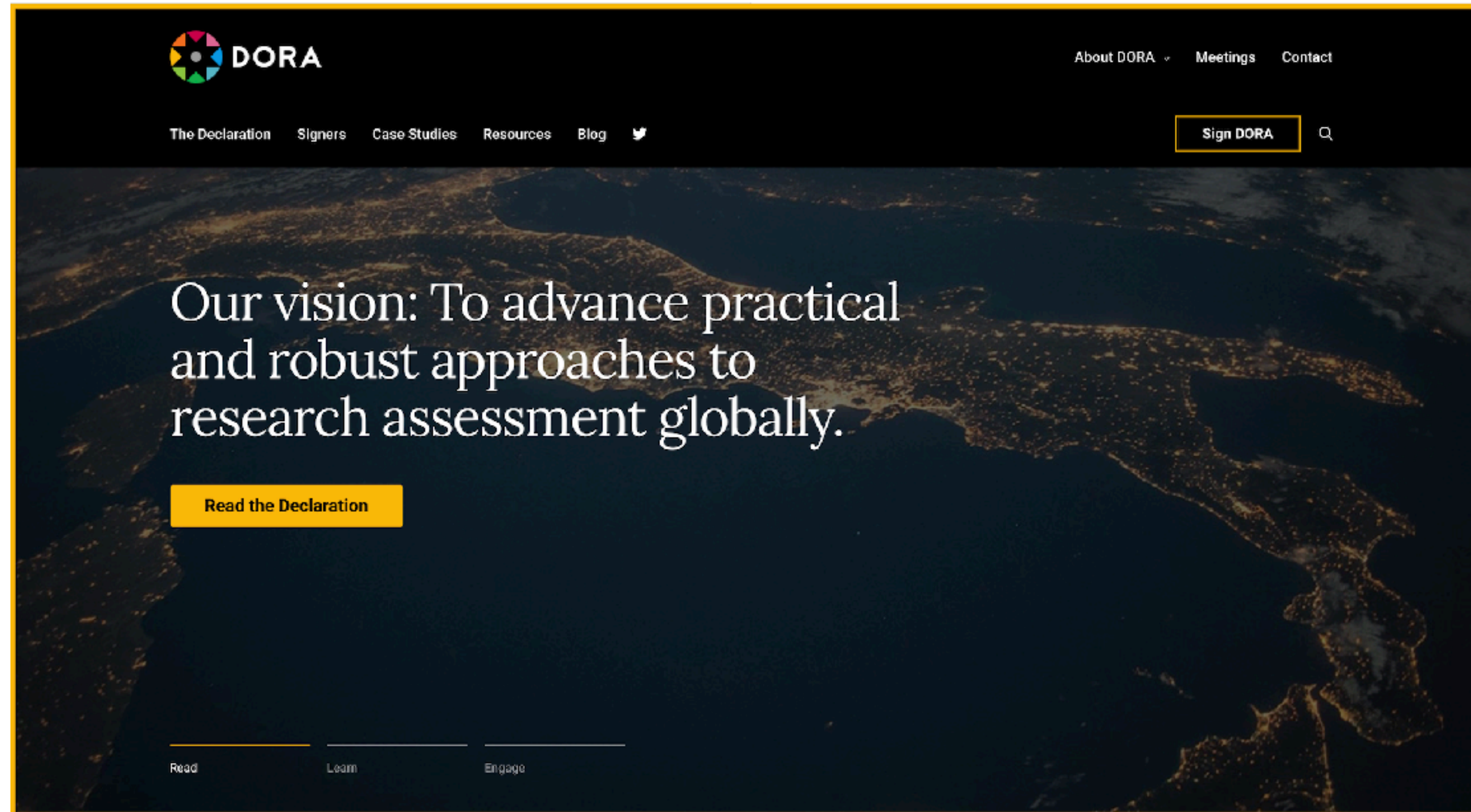


# Implementing DORA



Stephen Curry

Imperial College and DORA

EIFL Webinar | 24 June 2021

Will make my slides available, so no need to try to copy down URLs etc.



# How did Imperial come to sign DORA?

## Impact factors declared unfit for duty

Posted on [May 16, 2013](#) by [Stephen](#)

Regulars at this blog will be familiar with the [dim view](#) that I have of impact factors, in particular their mis-appropriation for the evaluation of individual researchers and their work. I have [argued for their elimination](#), in part because they act as a brake on the roll-out of open access publishing but mostly because of the corrosive effect they have on science and scientists.



**James Stirling**  
*Provost*



**Chris Banks**  
*Director of Library Services*



**Nick Jennings**  
*Vice Provost (Research)*



**Chris Jackson**  
*Professor, Earth Sciences & Engineering*

# How did Imperial come to sign DORA?

**THE WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS**

PROFESSIONAL JOBS EVENTS RANKINGS STUDENT

## Imperial College professor Stefan Grimm 'was given grant income target'

Emails with manager reveal details of review placed on academic found dead in September

December 3, 2014

By [Chris Parr](#)

Twitter: [@ChrisJParr](#)

A researcher at [Imperial College London](#) who [was found dead in September](#) had been told he was "struggling to fulfil the metrics" of a professorial post at the



March to Stefan Grimm, microbiology in the Faculty of Life Science at Imperial College London, who died on 25 September 2014. The article details his research process, which included a "researcher's share" of £200,000 per year in research funding and being the principal investigator of one programme grant in the following 12 months.

Dec 2014

### Application and Consistency of Approach in the Use of Performance Metrics

A report by the Associate Provost [Institutional Affairs]

December 2015

#### 1 Introduction

1.1 In their review of performance management policies at the College, which was presented at Provost's Board in February 2015, the Director of HR and the (then) Senior Consul noted that:

*"... a number of concerns were raised ... about the application and consistency of approach in the use of performance metrics in academia and in the College."*

As a result, the Provost asked the Associate Provost [Institutional Affairs] to convene a small team to undertake a review of the application of performance metrics for academic staff at Imperial College, the recommendations to be submitted for consideration by Provost's Board. It was subsequently agreed by the Provost to restrict this review to academic staff (Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Assistant Professors, Associate Professors, Readers and Professors) and to consider other academic researchers (PDRAs, Research Fellows and perhaps others), who are of major importance to the College but who nevertheless have their own (and different) concerns, at a later date.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/research-and-innovation/about-imperial-research/research-evaluation/>

Dec 2015

# Imperial signed DORA in 2017: then what?

- College signed DORA in Jan 2017
- DORA implementation working group convened
- Report approved in Dec 2017
  - Changed language in adverts, job descriptions, and guidance on hiring, promotion & funding procedures
  - Communication: workshop

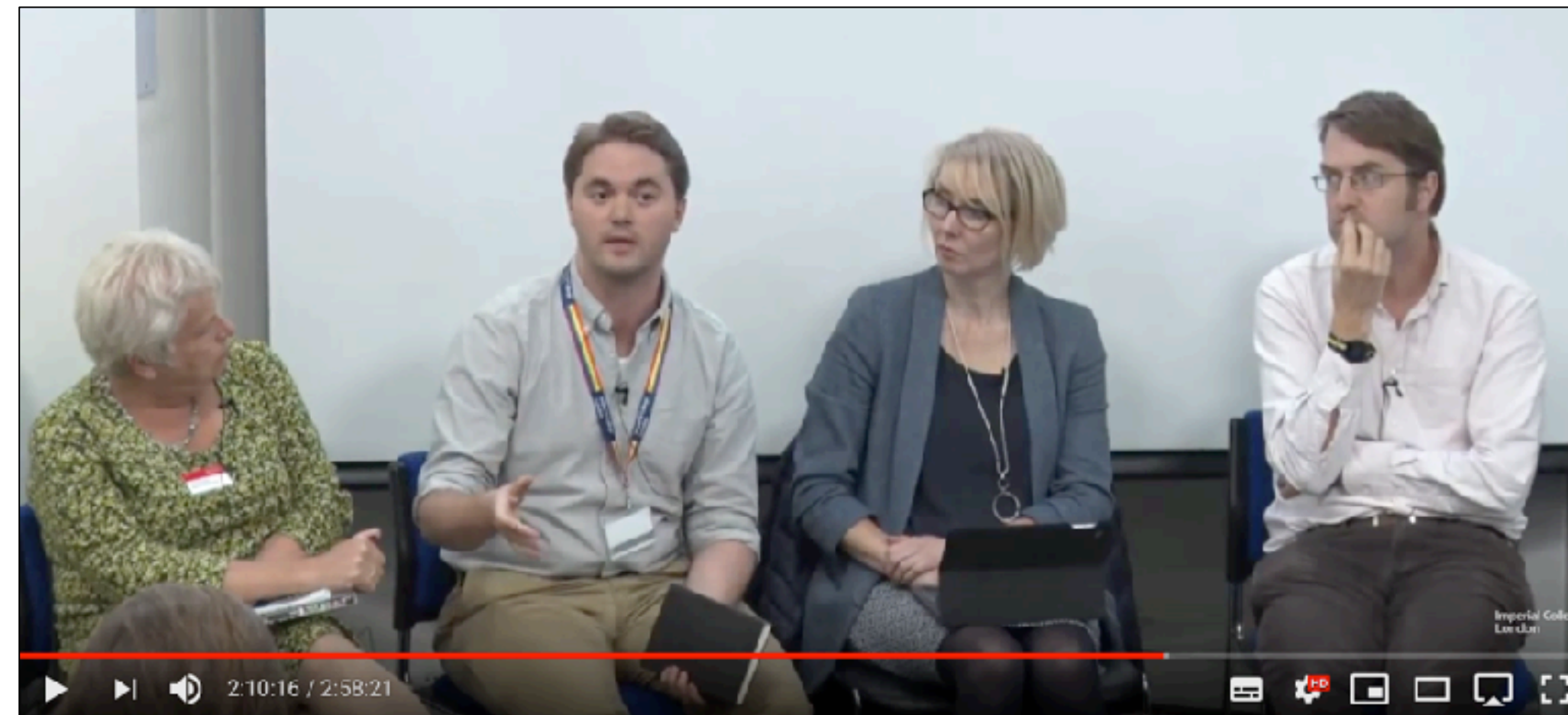
*“We recognise that establishing a transparent, evidence-based processes of staff evaluation as part of a culture that aims to be fully inclusive will take time.*”

*Signing the declaration is intended to empower staff to challenge any instances of practice that deviate from the goal of ensuring that research assessment practices are as rigorous as possible.”*

The image shows a screenshot of the Imperial College London website. The top navigation bar includes 'Imperial College London', 'Study', 'Research & Innovation', 'Be Inspired', and 'About'. The main content area is titled 'Research and Innovation' and features a sidebar with 'About Imperial research' and a main section for 'Research evaluation'. The 'Research evaluation' section discusses the college's commitment to high-level research and mentions 'The Richardson review' and 'The Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)'. To the right, a separate document titled 'Report of the DORA Working Group' is shown, dated 17 October 2017. The report includes a 'Contents' section with 11 items and a '1. Membership of Working Group' section listing members such as Professor Des Johnston (Chairman), Professor Lesley Cohen, Professor Stephen Curry, Anna Demetriades, Professor Jonathan Haskel, Professor Chris Jackson, Dr Cecilia Johansson, Jane Williams, and Professor Yun Xu.

<https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/research-and-innovation/public/DORA-working-group-recommendations-2017.pdf>

# Imperial signed DORA in 2017: then what?



<https://youtu.be/lpKyN-cXHL4>

**One-day workshop: Mapping the Future of Research Assessment at Imperial (Sept 2019)**

# Wider culture shifts...

## Our research culture



## Message from the Vice-Provost (Research and Enterprise)



Professor Nick Jennings, Vice-Provost (Research and Enterprise)

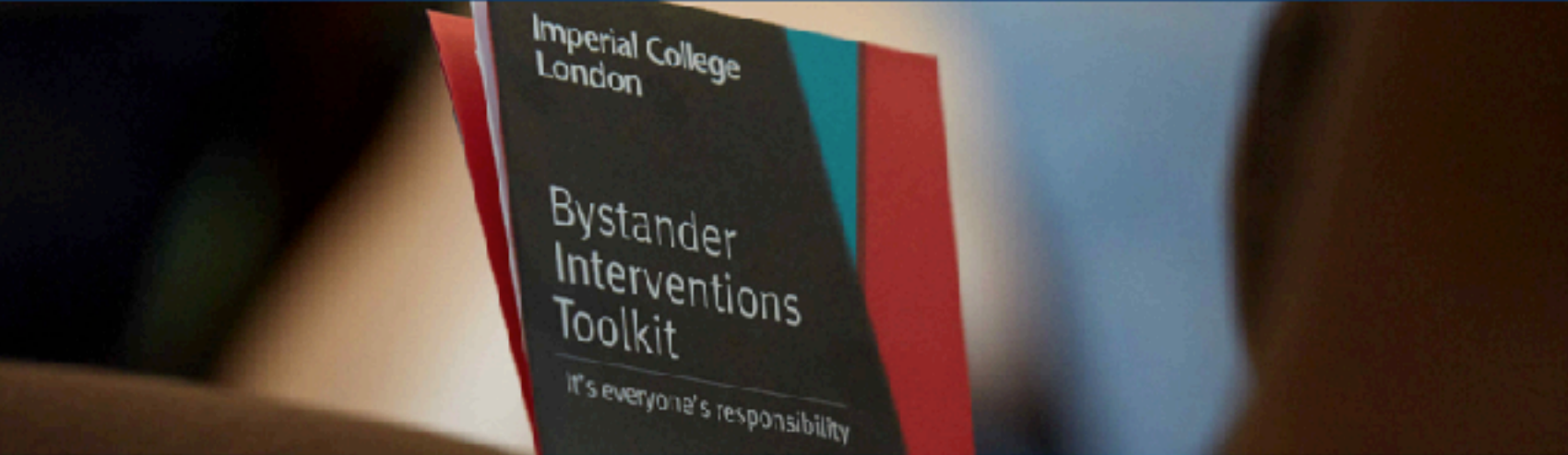
Imperial is committed to embedding a positive research culture throughout the College to support our mission to achieve enduring excellence in research and education in engineering, medicine and business for the benefit of society.

Imperial supports and nurtures a research environment that is defined by a culture of integrity, good governance and best practice. Our highly ambitious, collaborative, multidisciplinary community of researchers possess a common goal of tackling the scientific challenges of our time. This is only possible through our outstanding collaborative research ethos, and by placing public trust and confidence in our research at the heart of everything we do. We have built an environment where researchers can be bold, challenge the boundaries of their fields, and feel supported in judicious risk-taking.

Achieving a positive research culture is the responsibility of all staff and students at the College. We greatly value our talented researchers and recognise that they are fundamental to our ability to develop and deliver world class research. Imperial is dedicated to building a supportive, considerate and highly motivated community based on diversity, inclusivity and mutual respect across all disciplines, functions and activities to help us to attract and retain our talented staff and students. Equality of opportunity is essential to achieving research excellence and we believe our diversity of thought and culture is fundamental to our ability to solve complex challenges. We aim to remove barriers, eliminate discrimination and make sure everyone has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

## Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy

Executive summary | Why this matters at Imperial | Current work in College | Aims of the Strategy



Our strategy is a call to action to everyone at Imperial – staff and students – who believes that the dignity and individuality of every other person here should be respected and cherished.



Executive summary  
**Inclusive Excellence**

Read an Introduction from Professor Stephen Curry, Assistant Provost

Download an overview of our strategy, Inclusive Excellence [PDF, 1.7MB]

## Working Together Task Group



The Working Together Task Group (WTTG) was established in January 2021 with a specific focus on listening to our community and delivering concrete proposals that will help set the conditions for a positive working environment and culture for our staff and students.

The task group is co-chaired by the Provost, Professor Ian Walmsley, and Senior Consul, Professor Peter Openshaw, and will meet in the spring and summer terms of 2021.

The group is supported by an external independent facilitator, Louise Hardman, who has extensive experience of supporting positive change in complex institutions including universities, charities and the NHS. She is guiding the task group on how best to engage the wider College community and contribute.

Membership of the task group is drawn from across the College. Their work will also take into account conversations and community feedback already received through contributions to the [values project](#), which is producing a new set of values for the College. The work and timelines of both projects will be aligned to ensure they are complementary.

### Membership

Co-chairs - Ian Walmsley, Provost and Peter Openshaw, Senior Consul

- Francisco Veloso, Dean of the Business School
- Emma McCoy, Interim Vice-Provost (Education & Student Experience)
- Deborah Ashby, Director of the School of Public Health
- Peter Haynes, Head of Department of Materials
- Richard Martin, Director of Academic Services
- Harbhajan Brar, Director of Human Resources
- Tony Lawrence, Director of

## League tables



Imperial College London is rated as one of the world's best universities.

This page shows a selection of recent rankings from the UK and worldwide. For more detailed subject-based information, [visit our full listing of League Tables.](#)

Global rankings

UK rankings

Imperial College Business School

# We need to re-imagine how we do research

## Why we need to reimagine how we do research



**Jeremy Farrar**

Director  
Wellcome

The emphasis on excellence in the research system is stifling diverse thinking and positive behaviours. As a community we can rethink our approach to research culture to achieve excellence in all we do.



<https://wellcome.ac.uk/news/why-we-need-reimagine-how-we-do-research>

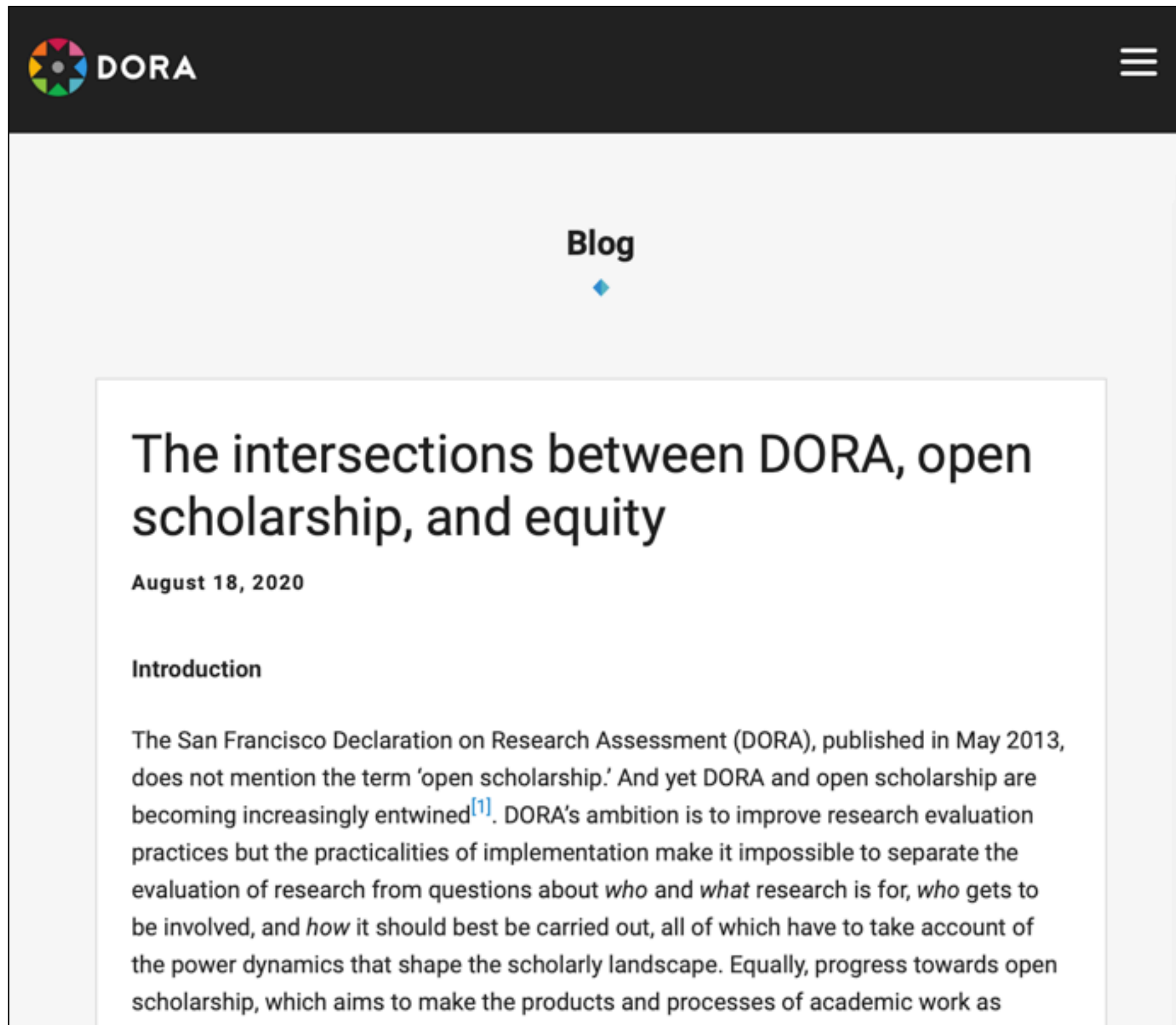
The relentless drive for research excellence has created a culture in modern science that cares exclusively about what is achieved and not about how it is achieved.

People tell me about instances of destructive hyper-competition, toxic power dynamics and poor leadership behaviour – leading to a corresponding deterioration in researchers' wellbeing. We need to cultivate, reward, and encourage the best while challenging what is wrong.

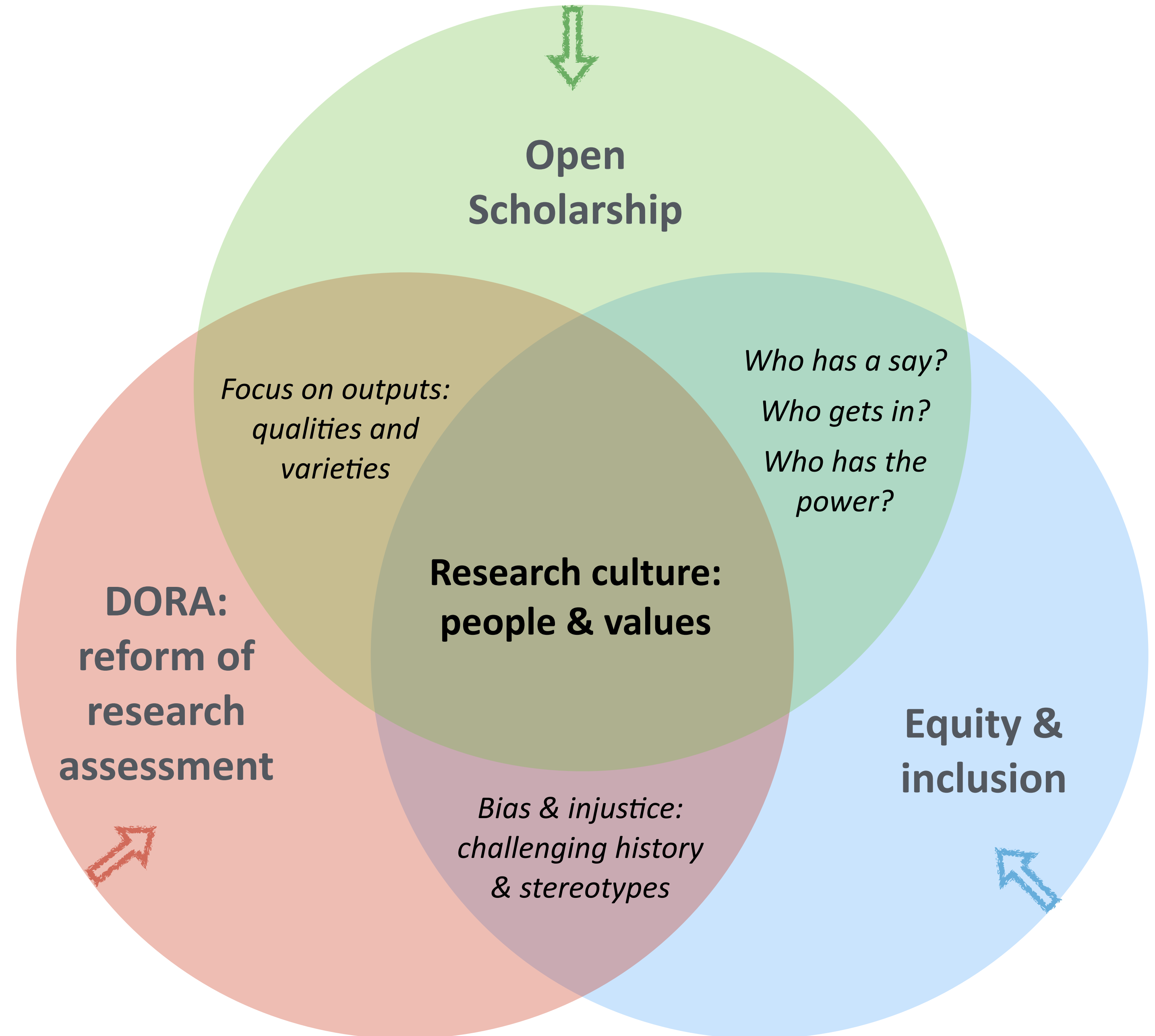
We know that Wellcome has helped to create this focus on excellence. Our aim has rightly been to support research with the potential to benefit society. But I believe that we now also have an important role to play in changing and improving the prevailing research culture. A culture in which, however unintentionally, it can be hard to be kind.

10 September 2019

# DORA: we are an important part of a bigger picture



<https://sfdora.org/2020/08/18/the-intersections-between-dora-open-scholarship-and-equity/>

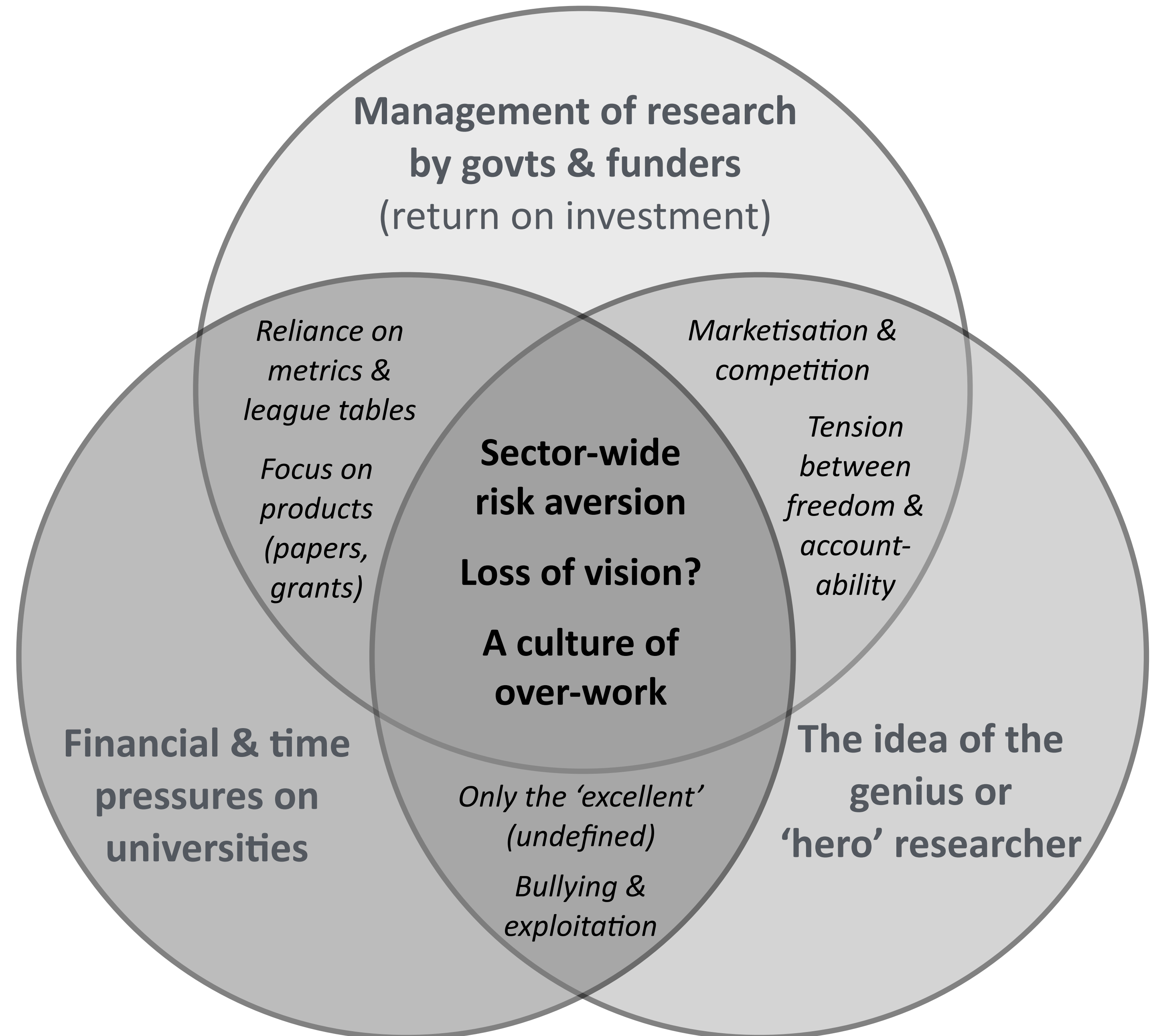




# The bigger picture: understanding the real-world constraints on change

External and internal drivers, each reasonable by its own terms, conspire to create a toxic brew

Individual actors (funders, universities, researchers) are constrained by competitive forces



# DORA: the declaration

One general recommendation:

**Do not** use journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, as a **surrogate measure** of the quality of individual research articles, to assess an individual scientist's contributions, or in hiring, promotion, or funding decisions.



17 **positive** recommendations for different stakeholders:

- funders
- **institutions**
- publishers
- data providers
- researchers

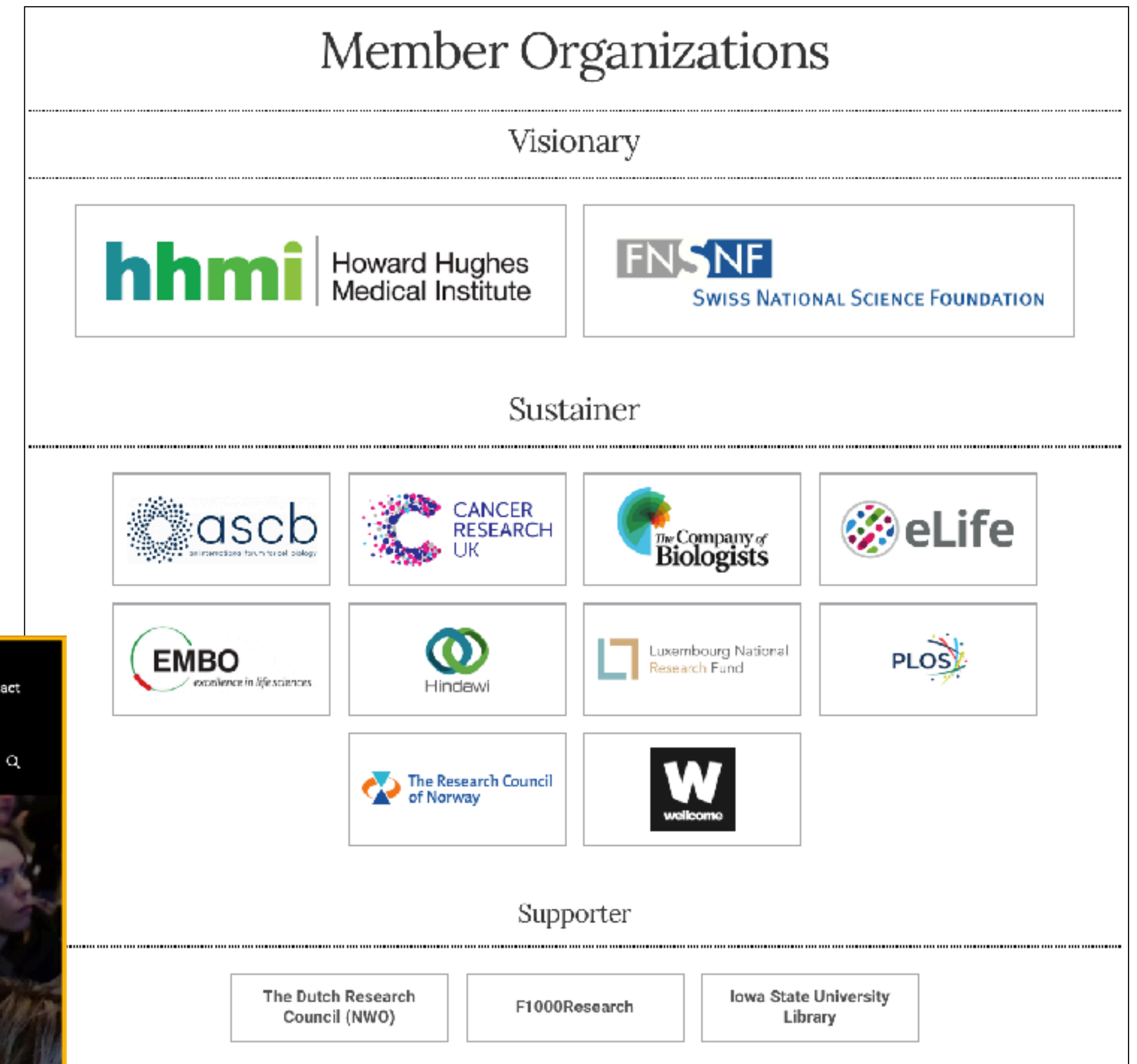
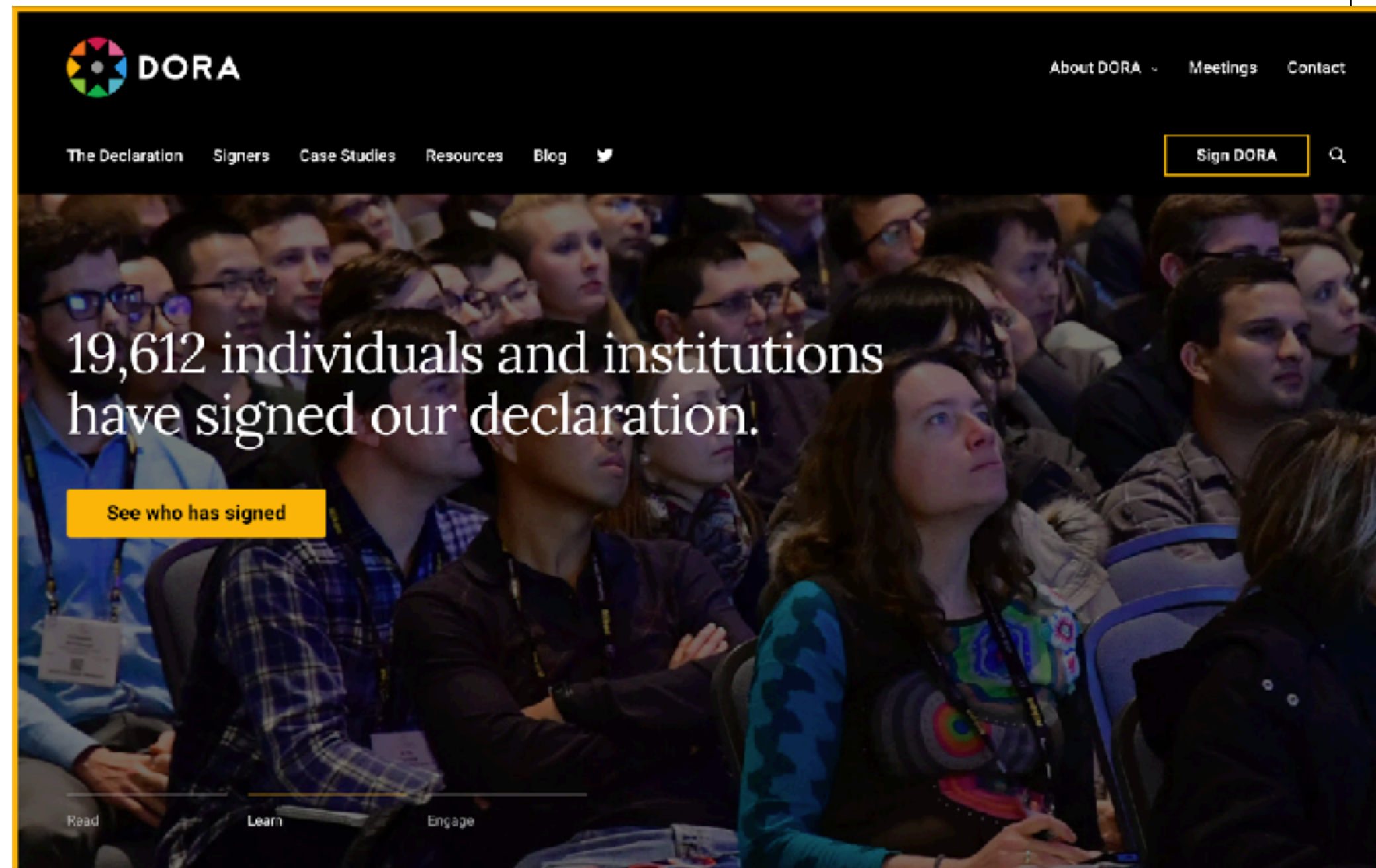
## For institutions:

4. **Be explicit about the criteria** used to reach hiring, tenure, and promotion decisions, clearly highlighting, especially for early-stage investigators, that the **scientific content of a paper is much more important than publication metrics** or the identity of the journal in which it was published.

5. For the purposes of research assessment, **consider the value and impact of all research outputs** (including datasets and software) in addition to research publications, and **consider a broad range of impact measures** including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice.

# DORA: the organisation

- [sfdora.org](http://sfdora.org)
- Launched in 2013
- >17,600 individuals and >2,200 organisations have signed
- From 2017: significant new financial support
  - 1.2 members of staff (plus an intern)
  - International steering group & a global advisory board (all volunteers)



# DORA: Steering Committee, Advisory Board and Staff

## Steering Committee



**David Carr**  
Wellcome



**Stephen Curry**  
—Chair—  
Imperial College London



**Michael Hill**  
Swiss National Science  
Foundation



**Matt Kaiser**  
Cancer Research UK



**Stuart King**  
eLife



**Catriona MacCallum**  
Hindawi



**Erin McKiernan**  
National Autonomous University  
of Mexico



**Dan Morgan**  
PLOS



**Claire Moulton**  
The Company of Biologists



**Bernd Pulverer**  
EMBO



**Marc Schiltz**  
Luxembourg National Research  
Fund



**Erika Shugart**  
American Society for Cell Biology



**Bodo Stern**  
Howard Hughes Medical Institute

## Advisory Board



**Ginny Barbour**  
—Chair—  
Queensland University of  
Technology  
Australia



**José Pío Beltrán**  
Consejo Superior de  
Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC)  
in València  
Spain



**Needhi Bhalla**  
University of California, Santa Cruz  
United States



**Leslie Chan**  
University of Toronto Scarborough  
Canada



**Kelly Cobey**  
Ottawa Hospital Research  
Institute  
Canada



**Christian Gonzalez-Billaut**  
Universidad de Chile  
Chile



**Yukiko Gotoh**  
The University of Tokyo  
Japan



**Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen**  
National Library of Finland  
Finland



**Rebecca Lawrence**  
F1000  
United Kingdom



**Xiaoxuan Li**  
Chinese Academy of Sciences  
China



**Satyajit Mayor**  
National Centre for Biological  
Science (TIFR)  
India



**Valerie Mizrahi**  
University of Capetown  
South Africa



**Ahmed Ogunlaja**  
Open Access Nigeria  
Nigeria



**Laura Rovelli**  
El Consejo Latinoamericano de  
Ciencias Sociales (CLACSO)  
Argentina



**Judith Sutz**  
Universidad de la República  
Uruguay



**Rhoda Wanyenze**  
Makerere University School of  
Public Health  
Uganda

## Staff



**Anna Hatch**  
Program Director



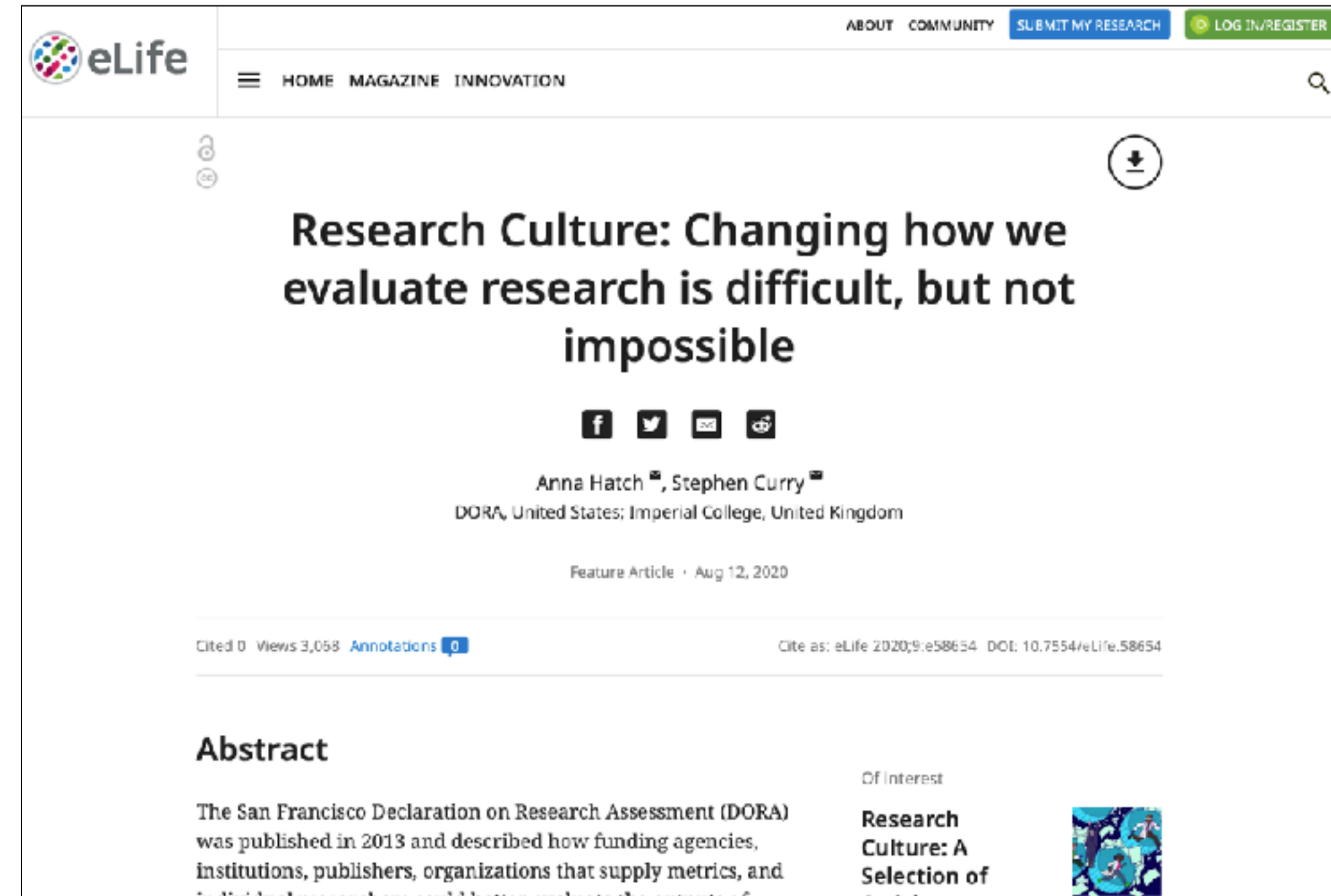
**Haley Hazlett**  
Policy Intern



**Helen Sitar**  
Community Coordinator

# DORA: our roadmap for *action*

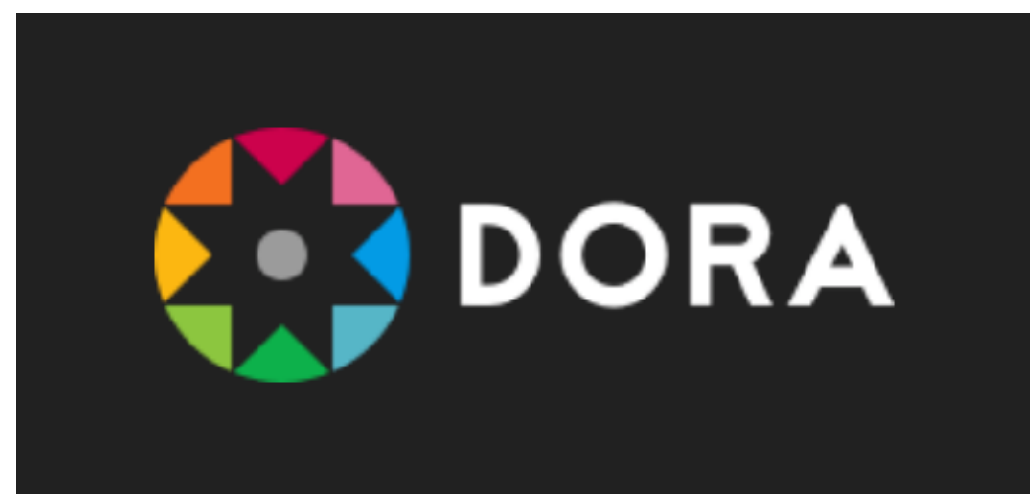
- Recruit more signatories
- Extend the global and disciplinary impact of DORA
- Develop and promote best practice in research assessment



<https://elifesciences.org/articles/58654>

## Framework for action:

- **understand** the obstacles to changes in the way research is assessed
- **experiment** with different approaches
- **create a shared vision** when revising policies and practices
- **communicate that vision** on campus and beyond




More info & resources at: <https://sfdora.org/>

# DORA: building and promoting new tools and processes for evaluation

RETHINKING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

## IDEAS FOR ACTION



### 5 COMMON MYTHS ABOUT EVALUATION

**Hiring, promotion, and tenure decisions are largely made on "merit."**

Assessing research and researchers, especially in research-intensive institutions, frequently relies on indicators like Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and similar measures as proxies for quality in research, promotion, and tenure (RPT) decisions. But a closer examination indicates that the perceived value of JIF is often grounded in **five common myths**:

**Large volumes of applications for faculty searches make it difficult for evaluators to distinguish between top-tier candidates, and unintended biases—like the halo effect, availability, and confirmation bias—influence decision making.**

Novel research, including breakthrough Nobel-prize winning work<sup>2</sup>, often becomes influential (and cited) outside of the JIF measurement window<sup>3</sup>, and findings with significant societal impact are not always published in journals with a high JIF.

JIFs are intended to reflect overall journal measures, and do not provide reliable or scientifically sound information about individual articles or researchers<sup>4</sup>.

Forty percent of research-intensive institutions in North America mention JIF in RPT documents, but interpret it inconsistently to mean quality, importance, or prestige<sup>5</sup>.

Faculty members claim to prioritize peer readership when publishing, yet the perception that their peers value prestige and a reliance on university rankings puts pressure on researchers to publish their work in high impact factor journals<sup>6</sup>.

\*Invisible work\* like service is typically not valued in RPT, yet disproportionately falls on women and other scholars historically excluded from research<sup>7,8</sup>.

Based on a model of current post-doc to faculty transitions, faculty diversity will not significantly increase until 2080 without active intervention<sup>11</sup>.

**Quality research is easy to recognize and rises to the top**

**JIF and other similar journal-based indicators measure research quality**

**Researchers mostly care about journal reputation**

**Assessment practices will naturally improve over time**


Analogous examples of these myths exist, both inside and outside of science:

- John > All women**: There are more male CEOs named John than the total number of female CEOs.
- Low profits, high impact research**: Low profits, high impact research on extending the life of mangoes transformed the industry, where transportation damage had historically reduced yield by 40% and insured \$1 billion in losses<sup>9</sup>.
- Best name medications are often preferred to generics, even if they are the same formulation.**
- A 2019 US poll found that 76 percent of Democrats and independents were comfortable with the idea of a woman president, but only 33 percent believed their neighbors were.**
- Only forty-three percent of doctorates in the biomedical sciences are awarded to historically well-represented populations (i.e. white and Asian males), but if no same group accounts for 82% of full professorships<sup>10</sup>.**

<https://sfedora.org/resources/>

RETHINKING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT

## UNINTENDED COGNITIVE & SYSTEM BIASES



Judgment and decision-making biases that impact how we weigh options and make choices have been shown to result in inequitable review, promotion, and hiring practices. While recognizing these biases at a personal level is important, creating new structural and institutional conditions to reduce bias can be even more valuable.

People tend to dismiss evidence that doesn't fit their initial judgments or preconceptions.

**Example:** Cherry-picking information from a CV to confirm the view one already has, or dismissing potential warning signs because a candidate has already been accepted as a good fit.

**Why it's problematic:** Our initial conceptions are often based on subjective experiences and limited data. Failing to gather and consider counter-evidence makes us more likely to fall into old ways of thinking.

We often take the path of least resistance unless there are strong reasons not to.

**Example:** Continuing to use citations from academic journals as a primary indicator of impact or quality, rather than considering alternate quantitative indicators of real world value.

**Why it's problematic:** People often stick with recognizably flawed processes because the effort to fix them or adopt new ones is perceived as too much effort.

Resources often flow to those who already have them.

**Examples:** Highly cited references may be re-cited in part because researchers see that they're highly cited. Researchers with a long track record of grants receive a disproportionate amount of new funding.

**Why it's problematic:** When people lack the time or motivation to vet results, this can make access to resources even less equitable.

Once metrics are accepted as a way to gauge value, they start to lose meaning as objective measures.

**Example:** Reward systems that rely on easily measurable qualities—like citations and publishing in high-JIF publications—can lead people to "game" the system.

**Why it's problematic:** When quantitative measures have an outsized impact on how people are rewarded, it can increase the temptation to focus on a narrow set of activities and reduce investment in other meaningful, but less rewarded, achievements.

**"Objective" comparisons are not necessarily equitable**

Qualities that can be measured or ranked are tempting because they feel less subjective, but can feed a false sense of precision.

**What can institutions do?**

- Balance the use of quantitative metrics with qualitative inputs, like narrative CVs, that capture more intangible qualities
- Select standards based on a wide set of inputs rather than a narrow or anecdotal set
- Recognize where setting specific, quantifiable goals may be reinforcing some behaviors at the expense of others

**Tackling these infrastructural and institutional implications of common biases can help promote and support more equitable practices:**

**Incumbent processes and perceptions have the advantage**

Many institutions have deep legacy traditions that become normalized over time, but these organizational habits can also keep new ideas and people out.

**What can institutions do?**

- Make the benefits of new behaviors concrete, salient, and easy to grasp
- Recognize where old assumptions may overly reward those who are more traditionally successful, at the expense of new or more diverse talent
- Set, publicize, and adhere to measurable goals that look beyond traditional norms of success when reviewing potential candidates to broaden the pool of

**Matthew effect**

**Status quo bias**

**Confirmation bias**

**Campbell's law**

**Anchoring**

# DORA: we collaborate on tools and policies

## Royal Society - Resumé for Researchers



**THE ROYAL SOCIETY**

Home Fellows Events Grants, Schemes & Awards Topics & policy Journals

### Résumé for Researchers

Opening up conversations about researcher evaluation

Résumé for Researchers has been created to support the evaluation of individuals' varied contributions to research. Find out more about the background to the tool [in our blog](#).

#### Module 1 – How have you contributed to the generation of knowledge?

*This module can be used to explain how you have contributed to the generation of new ideas and hypotheses and which key skills you have used to develop ideas and test hypotheses. It can be used to highlight how you have communicated on your ideas and research results, both written and verbally, the funding you have won and any awards that you have received. It can include a small selection of outputs, with a description of why they are of particular relevance and why they are considered in the context of knowledge generation. Outputs can include open data sets, software, publications, commercial, entrepreneurial or industrial products, clinical practice developments, educational products, policy publications, evidence synthesis pieces and conference publications that you have generated. Where outputs have a DOI please only include this.*

**Module 2** - How have you contributed to the development of individuals?

**Module 3** - How have you contributed to the wider research community?

**Module 4** - How have you contributed to broader society?

<https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/research-culture/tools-for-support/resume-for-researchers/>

## Welcome Trust – implementing DORA principles



**W** wellcome

Funding Key issues How we work About us News

### Guidance for research organisations on how to implement the principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment

The draft guidance below provides information for Wellcome-funded organisations on how to implement the core principles of the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA).

We want to hear your comments and feedback on this guidance, before we publish an updated and final version in spring 2020. [Fill in our short survey](#) by 17:00 GMT, 24 February 2020.

#### On this page

- [The DORA principles](#)
- [What we expect](#)
- [Three areas to consider](#)
- [Background](#)

<https://wellcome.ac.uk/how-we-work/open-research/guidance-research-organisations-how-implement-dora-principles>

# DORA: sharing good practice

<https://sfdora.org/resource-library/>

The screenshot shows the DORA Resource Library website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the DORA logo, links for 'About DORA', 'Meetings', and 'Contact', and a search bar with a 'Sign DORA' button. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'Resource Library' with a subtext: 'A collection of materials to facilitate the development of responsible research and researcher assessment policies and practices.' The page is divided into a 'Search and Filter' sidebar on the left and a main content area on the right. The sidebar includes a search box, a 'Resource type' filter with options like 'Advocacy resources (7)', 'Case studies (11)', 'Good practices (31)', 'Initiatives (9)', 'Journal articles (13)', 'Policies and guidance (10)', 'Position papers (11)', 'Tools (12)', and 'DORA-produced (17)'. It also has an 'Intended audience' filter with options like 'Funders (30)', 'Journals and publishers (3)', 'Professional societies (9)', and 'Research institutes (37)'. The main content area shows a 'Per page' dropdown set to 1, 2, 3, and a pagination link '>>'. Three resource cards are displayed: 1. 'Academia In Motion: Recognition & Rewards at Leiden University' (Good Practices, Position Papers, FOR: Research Institutes) with a description of the Dutch Recognition and Rewards Programme. 2. 'Academic criteria for promotion and tenure in biomedical sciences faculties: cross sectional analysis of international sample of universities' (Journal Articles, FOR: Research Institutes) with a description of a study on institutional metrics. 3. 'Académie des Sciences, Leopoldina and Royal Society' (Good Practices, FOR: Professional Societies).



# DORA: case studies

<https://sfdora.org/dora-case-studies/>

**DORA**

About DORA ▾ Meetings Contact

The Declaration Signers Case Studies Resources Blog

## Reimagining academic assessment: stories of innovation and change











Case studies of universities and national consortia highlight key elements of institutional change to improve academic career assessment.

Produced in collaboration with:

**eua** EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY ASSOCIATION

**SPARC** Europe

**Sign DORA**

-  Tampere University  
FINLAND
-  University College London  
UNITED KINGDOM
-  University of Nottingham Ningbo China  
CHINA
-  Ghent University  
BELGIUM
-  Universities Norway  
NORWAY
-  The Dutch Recognition & Rewards Programme  
NETHERLANDS
-  Open University of Catalonia  
CATALONIA (SPAIN)
-  University of Bath  
UNITED KINGDOM
-  Responsible Research Network, Finland  
FINLAND
-  University Medical Center Utrecht  
NETHERLANDS

Google

Map data ©2021 Google, INEGI Terms of Use

# DORA and Responsible Research Assessment (RRA)



## RoRI Working Paper No.3 The changing role of funders in responsible research assessment:

### progress, obstacles and the way ahead

Stephen Curry, Sarah de Rijcke, Anna Hatch, Dorsamy (Gansen) Pillay, Inge van der Weijden and James Wilsdon

November 2020

Produced in partnership with:



[https://rori.figshare.com/articles/report/  
The\\_changing\\_role\\_of\\_funders\\_in\\_responsible\\_research  
\\_assessment\\_progress\\_obstacles\\_and\\_the\\_way\\_ahead/  
13227914](https://rori.figshare.com/articles/report/The_changing_role_of_funders_in_responsible_research_assessment_progress_obstacles_and_the_way_ahead/13227914)

## Responsible Research Assessment – a virtual conference from the Global Research Council

November 23 - 27, 2020

<https://web-eur.cvent.com/event/7ca86a3d-6e6f-4d11-98e9-f01fe69fdf46>

“the purpose of RRA is to **improve research**, in cultures, in practices and in products.”

RRA is “an umbrella term for approaches to assessment which incentivise, **reflect and reward the plural characteristics** of high-quality research, in support of diverse and inclusive research cultures.”

“Opening up the **range of contributions** that are recognised as valuable will also be an important step towards **detoxifying the hyper-competitive culture** which, by fixating on stunted measures and proxies for success, is **eroding the sustainability of research systems**, degrading researcher wellbeing, and maintaining barriers that exclude women and other under-represented groups.”

Thank you

s.curry@imperial.ac.uk

@Stephen\_Curry

Imperial College  
London

