Statement on Responsible Use of Research Metrics

## Note

This Statement was adopted by the Research Committee on 22 May 2019 as Annex XIII of LSBU’s REF 2021 Code of Practice. The Code of Practice was updated on 1 October 2019.

# Introduction

London South Bank University makes use of quantitative metrics and indicators to gain insight into the performance of its research. In particular, using them can assist in the identification of excellent research output, benchmark against its peers, prepare for internal and external assessments, and inform the allocation of resources.

Informed by the *Metric Tide* (Wilsdon, 2015)report of the Independent Review of the Role of Metrics in Research Assessment and Management, the Leiden Manifesto (Hicks, 2015) and San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, 2012), as well as its own Behavioural Framework, the university commits to use metrics with integrity in a fair, transparent and responsible manner.

# Statement

All research assessment using metrics at London South Bank University should be informed by the following five dimensions articulated in the *Metric Tide* report:

**Robustness:** basing metrics on the best possible data in terms of accuracy and scope

* At LSBU, metrics will be selected and used which are accurate and comprehensive; where there are limitations in available metrics these will be noted as part of any formal use.
* At LSBU, metrics will not be used inappropriately: an example is using a journal metric to infer the quality of an individual article.

**Humility:** recognising that quantitative evaluation should support – but not supplant – qualitative, expert assessment

* At LSBU, metrics will not replace expert opinion or peer review but can support such assessment.
* At LSBU, all decision-makers using research metrics will understand their proper uses, and any limitations or deficiencies. Support in the attainment of this commitment will be provided through briefings and training.

**Transparency:** keeping data collection and analytical processes open and transparent, so that those being evaluated can test and verify the results

* At LSBU, assessment criteria and any quantitative data used will be transparent and made available (on request) to those being assessed. Those conducting assessments must disclose the data sources used and ensure that researchers can access (on request) and correct data about their work.

**Diversity:** accounting for variation by field, and using a range of indicators to reflect and support a plurality of research and researcher career paths across the system

* At LSBU, disciplinary differences in research inputs, processes and outputs will be taken into account. Any disciplinary biases in indicators used must be explicitly acknowledged and addressed.
* At LSBU, we are mindful of our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and we will address these in selecting and using metrics. We will not make use of the h-index, since it does not take account of factors such as career breaks.
* At LSBU, research assessment and management activities will be tailored to the scale of the research activity being assessed. Particular caution is needed when interpreting quantitative indicators in small scale assessments such as the assessment of an individual researcher. However, we are also mindful that bibliometric data can be less prone to subjectivity (especially when field weighted) than reviews undertaken by peers so we will strive to use them in a manner that upholds objectivity and counters personal bias.

**Reflexivity:** recognising and anticipating the systemic and potential effects of indicators, and updating them in response

* At LSBU, the potential or systemic effects of using metrics will be acknowledged: where such effects are identified, they will be addressed and updated.

**Actions**

* The Provost to sign DORA (the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) as a public sign of LSBU’s commitment to responsible metrics.
* The Provost to affirm LSBU’s agreement with the Leiden Manifesto alongside DORA.
* The Scholarly Communications and Repository Manager to arrange regular (at least once per semester) training and briefing in the responsible use of metrics in concert with colleagues in Research, Enterprise & Innovation and Planning, Performance & Assurance.
* Anyone with concerns about the use or application of research metrics is invited to raise them with their Director of Research & Enterprise and Dean, or the Provost.

# References

Hicks, D. (2015). The Leiden Manifesto for research metrics. *Nature*, 429-431.

*San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment.* (2012). Retrieved from DORA: https://sfdora.org/read/

Wilsdon, J. (2015). *The Metric Tide: Report of the Independent Review of the Role of Metrics in Research Assessment and Management.* HEFCE.