

## **RESPONSIBLE RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AND STS**

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### **Abstract:**

Over the past decade campaigners and policymakers have become increasingly concerned with what they consider narrow, harmful and ‘irresponsible’ recognition and reward criteria used in academic research assessments. Inspired by Responsible Research and Innovation frameworks, the term Responsible Research Assessment has recently come into vogue among campaigners and reformist research organizations. Here the term is evoked as a deliberately underspecified umbrella label which calls on research assessment to change in order to better meet various broader research culture reform agendas. For instance, as well as targeting inappropriate uses of research performance metrics in assessments of individuals, institutions and funding proposals (e.g. prompted by the Leiden Manifesto, DORA Declaration, Metric Tide), the Responsible Research Assessment discourse also calls on research assessments to become more pluralistic and get better at recognizing and rewarding research activities like open access publishing, data sharing, research integrity, and ensuring equity and inclusion.

Responsible Research Assessment can thus be seen as an attempt at a social innovation (Rip 2016) centered around encouraging (or ‘nudging’) various actors in the research system into adopting more ‘responsible’ roles and responsibilities in their research assessment practices. Simultaneously, the Responsible Research Assessment discourse is about generating interest and momentum for alternative ‘responsible’ assessment practices to be developed, tested and implemented. Witness for example ongoing development, piloting and implementation of alternative assessment tools like narrative CVs and new standards to recognize and reward societal relevance and impact, research integrity, open science, equity and inclusion, each of which promise to counteract dysfunctions in current mainstream research assessment practices.

As STS research on the Responsible Research Assessment ‘field’ is currently rather fragmented, we invite contributions on one or more of the following topics:

→ Empirical case studies of international, regional, national, organizational and/or professional- led research assessment reform initiatives and the emergence of novel ‘responsible’ assessment tools. What are the organizational, institutional and infrastructural challenges in translating research assessment reforms into practice and how do these play out in different settings?

– The discursive, material and practical construction of Responsible Research Assessment in policy and institutional contexts – what are the overlaps and discontinuities with earlier ‘responsibility’ discourses in research and innovation policy?

– How should STS researchers respond to the emerging Responsible Research Assessment field – for example, through critique, through attempting to reflect on and improve practices in this space, and/or through reflexive consideration of our own roles and responsibilities as professionals routinely engaged in assessment activities?

**Key words:**

Research assessment reform; research (e)valuation; research policy