

(Note: This paper has been renamed in the course of revision.)

PANEL 2 / RECOGNITION OF INDIVIDUAL SCHOLARS

Scholarly knowledge is difficult to measure and its effect and significance often only becomes evident in the long term. There are nevertheless a number of indicators which make scholars' reputations visible and which can be applied to all disciplines within the humanities and social sciences.

The central criterion for recognising scholars is their publishing record and the innovativeness of their scholarly work. In the humanities and social sciences, innovative research means not necessarily developing new methods or procedures, but also raising relevant questions from an innovative perspective, unearthing new source material and gaining new insights and interpretations. Traditionally, in most disciplines within these fields a scholar's reputation depends on research-based monographs, syntheses with a research orientation, or historical-critical editions. In addition to this, many of the best articles appear as contributions to edited collections and an invitation to publish from the editor often holds more weight than formal peer review. In contrast, other disciplines have become overwhelmingly concerned with the number of publications in international journals and their dissemination, measured by bibliometric indicators.

Furthermore, a scholar's reputation is made visible by prizes, honours, awards and memberships of scholarly organisations and academies. Further indicators are high-level grants (ERC grants), international connections (publications with international co-authors, translation of books, research stays) and invitations to speak at national or international conferences and to contribute to high-level publications. A scholar's reputation is also related to contributions to self-governance within the field, for instance editing scholarly journals, taking on leadership roles (such as presidency) of renowned scholarly organisations, organising scholarly events (conferences, exhibitions) and supervising students and PhD candidates.

These criteria can ostensibly be traced back to easily measurable indicators, but assessment of research achievements by exclusively considering simple measured criteria must be regarded with a certain degree of criticism. It seems to be particularly problematic when quantitative indicators are used to create systems of controls and incentives that are supposed to measure changes in research performance. Another problematic aspect is the tendency to distinguish between good and excellent research by defining threshold values, the objectivity of which must be doubted. Even though quantitative indicators may be considered for certain purposes, they should be combined with qualitative criteria.

A scholar's recognition thus depends on manifold criteria, in particular high-level publications and important research results and interpretations.