



SPACE TO EVOLVE **ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT**

A RUBRIC FOR ANALYZING
INSTITUTIONAL PROGRESS INDICATORS
AND CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS

RUBRIC
WORKBOOK

For use with:

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ABOUT THE RUBRIC

Research and researcher assessment is a systems challenge, suggesting that institutions that prioritize developing infrastructures to support their efforts may be better positioned to achieve their goals than those focused only on individual solutions.

The SPACE rubric was developed over the course of several months in 2020-1 as a collaboration between DORA and The Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology, with input from over 75 individuals from across 26 countries and six continents. Its purpose is to provide a structure for institutions interested in growing their internal capabilities to support scholarly research reform efforts. The rubric is therefore less oriented toward gauging or honing the success of specific efforts or initiatives that may be underway at scholarly institutions than building internal infrastructures to support interventions more broadly and systematically, with the recognition that even good ideas may succeed only due to luck or to a strong champion if institutions themselves lack the structures and conditions to support them.

RUBRIC STRUCTURE

The SPACE rubric consists of five dimensions across three stages of capability development:

	FOUNDATION Core definitions and shared clarity of purpose	EXPANSION Increased traction and capability development	SCALING Accelerated uptake and continuous improvement
STANDARDS FOR SCHOLARSHIP <i>How are new definitions of “quality scholarship” formulated and applied?</i>	Alignment on values and goals	Diversification of standards	Adoption of new practices
PROCESS MECHANICS AND POLICIES <i>How are new practices incorporated into review structures, processes, and institutional policies?</i>	Debiasing deliberative judgments	Capacity to support new activities	Integration into existing systems
ACCOUNTABILITY <i>How are individuals and institutions held liable for executing on new assessment practices?</i>	Transparency and clarity of goals	Adherence through commitment	Proactivity in engagement
CULTURE WITHIN INSTITUTIONS <i>How are assessment practices perceived and adopted both within and outside of formal evaluation activities?</i>	Inclusion and access	Advocacy at institutional levels	Reflexivity through reflection
EVALUATIVE AND ITERATIVE FEEDBACK <i>How are intervention outcomes and progress toward institutional values captured and continually improved upon?</i>	Articulation of diverse indicators	Systematization to gain consistency	Improvement using feedback loops

USING THIS WORKBOOK

There is a separate page in this workbook for each of the five dimensions, which can be completed independently or in groups to capture specific aspects of current, anticipated, and aspirational institutional capabilities with regard to research assessment reform.

Each page also contains illustrative examples of the kinds of activities and behaviors that might be relevant for the *Foundational*, *Expansion*, and *Scaling* phases. Note that these are not intended to suggest preferred or 'correct' approaches, but rather to provide guidance and thought-starters for potential directions that might be appropriate for individual institutional contexts.

At the end of the document there is a Next Steps page, which provides space for capturing specific, tangible actions that can help move efforts forward and capture existing momentum.

How are new definitions
of “quality scholarship”
formulated and applied?

STANDARDS FOR SCHOLARSHIP

FOUNDATIONAL EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Standards are explicitly **designed and articulated to align with institutional mission and values**, such as increasing equity and support for traditionally underrepresented, minoritized groups

New standards for scholarship consider the **balance across research, teaching, and service** contributions including training, mentoring and good citizenship

Specific definitions and standards of “quality” with regard to scholarship are articulated and **shared across disciplines** and review/promotion committees

EXPANSION EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Scholarship is assessed using **diverse indicators** (e.g. societal impact), **units of assessment** (e.g. full body of work v. individual articles), and **forms of output** (e.g. non-journal contributions)

Indicators of quality recognize **non-individualized activities and accomplishments** like team science

New definitions of “scholarship” are **deployed across the full range of institutional disciplines**

SCALING EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Faculty have the **ability to customize success measures** to reflect their research interests and goals

New standards, definitions, and criteria for evaluating the quality and impact of scholarship are **integrated into the language and processes of new assessment practices**

ALIGNMENT ON VALUES AND GOALS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

DIVERSIFICATION OF STANDARDS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

ADOPTION OF NEW PRACTICES

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

How are new practices incorporated into review structures, processes, and institutional policies?

PROCESS MECHANICS AND POLICIES

FOUNDATIONAL EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Meaningful and appropriately rigorous qualitative structures for academic assessment, such as narrative CVs, are given due weight

Structures and processes are applied consistently across assessment activities, taking into consideration alternate paths and starting points

Use of new assessment mechanics extend beyond traditional evaluative contexts into ensuring equitable opportunities, mentoring, and retention to increase research and researcher diversity

EXPANSION EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Training on the goals and procedures of assessment processes and practices are accessible and continually maintained

Institutions design processes take into account the resource capacity of committee members to effectively adopt new assessment practices, such as additional burdens on time

Institutions have designated senior functions or offices to ensure faculty capacity for new assessment practices and principles

SCALING EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Assessment mechanics can be flexibly applied and adapted to accommodate diverse disciplines

Mechanisms to support practices are codified and written into institutional policies

New processes and practices are seamlessly integrated and widely adopted

DEBIASING DELIBERATIVE JUDGMENTS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

CAPACITY TO SUPPORT NEW ACTIVITIES

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

INTEGRATION INTO EXISTING SYSTEMS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

How are individuals and institutions held liable for executing on new assessment practices?

ACCOUNTABILITY

FOUNDATIONAL EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

The goals, principles, and practices of academic assessment and review, promotion, and tenure (RPT) activities are **transparent and clearly articulated**, and agreed upon by all participants

Institutions have **clearly defined expectations for adherence** to academic assessment practices

Examples of "what good looks like" are collected and shared to more concretely illustrate target outcomes and behaviors

EXPANSION EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Research evaluators **self-monitor adherence** to academic assessment principles and practices

Senior leaders and committee members actively stipulate equitable assessment practices during both formal and informal career development contexts

Institutions model **ecosystem-level accountability**, such as ensuring that system-level incentives align with and support agreed-upon principles and practices

SCALING EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Individuals actively contribute to the development and review of new practices and principles

Departments proactively broaden and conduct outreach activities to include new or minoritized applicants

Faculty serve as "ambassadors" for new academic assessment practices, such as when serving as external committee members

TRANSPARENCY AND CLARITY OF GOALS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

ADHERENCE THROUGH COMMITMENT

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

PROACTIVITY IN ENGAGEMENT

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

How are assessment practices perceived and adopted both within and outside of formal evaluation activities?

CULTURE WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

FOUNDATIONAL EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

More diverse types of individuals are involved in both defining and participating in career advancement processes, such as including early career researchers on RPT committees

Representation of minoritized applicants meets or exceeds equity goals for both new hires and researcher retention

Career growth and mentoring systems are intentionally designed to provide ongoing support for underrepresented hires

EXPANSION EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Adoption of new assessment mechanisms is supported and advocated for by departmental and institutional leaders

All individuals actively contribute to building more equitable practices—not just minoritized ones

New research assessment norms are increasingly adopted as a default by faculty, administrators, and applicants

SCALING EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

"Positive friction," or intentional pause points to reflect on assessment practices and slow down business-as-usual processes is incorporated into both formal and informal assessment practices

All participants in assessment activities feel processes achieve a balance of effectiveness and efficiency

INCLUSION AND ACCESS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

ADVOCACY AT INSTITUTIONAL LEVELS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

REFLEXIVITY THROUGH REFLECTION

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

How are intervention outcomes and progress toward institutional values captured and continually improved upon?

FOUNDATIONAL EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Goals and success criteria for individual academic assessment interventions are well-defined and shared

Use of **leading indicators** (e.g. increased diversity of inquiries for open positions) supplements **lagging indicators** (e.g. increased diversity of hires) when gauging intervention efficacy

Goals and success criteria are automatically reviewed whenever institutional strategy is updated

EXPANSION EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Quantitative and qualitative **data from interventions** are captured in a standardized way

Mechanisms that **capture both quantitative and qualitative feedback** are explicitly designed and embedded into assessment processes from the outset

Best practices and examples of measurement and/or gathering feedback are codified and shared across disciplines within the institution

SCALING EFFORTS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

Interventions that don't achieve desired outcomes are considered **learning opportunities**, not failures

Outcomes and data are collected and monitored to ensure high standards of evaluation quality and identify **unintended consequences or adverse effects**

Feedback and other **indicators are refined and/or examined in aggregate** to identify and investigate patterns or opportunities for course-correction

EVALUATIVE AND ITERATIVE FEEDBACK

ARTICULATION OF DIVERSE INDICATORS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

SYSTEMATIZATION TO GAIN CONSISTENCY

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

IMPROVEMENT USING FEEDBACK LOOPS

THIS MIGHT LOOK LIKE...

NEXT STEPS

Use this page to capture and assign immediate next steps and action items.

STANDARDS FOR SCHOLARSHIP

PROCESS MECHANICS AND POLICIES

ACCOUNTABILITY

CULTURE WITHIN INSTITUTIONS

EVALUATIVE AND ITERATIVE FEEDBACK

