

WHY DOES RESEARCH EVALUATION MATTER?

M. Kadkhodae¹, S. Amini² and M. Fremerey²

1) Department of Physiology, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences/University of Tehran, Iran

2) Institute for Socio-Cultural Studies, University of Kassel, Germany

Research evaluation is a peer review action to evaluate the quality of research in faculties and research centers. Universities are institutions that are reactive to the demands of their societies needs to change and to solve community health problems by promoting high quality research. Research evaluation is a pronouncement concerning the effectiveness of a plan or treatment and is expected to provide data on the “value for money”, to supplement the concern with financial accountability. Evaluation will contribute toward improved planning, better management and greater accountability. To achieve these goals, we need to increase the efficiency of the research programs by different kinds of support plus continuous evaluations of the system. At the university, science of evaluation must be seen as a science of instrumental development and interpretation. A core definition for the evaluation of the university research proposals and reports is to interpret or judge (measuring) the quality, efficiency, relevance, viability and the effectiveness of the university researches. Besides, the evaluation itself must be improved in a way that is responsive to the needs of the universities change.

In all of these procedures we need to have an effective evaluation system, but there are always many problems with the design and interpretation of a project whose aim is to evaluate. In some

institutions the evaluation culture is missing, because it is understood as a control and prove instrument, not as an improving tool. There are also lack of networking at the university level including lack of interaction between researchers and administrators.

Thus, there is a crucial need to changes. In developed countries the recent changes in the universities has led to the emergence of an entrepreneurial model of academic research. In developing countries, universities, to increase their contribution to development through the production and distribution of knowledge, need to transform themselves into “developmental universities”. The key feature of this model is acceptance by universities that they have a responsibility not only to provide teaching and carry out research, but also to contribute directly to economic growth of the society in which they are embedded.

In order to increase the quality of research in Tehran University of Medical Sciences, high-level research and teaching activities need to be strengthened. Local needs must be included in research agendas and an effective evaluation tool instrument must be developed to encourage the university researchers to conduct the research mainly on society needs and finally support must be provided for students and university staff to identify and commit to solving social and community health problems.



Fig 1. Different stages of research processes (Ref. 1).

REFERENCES

1. Amini S. Management requirement. DAAD Bulletin No 4, Oct 1993.
2. Fremerey M. The University as a learning organization. In: Amini S, Fremerey M, Wesseler M. Towards a shared vision for higher education. Germany: Kassel University; 2002.
3. Campbell FJ. Conceptual framework for the evaluation of university research in Europe. Washington DC, USA: The George Washington University Press; 2002.
4. Connell H. University research management, Meeting the institutional challenge. Paris, France: OECD publications; 2004.