

**12 October 2022**

**Panel discussion on the reform of research evaluation**

Which methods can be used to evaluate and appreciate the quality and impact of research achievements? And what criteria should be used as a basis for assessing scientific research? These questions were the focus of a joint event organised by the Einstein Foundation Berlin, the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (BBAW) and the German Rectors' Conference (HRK) yesterday evening in Berlin. The participants in the panel discussion agreed that a fundamental reform of the research evaluation system was necessary. In the course of this reassessment, indicators such as diversity, sustainability and open science should be taken into account. Nevertheless, scientific excellence must remain the all-important criterion in the evaluation of research achievements.

Prof Dr Christoph Marksches, President of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities:

"In recent decades, a wide variety of research evaluation procedures have been established in a wide variety of academic disciplines. It seems to me that there is now rather a danger that we are doing too much of a good thing: If projects in certain funding programs and lines are evaluated every two years, then it seems to me that the damage is sometimes greater than the benefit - and it doesn't make economic sense anyway, to say the least. In this respect, we now need a very thorough evaluation of research evaluations. In addition, research funding needs trust, and trust can be disappointed. In this respect, I very much welcome this evening's discussion and regret not being able to take part in it personally."

Prof Dr Martin Rennert, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Einstein Foundation Berlin:

"We owe it to the younger generation of scientists to look critically and closely at our procedures. They date from a time when fewer researchers dealt with fewer topics; a system based solely on peer review has become a major challenge today. But alternatives are difficult to design."

Prof Dr Ulrich Dirnagl, Director of the QUEST Center at the Berlin Institute of Health and Secretary of the Einstein Foundation Award for Promoting Quality in Research:

"The evaluation of researchers and their products determines the content, direction, and culture of research. The current practice of research evaluation has many unintended and often even harmful consequences. Not only is there broad international consensus on the urgent need to reform this practice, but we also already have best practices and a variety of promising approaches on how to integrate content, quality, openness, inclusivity, and societal relevance into research evaluation."

Prof Dr Peter-André Alt, President of the German Rectors' Conference:

"Scientific excellence is the central criterion for research. Paradigms such as open science or diversity must not be equated with research excellence. If we want to open research evaluation

to aspects such as diversity, collaboration and openness these criteria need to be included into the early stages of the research process. From the point of view of the universities, it is indisputable that excellence must be upheld as the guiding principle of any quality assurance in the sciences."

**Further information on the event (incl. video recording):**

[www.einsteinfoundation.de/en/events/evaluation-of-research-and-scholarship](http://www.einsteinfoundation.de/en/events/evaluation-of-research-and-scholarship)