**Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA) and the recruitment process**

**What is DORA?**

[The San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment (DORA)](https://sfdora.org/) <https://sfdora.org/>  is a worldwide, cross-disciplinary initiative which recognises the need to improve the ways in which scholarly research outputs are evaluated and seeks to encourage institutions, researchers, funders, publishers, and other key stake holders to develop and promote best practice.

While DORA makes 18 recommendations for change, the key themes are-

* Eliminate the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factor (JIF), in considering funding, appointments, and promotions
* Assess research on its own merits rather than on the journal in which it is published
* Capitalise on opportunities provided by online publication (such as relaxing unnecessary limits in articles and exploring new indicators of significance and impact)

**University of Aberdeen and DORA**

The University of Aberdeen became a signatory of DORA in July 2020.

The University highlighted that it should-

* Be explicit about criteria used in recruitment and promotion decisions with the emphasis on scientific content of research outputs rather than publication metrics or publication source
* In assessment of research, consider the value and impact of all research outputs not limited to publications, as well as a broad range of impact measures including qualitative indicators of research impact, such as influence on policy and practice

While researchers should-

* Make assessments based on scientific content rather than publication metrics, when involved in committees making decisions about funding, recruitment and promotion
* Cite primary literature in which observations are first reported rather than reviews in order to give credit where credit is due
* Use a range of article metrics and indicators on personal/supporting statements, as evidence of the impact of individual published articles and other research outputs
* Challenge research assessment practices that rely inappropriately on JIF, and promote and teach best practice that focuses on the value and influence of specific research outputs

**Responsible use of metrics for recruitment**

The use of indicators or metrics in any HR process should be stated in advance of the process starting. Such indicators or metrics should be based on openly available data. The purpose of the indicators or metrics is to inform and to support assessment; recruitment candidates may be asked to provide a narrative that highlights their best outputs and to justify their contribution to advancement of the field.

**For recruitment panels**

Recruitment panels, when assessing the quality of a piece of research, should use expert judgement and value the merit of the work and not the journal impact factor, journal ranking, publication channel, or publisher.

An applicant should not be penalised for including journal-based metrics, but if they do not qualify why the research is important/impactful/rigorous etc. then journal base metrics should not be used as a substitute for this omitted information.

If metrics do end up being used by the panel, a suite of metrics efficient in validating the results of each other should be used where possible alongside expert judgement. The use of metrics will be reassessed for each job role.

**For applicants**

When preparing an application, CV, or cover letter, please note that there is no guarantee the metrics supplied will be taken into consideration. Where metrics cannot be independently confirmed; if they are not deemed robust or appropriate; or if they cannot be meaningfully compared in a consistent manner across all candidates they will not be taken into consideration. However, you will not be penalised for supplying metrics. Please read the Further Particulars and Person specification carefully to understand what information can be included in support of an application.

If a metric is being used, the panel should follow the DORA principles.