

INORMS Research Evaluation Group

SCOPE Case Study: Oslo Metropolitan University: Lectures in the master's course “Scholarly Communication”

SCOPE is a five-step framework for evaluating research responsibly.

It invites evaluators to:

- S - START with what they value about the entity being evaluated;
- C – Consider the CONTEXT in which the evaluation takes place;
- O – Explore all the OPTIONS for evaluating – both quantitative and qualitative;
- P – PROBE their approach for unintended consequences;
- E – EVALUATE - and evaluate the evaluation.

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

How was SCOPE used?

As part of the subject “Scholarly Communication” in the master's program in “Library and Information Science” SCOPE was presented as a possible framework for responsible research evaluations.

Overview of the course “Scholarly communication”

The course covers practical and theoretical knowledge relating to the various stages of scholarly communication. The course includes:

- models for scholarly communication
- open science and open data
- publication patterns in different scholarly disciplines
- bibliometric methods and aims
- funding models for scholarly publication
- open access publishing and institutional archives

Learning outcomes

Knowledge

The student:

- understands the structure of scholarly communication and publication on a national and international level, and how it is influenced by disciplinary differences
- has advanced knowledge of the political and practical aspects of open data, open access and open science
- is well acquainted with bibliometric methods and aims for the development of collections, mapping of research activity and research evaluation

Skills

The student is capable of:

- advising researchers in open-access publication solutions
- explaining and recommending metadata solutions for research data
- working with the administration of research data
- conducting simple bibliometric analysis

Teaching and learning methods

The course is organised as a weekly series of seminars. The students can attend the lectures on campus or follow them remotely online.

Course Requirements

The students will write an assignment on a self-selected topic, which must be approved by the lecturer in advance. The semester paper can be written individually, in which case its scope shall be approx. 15 pages, or it can be written in groups of two or three students, in which case it shall have a scope of approx. 20 pages.

The requirement must be delivered by a prescribed deadline, and it must be approved to qualify for final grading.

Assessment

The assessment form is an individual written three-day home exam.

A grade scale with grades from A to E for pass and F for fail is used.

All exam papers are graded by one internal and one external examiner.

The content of the lecture on 'research evaluation':

- Responsible Research Evaluation
 - Bibliometrics in research management and research evaluation
 - Five arguments to persuade HE Leaders to evaluate research responsibly
 - Introducing SCOPE – a five-stage process for evaluating responsibly.
- Government priorities and expectations
- Target-oriented management at OsloMet
- Evaluation and analysis at the university
- Use of bibliometrics and different indicators at OsloMet
- Four R&D indicators; trends at faculties and departments
- Selected tools

The outcome of the lectures. E.g., feedback received.

The lecture on the practical use of bibliometric tools and other assessments and experiences with research evaluation at the university complements the course's theoretical basis with valuable understanding from practical work with scholarly communication.

The outcomes for the students is a better understanding of research assessment, and the risk involved in use of different indicators.

SCOPE was used as an illustrative framework and pedagogical tool to achieve understanding of what responsible research assessment entails.

The lecture gives an overview of all assessment activity at the university.

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Feedback from the participants stated that the most important outcome is that metrics can't be responsible or irresponsible, only people can. An evaluation should be understood as integral part of ongoing quality assurance. Evaluations are intended to reflect and learn.

When evaluating choose indicators that best fit values (aims and strategy), context, options, and explored alternatives.

Together with the students we discussed the use of indicators and metrics going through the assessment regime and annual cycle for evaluations and analysis at the university. And we explored the roles and responsibilities of those involved.

Several students have chosen aspects of 'research evaluation and assessment' as the topic for their course assignment paper. Matters dealt with in the papers range from the use of bibliometrics for distribution of resources, hiring, monitoring of research activity, and use and misuse of the Norwegian publication indicator, alternative metrics, etc

We have not seen the SCOPE framework mention in the papers yet. But the presentation of SCOPE during the lecture serves as both a framework and a checklist for planning evaluation processes and as a starting point for discussions about research culture.

What were the learning points for the SCOPE team?

The students have been very happy with the lectures. This lecture has been conducted three years in a row. Some students have pointed out that the presentation was a bit intense and tightly packed. So after the last evaluation, this year's lecture will have fewer examples and a shorter slide presentation so that there will be more room for dialogue, discussions and questions.

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