



UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG

Action Plan for Reforming Research Assessment (CoARA)

The University of Gothenburg (GU) signed the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment within the framework of the Coalition for Advancing research Assessment, CoARA, in April 2025. Through this commitment, GU has developed an action plan for how the principles of responsible research assessment will be addressed in GU's regular processes for quality assurance and continuous quality improvement and therein specific actions.

Integration with existing quality processes and current position

GU has a long tradition of collegial assessment and peer review in matters relating to research quality, recruitment and academic development. Assessment of research, and of researchers, takes place in several contexts, including recruitment and promotion processes, quality dialogues, evaluation of research environments, and strategic discussions on research development.

Research quality is addressed within an established framework through the *Policy for quality assurance and continuous quality improvement of research (2024)*. The policy emphasises:

- *Basic principles* such as an active quality culture, spreading of good examples and exchanges of findings via various arenas.
- *Local continuous follow up and improvement* meaning for example that departments should, based on qualitative information, monitor and develop research development and renewal.
- Recurring external evaluation, including RED (*Research Evaluation Development*). RED27 is adapted to best contribute to each faculty's quality and development of research.
- *University-wide strategic monitoring* which includes that the vice-chancellor annually monitors the quality of research through i.e. dialogues with faculties. The Quality committee works to enhance and develop GU's research quality and the Committee for ethical issues in research promotes knowledge and awareness of research ethics and good research practice.
- The importance of *compliance with steering documents* as The University of Gothenburg's Vision 2021 – 2030, Open Publication Policy, Research Ethics Policy and Gender equality plan.

Priority areas for 2026–2028

1. Recognition of a broader range of contributions

GU will continue to support assessment practices that recognise disciplinary diversity and that allow for a broader understanding of relevant research contributions. This includes, where appropriate, contributions relating not only to publications, but also to collaboration, supervision, leadership, open science, and societal engagement.

2. Responsible use of indicators

GU will promote a responsible and context-sensitive use of indicators in research assessment. Quantitative data may serve as support in assessment processes but should not replace collegial and expert judgement.

3. Transparency in assessment

GU will support continued reflection on how criteria and expectations in assessment processes can be made clearer and more transparent, particularly in contexts concerning recruitment, promotion, and research evaluation.

4. Collegial dialogue and learning

GU will use existing collegial forums to support dialogue and exchange of experience on assessment practices, including differences between disciplinary areas and organisational contexts.

Specific activities

1. Review of relevant findings from HR in Excellence

Results and observations from the work related to GU's application for the *HR Excellence in Research Award* that are relevant to research assessment will be identified and compiled, in particular results and observations relating to merit assessment, recruitment and career development.

2. Review of relevant findings from RED27

Relevant observations from the *RED27* concerning research quality, assessment criteria and evaluation practices will be noted and, where appropriate, used as input to the continued CoARA work.

3. Self-evaluation for the Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ)

The Swedish Higher Education Authority (UKÄ) is reviewing GU's quality assurance system for research in 2028. UKÄ's assessment criteria include how the university demonstrates *appropriate peer review* from national and international perspectives; how the university creates favourable conditions for the *development and renewal of research and research environments*; and how the university promotes *gender equality* in preconditions for research. Several of the findings during the self-evaluation process and the external review will be relevant to the continued work with CoARA.

4. Collegial exchanges on assessment practices

Existing forums and targeted dialogue activities will be used to discuss issues related to responsible research assessment. This will include relevant exchanges involving faculties, research leadership functions and bodies involved in recruitment and promotion such as the *Teacher Appointment Committees*, recognising the committees as key actors in the interpretation and application of responsible research assessment.

5. Internal synthesis

Based on findings of the HR Excellence in Research Award process, RED27, the UKÄ review and collegial dialogue, the University will prepare an internal synthesis of issues that appear particularly relevant for the continued development of research assessment at GU.

6. Revision of the action plan

The present action plan will be reviewed and, if needed, revised in the light of the results and experiences gathered during the implementation period.

Governance and responsibilities

The work related to CoARA will be integrated in GU's existing structures and processes for research quality and development. The Research Board will serve as an important forum for discussion and follow-up. Relevant support functions, including HR-related functions and other appropriate functions will contribute to coordination and analysis.

The faculties and their collegial bodies remain central to the practical development of assessment practices, since research assessment is carried out within disciplinary and organisational contexts.

Follow-up

Follow-up of this action plan will take place within GU's ordinary quality and governance processes. The main purpose of follow-up is to support reflection, coordination and learning, rather than to establish a separate reporting structure.

This approach is consistent with GU's established policy framework for quality assurance and continuous quality development of research and contributes to strengthening a culture of collegial reflection on research quality and assessment.

Milestones

Spring 2026	<i>Preparation and dialogue</i>	Adoption and publication of a first CoARA Action Plan. Continued discussions in the Research Board and faculties on current assessment practices in relation to CoARA principles. Discussions at meeting with all deans and heads of department.
2026–2027	<i>Embedding reflection</i>	Arranged seminars with the Teacher Appointment Committees and spreading of experience. Revision of the Policy for quality assurance and continuous quality improvement of research.
2027	<i>Evaluation and learning</i>	Collection and review of relevant input from HR in Excellence, RED27 and the UKÄ review. Internal synthesis of observations and possible development needs relating to research assessment.
2028	<i>Sharing and consolidation</i>	Review and possible revision of the CoARA Action Plan.