

‘Evaluation of research is useful – if multiple performance dimensions are considered!’

An international research network explores the ‘governance’ of universities and research organizations – Workshop 21-22 February 2008 at University of Twente, sponsored by the Institute of Governance Studies (IGS).

Comparisons

One size does not fit all! Comparisons of research performance is useful if it is applied to comparable research organizations and if the particular role and scope of activity of an organization in the research system is sufficiently considered. Performance comparisons should be organized as ‘ratings’ of multidimensional performance areas, and not as simplistic ‘rankings’ (like for example the ranking by the Shanghai Jiao Tong University). This was a key message presented at a high-level Science Policy Conference March 2007 in Berlin. Last week (21-22 February 2008) the organisers of the Berlin event met for a workshop at University of Twente (UT) in order to prepare joint book publications and to draft a new research programme for the years to come. The UT workshop was hosted by Professor Stefan Kuhlmann, Faculty of Management and Governance (MB), sponsored by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the IGS.



Prof. Stefan Kuhlmann opening the Workshop ‘Governance of Research’, University of Twente.

Better evaluation concepts are just one issue investigated by the research Group ‘Governance of Research’ which is funded by DFG with some 4 million Euros for the period from 2003 until 2009. The Research Group, fully named ‘International Competitiveness and Innovative Capacity of Universities and Research Organizations - New Forms of Governance’, comprises 9 participating and a number of associated projects with some 40 researchers at 12 universities in Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland. Members of the multi-disciplinary network are sociologists, political scientists, economists, and lawyers.

UT participants are Professor Stefan Kuhlmann (MB-STeHPS) and Professor Jürgen Enders (CHEPS); in their projects they analyse the changing governance of research organisations and university research in various European countries. Also the other projects of the international network aim to assess the impacts of the ongoing reforms of research systems in Europe: Firstly, both the internal and external modes of Governance of the individual research and science organisations are regarded. In particular steering mechanisms such as budget, personnel, law, organisation and decision-making procedures are examined. Secondly, the impact of the reforms on research performance is analysed. Eventually recommendations for research policy and organisational design are drawn. In short, the network aims to analyse the positive and normative conditions for new forms of governance in universities and non-university research organisations. Next to numerous individual research reports, PhD theses and journal publications a first joint book with intermediate results was published in 2007 (edited by D. Jansen, *New Forms of Governance in Research Organizations. Disciplinary Approaches, Interfaces and Integration*, Dordrecht, Springer).



The

international researcher network 'Governance of Research' met for a workshop at the Conference Hotel Drienerburgh (21-22 February 2008).