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**UNIVERSITÄT
BERN**

Wirtschafts- und
Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät
Qualitätsbeauftragter

QSE of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences

Research Evaluation Concept

Approved by the WISO-Faculty December 12, 2014

Concept Proposal by the Research Evaluation Commission:

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Fundamental principles of the research evaluation

The Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences of the University of Bern is committed to research on the highest international level. Researchers in departments and institutes publish their research results in prestigious and highly regarded peer-reviewed journals as well as in widely respected essays and books. They support scientific junior staff and educate highly qualified doctoral students, which are recruited internationally. The researchers of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences raise third-party funds to finance their research. They organize conferences, seminars and workshops, and are committed to editorial boards of international journals.

The University of Bern defined quality standards in research, teaching and services in the document “Konzept für die Qualitätssicherung und die Qualitätsentwicklung” (approved by the *Senat* on 14.12.2010). To meet and exceed these standards, the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences promotes a culture of excellence to enhance the researchers’ creativity and performance throughout their professional life. Annual self-evaluations of the different departments serve to discover possible areas for improvements.

Diversity of the research cultures

Scientific research is a creative process that is executed in very different ways in different disciplines. The researchers of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences conduct research individually, in small local teams, as well as in national and international collaborations of different sizes. Also the type of research activities and methodologies differ across units. Furthermore, the different research areas have different publication cultures and “business models”. While business administration and economics aim at publishing their research in top international peer-reviewed journals, social sciences place a much higher weight on the publication of monographs.

Due to the diversity of the research cultures and the underlying subtle creative process, it is extremely difficult to measure and compare the research quality objectively within and, in particular, across departments and faculties. More specifically, the quality of a researcher cannot and should not be measured only by the quantity of publications. Still, it makes sense and it is desirable to record and evaluate the temporal change in productivity and quality of a unit. When doing so, temporal changes need to be carefully interpreted. The related evaluation of research has to consider that for example a decline in publication performance of a unit could result from the fact that new research projects are prepared and conducted, which lead to publications at a later time.

Taking into account the huge diversity of the research cultures of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences proposes the following indicators for the research evaluation. We would like to point out, however, that these indicators cannot and should not be applied for a performance-oriented funding assessment, as they do not necessarily reflect the research culture of a specific department.

Goal of the research evaluation

High quality of research requires a high degree of freedom. The creativity that is necessary for developing innovative ideas must be able to unfold freely. Unconventional research approaches should be encouraged and new methods are always welcome. A meaningful research evaluation should not impede this freedom, but should support it, if possible.

Quality indicators

Quality indicators should be assessed with data that can be easily collected, are transparent, and meaningful for each department. Thus, it makes sense to use data that are already available (e.g. from the literature data base BORIS). To account for the different research cultures in each of the three departments, the indicators need to be interpreted individually for each department.

The following quality indicators that are annually collected by the *Vice-Rectorate Research* will be used to assess research performance of the departments of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences:

- **Number of citations.** The number of citations will be measured on the one hand by citations / mean field citation score based on data of the JCR (Journal Citation Reports) of the ISI Web of Knowledge and on the other hand by the number of citations based on data of Google Scholar. For the citations measured by Google Scholar a Google Scholar profile of each researcher of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences is required. Checking each Google Scholar profile is the responsibility for each individual researcher.
- **Number of ranked peer reviewed articles.** This indicator is assessed based on data of BORIS and FactScience. In order to accommodate the different research cultures of the faculty, each department can apply its own specific journal ranking. For example, the economics department uses the Toulouse School of Economics journal ranking for internal evaluation and should be evaluated using this ranking. A nationwide or international comparison is impossible since appropriate data is not available. For each research unit, this indicator can be standardized by number of fulltime equivalent research positions.
- **Maximum ranking.** Maximum ranking is the impact of a typical publication in journals or conference proceedings with peer review (if those are listed in ISI Web of Knowledge). The maximum ranking method compensates discipline-specific differences and is internationally comparable. Not the sum of all publications will be assessed but the average value over all publications. This indicator is assessed based on data of FactScience. The economics department finds this indicator does not reflect its research culture and does not wish it to be reported to assess its performance.
- **Third party research funds.** This indicator is mandatory according to the QSE concept of the University of Bern. Since third-party funds in a peer reviewed process are allocated on a competitive basis, this indicator can be used as a proxy

variable for the quality of research. The amount of third party funds will be assessed by the *Finance Office* and the *Controller of the University* and then can be standardized for each research unit by personnel points spent.

- **Qualification data.** This indicator refers to the number of dissertations and habilitations completed. This indicator will be assessed by the *deanery* of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences and then can be standardized for each research unit by personnel points spent.

Annual self-evaluation

In an annual self-evaluation the five quality indicators are reported for the last three years. Data collection is supported by the *Vice-Rectorate Research*. The results will be sent to the *Dekan*, to the *Departementssprecher* of the three departments and to the *QSE-Beauftragten* of the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences. The self-evaluation in the Faculty of Business Administration, Economics, and Social Sciences always takes place in the fall semester, since data of the previous year will be collected then. The evaluation is done at aggregated department level.