Re-envisioning Research on Research for Higher Education

CGHE Project 3: The research function and mission of higher education

Prof Alis Oancea

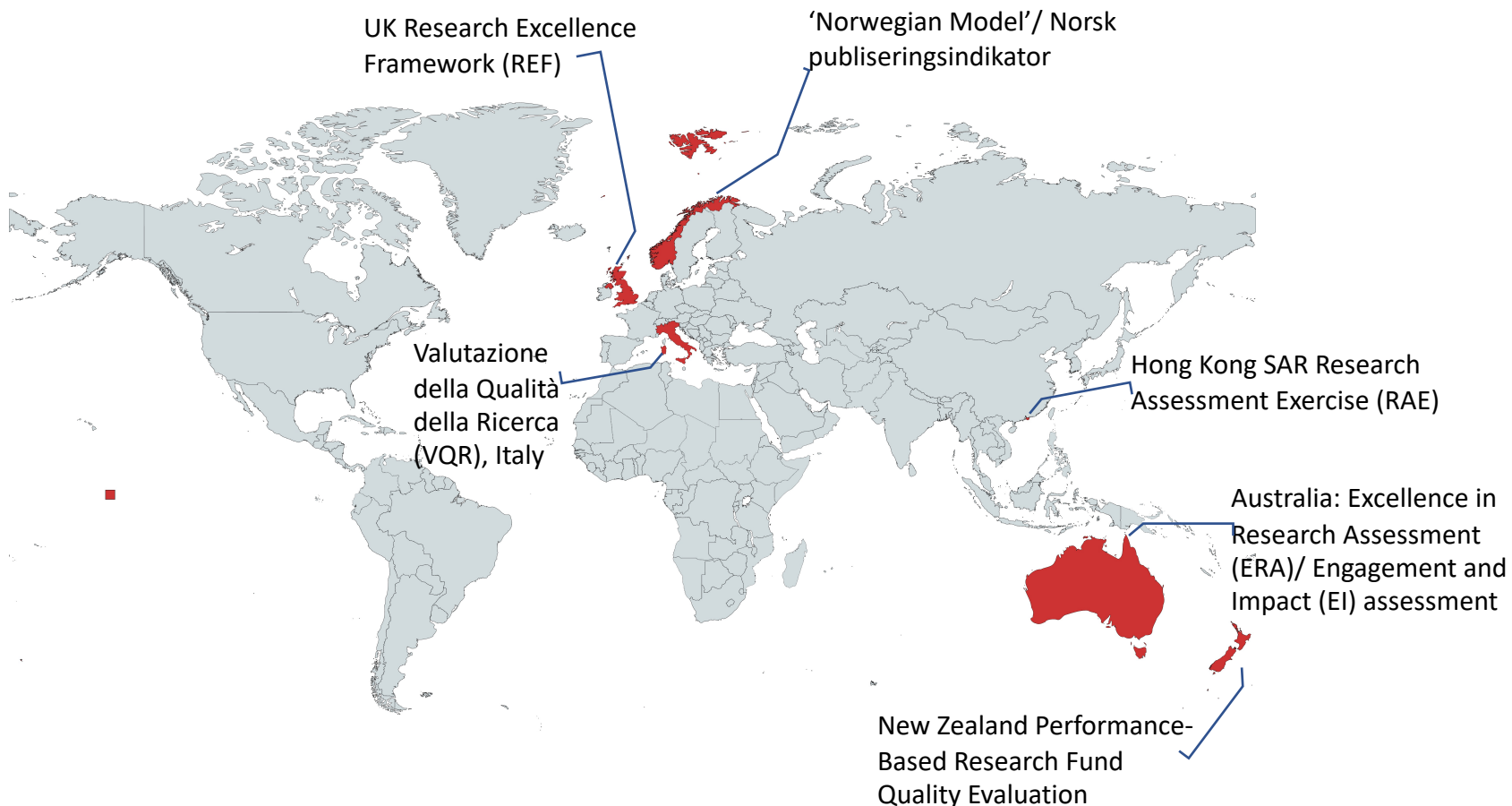Dr Gemma Derrick

Dr James Robson

Dr Xin Xu

Structure of session

- **The strands of research in Project 3**

- **The wider RoR landscape**
  - **Current and recent work by the team**
  - **Doctoral research**

- **Collaborative knowledge building with you!**

Strands

- **I. Systems**: research assessment
  - Comparative policy analysis
  - Interviews
  - Bibliometric analysis
- **II. Organisations**: role and value of academic research in HEIs (institutional case studies)
  - Documentary and digital profile analysis
  - Network mapping and bibliometric analysis
  - Interviews
- **III. Individuals**: perspectives on the importance and recognition of research (academics, management, policy actors and publishers)
- **IV. Further** research: [global] survey development

HE research & research assessment systems covered in the case studies:

UK Research Excellence Framework (REF)

'Norwegian Model'/ Norsk publiseringsindikator

Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca (VQR), Italy

Hong Kong SAR Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)

Australia: Excellence in Research Assessment (ERA)/ Engagement and Impact (EI) assessment

New Zealand Performance-Based Research Fund Quality Evaluation

I. Research assessment

System level

Research questions

Q I. What are the purposes, features, mechanisms, governance, embeddedness, buy-in, use, outcomes and challenges of research assessment frameworks used in performance-related research funding in six countries/regions? (UK, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Hong Kong SAR)

- How have research assessment frameworks developed internationally?
- How does research assessment relate to system-level priorities and definitions of research excellence?

Approach

- Combined approach
  1. Comparative policy analysis
  2. Interviews: departments of case universities in UK, Australia, Italy, NZ, Norway and Hong Kong
  3. Analysis of outcomes from system-level assessments
  4. Bibliometric analysis

Systematic Mapping of Policy Documents [Phase I]

System	Assessment framework	Main Sources of Policy Documents	Most Recent Round	Past Rounds
Australia	Excellence in Research Assessment (ERA)	Australian Research Council	2018	2010; 2012; 2015
	Engagement and Impact (EI) assessment	Australian Research Council	2018	/
Hong Kong SAR	Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)	University Grants Committee	2020 (Outcomes expected in 2021)	1993; 1996; 1999; 2006; 2014
Italy	Valutazione della Qualità della Ricerca (VQR)	Italian National Agency for the Evaluation of Universities and Research Institutes	2015-2019 (Outcomes expected in 2021)	2004-2010; 2011-2014
New Zealand	Performance Based Research Fund Quality Evaluation	Ministry of Education; Tertiary Education Commission	2018	2003; 2006; 2012
Norway	"Norwegian Model" (publication indicators)	Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions; National Board for Scholarly Publishing; Norwegian Centre for Research Data	2020	Since 2002
United Kingdom	Research Excellence Framework (REF)	Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021	2021 (outcomes expected in 2022)	1986; 1989; 1992; 1996; 2001; 2008 [RAE] 2014 [REF]

Systematic Mapping of Policy Documents [Phase I]

- **Data collection**
  - Documents manually collected from official websites of each research assessment framework in six systems

- **Language for data collection**
  - English websites and documents for Australia, New Zealand, and United Kingdom
  - Bilingual websites and documents for Hong Kong SAR, Norway, Italy [translation needed for some documents]

- **Limitations**
  - Some documents may be outside the main official websites [to double-check in Phase II]
  - Some materials not collected in this phase [interactive webpages and workshop videos]
  - Some documents replaced by later documents [to curate in Phase II]
  - Categorisation of some documents ambiguous [to double-check in Phase II]
  - Only focused on the most recent round of research assessment exercise [to double-check in Phase II]
  - Some information missing such as year of publication

Systematic Mapping of Policy Documents [Phase I]

System	Number (309 in total)	Types of Documents	Year of Publication	Language of Publications
Australia	38	Guidance documents (18); Review and consultation documents (10); Outcome documents (6); Pilot policy documents (2); Background policy document (1); Impact assessment (1)	2016-2020	English (38)
Hong Kong SAR	43	Guidance documents (28); Workshop documents (6); Official reports on the running of the exercise (4); Open forum documents (2); Background legislation paper (1); Consultation document (1); Formal evaluation (1)	2013-2020	English (39) English/Chinese (4)
Italy	26	Guidance documents (18); Background legislation documents (3); Formal evaluation (2); Workshop documents (2); Public-facing information (1)	2019-2021	English (8) Italian (18)
New Zealand	49	Formal evaluation of the exercise (22); Official reports on running the exercise (8); Guidance documents (7); Outcome documents (7); Audit reports (3); Public-facing information (2)	2014-2020	English (49)
Norway	45	Guidance documents (19); Official evaluation of the exercise (9); Public-facing information (9); Background document (3); Non-decided (2); Seminar document (2); Outcome document(1)	2003-2021	English (9) Norwegian (36)
United Kingdom	108	Guidance documents (70); Workshop documents (26); Consultation documents (8); Official reports on running the exercise (4)	2017-2021	English (108)

Approach

1. Comparative policy analysis
2. Interviews

RQ: How does research assessment relate to system-level priorities and definitions of research excellence?

3. Analysis of outcomes from system-level assessments (incl. subjective assessments)

4. *Independent* bibliometric analysis of research *practice* and *activity*

    - Field normalised measures of productivity, collaboration & co-authorship, discipline visibility (nationally and internationally)

Main challenges anticipated

- Database selection
    - Country, field and language representativeness is highly sensitive to the database used.
    - Currently prefer Scopus due to higher non-English language coverage and ability to map multilayered networks
- Extra care required:
    - Staff coverage
    - Comparing metric-measurements of *activity* & *practice* with subjective, framework-embedded notions of *performance* & *excellence*.
    - Fair analysis across appropriate levels of assessment e.g. research group, individual, journal and performance.
    - Embed principles of Responsible metrics and evaluation in the research analysis approach.

Over to you...

- Cultural understandings of what it means to be a researcher and how individual researchers should be 'counted' in an assessment framework

- Please share your thoughts in the chat

II. The role and value of academic research in HEIs

Organisational level

Research questions:

- Q II. What are the factors, pressures and incentives that shape organisational structures, policies and practices concerning the role and value given to academic research?
  - How does research relate to other functions of higher education internationally (in particular, to teaching and learning)?
  - What role does research play in the relationships between universities and other sectors, in particular industry, in selected countries/regions?
  - What are the patterns of productivity and authorship, collaboration and citation; and the features of engagement networks in the research units under study?

Approach

- 12 Institutional Case Studies – 2 from each country/region

- Unit/s of analysis: organizational structures, policies and practices

- Methods:
  - Documentary and digital profile analysis
  - Interviews with key stakeholders in each case
  - Observations?
  - Network mapping and bibliometric analysis

Challenges: Case Selection

The aim is to ensure the selection of a diverse range of cases across broad selection criteria, while also taking into account unique HE structural, social, economic and political issues from each country/region-specific system. However:

- **Cultural sensitivities**: balancing typicality against insights/intrinsic value.

- Defining **selection criteria** that will enable meaningful cross-case analysis and comparison between countries/regions, while also engaging with the specific, within-HE-system issues, structures (governance, social, economic, and political), and discourses that will ensure depth of understanding of the context of each system.

- Defining **boundaries** around the cases; the project's HE foci intersect with a wide variety of issues and organisations (industry, for example). The relationship between these and the case study institution needs careful conceptualising and mapping.

Challenges: Fieldwork

- **Accessing** relevant materials and dealing with websites and documents that are in a variety of different languages.
  - We are attempting to overcome this by drawing on existing CGHE networks to support accessing relevant documents and through the judicious use of translating tools.
- Understanding the unique structures and issues within each country with sufficient **nuance** to reflect often complex political and social situations.
  - We are attempting to overcome this through the support of critical friends and an advisory group with understandings of country/region-specific nuances and complexities.

Over to you...

- What one key consideration should we keep in mind in case study selection for each country/region (UK, Australia, Italy, New Zealand, Norway, Hong Kong)?

- balancing typicality against insight/contextual richness

- Please share your thoughts in the chat

III. Perspectives on the importance and recognition of research

Individual level

Research questions:

Q III. How do stakeholders describe and evaluate the importance given to research in HE in the six countries/regions, particularly in relation to: individual careers; organizational environments; the functions of higher education; and sectoral policy?

- What are the organisational practices involved in ascribing importance to, incentivising and recognising research in HEIs; and how do stakeholders experience them?

- How do these perspectives and experiences vary across career stages, disciplines, types of institutions, systems, and sectors?

Approach

- Investigation <u>in the 12 case institutions</u> of the weight of research in academic life and evaluations. (Face-to-face or digital) semi-structured interviews with:
  - Four department heads
    per case institution (sciences, medicine, humanities/arts, social sciences) (n=48)
  - A senior manager and a senior
    research administrator per institution (n=24)
  - Policy stakeholders in each system (n=6-12)
  - Publishers or key industry partners (n=6)
  - Early and mid- career researchers (n=48)

Challenges

- **Access to participants:**
  - We will invite participants via email invitations and snow-balling strategy

- **Reflexivity:**
  - Reflexivity is crucial as we are conducting research on research, as researchers ourselves under research assessment frameworks

Over to you...

- Contextual sensitivity:
  - We aim to be mindful of and sensitive to the contextual nuances of each system, institution, and the culture participants are in – including definitions of 'research excellence' and of other key terms

  - What do you think about the contextual sensitivity? What do you think 'research excellence' means in your context?

  - Please share your thoughts in the chat

More RoR to share...

The Landscape of Educational Research in the UK

(Compulsory and Post-compulsory)

Report to the British Academy and Royal Society

January 2021

Alis Oancea, Tiarnach McDermott, James Robson, Catherine Scutt,

Xin Xu, Olga Mun, Nuzha Nuseibeh, Miranda Voss

University of Oxford Department of Education

HAND-BOOK OF META-RESEARCH

Out 2022

EDITORS
Alis Oancea, Gemma Derrick, Xin Xu, Nuzha Nuseibeh

CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDE •

Adam, Akerlind, Bayley, Benneworth, Bone, Boshoff, Boyack, Cohen, Colavizza, Costas, Cruz-Castro, Didegah, Fenby-Hulse, Hill, Holbrook, Hook, Inouye, Klavans, Lariviere, Marginson, McAlpine, Melkers, Mills, Muhonen, Nedeva, Ochsner, Oliver, Plume, Prozesky, Robson, Sanz-Menendez, Schneider, Shankar, Smith, Sugimoto, Tellmann, Thomas, Vallee-Tourangeau, van Eck, van Leeuwen, Waltman, Watermeyer, Wheelock, Wilsdon, Wooley

PUBLIC VALUE OF RESEARCH
Academic norms
Societal value/s
Responsible research
Challenge research
Users and stakeholders

KNOWLEDGE DYNAMICS
Global systems
Research synthesis
Publications/ publishing
Epistemic diversity
Postcolonial research

POLICY, REGULATION, GOVERNANCE
Knowledge actors
Accountability
Research management
Evidence use

RESEARCH EVALUATION
Structures and systems
Peer review
Bibliometrics
Altmetrics
Big data and AI

ENVIRONMENTS, CULTURES, BEHAVIOURS
Careers and mobility
Researcher identities
Incentive systems
Equity and diversity

EDWARD ELGAR PUBLISHING

Gallery – link in chat OR here:
https://www.researchcghe.org/perch/resources/ror-portfolio-cghe-annual-conference-2021.pdf

PEARL
Peer and expert review laboratory
Opening the black box is just the beginning.......
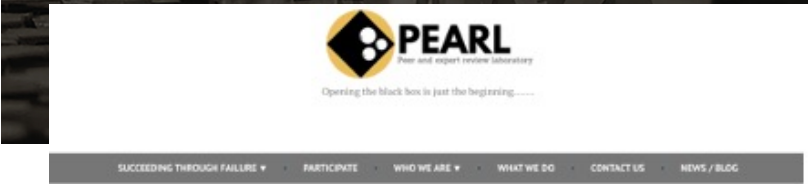
SUCCEEDING THROUGH FAILURE ▾   PARTICIPATE   WHO WE ARE ▾   WHAT WE DO   CONTACT US   NEWS / BLOG

Why is feedback a fix for a failed peer review system?

⏱ August 1, 2020   📁 Uncategorized

DIFFICULT ROADS LEAD TO BEAUTIFUL DESTINATIONS
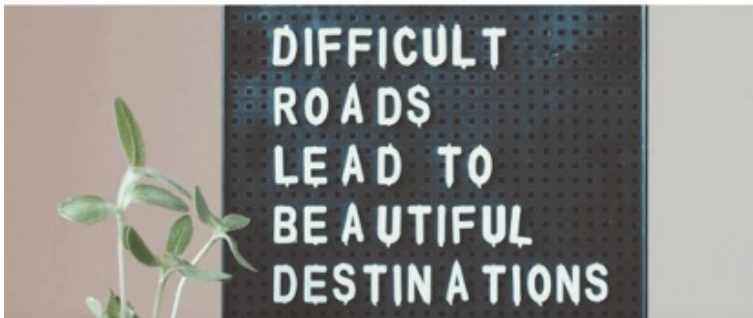
Incentives for International Publications in the Humanities and Social Sciences:
An Exploratory Study of Chinese Universities

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Thesis Submitted for the
Degree of DPhil in Education by

Xin Xu

Department of Education
Lady Margaret Hall
University of Oxford

Supervised by
Prof. Alis Oancea; Dr. Heath Rose; Prof. Hubert Ertl

Trinity Term 2018

European Commission

Indicator Frameworks for Fostering Open Knowledge Practices in Science and Scholarship

Independent Expert Report

Written by *Paul Wouters (chair), Ismael Ràfols, Alis Oancea, Shina Caroline Lynn Kamerlin, J. Britt Holbrook and Merle Jacob*

July 2019

Research and Innovation

GEMMA DERRICK
THE EVALUATORS' EYE
Impact assessment and academic peer review
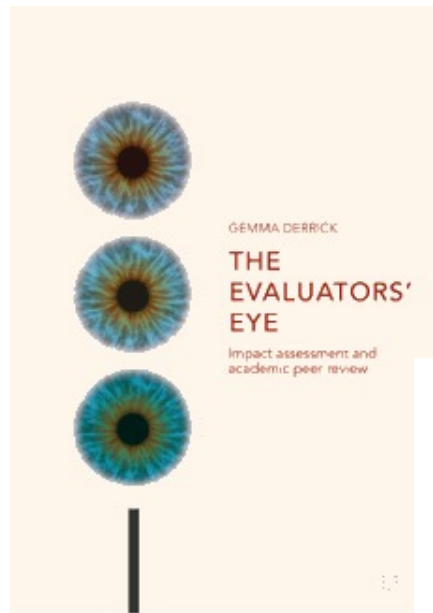
Oxford Bibliographies

Performance-based Research Funding
Alis Oancea, Xin Xu

LAST MODIFIED: 24 MAY 2017
DOI: 10.1093/OBO/9780199756810-0182

The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Global Research

Xin Xu

Research assessment as governance technology in the United Kingdom: findings from a survey of RAE 2008 impacts

Forschungsrating als eine Kontrollmethode in Großbritannien – Ergebnis zu den Auswirkungen von RAE 2008

Alis Oancea ✉

Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft **17**, 83–110(2014) | Cite this article

Ovseiko et al. BMC Health Services Research 2012, **12**:478
http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/12/478

BMC
Health Services Research

//www.nature.com/articles/s41599-018-0213-6

Article | Open Access | Published: 05 March 2019

Research governance and the future(s) of research assessment

Alis Oancea ✉

Palgrave Communications **5**, Article number: 27 (2019)

---

nature

Explore content ∨ Journal information ∨ Publish with us ∨ Subscribe

nature › career column › article

CAREER COLUMN · 20 APRIL 2020

How COVID-19 lockdowns could lead to a kinder research culture

A nascent movement could gather pace as researchers discover more respectful ways of communicating, collaborating and publishing, says Gemma Derrick.

---

palgrave
communications
HUMANITIES | SOCIAL SCIENCES | BUSINESS

ARTICLE
https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-020-0438-z   OPEN

The impact a-gender: gendered orientations towards research Impact and its evaluation

J. Chubb [1] & G. E. Derrick [2]

RESEARCH ARTICLE   Open Access

Assessing research impact in academic clinical medicine: a study using Research Excellence Framework pilot impact indicators

Pavel V Ovseiko[1], Alis Oancea[2] and Alastair M Buchan[1]*

Research Evaluation, 26(4), 2017, 302–315
doi: 10.1093/reseval/rvx014
Advance Access Publication Date: 2 July 2017
Article

Qualitative network analysis tools for the configurative articulation of cultural value and impact from research

Alis Oancea*, Teresa Florez Petour and Jeanette Atkinson

Minerva
https://doi.org/10.1007/s11024-021-09441-w

The Impacts of Incentives for International Publications on Research Cultures in Chinese Humanities and Social Sciences

Xin Xu[1] · Alis Oancea[2] · Heath Rose[2]

2014 年 11 月   重庆高教研究   Nov., 2014
第 2 卷 第 6 期   Chongqing Higher Education Research   Vol. 2 No. 6

学术国际化与社会科学评价体系
——以 SSCI 指标的应用为例

许 心, 蒋 凯
（北京大学 教育学院, 北京 100871）

Research Evaluation, 2019, 1–13
doi: 10.1093/reseval/rvz028
Article

Performing under 'the baton of administrative power'? Chinese academics' responses to incentives for international publications

Xin Xu ⓞ *

Department of Education, Centre for Global Higher Education, University of Oxford, 15 Norham Gardens, Oxford OX2 6PY, UK
*Corresponding author. Email: xin.xu@education.ox.ac.uk

Doctoral research

- Minto Felix (Oxford): **Research culture(s) in India: an exploration of the disciplinary, institutional and system dimensions**

- Xiaona Wang (Oxford): **Transnational knowledge production: a case study of Sino-Swiss scientific research collaboration**

- Olga Mun (Oxford): **Epistemic Injustices in Internationalising Humanities and Social Sciences: A Case Study of Higher Education and Science Institutes in Kazakhstan**

- Wanlin Cai (Oxford): **Universities amid the imaginary of the triple helix in the Great Bay Area (GBA) of China**

- Antonin Charret (Oxford): **European Universities: Building the future of higher education in the European Union through transnational "knowledge alliances"**

- Julie Lin (Oxford): **Emerging professions in higher education administration in East Asia: a comparative study of research and international offices**

- Elena Tsvetkova (Oxford): **The Impacts of the Academic Excellence Initiative on Russian Higher Education: Perspectives on the Future Development of Doctoral Education**

- Anoud Abusalim (Lancaster): **English for Research Publishing Purposes (ERPP): A Comparative Study of ERPP Practices for EAL and NES Scholars in Social Sciences (SS) and STEM Disciplines**

Link in chat OR here: :
https://www.researchcghe.org/perch/resources/ror-doctoral-research-posterscghe-annual-conference-2021.pdf

TRANSNATIONAL KNOWLEDGE NETWORKS: A CASE STUDY OF SINO-SWISS SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COLLABORATION

Xiaona Wang | xiaona.wang@education.ox.ac.uk

European Universities: Building the future of higher education in the European Union through transnational "knowledge alliances"

Antonin Charret – Department of Education – University of Oxford
antonin.charret@education.ox.ac.uk
Supervisors: Maia Chankseliani and Alis Oancea

Epistemic Injustices in Internationalising Humanities and Social Sciences: A Case Study of Higher Education and Science Institutes in Kazakhstan

By Olga Mun, Doctoral student, Department of Education, University of Oxford

Emerging professions in higher education administration in East Asia: a comparative study of research and international offices

Julia Lin
DPhil, Oxford University
Chin-yi.lin@education.ox.ac.uk

Supervisors:
Alis Oancea
Simon Marginson
Xin Xu

THE IMPACTS OF THE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE ON RUSSIAN HIGHER EDUCATION: PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF DOCTORAL EDUCATION

Elena Tsvetkova, Doctoral Student
University of Oxford, Department of Education
Supervisors: Professor Alis Oancea, Professor Simon Marginson
Email: elena.tsvetkova@education.ox.ac.uk

English for Research Publishing Purposes (ERPP): A Comparative Study of ERPP Practices for EAL and NES Scholars in Social Sciences (SS) and STEM Disciplines

Anoud Abusalim

Department of Educational Research, Lancaster University

Research culture(s) in Indian higher education: exploring the disciplinary, institution and system dimensions

Minto Felix | minto.felix@wolfson.ox.ac.uk
Department of Education, University of Oxford
Supervisors: Professor Alis Oancea, University of Oxford and Professor Simon Marginson, University of Oxford

Universities amid the imaginary of the triple helix in the Great Bay Area (GBA) of China

Wanlin Cai, University of Oxford
Contact: wanlin.cai@education.ox.ac.uk

Supervised by Dr. Xin Xu, Prof. Simon Marginson and Prof. Alis Oancea

Doctoral gallery – see link in chat OR here:
https://www.researchcghe.org/perch/resources/ror-doctoral-research-posterscghe-annual-conference-2021.pdf

- Mailing list (see link in chat OR join through this link: http://eepurl.com/hxYFov)

- Blog

Thank you

Q& A and Breakout room