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# **Criteria and indicators for visualising theological research and evaluating its quality – a bottom-up approach**

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## outline

- the project, our approach
- quality criteria for research in theology
  - online survey
  - preliminary results
- discussion

## project

- "Resource-based instrument for documenting and evaluating research in the humanities and the social sciences as exemplified by theology"
- SUK-Programme P-3: «Performances de la recherche en sciences humaines et sociales»

## objective

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- define criteria that are fit to adequately describe research in theology and assess research quality
- create and provide an open-source software application
- adaption and further development of the criteria-set and the software application

# approach

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- regular exchange with deans and faculty members; consultation of experts from theology and experts from research evaluation in the SSH

# quality criteria

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- proposition of a “preamble” (premisses of theology)

## **core criteria for research design (and realisation of the research)**

### **suited methodology**

clear research question and objective, pertinent choice of methods, openness and transparency, distinction between description and interpretation, reflection on historical, cultural, socio-political. . . preconditions and influences on research, intelligibility, ethical and legal awareness and sensitivity

### **integration into the scientific community**

reflection of and positioning to state of research, positioning to schools of thought, production of new knowledge, introducing new areas of research

### **topicality and connectivity**

openness to interdisciplinary research designs, collaboration, connection with current social issues and issues in church, ecumenical compatibility, openness to and awareness of interreligious issues

### **innovation and creativity**

use of new materials, generation of knowledge and new interpretations, new methods and areas of research

### **feasibility**

feasible objective (research question and methods), realistic planning of financial resources and staff, time management

## **orientation of research**

### **relevance**

relevance as basic research, relevance as applied research, relevance for scientific discourse, relevance for societal discourse, relevance for church

### **transfer**

impulses for teaching, inspiration from teaching, commissioned research and expert opinions etc., public outreach and communication with wider public

### **sustainability**

public access to research results and preservation of research, creating sustainable research structures and networks, long-term research (continuity in research topics)

## **reception of research**

### **recognition**

reception in scientific community (national and international), societal reception, recognition by church

## **research performance and competencies of the researcher**

### **performance up to date**

quality of previous research output, quantity of research output, third-party funding, integrity and good practice

### **exchange and cooperation**

exchange and cooperation within the university (intra- and interfaculty), scholarly exchange and cooperation on national level, . . . on international level, exchange and cooperation with non-academic players

### **transversal competences**

capacity for teamwork, leadership and managerial qualities, constructive dealing with criticism, communication skills (intra- and extra-scientific community)

### **motivation**

identification with the research area, intrinsic motivation to do research

## **research environment**

### **independence and impartiality**

freedom in choice of research topics and methods, openness of results, critical distance towards expectations of different stakeholders

### **infrastructure**

provision of basic infrastructure (work station, access to databases, archives etc.), administrative support

### **favourable surrounding circumstances**

long-term institutionalisation of research structures, fruitful and inspiring atmosphere, promotion of diversity in research teams (age, sex, cultural background etc.), endorsement of unconventional research approaches to avoid standardisation

### **promotion of young researchers**

integration in research teams, integration in the wider scientific community, career opportunities for young researchers



# results

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- weight of the criteria is considered slightly different by protestant and catholic faculties, and by young and advanced researchers
- major differences between the subdisciplines (exegetical theology, historical theology, systematic theology, practical theology)