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Abstract

Notions of research quality are contextual in many respects: they vary between fields of research, between review contexts and between policy contexts. Yet, the role of these co-existing notions in research, and in research policy, is poorly understood. In this paper we offer a novel framework to study and understand research quality across three key dimensions. First, we distinguish between quality notions that originate in research fields (Field-type) and in research policy spaces (Space-type). Second, drawing on existing studies, we identify three attributes (often) considered important for 'good research': its originality/novelty, plausibility/reliability, and value or usefulness. Third, we identify five different sites where notions of research quality emerge, are contested and institutionalised: researchers themselves, knowledge communities, research organisations, funding agencies and national policy arenas. We argue that the framework helps us understand processes and mechanisms through which 'good research' is recognised as well as tensions arising from the co-existence of (potentially) conflicting quality notions. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)