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**Abstract**

Research-intensive universities are operating in an environment of conflicting goals and priorities. Their status in research as well as education is dependent on their performance in various global arenas where performance can be measured with relatively clear indicators. However, success in operations outside the primary tasks of the academic community, such as universities' societal relevance, is more difficult to identify. Tasks outside the core of academic work are subject to requirements that are less well defined and are more abstract. This article seeks to define these noncore requirements as external contingencies and to analyse them by means of a contingency approach. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)