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The development of a benchmarking methodology to assist in managing the enhancement of university research quality

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**Abstract**

The paper proposes a metric, the research quality index (RQI), for assessing and tracking university research quality. The RQI is a composite index that encompasses the three main areas of research activity: publications, research grants and higher degree by research activity. The public availability of such an index will also facilitate benchmarking (internally, competitively and generically) by academic units in universities. This has become an important activity in Australia with the proposed introduction of the Research Quality Framework (RQF) as the future research funding mechanism for Australian universities. The RQF is a quality-based system that will replace the existing funding system that is focused on the volume of research output, not quality. Benchmarking, using the RQI, will allow academic units to track their progress towards their quality targets and facilitates internal and competitive benchmarking, allowing academic units to assess the efficacy of their research quality enhancement strategies and policies on an annual basis. The paper illustrates the compilation

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and operation of the RQI. The RQI is a short-term tracking methodology for use in between the cyclical major research quality assessments. With modifications, it is applicable in a wide range of countries. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)