SFI Narrative CV FAQs

*This guidance document is part of an ongoing consultation process and may be subject for further changes. We welcome observations on this guidance from all our stakeholder groups; these can be submitted to researchpolicy@sfi.ie.*

**Why has the narrative CV been implemented in SFI’s grant evaluation processes?**

As a member of DORA[[1]](#footnote-2), the narrative CV is being implemented in all SFI’s review and evaluation processes as it encourages fair and responsible research assessment procedures by taking a more holistic view of an applicant’s achievements. It also allows an applicant to provide context to their contributions in their field of research and associated achievements with reference to their career stage. Furthermore, as a founding member of cOAlition S[[2]](#footnote-3), SFI is committed to open access publishing and is thereby moving research assessment away from journal-based metrics, thus improving the ways in which the outputs of scientific research are evaluated. These principles are echoed in the National Action Plan for Open Research 2022-2030[[3]](#footnote-4), of which SFI is also a signatory. This plan serves as a roadmap for the implementation of open research across Ireland, outlining national goals and coordinated actions that will assist the Irish research system as a whole to better support open research practices. To complement these activities and further reinforce SFI’s commitment to the overarching objectives of the Narrative CV, during 2022, SFI became a signatory to the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment[[4]](#footnote-5) and thus became a member of the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA)[[5]](#footnote-6) along with over 360 signatory organisations from Europe, the UK and beyond. The Agreement sets a ‘shared direction for changes in assessment practices for research, researchers and research performing organisations, with the overarching goal to maximise the quality and impact of research’.

**What funding organisations are implementing the narrative CV?**

Like SFI, many Research Funding Organisations are shifting to a more holistic interpretation of research outputs and achievements that can be recognised in the grant evaluation process. To this end, they are adopting narrative CV formats since these formats change what is visible and valued within the research ecosystem. Research Funding Organisations are implementing the narrative CV to:

* help applicants share their varied contributions to research in a consistent way and across a wide range of career paths and personal circumstances.
* move away from an over reliance on narrowly focused performance indicators towards a more holistic view of performance.
* reward and nurture the full range of contributions that a researcher has made to their field or discipline.

The Health Research Board (Ireland), Luxembourg National Research Fund, Dutch Research Council, the Swiss National Science Foundation and the European Research Council have all implemented the narrative CV in their research assessment processes. In October 2021, the European Research Council declared that its research proposal evaluation system would not permit references to a publication’s destination journal impact factor[[6]](#footnote-7). The intention of this ‘ban’ was to encourage applicants and reviewers to focus on the content and impact of a publication rather the publication venue.

UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) recently launched a Joint Funders Group[[7]](#footnote-8). SFI is a member of this international community of practice of Research Funding Organisations who collectively are working on the roll out of the narrative CV through exploring shared approaches. The latter is based on the Royal Society’s ‘Résumé for Researchers’ (R4R)[[8]](#footnote-9). The Joint Funders Group has developed guidance documents for Research Funding Organisations wishing to implement the narrative CV[[9]](#footnote-10).

**What specific metrics are on the banned list?  For example, the template specifically mentions research performance indicators such as H-index, i10index, G-index, H(2)-index, HG-index, Q2-index, AR-index, M-quotient, M-index, W-index, Hw-index, E-index, A-index, R-index, W-index, J-index but are other publication metrics such as citations per publication allowed?**

In keeping with DORA principles, no journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors, and indicators used to measure research performance, can be used as surrogate measures of the quality of individual research articles, when assessing an applicant’s or co-applicant’s scientific contributions. As such, all journal and publication metrics, with the exception of publication citations, are not permitted and their inclusion will result in the redaction of this information prior to expert review.

**What is the issue with metrics?**

There is increasing concern about the over-reliance of journal-based metrics and other types of metrics such as H-index when assessing a researcher’s career track record, particularly in the context of competitive grant funding and securing promotion and tenure in academic settings. The overuse of metrics alone undermines the quality of research evaluation processes and does not allow for a fair and holistic assessment of researchers from a broad cross section of disciplines and with reference to their career stages and/or career breaks.

**Why are altmetrics not permitted when describing publications?**

Altmetrics can provide additional information regarding the reach and perceived interest of research outputs. However, the quality and robustness of these data are unclear and, furthermore, can be vulnerable to manipulation. Please note that altmetrics may be used for outputs other than publications, but it is advised to consider how meaningful this information is in the context of the qualitative information already being provided.

**Can Field Weighted Citation Impact (FWCI) be used?**

The inclusion of information about citations is permitted, but this should complement the qualitative (narrative) information provided. It should be noted that bibliometric, journal-based metrics and H-index indicators currently used to measure research performance may not produce viable results at the level of the individual researcher and are usually more meaningful when measured in aggregate.

**Can collaboration (co-authorship) metrics be used on the CV?**

It is permitted to refer to the contributions an applicant has made to the success of a collaboration(s) in the **“Development of Individuals and Collaborations”** section of the CV as well as describing the significance and/or impact of a collaboration in the **“Generation of Knowledge”** section of the CV. This can include, but should not be limited to, publications, innovation and commercialisation activity, software and open data set developments. However, in keeping with DORA principles, referring to the total number of collaborative publications and associated journal and publication metrics, is not permitted.

**In terms of the DORA guidelines for the CV, is it possible to mention citations associated with selected publications?**

Publication citations are permitted in the narrative CV as per the instructions provided in the narrative CV template. They may be used to describe the impact and/or reach of your research, in addition to other impacts associated with the publication.

**Can links to other information be included on the CV e.g., links to institutional profile; ResearchGate; Google Scholar?**

The use of hyperlinks and URLs to provide additional information is not permitted, especially if they are required to be accessed as part of the application review process. These links can include but are not necessarily limited to an applicant’s institutional profile, ResearchGate, Google Scholar etc., which would provide additional information to that already included in the standardised narrative CV template used by all other applicants.

**Can you give further clarity on what is/is not allowed in the CV?**

In keeping with DORA principles, journal-based metrics, such as journal impact factors etc., cannot be used in the CV. This ensures that the applicant has an opportunity to describe why or how a research output is important and who has benefited from this output. As such, all journal and publication metrics, with the exception of publication citations, are not permitted and their inclusion may result in the redaction of this information prior to expert review.

**Is the narrative CV similar to an impact statement?**

No, the impact statement is a distinct and separate part of the application process, and its function is to describe the potential impact arising, which can be attributed to the programme of research, in the future. The CV describes the impact or result of past achievements, that is, impact that can be evidenced. SFI recognises that not all ‘impacts’ related to research outputs may have been fully realised as of yet, particularly where a programme of research is at an earlier stage. As such, alternative descriptions of why a particular research output is valuable are acceptable, e.g., learning outcomes, new knowledge for the researcher or their team, new skill development, or new perspectives which have been beneficial in some way etc.

**How will non-academic publications/career impact be considered?**

The narrative CV provides an opportunity for applicants to discuss their wider contribution to research under four specific categories: 1. Generation of Knowledge; 2. Development of Individuals and Collaborations; 3. Supporting Broader Society & the Economy, and 4. Supporting the Research Community. Reviewers are asked to assess the applicant based on the details provided in all these categories.

**Can applicants add details of their research funding track record in the CV?**

No. The applicant’s full research funding track record should be uploaded to the applicant’s profile on SESAME and should not be included in the CV.

**Are all SFI schemes going to use the new SFI CV template from now on?**

SFI is moving to implement the narrative CV template in all programme funding calls. This implementation will take a period of time as new calls are developed or existent programme are updated and re-launched.

**How does SFI instruct reviewers to ensure the principles of DORA (San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment) are realised?**

SFI is introducing a narrative CV format to all programme funding calls. This CV provides applicants with an opportunity to describe their wider contributions to, and outputs from, research. Reviewers are instructed to review all of the information provided in the CV template when assessing and arriving at a score for the applicant[[10]](#footnote-11). Furthermore, in line with DORA principles, the use of journal metrics such as journal impact factors and indicators used to measure research performance metrics such as h-index are not permitted. Deviating from these instructions may result in the redaction of these details prior to expert review.

**How will the CVs be utilised in the evaluation process? For example, will the CVs be used to determine the capacity and relevant experience of the applicant to carry out the proposed project?**

Reviewers are asked to comment on the quality, significance and relevance of the applicant’s and co-applicant’s (if relevant) key achievements and research track record as demonstrated in the CV(s) provided, commensurate with career stage and with regard to individual categories in the CV(s): 1) Generation of Knowledge; 2) Development of Individuals and Collaborations; 3) Supporting Broader Society & the Economy, and; 4) Supporting the Research Community.

Reviewers are also asked to consider whether the expertise and experience of the lead applicant, co-applicant(s), mentor, and collaborator(s)[[11]](#footnote-12), if relevant, are appropriate given their proposed contribution to the research programme. Furthermore, reviewers are requested to comment on the appropriateness of the skills and composition of the team and their alignment with the proposed research programme. As such, key achievements and publication details of applicants and co-applicants are used collectively in the evaluation process to assess their ability and suitability to successfully deliver on the proposed programme of research

1. <https://sfdora.org/read/> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. <https://www.sfi.ie/funding/sfi-policies-and-guidance/open-research/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. <https://norf.ie/national-action-plan/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. <https://coara.eu/app/uploads/2022/09/2022_07_19_rra_agreement_final.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://coara.eu/> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://erc.europa.eu/news-events/magazine/open-science-practice-new-erc-grant-recipients> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-and-innovation-culture/joint-funders-group/> [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. <https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/research-culture/tools-for-support/resume-for-researchers/> [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. <https://www.ukri.org/what-we-offer/supporting-healthy-research-and-innovation-culture/research-and-innovation-culture/joint-funders-group/> [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Details on the scoring system can be found in the relevant Programme call document. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
11. Whilst the use of the narrative CV is recommended it is not mandatory for collaborators and mentors. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)