

Evaluation short-termism in Science: Evidence from UK's Research Excellence Framework

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Abstract

Research assessments can have unintended side-effects on research quantity and quality. In this paper we use governmental university research evaluations in the UK executed for funding allocation purposes (the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise and the 2014 Research Excellence Framework) to investigate the consequences of imposing an evaluation deadline on research activity. We find evidence that exogenously set assessment deadlines can incentivize researchers to display adaptive behaviour which generates scientific output of lower quality and greater quantity close to deadlines.