

# Poetry, prose, literature and insights

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## **Government research evaluations**

Universities were once founded, for the public good  
It seems that this goal, is no longer understood  
Government research evaluations, now rule the day  
Having come to Australia, from the UK  
They have moved beyond a periodic exercise  
And have unconsciously transformed academic lives!

We've become professional players, of this evaluation game  
With scholarship no longer valued the same  
Colleagues and friends, in fierce competition  
Sharing of ideas, are replaced with suspicion  
Academic freedom is so fast disappearing  
As it is the metrics that we all are fearing

Inquiry and teaching once ruled academic life  
Now these evaluations are causing much strife  
No points did we earn for our creative piece  
As our metric count, it did not increase  
We raise important issues, that is for sure  
To think we'd get applauded, would be premature

SCImago, Quartiles, and Citation scores  
We find ourselves facing new kinds of wars  
Clarivate has now been added to the measure

There's no time at all for any type of leisure  
Accounting scholars are certainly under the hammer  
As for a small group of top journals we clamour

DVCs vigilantly monitor their publication bank  
Because all that they care for is a good university rank  
The funding model now to the metrics is tied  
Those bringing in money are viewed with pride  
Business school income helps ease funding strains  
Yet accounting scholars see little of those gains

Deans, they play the game of name and shame  
With accounting scholars, so easy to frame  
Do they care for the increasing student numbers these scholars teach  
And that time for research is out of reach?  
Anger and aggression of scholars are common threats  
While physical and mental stress both cause regrets

You may be writing a book that will be widely read  
If you think that counts, you are sadly misled  
The fact that your research may help the nation  
Can be lost in the government's research evaluation  
Publish or perish is never enough  
Impact and engagement is our new handcuff!

What should we do in this world of metrics?  
Perhaps to best go with the words of Maverick  
Choose a path fuelled by your passion  
Do honest work and trust your senses, not fashion  
Write to make the world a better place  
In this relentless metric craze!!

#### Further Reading

- Guthrie, J., Parker, L., Dumay, J. and Milne, M. (2019), "What counts for quality in interdisciplinary accounting research in the next decade", *Accounting, Auditing & Accountability Journal*, Vol. 32 No. 1, pp. 2-25.
- Martin-Sardesai, A., Irvine, H., Tooley, S. and Guthrie, J. (2017a), "Government research evaluations and academic freedom: a UK and Australian comparison", *Journal of Higher Education Research and Development*, Vol. 36 No. 2, pp. 372-385.

Martin-Sardesai, A., Irvine, H., Tooley, S. and Guthrie, J. (2017b), "Organizational change in an Australian university: responses to a research assessment exercise", *British Accounting Review*, Vol. 49 No. 4, pp. 399-412.