



ACADEMY OF FINLAND
RESEARCH FUNDING AND EXPERTISE

How the Academy of Finland ensures the quality of ext-post evaluations

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Guidelines for Evaluations

Guidelines for the evaluation of Academy of Finland Research Programmes
Guidelines for the evaluation of research fields and disciplines

Ethical principles

- **IMPARTIALITY**
 - Appropriate experts: no conflicts of interest, diverse combination of expertises
- **ACCURACY**
 - Transparent, open & flexible process
 - Right to reply; Justified assessments
- **CONFIDENTIALITY**
 - Trust and liability
 - Business and research ideas safeguarded



ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

- To fields considered of key importance in terms of science and society
- Designed to advance a certain field of research, raise its scientific standards, and create new scientific knowledge and knowhow
- Multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity & international cooperation
- Focused on a defined subject area, scheduled to run for a set period and composed of several research projects
- Fixed-term funding provided for at least four years
- Coordinated management
- In 2008 the Academy funded 11 research programmes



GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Ex-post evaluations of Research Programmes

Objectives

- attainment of the objectives set out for research programmes evaluated upon their completion
- evaluated against the starting-points of the programme, its objectives and funding volume
- Info on how the objectives of the programme were attained, on its success in generating new information and on the added value it produces
- feedback on the programme process and coordination as well as other information that is useful for purposes of science policy planning and decision-making
- contributes to the development of the evaluation process itself and serves as a learning process for those involved in the evaluation
- feedback to the researchers

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Follow-up and evaluation plan

A **public** follow-up and evaluation plan is drawn up for every research programme from the early stages

- Objectives of the follow-up and evaluation
- Responsible bodies
- Methods of evaluation
- Timetables
- Evaluation material that shall be collected.
- Detail the areas of the programme to be evaluated
- Evaluation criteria

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

The **evaluation** breaks down into the following **components**

(final set of evaluation criteria will depend upon the objectives set for the programme evaluated)

Planning of the research programme

- Preparation of the programme and planning of the programme content
- Research projects funded and funding decisions in creating the necessary preconditions for the programme

Activities and results of the research programme (most important component to evaluate)

- Scientific quality and results
- How are the programme objectives achieved?
- Added value of the programme
- Coordination activities and the results in relation to the available resources

Societal impacts of the research programme

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Implementation of evaluation

A key objective of evaluation is that it has immediate *utility value*. The following factors are therefore crucial:

- The evaluation questions are clearly defined
- The objectivity and expertise of the evaluators are ensured
- High quality standards are maintained throughout the evaluation process
- The main conclusions of the evaluation are clearly set out and their relevance to the programme objectives is established
- Careful thought shall be given to the materials collected for the evaluation and to the criteria and methods applied

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

Duties and responsibilities of parties involved in the evaluation

- The final evaluation of a research programme is conducted by the method of peer evaluation, in which a **group of primarily foreign experts** evaluates the success of the programme
- **Programme steering group** plans and implements the programme evaluation, appoints a Chair for the evaluation panel as well as its members, draws up an assignment for the panel including the objectives of the evaluation
- **Programme manager** (and AoF civil servants): Assisting role in the evaluation process, Collects, compiles and prepares the evaluation materials for the panel; Organises the self-evaluation, Presents to the panel Finnish innovation system, the Academy's role, tasks and organisation and the programme instrument
- **Researchers** assess the programme for general success as well as their own contribution

GUIDELINES FOR THE EVALUATION OF ACADEMY OF FINLAND RESEARCH PROGRAMMES

REPORTING AND UTILISATION OF EVALUATION

Evaluation report prepared by the evaluation panel (sometimes with an expert secretary)

- Description of the evaluation panel, its composition and assignment
 - A brief description of the evaluation panel's work: meetings, interviews, material used in the evaluation
 - Description of the evaluation criteria and methods used by the evaluation panel
 - Evaluation proper
 - Conclusions and recommendations
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- Research councils: draw up an **after-care plan** for the programme, including proposals on the implementation of the recommendations (in so far as they are considered justified)
 - Other funding bodies supporting the research
 - Researchers, other end-users of the results and the media

FUTURE

New Academy of Finland's Research Programme Strategy
will be published soon (previous for 2003-2007)

- More focus on impact evaluation of research programmes
- Revised evaluation guidelines