

# CoARA Action Plan of Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz for 2025-2030

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2025, the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (UKW) celebrates its 20th anniversary. However, the origins of the university, which in earlier years operated under different names, date back to 1969. UKW is a dynamically developing institution and the second largest university in the Kuyavian-Pomeranian region. Since obtaining university status, UKW has consistently pursued intensive scientific and didactic development, with particular emphasis on the growth and support of its employees, thereby continuously strengthening its position on the map of Polish higher education.

In accordance with the objectives outlined in the *Mission of the Kazimierz Wielki University*, the institution is committed to its own development, guided by the vision of a multi-profile, autonomous university participating in global science and maintaining a strong academic position. To achieve the fundamental goals set out in the mission, the university has, from the outset, recognized the need to improve support systems for the scientific work of its staff.

Strengthening the university's position as a significant research center is one of the core objectives included in the *Strategy of the Kazimierz Wielki University for 2021–2026*. According to this document, the university has undertaken actions to create optimal conditions for conducting high-quality research. UKW also aims to enhance its HR policy in areas such as recruitment, promotion, and evaluation, as well as to support employees in developing professional competencies—objectives that align with several of the goals defined in the CoARA Agreement.

Striving for further development, UKW recognizes the need to introduce systemic changes in the evaluation of research activity, shifting the focus from predominantly quantitative assessment—currently dominant in the Polish system—to qualitative evaluation. At the same time, UKW acknowledges the importance of continuously improving its internal systems for assessing research performance. For this reason, in 2024, the university joined the CoARA initiative, thus beginning cooperation with both Polish and international universities.

Following its accession to the CoARA initiative, in 2024–2025 UKW has already taken the first steps to support its academic staff, strengthen research potential, and enhance the mechanisms for evaluating scientific activity within the institution.

At present, the university operates a comprehensive system for assessing research activity, which will be further developed between 2025 and 2030 in line with the ten commitments of CoARA. UKW intends to implement this reform gradually over the next five years, in accordance with the principles set out in this action plan.

## **UKW Action Plan 2025-2030 roadmap in conjunction with the CoARA's 10 commitments**

### **1. Commitment: Recognise the diversity of contributions to, and careers in, research in accordance with the needs and nature of the research**

At UKW, the evaluation of researchers takes into account a variety of contributions to scientific activity, depending on the type of position held. Academic staff are employed in research, research-and-teaching, teaching, and research support specialist positions, and different evaluation criteria are applied in each case. According to the regulations currently in force at UKW, an academic teacher employed in a teaching position may, but is not required to, complete an evaluation form in the field of scientific activity, and is assessed in this area only upon their own request.

**Planned activities:** an analysis of the employee evaluation form to ensure greater recognition of the diverse nature of research contributions, including the specific characteristics of individual research disciplines (to be implemented by the end of 2026).

### **2. Commitment: Base research assessment primarily on qualitative evaluation for which peer review is central, supported by responsible use of quantitative indicators**

The current research evaluation system at UKW is mixed, combining both quantitative and qualitative criteria. Staff members are assessed not only on their publications but also on a wide range of research-related activities, such as participation in conferences and their organization, research internships, and project involvement. This approach is consistent with the principles set out in the CoARA commitments.

**Planned activities:** an analysis of the Rector's Ordinance on the periodic evaluation of academic staff, as well as other internal university documents and national regulations, to identify opportunities for strengthening the role of qualitative assessment. The university plans to place greater emphasis on qualitative criteria in decisions concerning researchers' professional advancement and to modify the system of scientific awards so that it better reflects the quality of research achievements (implementation by the end of 2026).

### **3. Commitment: Abandon inappropriate uses in research assessment of journal- and publication-based metrics, in particular inappropriate uses of Journal Impact Factor (JIF) and h-index**

At UKW, international impact indicators are currently used only to a limited extent in the evaluation of academic staff. Moreover, a broad range of additional research-related activities is also considered in the overall assessment of scientific performance.

**Planned activities:** an analysis of university regulations related to the research evaluation system, as well as relevant national legislation, to explore possibilities for reducing the role of quantitative, publication-based indicators—such as journal rankings or citation metrics—and for strengthening the use of qualitative evaluation criteria (implementation by the end of 2026).

### **4. Commitment: Avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment**

This goal has already been achieved. UKW does not use rankings of research organisations in the evaluation of employees' scientific performance.

### **5. Commitment: Commit resources to reforming research assessment as is needed to achieve the organisational changes committed to**

Following its accession to the CoARA initiative, UKW has already undertaken initial actions in this area.

**Actions taken and planned:** At the end of 2024, the university authorities decided to apply for the **HR Excellence in Research** award granted by the European Commission. To this end, the Rector appointed a **Representative for the Development of HR Strategies for Researchers**.

Subsequently, in January 2025, the position of Rector's **Representative for the Improvement of Research Assessment Systems** was established, reporting directly to the Vice-Rector for Science. In addition to maintaining ongoing communication with CoARA, the responsibilities of this representative include preparing an analysis of the research evaluation system currently in place at UKW—taking into account both bibliometric tools and qualitative assessment—participating in the development of the university's action plan, and monitoring the implementation of the adopted objectives (by the end of 2026).

### **6. Commitment: Review and develop research assessment criteria, tools and processes**

UKW applies a range of criteria, tools, and processes for evaluating research performance, which will be reviewed and aligned with the commitments of CoARA.

**Planned activities:** an analysis of key university documents and procedures with a view to further improving the systems for evaluating scientific activity, including in particular:

- the *Mission of UKW*,
- the *Statute of UKW*,
- the *Strategy of UKW* (preparation of a new strategy to be implemented from 2027, incorporating measures aimed at improving the research assessment system),
- the *Rector's Ordinance on the periodic evaluation of academic staff at Kazimierz Wielki University* (implementation by the end of 2026).

## **7. Commitment: Raise awareness of research assessment reform and provide transparent communication, guidance, and training on assessment criteria and processes as well as their use**

The university continuously works to raise awareness among its staff about research assessment reform by organizing meetings and discussions on this topic.

**Planned activities:** organization of meetings with the academic community of each faculty to increase awareness of the ongoing reform of research assessment; conducting a survey among UKW researchers to gather their previous experiences and expectations regarding the evaluation of research activity. Depending on identified needs, other additional forms of support may also be provided for faculty committees responsible for research evaluation at UKW (implementation: ongoing in the years 2026–2027).

## **8. Commitment: Exchange practices and experiences to enable mutual learning within and beyond the Coalition**

UKW regularly shares its experience in the field of research assessment with other universities but recognises the need to intensify its activities in this area.

**Planned activities:** further strengthening of cooperation with other domestic and international universities participating in CoARA, including engagement in working groups and joining the National Chapter. It is also planned to organise regular meetings with representatives of other universities dedicated to the exchange of good practices and mutual learning (implementation: ongoing in the years 2025–2030).

## **9. Commitment: Communicate progress made on adherence to the Principles and implementation of the Commitments**

Since joining CoARA, UKW has sought to keep both its staff and representatives of other universities informed about the progress of actions undertaken to reform the system of research assessment.

**Planned activities:** intensifying communication efforts both within the university and across the CoARA network by regularly sharing updates on progress and organising periodic meetings dedicated to this topic (implementation: ongoing in the years 2025–2030). Creation of a UKW website subpage dedicated to this topic in Polish and English (implementation: by the end of December 2025).

## **10. Commitment: Evaluate practices, criteria and tools based on solid evidence and the state of the art in research on research, and make data openly available for evidence gathering and research**

Currently, the University Science Council reviews the criteria, tools and processes related to the evaluation of scientific activity on an ongoing basis.

**Planned activities:** the university will conduct a general review within the next 2 years (implementation: in the years 2026-2027).

## **CONCLUDING STATEMENT**

UKW recognises that, in order to fully implement all CoARA commitments, it is first necessary to introduce fundamental changes to the institutional and legal framework governing the principles of researcher evaluation within the Polish science system. Therefore, together with other national partners participating in CoARA, UKW will continue to work towards the implementation of the expected reforms in this system, which will, in turn, enable corresponding changes at the university level.