

REFORMING RESEARCH ASSESSMENT AT IDIBAPS: ACTION PLAN 2024 - 2028

1. Introduction

The [Fundació de Recerca Clínic Barcelona-Institut d'Investigacions Biomèdiques August Pi i Sunyer](#) (IDIBAPS) is a biomedical research institute of excellence. It combines clinical, translational and basic research to accelerate the translation of knowledge to the benefit of patients. IDIBAPS is a nonprofit foundation with a board of governors representing the Catalan Government's departments of Health and of Research and Universities, the Clínic Barcelona Hospital, and the University of Barcelona. The IDIBAPS research community is composed of more than 2,000 professionals and includes 98 research groups distributed across 5 different areas of knowledge and 5 multidisciplinary research programs.

In the recent years prior committing to the reform, IDIBAPS has progressively adapted some of the assessment processes and criteria in the institutional evaluation schemes. Progress is ongoing and further changes can still be implemented in most of the institution's assessment schemes, now benefiting from the structure and timeframe that the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment (ARRA) and the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) require.

Generally, assessment processes at IDIBAPS can be classified in two categories: those part of internal calls or processes, and those related to external calls. Whereas the first are entirely designed and executed institutionally, and thus eligible to be thoroughly reformed, external assessment processes commonly consist in a prioritization of candidacies requested by research funders. Research assessment at IDIBAPS is managed by the Scientific Coordination Office (SCO) under the supervision of the Strategy Director (SD), and ultimately the IDIBAPS Director.

- Internal assessment schemes include evaluations of individual researchers at different stages of their career (e.g., promotion to junior group leader, renewal of group leader position) or evaluations of research groups, among others. Importantly, the large number of researchers and research groups at IDIBAPS poses a challenge in evaluation processes targeting the whole community, such as the quinquennial evaluation of research groups, so does their heterogeneity in disciplines and profiles.
- In the prioritization of candidacies for external funders, two main factors limit the adoption of ARRA commitments: firstly, the requested documentation and applied criteria need to align with those established by the funders' call and, secondly, the assessment process needs to be feasible within the timeframe provided by funders, often too limited to accommodate a peer-review process. This situation evidences the importance of envisioning the research assessment reform as a collective effort by all actors in the local, national and international research system and the need for aligned criteria and indicators.

Tackling these challenges will be key to successfully implement a research assessment reform at IDIBAPS, for which *feasibility*, *prioritization*, and *flexibility* in accordance with the pace that reforming assessment implies will become **guiding principles**. These will add to the key principles of *inclusiveness*, *diversity*, *collaboration* and *sustainability* in a process aiming to embed quality-focused assessment in IDIBAPS' institutional culture while contributing to reforming research assessment beyond.

2. Action Plan 2024 – 2028

Goal	Actions	ARRA commitments	Actors
A) Aligning institutional evaluation practices to ARRA commitments			
1) Involving all relevant actors in the institutional RAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a WG: researchers from all career stages, research areas and profiles + SD + SCO. Introduce WG members to the RAR and ARRA. 	6	SCO SD WG
2) Reviewing current research assessment practices; discussing and developing new ones	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate the capacity and feasibility to change institutional assessment processes (internal and external). Select and prioritize assessment processes to be reformed. Discuss and propose concrete actions to change and restructure assessment processes. 	1-3; 6	WG SCO
3) Planning, piloting and implementing the proposed RAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design and plan the RAR implementation. Commit resources to coordinate the implementation. Pilot the proposed reform in different evaluation processes and cohorts. Fully implement the RAR. 	1-3; 5	SCO SD
4) Evaluating the new assessment practices; collecting feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluate aspects of the implemented reform: execution, outcomes, views of actors involved. Analyse and integrate evaluation results and feedback to the reform process. 	10	SCO SD WG
B) Fostering an institutional cultural change in research assessment			
1) Awareness raising and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate the RAR and progress in its implementation to the research community. Train the research community on new research assessment practices. 	7; 9	SCO Communi- cations Office
2) Integrating the RAR into institutional policies and regulations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrate the RAR in other institutional policies (e.g., Open Science, research career, etc). Integrate the RAR in the institutional Strategic Plan 2025-2028. 	-	SCO SD

C) Participating and contributing to the RAR locally, nationally and internationally

1) Participating in CoARA's WGs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in CoARA WGs (e.g., SAGA WG). Participate in National Chapter Spain. 	8; 9	SCO
2) External dissemination and exchange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the institutional progress towards the RAR. Participate in exchange opportunities with external actors. 	7-10	SCO

ARRA: Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment; RAR: research assessment reform; SCO: Scientific Coordination Office; SD: Strategy Director; WG: working group.

2.1 Timeline for Action Plan implementation

IDIBAPS became an ARRA signatory and CoARA member in October 2022, and actions towards the institutional reform of research assessment started immediately afterwards (2023).

Year	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028
Goal						
A	1					
	2					
	3					
	4					
B	1					
	2					
C	1					
	2					

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