

Creating a Canadian Community of Practice On Responsible Research Assessment

Summary of Kick-Off Event

On April 7, 2025, we hosted our inaugural meeting to create a Canadian Community of Practice on Responsible Research Assessment (RRA), marking the beginning of what promises to be an exciting collaborative initiative. This first gathering, which was held virtually and saw 226 attendees, set the stage for a dynamic community of practice dedicated to advancing more responsible, transparent, and equitable research assessment practices across the Canadian research ecosystem.

Introduction by Dr. Kelly Cobey:

Dr. Kelly Cobey, DORA Co-Chair and Scientist at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, opened the meeting with an introduction of DORA (the [Declaration on Research Assessment](#)). She provided background on DORA's history and its current uptake within the Canadian context. Her presentation highlighted DORA's 18 recommendations, which include valuing a wider range of scholarly outputs (such as datasets, protocols, and preprints) and advocating for transparency in how metrics and assessment are implemented.

The slides used at the event are available in both English and French.

 [English](#)

 [French](#)

 [Full Recording of the event](#)

Panel discussion:

The event featured a series of short talks where Canada-based panelists offered their unique insights into their own institution's actions on reforming research assessment

Erica Conte (Director, Funding Strategy and Stewardship, Unity Health): Detailed Unity Health's DORA strategies and introduced the "More Than Our Rank" initiative and the SCOPE Framework as she discussed her institution's steps to sign and implement DORA.

Lupin Battersby (Director, Knowledge Mobilization, Simon Fraser University): Explained SFU's approach to evaluating research and scholarly impact. While not a DORA signatory she highlighted significant institutional commitments to responsible research assessment, including the Barcelona Declaration on Open Research Data, and her institution's specific activities in open science and knowledge mobilization.

Shruti Patel (Director, Interprofessional Research & Knowledge Mobilization, University of Ottawa Institute of Mental Health Research at The Royal): Discussed how and why the IMHR at The Royal became a signatory of DORA and described their concrete plans to advance responsible research assessment methods at an individual and institutional level in alignment with their organizational Strategic Research Plan.

Stephanie Warner (Manager, Knowledge to Impact, Research Services, University of Calgary): Presented the University of Calgary's strategic plan for DORA and responsible research assessment and discussed the work leading up to signing DORA and onwards to implementation.

Group discussion:

The organizing committee posed a series of four questions to attendees at the event:

1. What do you want from a community of practice on responsible research assessment?
2. Does the community want to take an advocacy role?
3. What conversations are you having about responsible research assessment at your institution?
4. Where do we go from here?

Key Topics Raised in the discussion includes:

- **Broader Assessment Metrics:** A consensus on the need to shift from traditional, journal-based metrics to a more holistic view that values varied research outputs.
- **Transparency and Equity:** How responsible assessment practices can support greater transparency in research evaluation and promote equity, diversity, and inclusion should be a priority.

- **Reproducibility and Open Science:** The role of reproducibility as a cornerstone for trust in scientific research, and how open science principles are integral to improving research integrity.
- **Building a Sustainable Community:** The importance of creating a collaborative network—a community of practice—that can drive continuous improvement in research assessment and foster shared learning across institutions and funding agencies.

Our Q&A and discussion session highlighted that Responsible Research Assessment (RRA) should be pursued through co-creation with funders as key stakeholders for sustainable change. The group emphasized engaging organizations to develop context-specific outputs such as practice guidelines and toolkits for diverse settings (e.g., hospital-based research institutes vs. university faculties). There was broad agreement on the importance of national and institutional funding such as for a sustainable scientist evaluation database, and for having federal agencies and sponsor foundations integrate principles from DORA, decolonization, and other inclusive frameworks (including feminization, Indigenous reconciliation, research-creation, and interdisciplinary scholarship) into funding and merit guidelines, thereby grounding the global discussion on RRA in a uniquely Canadian context.

Attendee Characteristics

Attendees' province	
Ontario	105
Quebec	41
Alberta	25
International	15
British Columbia	11
New Brunswick	8
Nova Scotia	1
Total	206

Next Steps

- Newsletter: Stay informed about upcoming events by adding your name to our [mailing list](#).
- If you are interested in becoming more actively involved in leadership of the Responsible Research Assessment community of practice, please contact Dr. Kelly Cobey at kcobey@ottawaheart.ca

Upcoming events

1. DORA is hosting a virtual 1.5 hour session on May 16th at 2pm EST to launch their **“Practical guide to reforming research assessment at research performing organizations”**. We will share the guide when it is available.

This guide provides research performing organizations with concrete suggestions to move from thinking about responsible research assessment to taking concrete steps for change. The event is free to attend, you and register [online](#).

Thanks for your attendance and engagement on behalf of the organizing team!