

# 2019 In Review: Research on Research

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December 22, 2019



2019 has seen an increased focus on the ways in which different national and international research systems function and how they can be improved. This post brings together some of the top posts on the theme of research on research that have featured on the LSE Impact Blog during 2019.

## Pushing research to the limit – Who innovates in social science research?

Innovation in any field of research often runs the risk of being poorly judged and misunderstood by researchers beholden to more conventional methods. What then allows researchers to undertake research that could leave them ostracised from their disciplinary communities? In this post, **Sharon Koppman** and **Erin Leahey** highlight how the development of interdisciplinary identities, association with key organisations, and the ability to present unconventional research in a conventional light are key to enabling researchers to innovate.



## Scientist Led or Mission Oriented – How much does it cost research funders to lead science?

Across national research systems, decisions about what research is funded are influenced by both researchers themselves, and policymakers with national priorities. However, beyond short term change in response to grants, it is unclear how the latter mission oriented form of research funding affects research practices over the long term. In this post **Kyle Myers**, shows that the funding needed to actually alter research trajectories over longer periods of time may in fact be higher than expected.



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### **Giving Credit: Gender and the hidden labour behind academic prestige**

In recent months, a number of high profile cases have focused attention on how credit is attributed to the creation of academic research and in particular the way in which the role of women is often diminished or effaced as part of this process. In this post **Donica Belisle** and **Kiera Mitchell** highlight the historical precedent of Mary Quayle Innis and the unrecognised impact she had on her husband Harold Adams Innis' career and suggest that the social sciences and humanities would benefit from a wider interpretation of scholarly attribution than is currently practiced.



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### **India's retrospective review of PhD research quality is set to significantly change research practices**



India's University Grants Commission recently invited proposals to

retrospectively assess the quality of PhD theses awarded by the country's universities over the past 10 years. In this post **Santosh C. Hulagabali**, outlines the potential impacts of this review on Indian universities and scholars and highlights the role of this review in signalling the quality of Indian research.

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### **Blind Luck – Could lotteries be a more efficient mechanism for allocating research funds than peer review?**



Peer review is integral to the award of funds for academic research.

However, as an increasingly large number of researchers attempt to secure limited funding, it is clear that much funding is awarded based on marginal assessments of the quality of different proposals. In this post, **Lambros Roumbanis** argues that randomly awarding research funding via lotteries presents a more rational, efficient and most importantly unbiased means of distributing research funding.

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### **A call for funders to ban institutions that use grant capture targets**



Grant capture, or the ability of researchers to secure funding for their

projects, is often used as a formal metric for academic evaluation. In this post, **Dorothy Bishop** argues that this practice has led to perverse incentives for researchers and institutions and that research funders have both a responsibility and a significant interest in using their influence to halt this practice.

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### **To achieve a truly 'Global Britain' we need to take international research policy partnerships seriously.**



The relationship between the UK's research endeavour and its international

partners is likely to change in coming years as a result of changes in domestic funding streams and a potentially sharp exit from EU funded research projects. In this post **James Georgalakis** argues that if the UK is seeking to be truly 'Global' in terms of research, there is a need to invest in research that isn't simply delivered to international partners, but which involves long-term investment in research partnerships operating outside of the UK.

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### **To make PhDs fit for the 21st century we need to develop evidence based policies**



The growth of PhD level education globally and in the UK has

changed the nature of what it means to be a PhD holder. However, despite there being more PhDs and more value placed on producing them, there is still a severely limited evidence base for understanding PhD outcomes. Drawing on their recent working paper, **Sally Hancock** and **Paul Wakeling** outline key policy issues around PhD education and put forward an agenda for developing an evidence base for making PhDs fit for the 21st century.

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### **Lessons from the past – Why our current understanding of UK research policy is wrong**



As a result of Brexit, research policy in the UK is being asked to perform an

increasingly large array of functions and will likely undergo significant changes. In this post **David Edgerton** draws on the findings of a recent British Academy report on the history of UK research policy to highlight how research policy in the UK is frequently misunderstood and argues that whereas other policy areas, such as economic policy, have well defined historical backgrounds, the lack of this knowledge in research policy renders the field vulnerable to myth-making and the repetition of mistakes.

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### **Building reliable teams, a cure for research pathologies?**



**You-Na Lee** and **John P. Walsh** argue that the solution to

rising incidences of unreliable findings and research pathologies does not necessarily lie with preventing individual malpractice, but rather with promoting structural research integrity and developing better research teams and organisations.

*Note: This article gives the views of the authors, and not the position of the LSE Impact Blog, nor of the London School of Economics. Please review our [comments policy](#) if you have any concerns on posting a comment below.*

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