



**UHASSELT**

KNOWLEDGE IN ACTION



**Amsterdam UMC**  
University Medical Centers

# Changing researcher assessment

## International developments

Presentation for the OsloMet Forskerutdanningskonferansen 2022

15 September 2022 – Oslo, Norway (Presented remotely)

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Aspirant researcher in Cognitive Neuroscience research integrity  
research assessment  
research careers  
Fashionable topics  
Strategic networking  
policy advisor on research assessment  
Media attention  
Publish  
Convincing grant writing  
Publish  
High impact factors  
Publish  
Publish  
Publish!

## Problems with current research assessment

A few of the **many** initiatives that offer hope for the future

Select findings from research I have been involved in...

- Focus groups and interviews with different stakeholders
- Small scale survey with researchers

...not comprehensive, but largely consistent with existing research.

# 🎯 Focus groups and interviews

56 stakeholders in the Flemish biomedical science

What is **success in science?**

PhD candidates



Post Doc



Faculty researchers



Past-Researchers



Integrity network



Institution leaders



Policy makers



Research funders



Editors/Publishers



Integrity offices



Lab technicians

Indicators used to assess researchers often **fail to capture**  
high quality research and knowledge advancement

## Research success

≠

## Career success

Quality

Quantity

Valid, reproducible findings

Exceptional findings

Creating collaboration

Individual achievements

Open science

Competitive

Innovation

Positive results

Transparency, honesty, modesty

Sensational

## 📍 Small scale survey with researchers

126 respondents

Mostly from Flemish  
research institutions

18 statements of potential indicators for success

Publishing papers is...

Publishing in high impact journals is...

Publishing commentaries or editorials is...

Publishing more papers than others is...

Publishing open access is...

Peer reviewing is...

Replicating past research is...

Publishing findings that did not work (i.e., negative findings) is...

Sharing your full data and detailed methods is...

Reviewing raw data from students and collaborators is...

Conducting research with a high risk of failure is...

Connecting with renowned researchers is...

Collaborating across borders, disciplines, and sectors is...

Getting cited in scientific literature is...

Having your papers read and downloaded is...

Having public outreach (e.g., social media, news, etc.) is...

Having your results used or implemented in practice is...

Having luck is...

## Publishing in high impact journals is...

...in advancing my career

...in advancing science

...to my  
personal satisfaction

essential



important



irrelevant

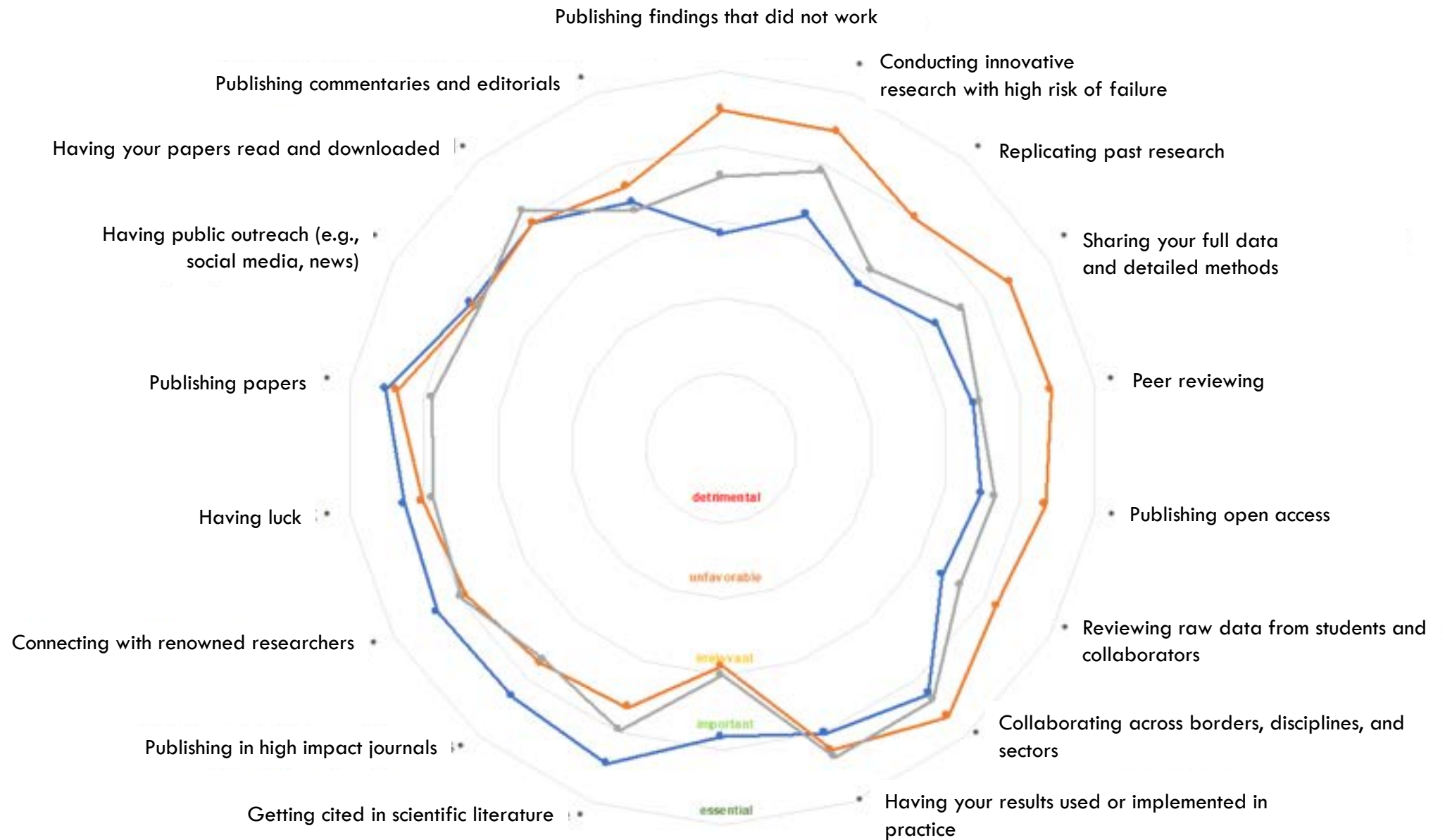


unfavorable

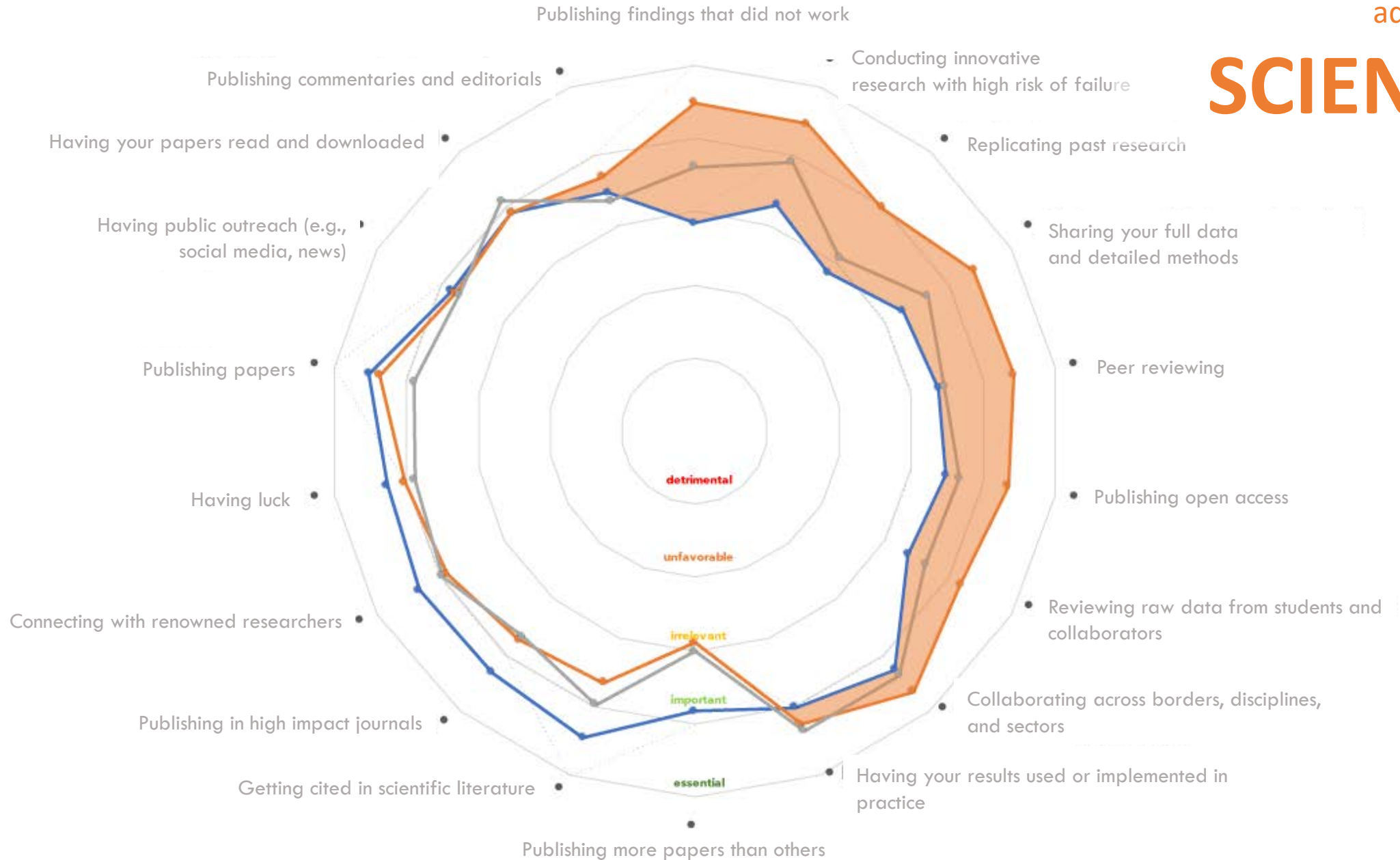


detrimental



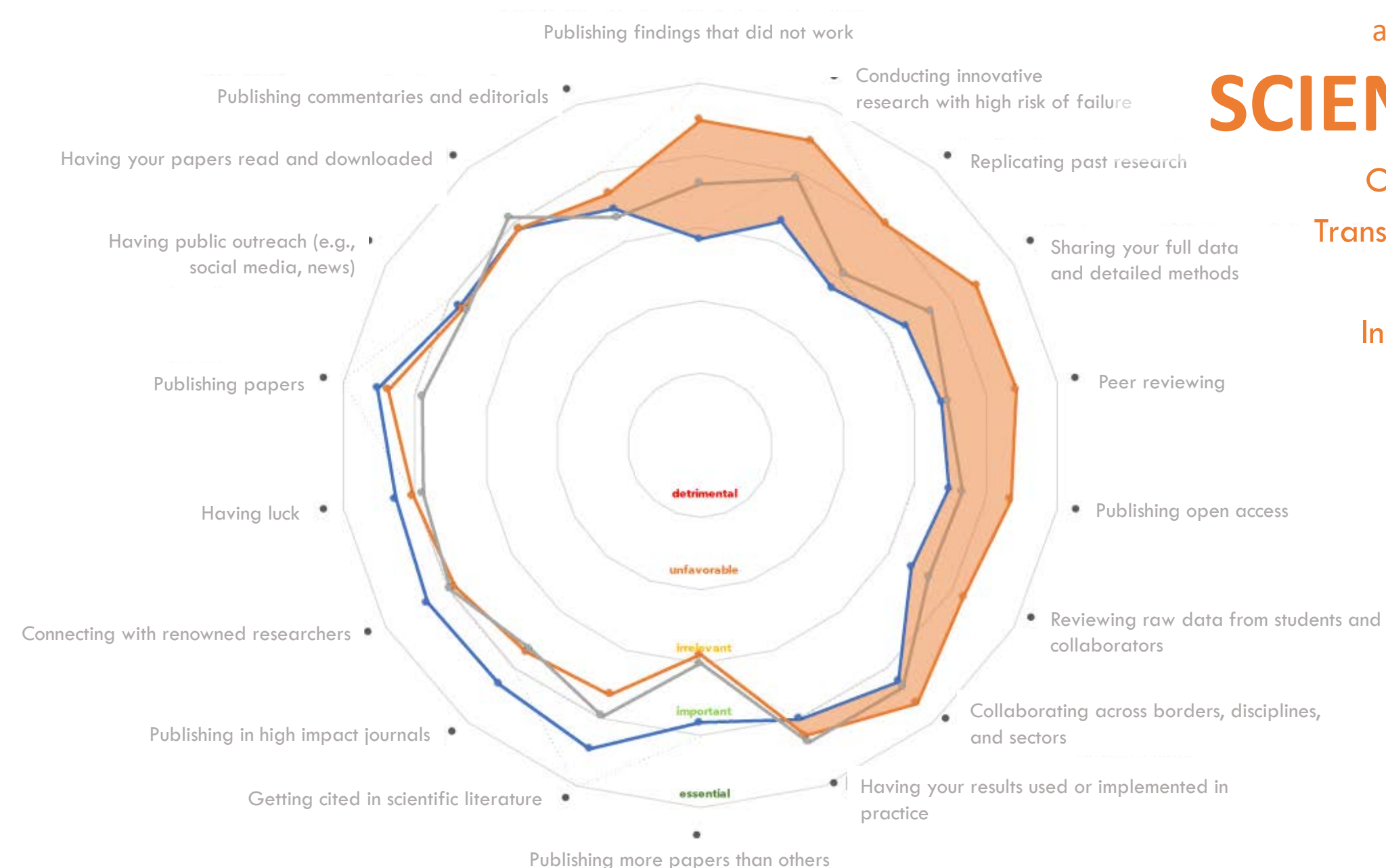






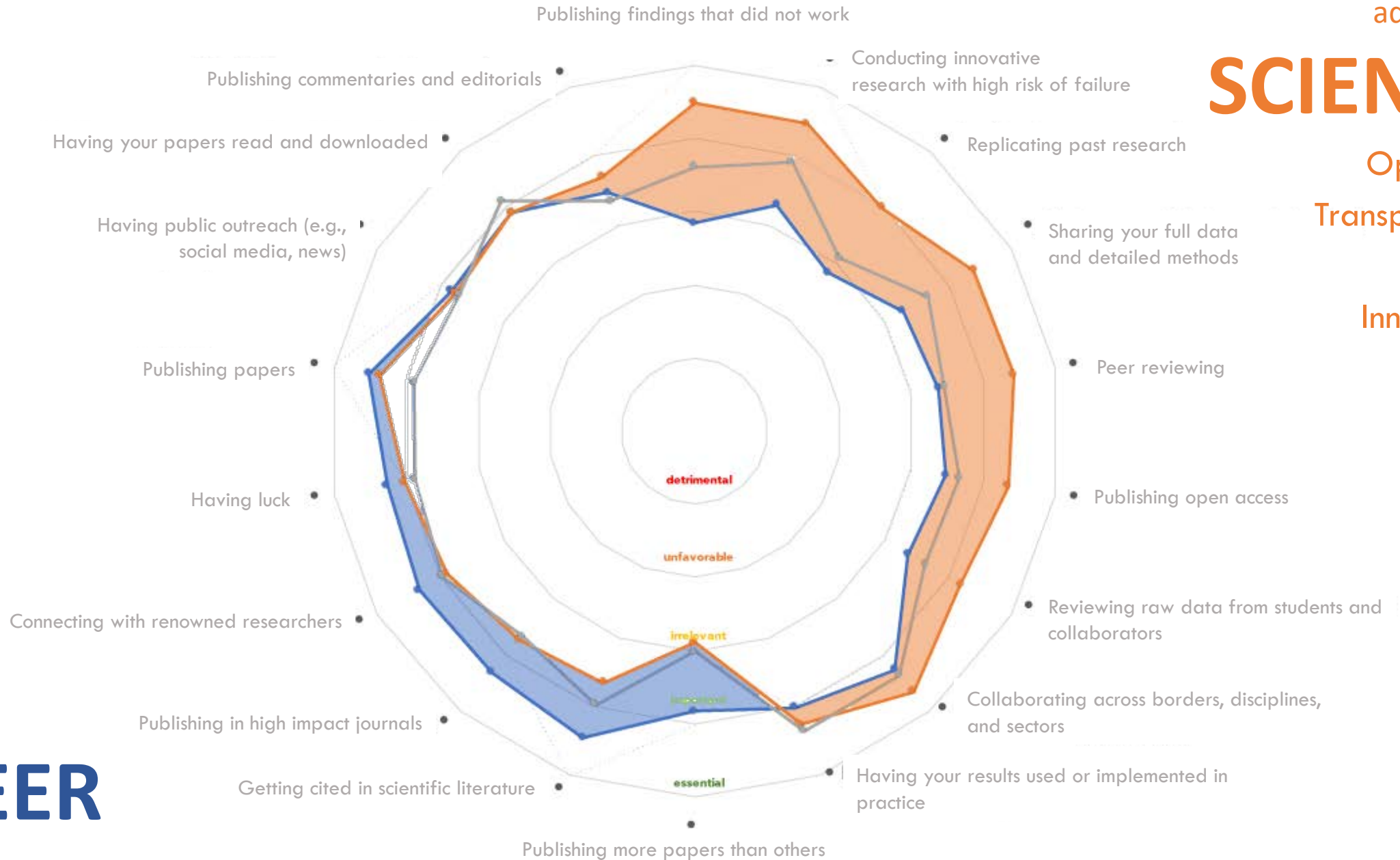
advancing  
**SCIENCE**

Openness  
Transparency  
Quality  
Innovation



advancing  
**SCIENCE**

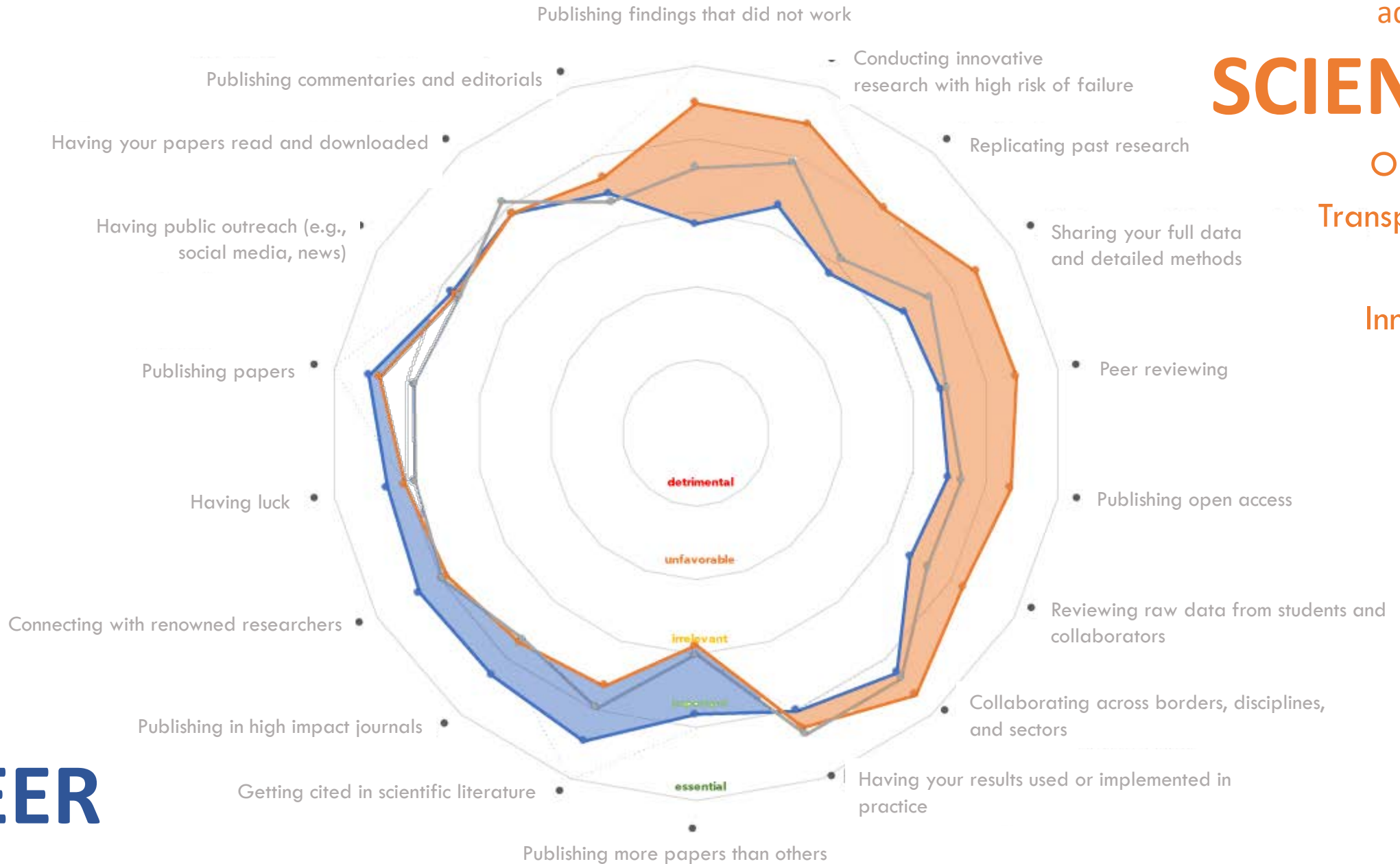
Openness  
Transparency  
Quality  
Innovation



advancing  
**CAREER**

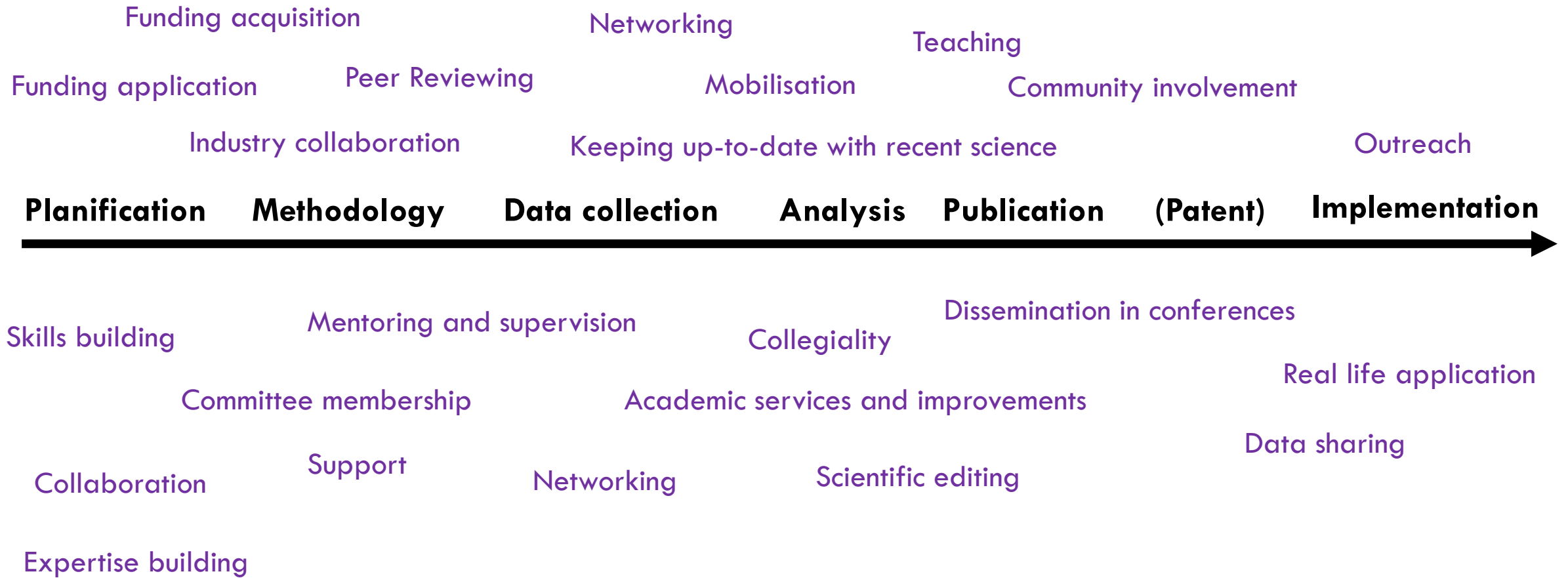
advancing  
**SCIENCE**

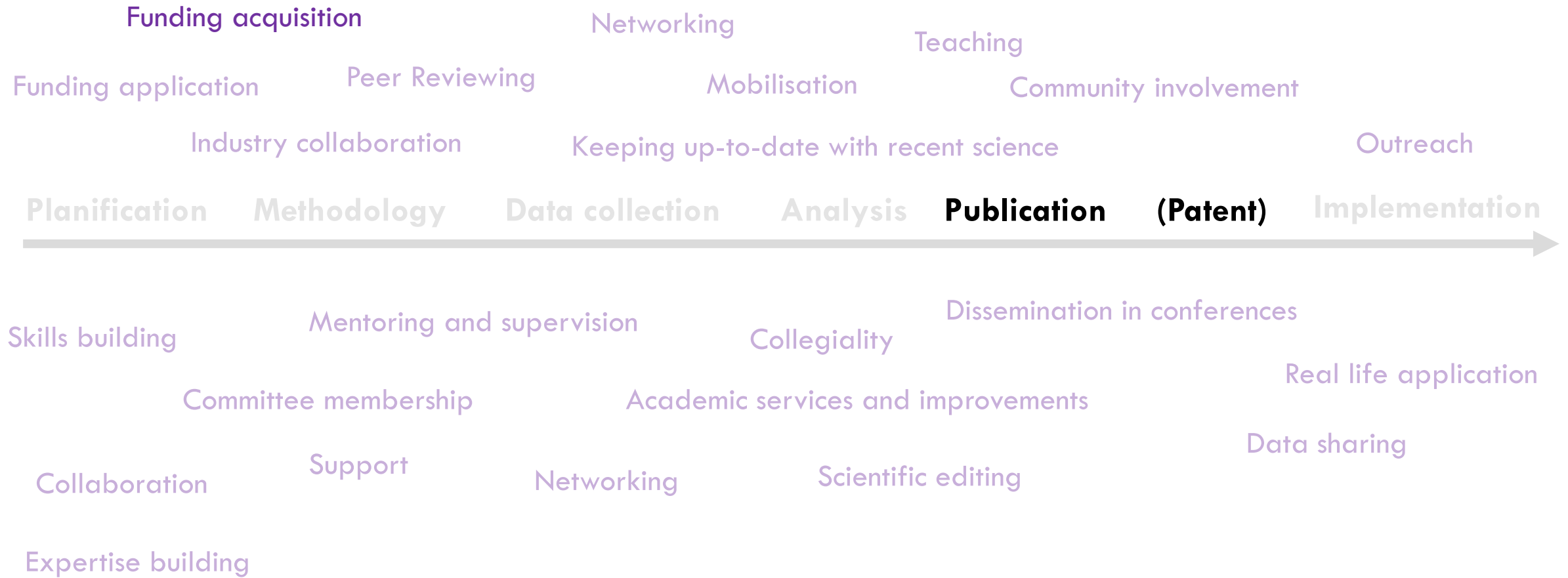
Openness  
Transparency  
Quality  
Innovation



Luck  
Prestige  
Status  
Competition  
advancing  
**CAREER**

Current research assessments almost exclusively look at outputs, overlooking *how* the research is conducted.



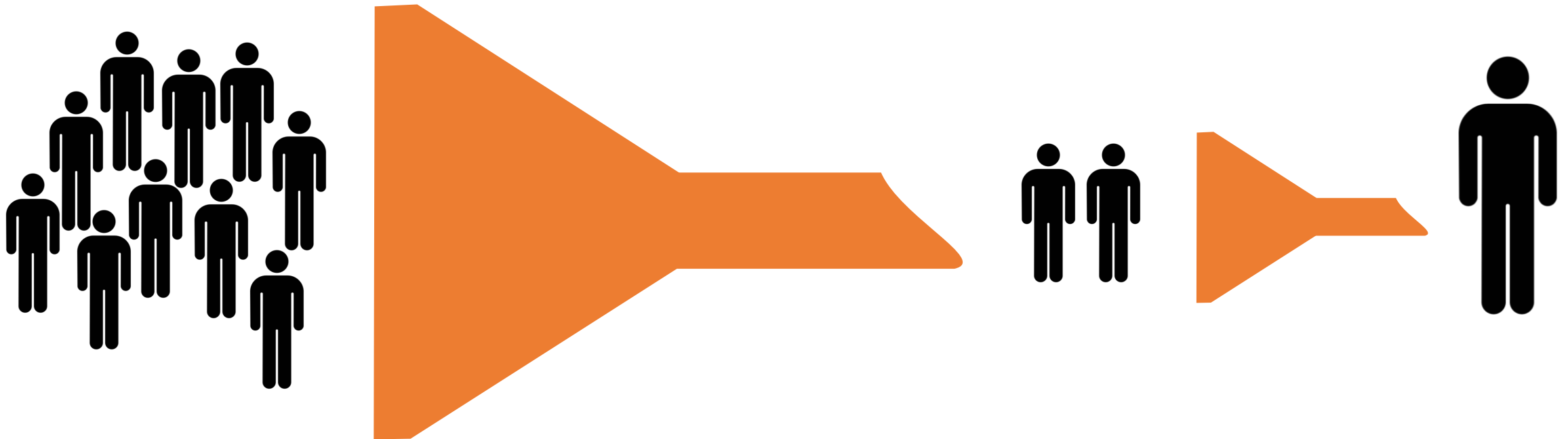


Current research assessments almost **exclusively look at outputs**, overlooking *how* the research is conducted.

Current career structures further  
deepen the problem

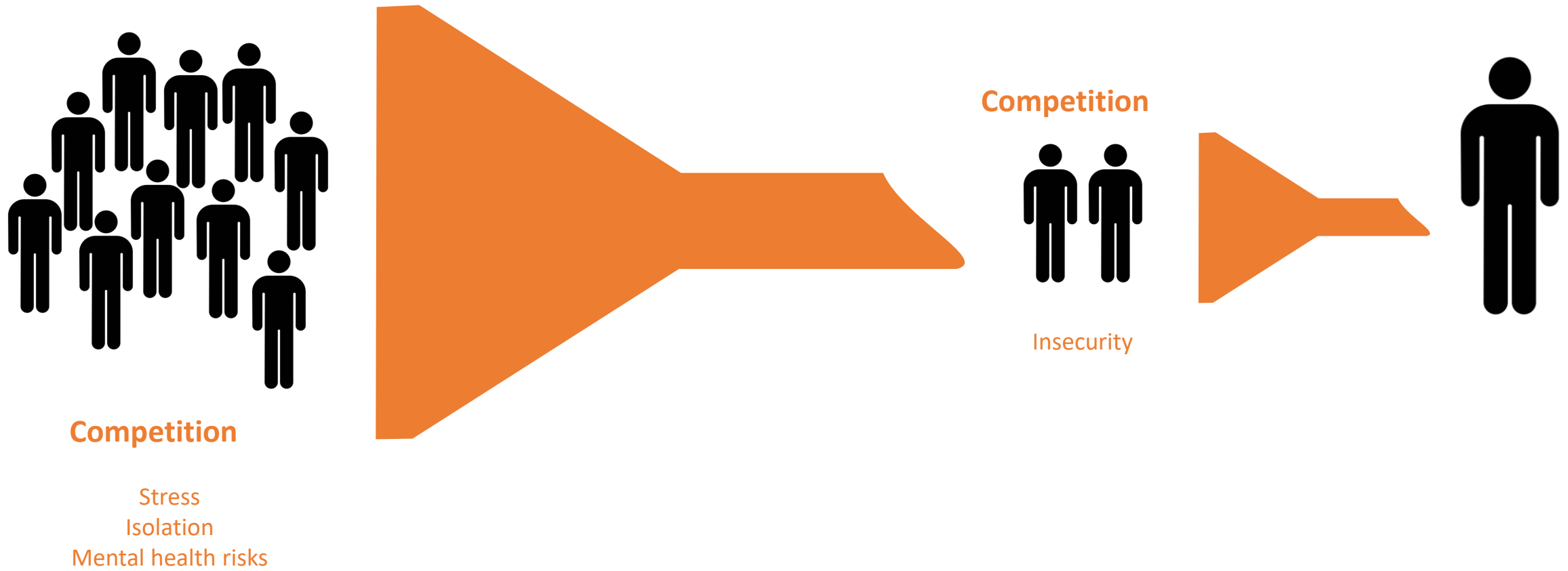


# Current career structures



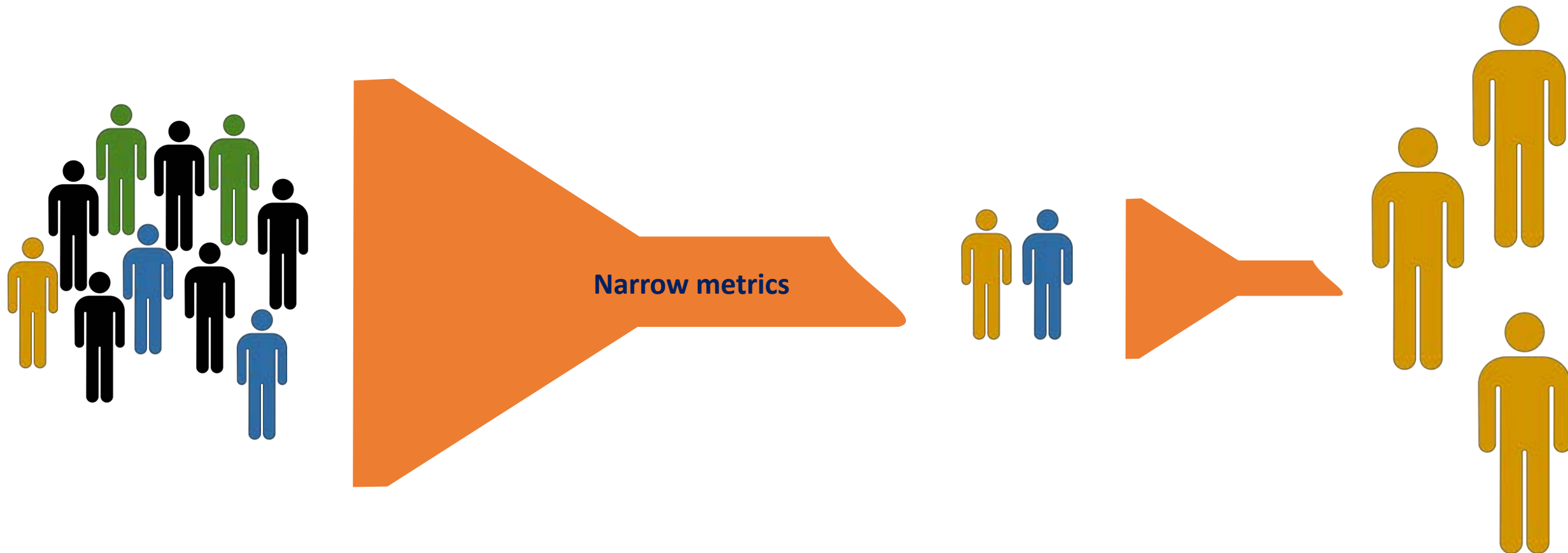
© Findings from focus groups and interviews

# Current career structures create competition between ECR



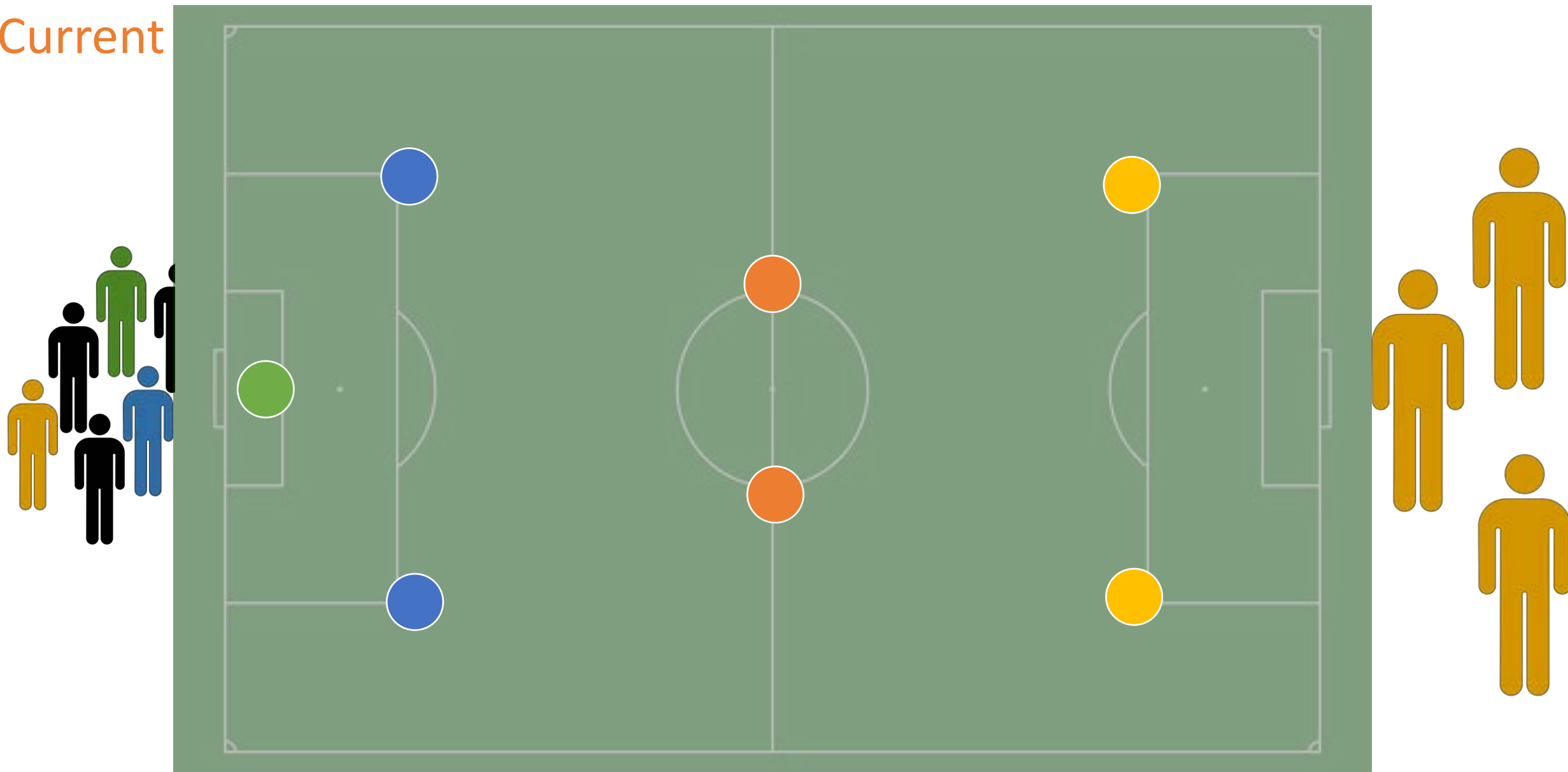
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# Current career structures block diversity



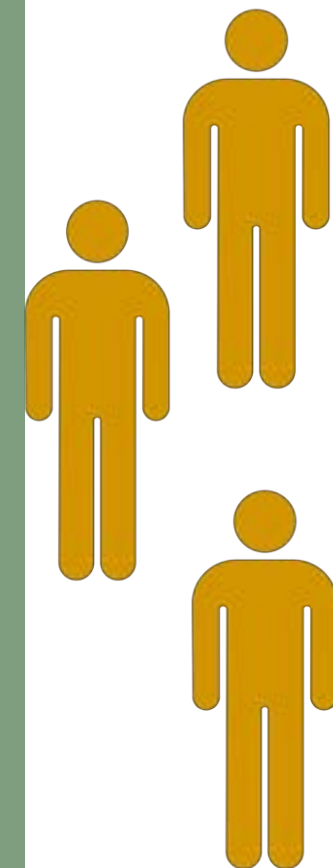
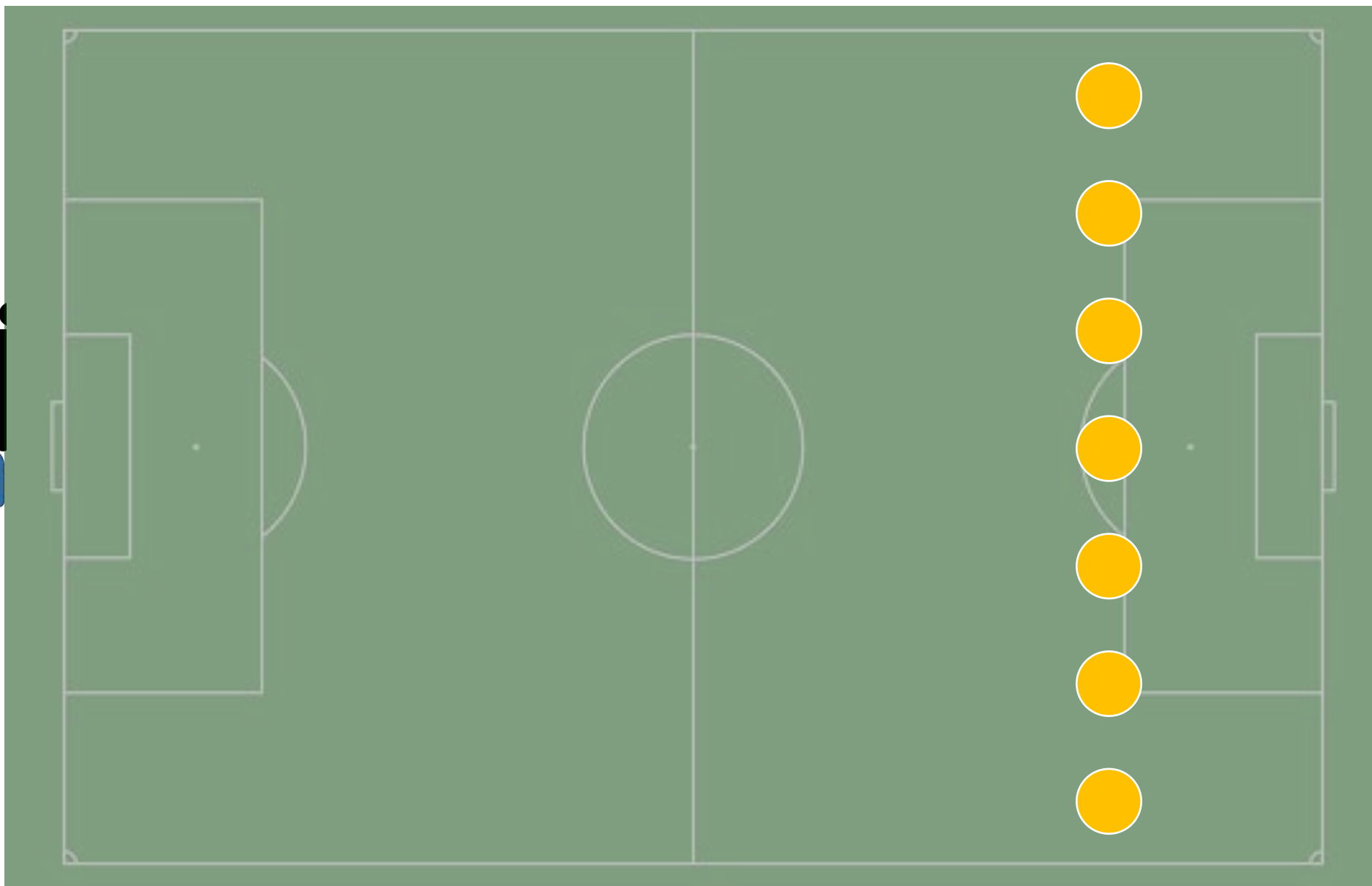
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Current



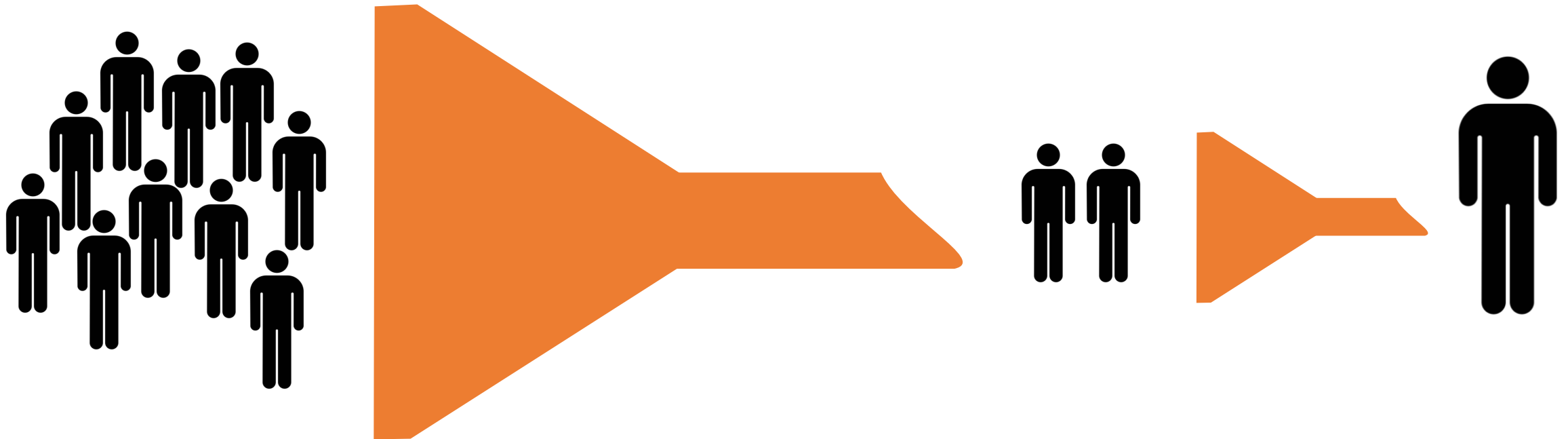
© Findings from focus groups and interviews

Current



© Findings from focus groups and interviews

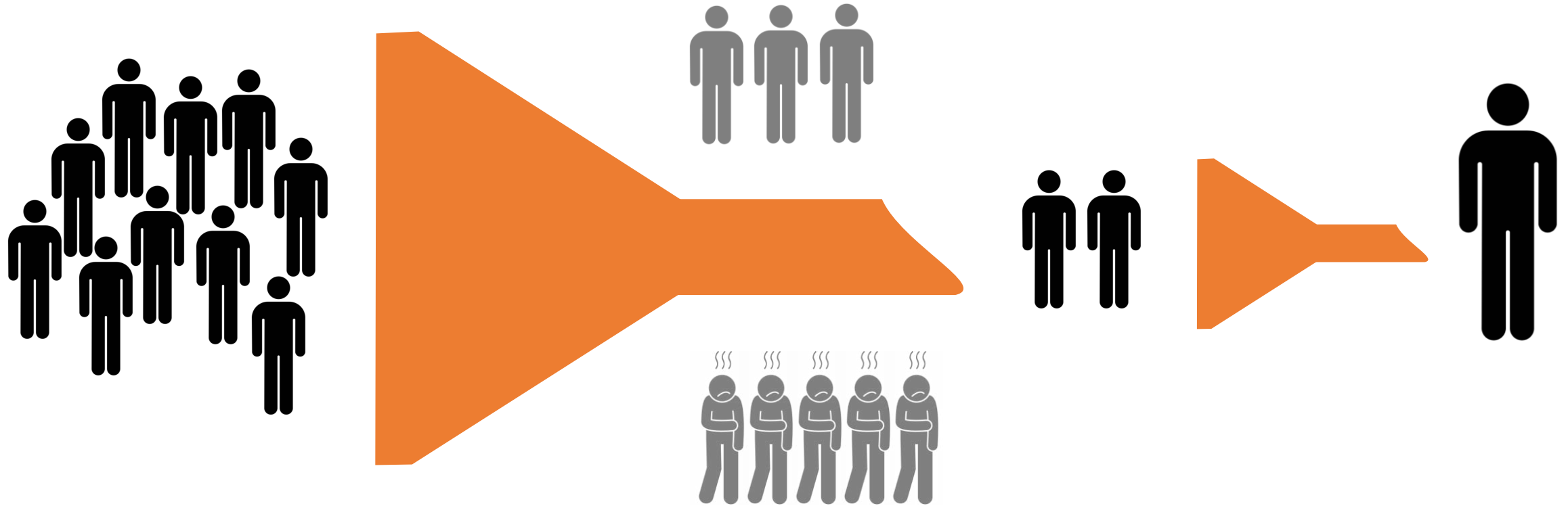
# Current career structures



© Findings from focus groups and interviews

# Current career structures don't support those who leave academia

Lack skills for non-academic careers

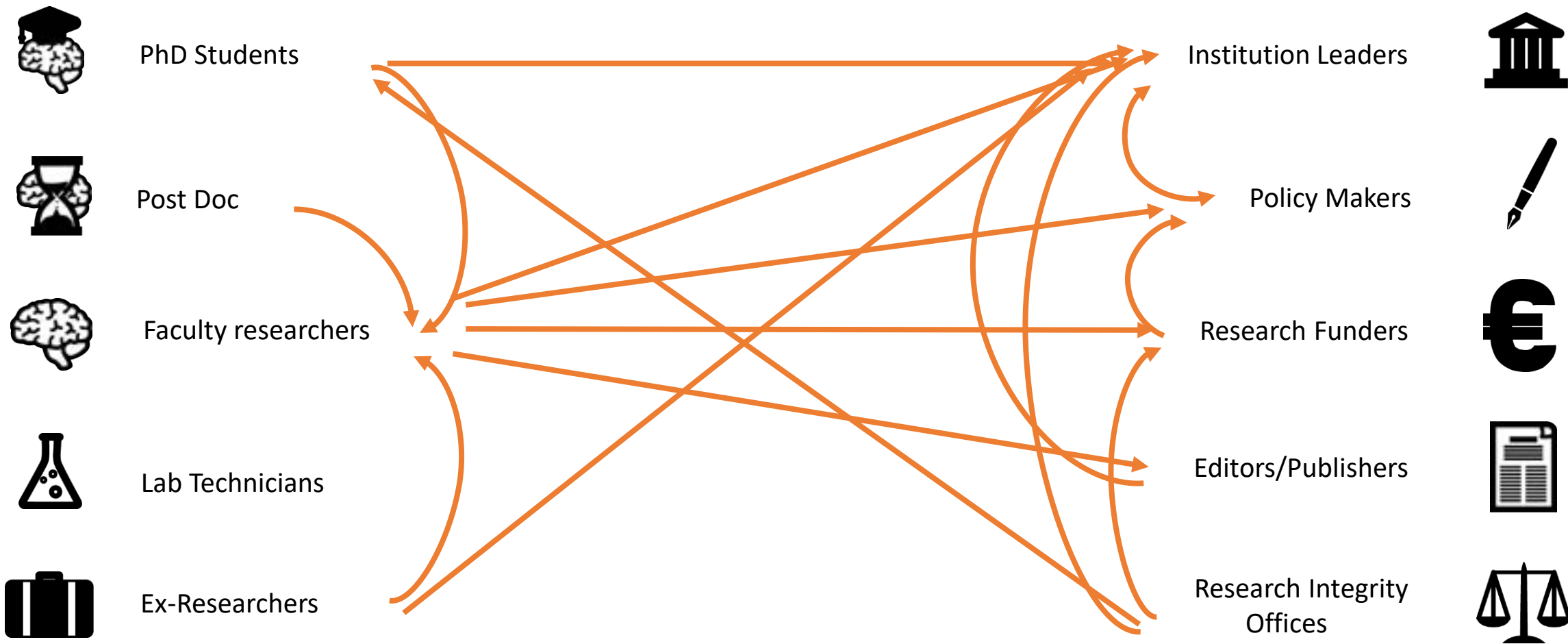


Feeling of failure, stigma

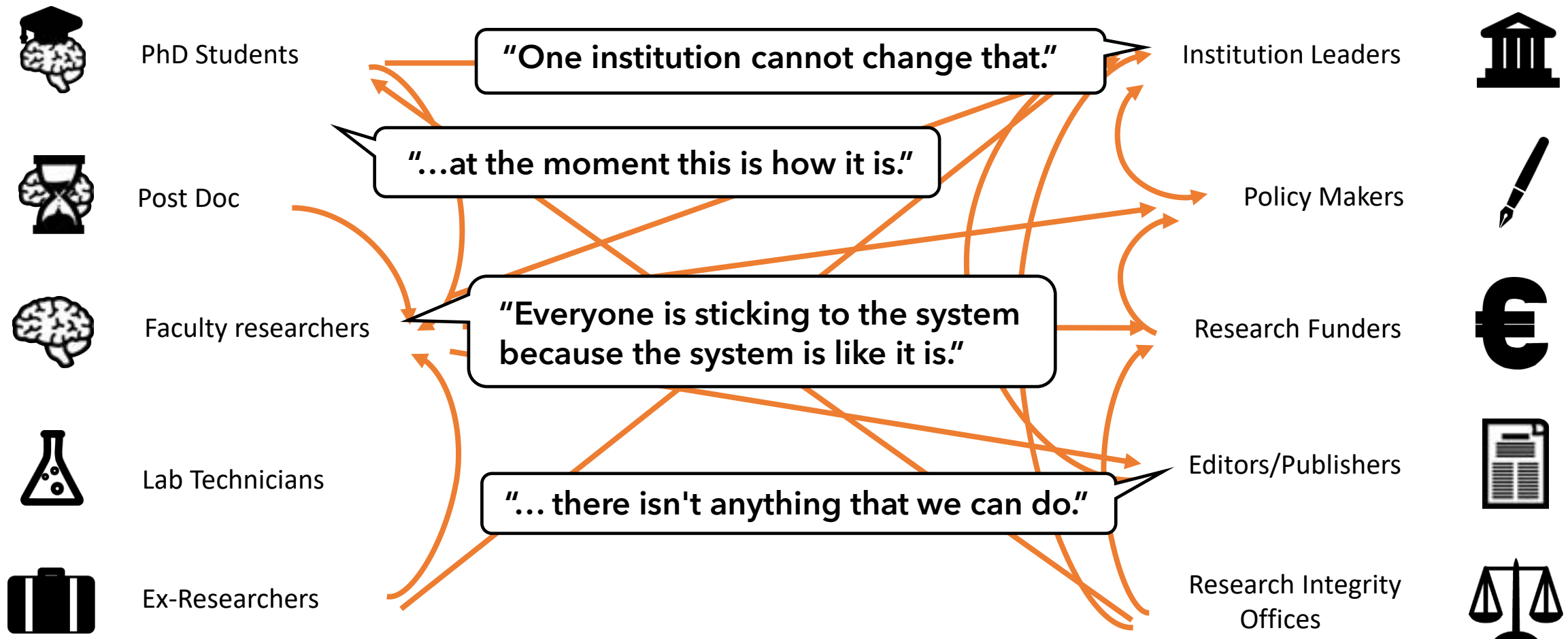
© Findings from focus groups and interviews

These problems are very difficult to address since they are systemic issues





© Findings from focus groups and interviews

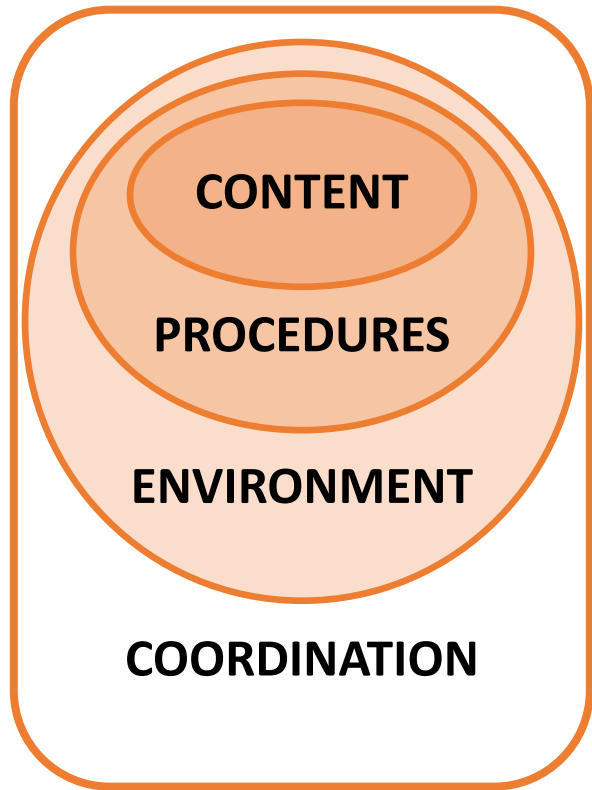


**Interdependencies, first mover disadvantage, incompatibilities...** Findings from focus groups and interviews

So... are we doomed?

No!

We are even in a momentum for change.



What

How and Who

Where

Between

Different **layers of change** are needed

CONTENT

CRT





## Responsible use of metrics

Creating awareness about responsible use of metrics, improving metrics literacy, limiting volumes assessed



## Looking beyond research outputs



Narrative or R4RI CVs providing flexibility in what researchers value

More room for individual profiles and diversity of skills...

## Valuing diversity

Embrace diversity as an asset to research



Value diverse profiles and areas of focus

## Broadening views of impact

Different dimension of impact

- Different stages of the research impact
- Concrete societal impact

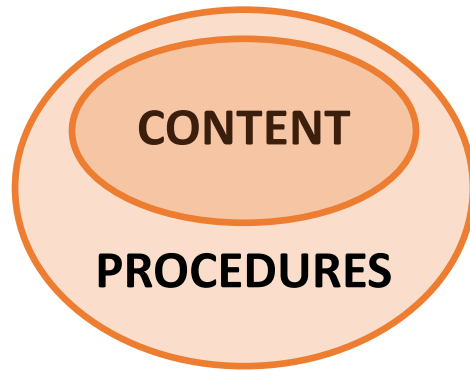


## Carefully think about assessment processes



- 'What do we value?'
- Evaluate only where necessary
- Evaluate with the evaluated

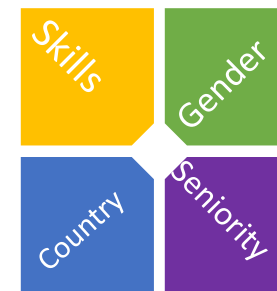
## Clear definitions of terms



Impactful  
Excellent  
World-class  
Significant  
Innovative



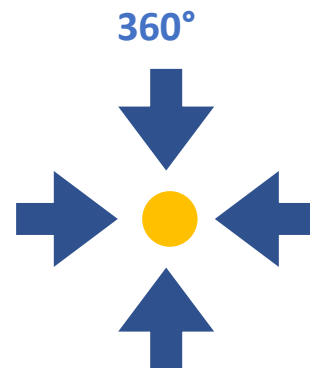
## Train assessors to minimise biases



- Implicit bias training
- Diversity training,
- Training for new CV formats

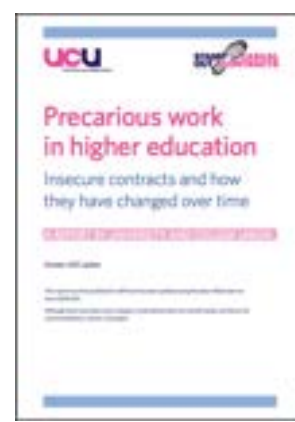
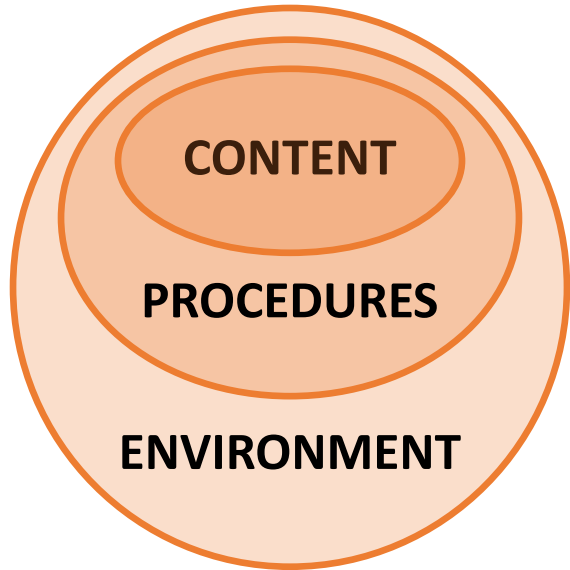
## Diversify the assessors

Assessors from all sides  
of the hierarchy to  
capture different aspect  
and perspectives



## Address employment precarity

More stability in and between contracts, mobility from and to academia, awareness raising



## Foster intersectoral mobility

Fight the stigma for non-academic employment



Teach transferable skill, build career continuity portfolio, raise awareness, etc.



## Create healthier research environments



Value and support healthy research environment, Culture experts

## Address higher levels of assessments

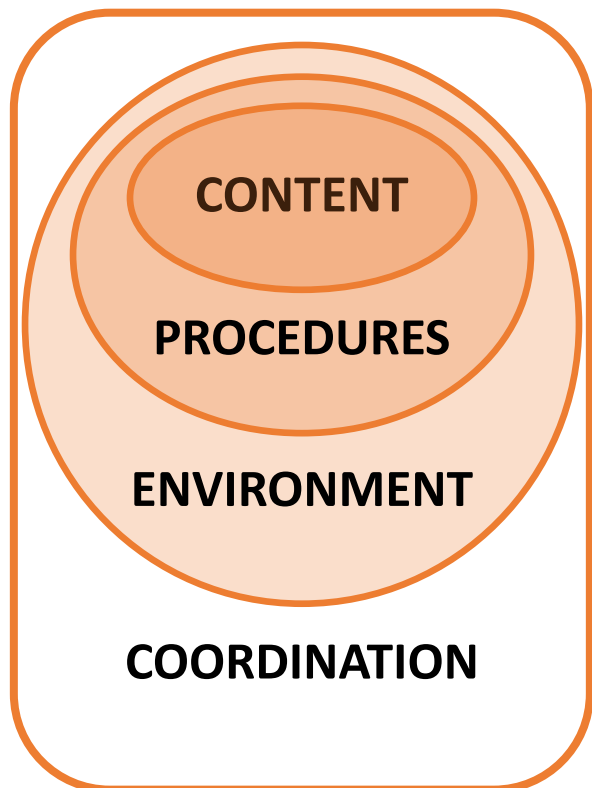
Rankings, Institutional funding







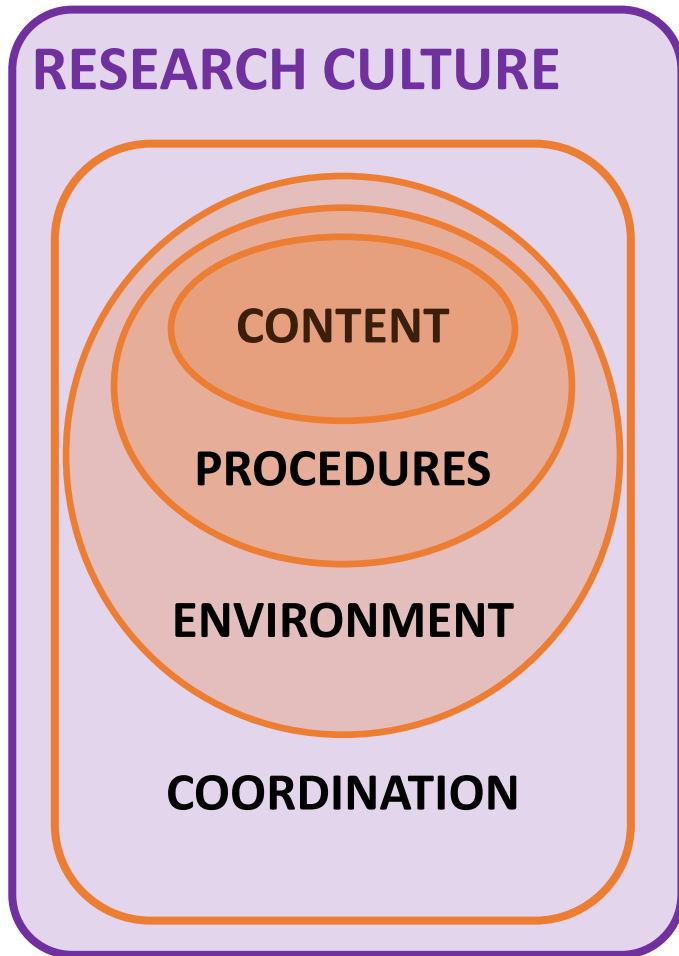
DORA has been a real driver for uniting voices, raising awareness, and encouraging actions



### Agreement on reforming research assessment

- Multi-stakeholder coalition
- From commitment to action
- About 350 organisations from 40 countries already expressed interest
- Global initiative





**We are the assessors.**

**We have a role in shaping what success means**

*What do we highlight in our biographies?*

*How do we talk about success?*

*How do we present our work?*

*Which activities do we give more time/efforts to?*

*How do we present our work?*

**We all are part of the problem...**

**...but we can all be part of the solution!**



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