

Towards an Adequate Assessment of Applied/Practice-Based Research

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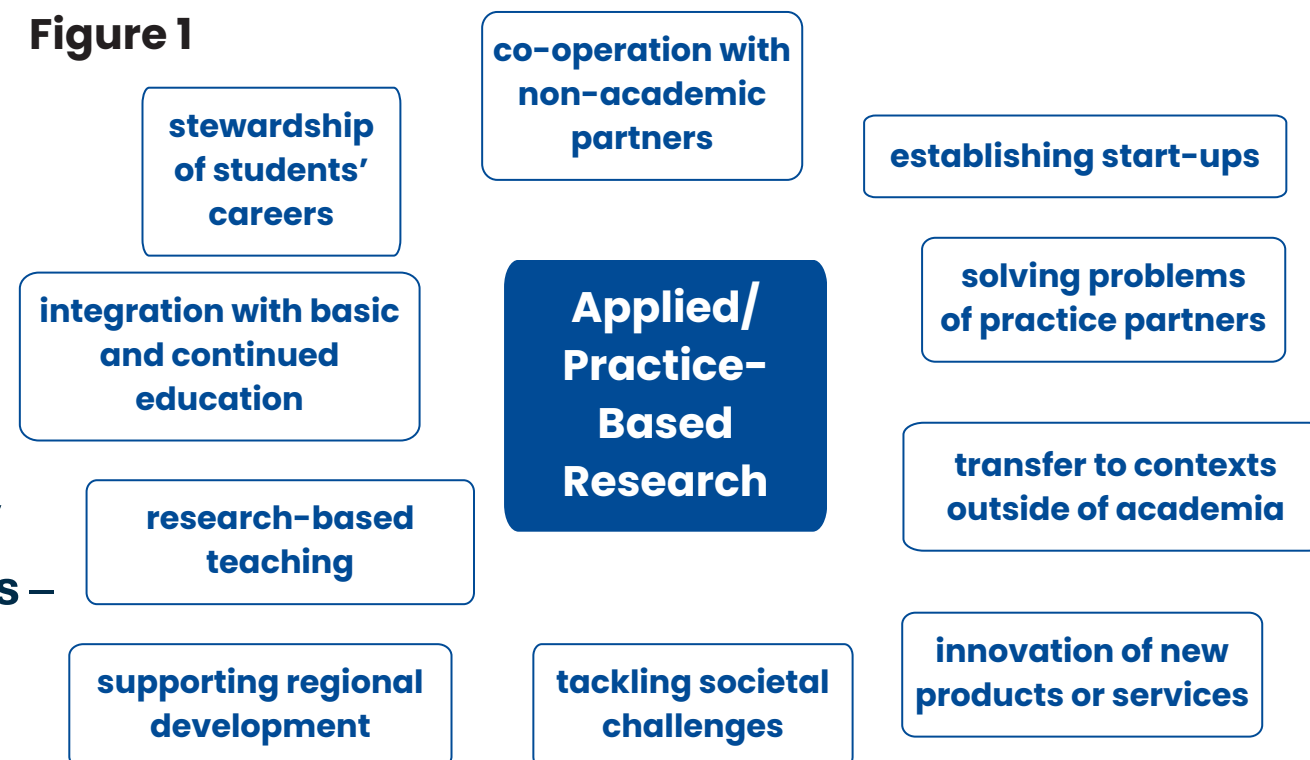
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Introduction

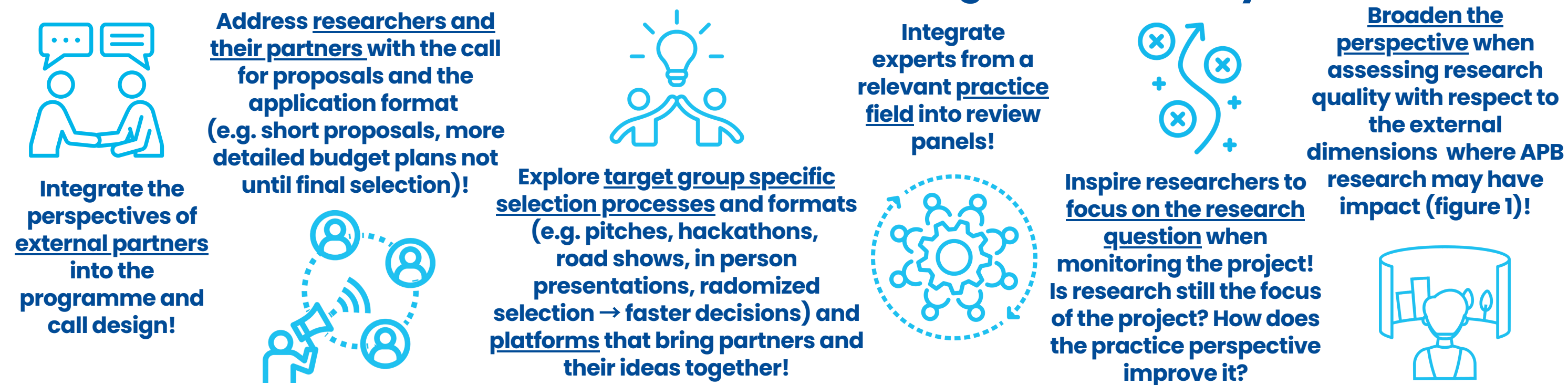
Applied/practice-based (APB) research is carried out “in, with and/or for practice” (Oancea and Furlong 2007, p. 124) (Figure 1). As such it is particularly prone to a high density of external – non-research specific – requirements, expectations, and wishes that **can at the same time mask or override as well as inspire or drive academic creativity and originality**.

Consequently, when assessing APB research, funders, managers, and policy makers need to focus on both, **researchers and their external stakeholders** – which might have no academic expertise at all – and bring them together to conduct high-quality application or practice oriented research.

Figure 1

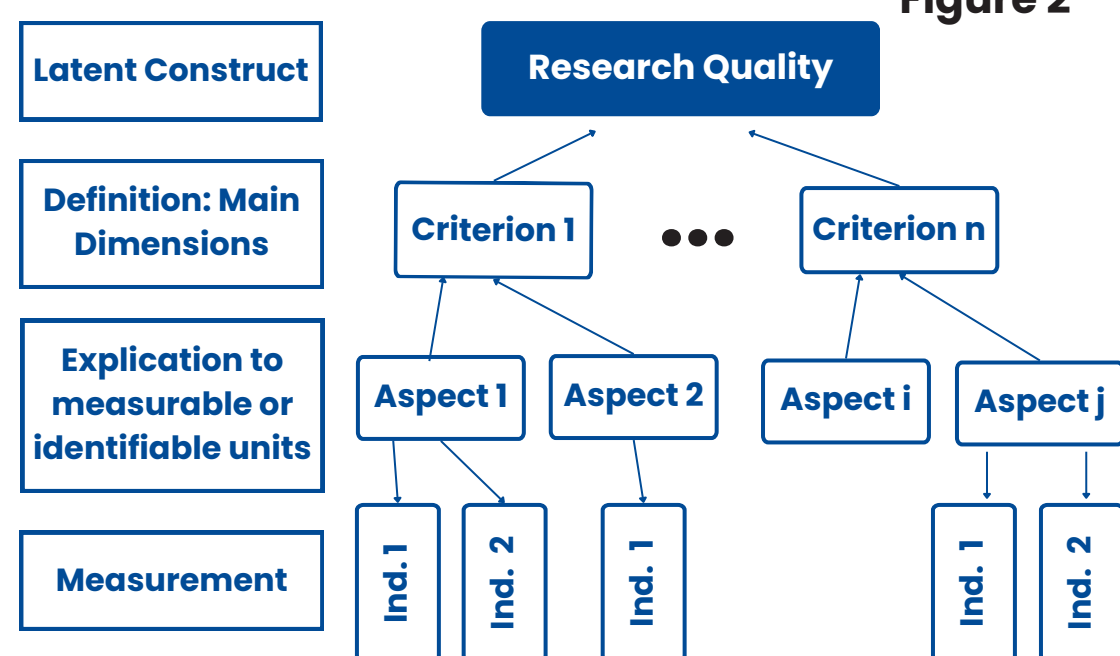


Practical Advice for APB Research Funders, Managers, and Policy Makers



Conceptualisation

Figure 2



Research quality as a higher order formative construct (graph credits Ochsner 2022)

Quality of research can be understood as a **latent construct** that cannot be observed or measured directly but requires explication through quality criteria that can be explicated by aspects with various (observable or measurable) indicators (Ochsner 2022, Figure 2). The main dimensions for APB research quality are e.g. its collaborative nature, its integration to academic teaching, its links to transfer and innovation, as well as its social or regional impact – economic, ecological, social, technical, digital, or even frugal. These quality criteria have aspects for which indicators can be defined – in some cases they may not exist. This explicative method of understanding research quality is key to broaden the perspective on APB research assessment, even if some indicators may not be quantifiable or measurable.

Collaboration

ASP1: leads to long-term collaboration
IND1: types of interaction, contributions of partners, share of responsibilities, resources, and data

ASP2: brings together different stakeholders
IND2: stakeholder map

ASP3: brings together and integrates different competences
IND3: matrix of competences

ASP4: leads to change at the practice partner
IND4: co-learner, research literacy, new processes, services, or products

Teaching

ASP1: transformative impact on a field of competence/profession
IND1: academisation of professions

ASP2: anticipates development of future skills
IND2: practice partner adopts new skills or techniques

ASP3: employment perspectives for students
IND3: career track records

ASP/IND 4: joint research publications with students
ASP/IND5: APB PhD programmes

Societal Impact

ASP1: relatable to relevant lay audiences
IND1: popular science dissemination (e. g. news, journals, TV, social media)

ASP2: public visibility and demand for expertise
IND2: participation in public inquiries, commissions, boards, councils

ASP3: development and maintenance of associations and networks
IND3: contribution and involvement in such organisation

ASP4: provides foundation for advice to decision-makers
IND4: citations in policy publications

Personal Qualifications

ASP1: academic expertise, profound practical experience, and teaching skills

NOR-CAM – A toolbox for recognition and rewards in academic careers



NWO – Room for everyone's talent

Regional Impact

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