

## **General Introduction to the SPOC on Research Assessment and Research Quality in the Social Sciences and Humanities.**

The role, output and evaluation of research in Social Sciences and Humanities (SSH) is heavily discussed at the national and European level, be it in Horizon 2020, where the integration of SSH is often criticized, or looking at the report of the Lamy group in preparation for the next European Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP). Although the contributions of SSH research and innovation are generally undisputed, forms of evaluation and the ways their contributions to society are assessed and even valued remain contested.

In the framework of the Swiss University Conference (SUC) programs “Mesurer les Performances de la recherche en sciences humaines et sociale” (*Measuring research output in the humanities and social sciences*) and “Performances de la recherche en sciences humaines et sociales” (*Research performances in the humanities and social sciences*), [Swissuniversities](#) have launched a variety of projects to explore how both the quality and the impact of research in the humanities and social sciences can be made visible and to explore new ways of evaluating in SSH. The programs have developed methods and instruments to present a tangible overview of research quality beyond the realm of a given discipline.

In this context, the Research Services of the University of Geneva organized an interdisciplinary workshop for emerging researchers in SSH in September 2016. This international workshop focused on methods and challenges for the evaluation of SSH research projects, and also on the evaluation methods applied to the careers of SSH researchers. This project has been supported by Swissuniversities. Representatives of the SNSF, the ERC and the LERU have been actively involved in this work. The results of the workshop are now available as a “SPOC” (small private open course).

The goal of the SPOC is to increase young researchers’ awareness of the different dimensions of the evaluation of research. Indeed, researchers constantly undergo evaluation procedures. When they wish to publish their research, it must first be approved by peers and/or publishers. Their performance contributes, directly or indirectly, to the evaluation of their university. This is most apparent when their CV is analyzed during the employment application process. For these reasons, it is essential that beginning researchers understand the impact of evaluation on their future professional careers, as well as the implications for the evaluation of their institution. Are there specificities to SSH evaluation? What are the stakes for the careers of researchers? What are the stakes for institutions in a context of increasingly strained budgets? The question of the quality of intrinsic SSH evaluation --if there is such a thing--is one of the main themes of the SPOC.