**Speaker1:** [00:00:04] So any name, position, ID, University will not be collected for the data management. Firstly, the impact of the performance measurement on you as an academic, on your work. How do you see that?

**Speaker2:** [00:00:18] Um, I think the performance measure, it depends on the different types of performance measure, as you said in your introduction for your study. But for some of them it can make some pressure on the academics. Like the REF Impact, for example, is asking most of the academics to publish.

**Speaker1:** [00:00:43] Yeah. So you're the performance measurement and its impact on you.

**Speaker2:** [00:00:46] Yeah. So it's based on the specific performance measurement that you are focusing on. For example, the REF is making some pressure on academics or especially research focus academics because after they measure, after each year they measure the research impact, what the impact you're doing in your department or in your university, how many publications you have and the quality of the publications. So in a way, it drives us to perform in a better way and to have higher quality research. Yes. But sometimes it can be it can be kind of pressure for academics if they didn't manage to publish specific papers in specific quality journals, because most of the REF is asking academics to publish in top quality journals. So of course it's good to improve the performance of the research, but if you didn't manage for like one or two years to publish in a good journal, this would be a kind of pressure on the performance and might drive you to be in a rush and the focus on the publication more than the quality of the publication. So for from, from my experience, for example, if I, when I wanted to publish something, sometimes if you submit it to a very top good journal and you find that they will take a lot of time to go through the publication process, you might go and choose another soft journal that will just make the publication process faster and easier for you.

**Speaker2:** [00:02:23] And instead of focusing on the very top quality journal like four star journals or something. So that's what I mean. The, the, the performance, the performance measurement itself is aiming to have higher performance. Yes. And it makes this higher performance that improve our performance. But sometimes it can lead to a little bit of pressure from the research point of view. But for the TEF, for example, from teaching point of view, I can't see any pressure for the TEF, I think for the teaching framework is mostly putting the structure that academics should follow for your teaching, aiming for better feedback and better student experience in the universities. So I don't think academics should feel any pressure from the TEF compared with the with the REF. But for the TEF, I think it makes our performance higher, of course, because it just structures the criteria that we should use when we are teaching or when we are doing any when we're giving lectures or seminars. We are not just focusing on giving them the material. It puts a lot of other new elements and the new perspective in our teaching how to make the students engaged. For example, how to focus on the industry experience, how to give them some real life examples. So I think the TEF is really improving most of the academic performance.

**Speaker1:** [00:03:51] Yeah. So do you have like experience with the REF itself, personal.

**Speaker2:** [00:03:55] Experience with the REF? I one paper I published in 2020 was contributing to the REF, but it wasn't under my name. It would under my supervisor's name because I wasn't a staff member at this time. I was a PhD student and it was our paper. But I think because the ref is required from the staff members, not the PhD student. So even it was my paper, but it was the contribution of my supervisor, not me. So it's not, it's not directly my contribution to the REF. It was, it was our paper. Yes. But it, it went to the REF under my supervisors name. Yeah. But we were, we were talking about this together when we were choosing the journal to submit the paper. Yeah. This is a dilemma I was telling you about. You can both. Both are good journals, Both are top journals. But if you want to like target a very top one and you know, it will take time and effort, but maybe you are under the pressure of the REF that you need to publish a lot so quickly. That's why you might choose the easy option compared with the very top option. That's what I mean with the pressure that the REF can make on some of the academics. But I think once you established your name, like if you are a well-known professor or something, you're not under the stress to publish papers or you are not under the stress to perform better because you already established your career. So maybe if you are in a higher level as an academic, like senior lecturer or professor or something, you will not be under the same pressure like early career researcher to publish a lot of papers. So maybe in this stage you will focus more on the on the high quality journals compared to the soft journals that can help you publish so quickly.

**Speaker1:** [00:05:45] But is this affecting the choose of the topic of the research or the.

**Speaker2:** [00:05:50] No, no, no, no. It doesn't affect the quality of the research. It just affects the publication process. Like it can it can affect the quality of the research. If you submit it to another journal and they give you like just very simple feedback, it will it will not make the research better. It will not make the research paper better. It will just be like the same level the research paper was. But if you submit it to a very high top rank journals like in my major in accounting review, for example, you can take like three or four years publication process from the day you submit to the day it's published. It can take four years. So for someone under the REF pressure, if they want to publish quickly to contribute to the REF or to consider their publication as a contribution to the REF, that might put them under this pressure, I was telling you, but I don't think it will affect the research quality because it's the same research paper. You just choose which option to go to.

**Speaker1:** [00:06:54] Yeah, but for TEF, if you have mentioned that it has a positive impact on academics, could you explain more?

**Speaker2:** [00:07:00] As I was telling you because the TEF, the recent criteria that the TEF is using is aiming for more or higher student experience and they are trying to focus more on the student feedback and the student experience that they are going through during the university. So they are trying to make the teaching more engaging. It's not just one way. They are aiming for two ways teaching. So if, for example, if I was a lecturer who was just going to the lecture hall and gives a PowerPoint without any engagement, and that's all I did, I leave the lecture and go after, after the TEF and after the guidance they gave to the universities, it will make my performance better because I will start reading the guidance, I will start following the guidance and make the teaching two ways, make some more engagement, try to give more examples about the real life that we have tried to give something about the main problems that they face in the industry after graduation and going to work. So that was in my point of view, that was the main point of the of the teaching excellence framework to have better experience for the students during their journey. So I think any teaching staff after, after reading the, the, the criteria for the death of course they will their performance will be better because maybe they didn't know this guidance like maybe the teaching staff is really trying to do their best, but they didn't know what exactly they should do. So it's like the TEF is putting them on track to tell them, okay, that's what you should do to make the students satisfied and to have better teaching experience and to make it two way as they was saying. I think that's what they needed. So I think it improves from my experience for from working here in the UK. I think it improves some of the teaching staff. Yeah.

**Speaker1:** [00:09:00] But how do you see your colleagues doing to respond to requirements of the REF or TEF?

**Speaker2:** [00:09:07] Um, I think my colleagues are having like the same thoughts that I was sharing with you, like with, with the REF. As I told you it, it makes them aiming for higher quality. Yes. When we are doing any paper, if I'm working with other colleagues in the same paper, we are trying not just to publish. So I think that's one of the first impact that the REF is doing, not just to publish a paper because the REF is saying basically if you publish a paper in two star journals, it doesn't need to be exactly in this level. There is another criteria for them to evaluate the paper. So the REF basically is making us thinking about the quality of the research more than the, the quantity. But again, it's like, as I was telling you in the first question, you maybe you want to focus on the quality too much, but that means you would publish just one paper in four or five years. So but with, with the demand of the market here in the UK, for example, they want to hire people who have more publication. So you're kind of stuck in the middle. And that's the thoughts I was sharing with my colleagues about your question. That's the thoughts most of academics I know are having. Like the REF is aiming for higher quality research.

**Speaker2:** [00:10:26] Yes, but that means this high quality research will take time to publish one paper. It will take like three or four years. But in the same time in the market, if you want to get promotion or if you want to go to another university or to improve your career. Every year they will they will focus on the how many papers you have. So it's like you're stuck in the middle. You don't know if you want to focus on the quality of the research or if you want to focus on the quantity of the papers. So I think that's what I mean by the impact of the REF. Like the effect is having a quality point of view. Yes, definitely. I admit that the REF is making us focusing more on the quality, but in the same time it puts the academic under the pressure of publication. So I think it's the same thoughts for my colleague as well and for the teaching. I was telling you this example when some of the staff didn't know what is the teaching criteria, what we should do to improve the teaching experience, for example. And when we have some workshops that introduce the idea of the TEF, we start knowing and getting new ideas like, okay, yeah, that sounds good, but I was not doing it.

**Speaker2:** [00:11:40] For example, me, for example, when I came to the UK, when I started teaching here, I didn't know most of the instructions of the TEF. I didn't, I didn't know even what is TEF means. Yeah. So, so when I start speaking with, with colleagues about this and they start explaining to me, I start saying, yes, that makes sense because teaching is not just one way. I can't go to the lecture and speak for one hour and go, and that's it. So when I start having more workshops about the TEF and read what is the teaching excellence framework means? What is the aim of this? Who are the people who are doing this and all of this kind of things? It makes my teaching performance better, of course, compared for from the first day I was teaching to today, I think it makes the teaching performance better. And it's not just my experience. I know a lot of people who were in the same position with me, like they didn't they didn't know what is a teaching excellence framework. But when they start going through some workshops from their line managers, they found out like, Yeah, that makes sense. We should start doing these things to improve our teaching experience with the students.

**Speaker1:** [00:12:51] Yeah, but do you see you have any bad experience, you or your colleagues with the REF or the TEF.

**Speaker2:** [00:12:59] Bad.

**Speaker1:** [00:12:59] Experience from your colleagues? What happened?

**Speaker2:** [00:13:03] Um, I think one of the bad stories I don't. I don't know about the TEF. I have to be honest. I can't remember any bad stories about the TEF, but about the REF. I know one of my colleagues, he, he published a paper in the four star journal, so it was like the highest ranked. But then during the ref process, because they have different criteria, they don't follow the this ranking starts with the ABS. They evaluate the paper and they put the evaluations themselves. So even the paper was published in a four star journal. They consider it as two stars when they were submitting for the for the REF. So it was it was like a frustration for the team who work on this paper. They spend like two or three good years to work on this paper to improve the quality of the research, and they managed to publish it in this journal, the High Top Rank Journal. But when the REF was assessing their performance with their own criteria, not the ABS criteria, they consider it as a two star. So it kind of like put them down and it makes them frustrated about improving the quality of the Yeah, like they were trying to do something better, but they found it slower quality now. So they have, they have a discussion with the with the REF committee in the, in this university when I used to work and they said we have certain criteria that it didn't meet. Especially I think about the impact because one of the main elements of the REF is to the research need to have like a practical impact or a policy impact. So I think that was the criteria they were missing in the paper. That's why from the ref point of view, they put the paper down instead of up. They consider it as not low quality but like middle quality.

**Speaker1:** [00:15:01] So it's not the journal ranking it other criteria.

**Speaker2:** [00:15:04] Yeah, because the ref doesn't follow the journal ranking, even if the journal is four star after the ref assessed it, they might consider it as one star. They might consider it as zero star or unlisted at all. So the REF is having their own criteria. They don't follow the three and four star ranking from the from the CABS, for example. They have their own criteria. So I think this is something that needs to be clarified actually more because as an academic, I want to publish in three and four star journals, but we want to know if this is in the same. Criteria was with the REF or not or what is the what is the research quality? From the REF point of view, I think this thing is required more elaboration about from the REF committee. They need to tell academics what is exactly the research quality they are aiming for because it happens. At least this is a story I know, but I know it happens with other people when they submit a four star journal or a three star journal to the REF. And then they found that it's not ranked as a four star. It's ranked as one star or two stars. So, yeah, I think this is something that needs more clarification from the Ref committee to advise academics what exactly they should follow when they are aiming for high quality research.

**Speaker1:** [00:16:28] Yeah. So how do you see you as an academic or your colleagues cope with the system? Like are they gaming the system how they cope with it?

**Speaker2:** [00:16:39] Um, I think from for, for the teaching point of view, they, they are coping with it by following the criteria like they are. I think from, from my experience, universities now start treating students as customers, not as students. They want each university, of course, want to be ranked higher. And if the university is not ranked as the first category in that they are trying to upgrade themselves. So the main aim for any university now is to make students happy and satisfied through different activities, even with the teaching quality or with making their process easier through the admission teams. Not, not just teaching. By the way, even all the process in the university like supervision, admin work, personal tutors, all of these things, I think they are trying to game the system, as you are saying, by just making the students life easier, because when the students will be happy, that means the university will have higher ranking and the when the university is having higher rankings, they will be higher in the in the TEF rankings. So I think all of the universities now are treating the students as customers. Just try to make them satisfied with anything which is not always good because sometimes you need to teach the students and not just to make them happy and make them pass.

**Speaker2:** [00:18:12] Like for my experience in one of the universities I was working, the my line manager was like, okay, our aim in this module is to let all the students pass because they will have the feedback after the third year, they will have the NSS after your module and you don't want them to be upset and have negative feedback on the university. So that's what I mean by it starts to be a business. Now maybe that is a bad side or maybe that is a bad effect of the of the TEF that universities start to pamper the students not just to teach them, they are trying to spoil them sometimes, which is not good from the teaching point of view. And I'm not sure that's I am sure that's not the objective of the TEF. Of course the TEF is aiming for higher teaching and better teaching quality of courses. You don't want to just make the students spoil. But some universities start going through this approach just to have higher ranking for the for the TEF. So yeah I think that's one of the.

**Speaker1:** [00:19:22] But does this affect the way that you are teaching?

**Speaker2:** [00:19:27] It doesn't affect the way you are teaching, but it can affect the relationship between the lecturer and the students. Like if for example, you want to give them something that is more difficult, so you want them to focus on higher standards for the topic you are teaching. But because the line manager or the university is trying to make their life easier, so maybe you will be under the pressure that maybe you will take this hard topic out of your syllabus so the exam will be easier for the students, so they will be much happier and give better feedback to the university. That's what I mean. But it doesn't affect the way of teaching significantly, of course. But it I think it can it can affect the teaching way a little bit but not, not too much like yeah, you, you, you might change your way of teaching just to satisfy the students more than giving them what they really need to know as a knowledge. Yeah. So I think in this, in this point it can, it can affect their performance in a way, not performance the way of teaching but the. Performance will be the same. Yeah.

**Speaker1:** [00:20:42] Yeah. And for the REF, how do you see your colleagues or you cope with the system gaming yet?

**Speaker2:** [00:20:48] Yeah. All the universities are gaming the REF. Any university, high, high quality university or low quality university, all of them are gaming the REF they are trying to like. You will find, for example, before the REF submission. Like the last submission was 2021. I guess that was the last REF submission. All the universities were aiming to hire academics with a very good research quality profile so they can submit to the REF saying That's our performance. So for example, if University X is not doing any research from now to 2027, which is the next REF, if they are not doing any research activities, they are not doing anything to improve the research. But in 2026 they hired five academics with top research profile. They will have a strong submission to the REF in 2027. So that's kind of the gaming they are doing. They are just focusing on hiring academics with, with better profile before the ref submission. So yeah, researchers teaching staff, universities I think everyone is trying to, to, to game this system to have higher ranking compared with actually rather than focusing on the quality of research. I think that's what I can't say. Everyone, of course, but most of academics and most of universities from my experience in the last four or five years here, that's what I saw when I was dealing with this kind of stories really related to the REF submission. They are trying to put the higher score they have for the REF submission and they trying to game this or manipulate the system, let's say in a way, rather than focusing actually on making staff, producing higher research quality. So that is the main objective of any university, of course, to have higher ranking for the REF by gaming this system.

**Speaker1:** [00:23:04] Yeah. So how do you see this affect the scholarship itself, whether the ref, the TEF, the pressure on the academics, the way they gaming the system, how this affect the scholarship?

**Speaker2:** [00:23:17] Um, I think it affects the scholars. Again, as I said, they, they put the guidance. Let's start with the TEF, for example. They put the guidance for the teaching excellence how to make your teaching better. So for the TEF, I think it's, it's very good for all the scholars to, to, to know about this criteria. So they have better teaching performance. So I'm telling you from my performance with the TEF, I think it's it will guide the scholars in the right way. It will put them in the in the right track. But going back to the REF and how it affects the scholars and again, as I said it, it will make them thinking about the quality of the research. Yes. But they will still have some pressure to meet the ref criteria. So I have I have stories with both as I as I shared with you already, some people manage to have a high quality research and they spend more time to do higher quality research, but they are on a higher level, like mostly associate professors or professors, but other scholars who are like early career researchers or PhD students or lecturers, they, they of course they aim to meet their REF criteria and they want to contribute to the REF. But at the same time as I said, they are under the pressure of having more than one publication or more numbers of publications. So I think it's very difficult to identify if it's if, if the REF will aim for more performance or more pressure on academics.

**Speaker2:** [00:25:03] But I think it depends on where they are with their career, to be honest. Like if you are in a very good stage of your career and you established your name and you have a good reputation as a researcher and you have good research profile, that means you will focus more on the quality and you will have more confidence and more time to focus on the quality of research and go align with the REF criteria. But maybe if you are someone who is early career researcher, you will focus on the on the idea of having more papers or more publications than the research quality. Maybe that's the game that the universities are doing. And maybe that's why universities are hiring. Both universities are hiring academics with a very good profile because they know the quality of their research is better and the higher, of course. And universities still hire early career researchers because they know they are motivated to contribute to the REF. They are trying to learn how to improve their research quality, but at the same time they are trying to produce more papers still to contribute to the to the REF or to have aiming for having more higher research quality. So yeah, I think I think the answer of this question is it depends on the staff member. It depends on the. On the researchers where they are in their in their career.

**Speaker1:** [00:26:42] So you see, it's mostly positive, but it depends.

**Speaker2:** [00:26:45] On it's not. It's definitely mostly positive.

**Speaker1:** [00:26:48] Yes. Even on research.

**Speaker2:** [00:26:49] Yeah. Yeah. No, in on research and teaching, teaching is definitely positive. I really I think the positive or if you are talking about like cost benefit analysis, I think the benefits from the TEF is a way much more than the disadvantage. But for, for the REF, from my experience, it's balanced, it has a lot of advantage and a lot of pressure as I said, but still mostly positive impact on the performance of the academics.

**Speaker1:** [00:27:20] Yeah. And for the quality of the research itself or the quality of the teaching itself, does it affect.

**Speaker2:** [00:27:27] The criteria of the REF and the TEF? Does it affect the quality? Yeah, no, of course. Definitely. Both of them affect the quality of teaching and, and research. That's yeah. No of course compared if you if you will compare the research quality now compare it with the research quality before the REF. Yeah. No definitely the research quality now is much higher and the competition even is more between researchers for each one to aim who is having higher research quality. So no, the REF completely managed to increase the research quality and to make to make the competitive environment between researchers. Everyone is aiming to have higher research quality. So the conclusion will be that we have more research or higher research quality as an output. And for the teaching, of course, as I said, I think the teaching is really affecting the performance and the quality of teaching significantly compared with for me because I didn't know what is the meaning of TEF, as I told you before. So for me, as someone who, who didn't know what is the meaning of TEF and was teaching without the meaning of TEF and then start teaching after knowing what is the teaching excellence framework. Now of course it increase the quality and improve the quality of teaching.

**Speaker1:** [00:28:46] Of course. Yeah. Could you explain a little bit more about the quality itself?

**Speaker2:** [00:28:52] When I when I say quality, I mean the student experience because, I don't like the students to just take the knowledge from the teacher and pass the exam and that's it. I think that have managed to make this teaching quality more interesting. The as I said, they are making it to like when they were talking about the assessments for example before the TEF, most of the assessment was just exams and that's it. But now after the TEF some lecturers and some teaching stuff, start thinking about other way of assessments, other academic reports, for example, other essays to other self-reflection reports from the students. So to make it to make the students more to participate in the process, not just to receive information and to go to the exam and pass the test and that's it. No, it starts being on the students more than the teaching staff. Actually. Students start making more effort compared with before, like before the TEF. I think the teaching staff was making most of the effort to give the information to students, and that's all. But now after the death, it aims to for the students to have a higher teaching experience, to have better teaching experience through their journey as an undergrad or post-grad.

**Speaker2:** [00:30:16] That's what I mean by the quality. The they improve the process, they improve the assessment criteria, they improve the engaging of the students in the teaching process. Yeah, that's basically the main point. When I, when I say the quality of teaching, I mean this kind of assessment criteria, the, the, the, the discussion even like when, when the TEF was aiming for having more seminars and workshops with small groups, that's again, something will affect the quality of teaching. If you are teaching for 200 students in a lecture hall will not be the same. When you are teaching for a workshop or a small group of 20 or 25. So that's again something under the TEF criteria for, for someone to have the teaching excellence framework or to be in higher ranking of the teaching excellence framework, they need to hire, they need to have this quality of small groups teaching which most of the universities start doing now. So all of these factors can represent the quality of teaching.

**Speaker1:** [00:31:22] Yeah, And for the quality of the research, this is my last question. The quality. What do you mean by the quality of the research itself? It improves the quality or.

**Speaker2:** [00:31:30] The quality of research for in my point of view is the impact of the research. Does it really have an impact like so what question that. For me when I'm reading a paper and they want to see if it's really a good quality or not, I ask, okay, after I read the paper, like, so what? What I know now because some papers will have a very good quality or a very good theoretical base or research question or contribution, but you feel like they don't have an impact on, on the industry or they don't have an impact on the theory. They don't they don't bring something really new to the knowledge. So I think that's what the REF is trying to do. As I was telling you before, the main focus of the of the REF is the impact, the policy impact and the impact on like regulations, impact to the theory, impact to some methodological problems. That's I think that's what they mean by the quality of research for me, mostly when I'm doing any research, I'm trying to see after someone is reading my research what will change what how is how it will affect their output. For example, if I'm doing something on the stock market or my research is mostly focusing on narrative reporting in accounting, for example. So I'm trying to at the end of the paper to say what is the impact of this research, how it can improve the decisions of policy makers, for example, or how can it improve the decisions of the government. If you are talking about research for tax or something like that. So the research impact I think is the main indicator for research quality. Yeah.

**Speaker1:** [00:33:20] Thank you so much for your time.

**Speaker2:** [00:33:22] Thank you.