

Research survival metrics.

Research survival metrics for biologists and chemists at Queen Mary University London. These are for the period January 2008 to December 2011 and were announced retrospectively. These criteria are based on the median achieved by the top 20% of UK researchers as determined by QMUL. However, QMUL acknowledged that the performance of its own researchers was likely to be lower. Therefore, the metrics they finally used, as shown in the table, are not as high as they might have been. This reduction, however, does not apply at all to the lecturers at the bottom. Meanwhile, professors have significantly lower thresholds (e.g. two high quality papers instead of three, £400,000 total income instead of £500,000).

Category of staff	Research Output Quantity (No. of Papers)	Research Output Quality (No. of high quality papers)	Research Income (£) (Total)	Research Income (£) As Principal Investigator
Professor	11	2	400,000	at least 200,000
Reader	9	2	320,000	at least 150,000
Senior Lecturer	7	1	260,000	at least 120,000
Lecturer	5	1	200,000	at least 100,000

In addition to the three criteria, ‘Research Output - quality’, ‘Research Output – quantity’, and ‘Research Income’, there is a minimum threshold of one PhD completion for staff at each academic level. All this data is “evidenced by objective metrics; publications cited in Web of Science, plus official QMUL metrics on grant income and PhD completion”.

To survive, staff must meet the minimum threshold in three out of the four categories, except as follows:

Demonstration of activity at an exceptional level in either ‘research outputs’ or ‘research income’, termed an ‘enhanced threshold’, is “sufficient” to justify selection regardless of levels of activity in the other two categories. And what are these enhanced thresholds?

For research quantity: a mere 26 published items with at least 11 as significant author (no distinction between academic level); research quality: a modest six items published in numerically-favoured journals (e.g. impact factor > 7). Alternatively, you can buy your survival with a total ‘Research Income’ of £1,000,000 as PI.