

## Peer Review

# Review of: "Risks for Academic Research and Possible Responses"

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I congratulate the author on this insightful and welcome look at project risk assessment in academic research. The integration of the participant inputs and the alignment with Moore and Shangraw's findings demonstrate consistency of the findings across the data set and serve to emphasize the important negative risks (challenges or threats) inherent in the grant-funded and partner-funded research environment. This analysis is beneficial to current and emerging research administration and management professionals in supporting researchers in project initiation and planning, and for research leaders, e.g., Principal Investigators, in more robust risk assessment and management in their projects.

One suggestion is to clarify the difference between a negative risk, i.e., a challenge or threat to the success of the project that has uncertainty in its likelihood, consequences, and impact, and a weakness in the project plan, i.e., something that could be addressed through revision of the plan or change management during execution. This would perhaps address the distinction between negative risks that are "system- and organization-level" versus challenges (risks or weaknesses) that might be mitigated within an individual project. For example, the identified risks of insufficient sample size or challenges with data access or sufficiency could perhaps be considered as weaknesses rather than threats, as iteration in or progressive elaboration of the project plan could identify and address these within the conduct of the project.

Regarding the funding risks (the threats associated with funding reductions), I suggest it may be important in future analysis to ensure clarity in the concern expressed by participants as to whether such risks are being considered broadly, i.e., about the academic funding landscape in general, or about a specific project and its funding. There may also be benefit in considering the questions of

delayed funding or funding reductions to an approved project as separate from the failure to secure funding for a project.

Lastly, future facilitated sessions may benefit from clarifying with participants whether their risk assessments relate to a specific research project or to research more generally. Especially regarding the funding and personnel risks identified here, participants within a research project with secured funding and a strong team may perceive these risks as less significant than those who consider a larger program of research or the research landscape as a whole.

## **Declarations**

**Potential competing interests:** No potential competing interests to declare.