

The Research Excellence Framework

Assessment framework and
guidance on submissions
(finalised, July 2011)

Consultation on Panel criteria
and working methods (online
consultation) (MPC slides)

Presentation outline

- The REF assessment framework and guidance on submissions:
 - Overview
 - Staff eligibility and circumstances
 - Submissions
 - Expert panels
 - Outputs (Sally Power)
 - Impact (Judy Sebba)
 - Environment (Jim Conroy)
 - Results
- Consultation on panel criteria and working methods:
 - Generic issues
 - Main panel criteria and working methods (MPC)

Main Panel C – Education sub-panel 25

James Conroy, University of Glasgow

Julian Elliott, Durham University

Becky Francis, RSA

John Furlong, University of Oxford

John Gardner, Queen's University Belfast

Tom Hamilton, General Teaching Council for Scotland

David James, University of the West of England

Anthony Kelly, University of Southampton

John Leach, University of Hull

Uvanney Maylor, University of Bedfordshire

Trisha Maynard, Canterbury Christ Church University

Debra Myhill, University of Exeter

Sally Power, Cardiff University

David Raffe, University of Edinburgh

Diane Reay, University of Cambridge

Charlotte Rees, University of Dundee

Jane Seale, University of Plymouth

Judy Sebba, University of Sussex

Richard Thurston, Welsh Assembly Government

Malcolm Tight, Lancaster University

The REF assessment framework and guidance on submissions

Purpose of the REF

The REF replaces the RAE as the UK-wide framework for assessing research in all disciplines. Its purpose is:

- To inform research funding allocations by the four UK HE funding bodies (approximately £2 billion per year)
- Provide accountability for public funding of research and demonstrate its benefits
- To provide benchmarks and reputational yardsticks

Principles of the REF

The REF is a process of expert review. The assessment is founded on the professional judgement of discipline-based expert panels.

The conduct of the REF is guided by these principles:

- **Equity:** All types of research and forms of output across all disciplines shall be assessed on an equal basis
- **Equality:** HEIs are encouraged to submit the work of all their excellent researchers
- **Transparency:** The assessment criteria and procedures, and the outcomes, to be published in full

Key changes since the 2008 RAE

- Inclusion of assessment of **impact**
- Fewer UOAs/panels operating more consistently
- Strengthened equality and diversity measures
- Revised eligibility criteria for staff
- Addition of (limited) use of citation data in some UOAs
- Removal of 'esteem' as a distinct element
- Revised approach to 'environment'
- Increased 'user' input on panels; and an integrated role for additional assessors
- Publication of overall quality profiles in 1% steps

Timetable

2011

- Panels appointed (Feb)
- **Guidance on submissions (Jul)**
- **Draft panel criteria for consultation (Jul)**
- Close of consultation (5 Oct)

2012

- **Final panel criteria and methods (Jan)**
- HEIs submit codes of practice (Jul)
- Survey of submission intentions and requests for multiple submissions (Oct-Dec)

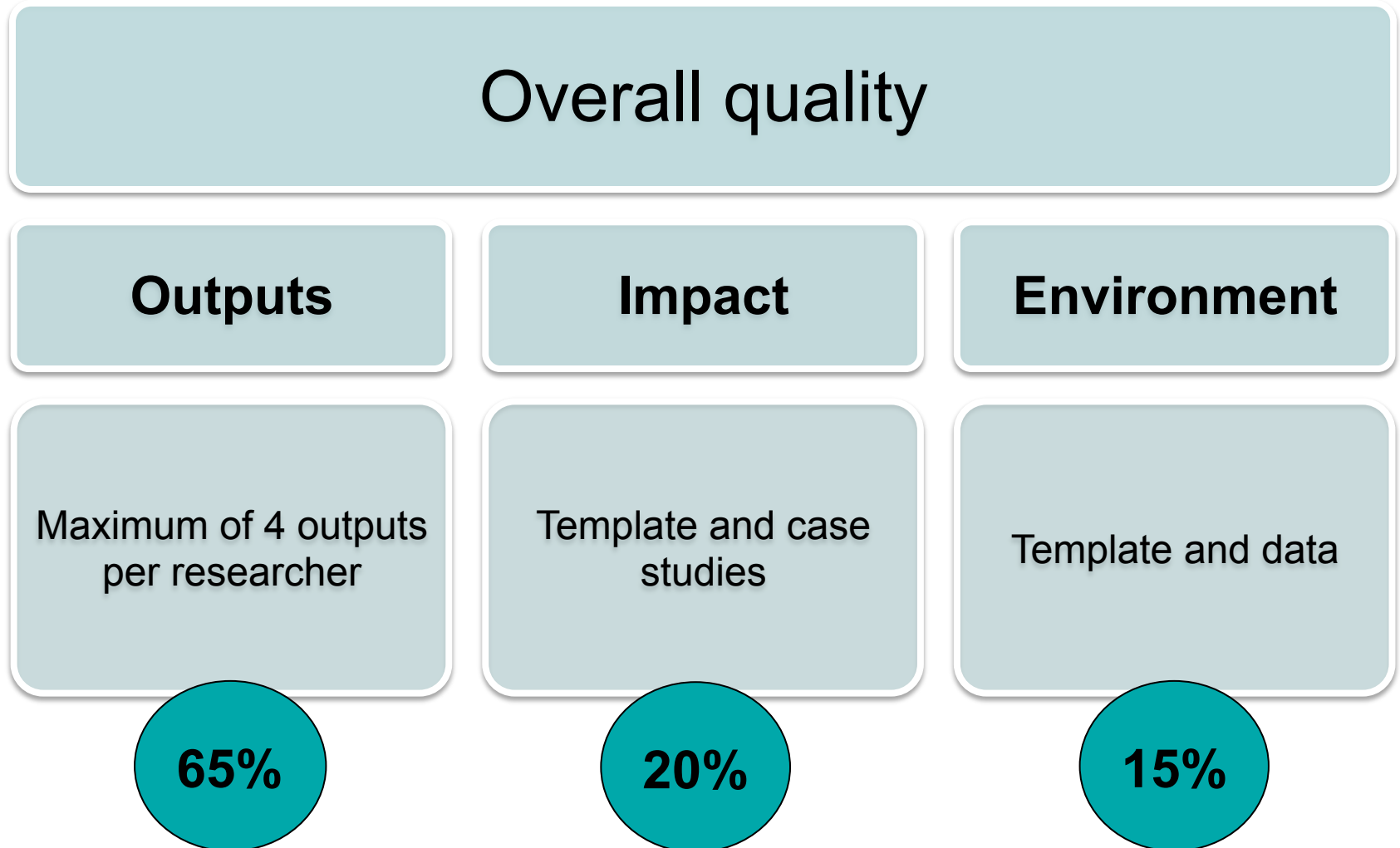
2013

- Launch REF submissions system
- Recruit additional assessors
- Staff census date (31 Oct)
- **Submissions deadline (29 Nov)**

2014

- Panels assess submissions
- **Publish outcomes (Dec)**

The assessment framework: Overview



The Research Excellence Framework – STAFF ELIGIBILITY AND CIRCUMSTANCES

Codes of practice on staff selection

- The funding bodies encourage HEIs to submit the work of all their excellent researchers, and HEIs have legal obligations affecting their staff selection procedures
- Each HEI is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair selection of staff for the REF:
 - To be submitted to the REF team by 31 July 2012
 - The REF Equality and Diversity Panel will examine these in advance of the submission deadline
 - They will be published at the end of assessment process
- Guidance on developing the Codes has been strengthened following a review of the RAE 2008 processes to support equality

Staff: Eligibility

HEIs select which staff to include in submissions:

- **Category A staff:** Academic staff with a contract of at least 0.2 FTE, on the payroll of the HEI on 31 Oct 2013, with a primary employment function of either 'research only' or 'teaching and research'
- **Category C staff:** Staff employed by an organisation other than an HEI with a contract or job role including research, and whose research is primarily focused in the submitting unit on 31 Oct 2013

(Category C staff will contribute to the quality profile but not the volume measure for funding purposes)

- Research assistants are only eligible by exception

Staff: Individual circumstances

- Up to four outputs must be listed against each member of staff
- This can be reduced without penalty where circumstances have constrained an individual's ability to work productively or produce four outputs during the assessment period
- These circumstances to be treated consistently across panels:
 - **Clearly defined circumstances:** a 'tariff' to determine how many outputs may be reduced (set out in the generic statement of panel criteria)
 - **Complex circumstances** requiring judgement will be referred to the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel

Staff: Individual circumstances

Clearly defined circumstances

- Qualifying as an Early Career Researcher (ECR)
- Part-time working
- Maternity, paternity or adoption leave (see also 'complex circumstances')
- Secondments or career breaks outside of HE

Complex circumstances

- Disability
- Ill health or injury
- Mental health conditions
- Constraints relating to pregnancy or maternity in addition to maternity leave
- Childcare or other caring responsibilities
- Gender reassignment
- Other circumstances relating to characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010

Individual circumstances: Maternity

- The proposals take account of maternity leave as follows:
 - The 'tariff' will be applied to the period of maternity leave (in the same way as other periods of absence from work)
 - Additional work constraints relating to pregnancy and maternity will be considered as a more complex circumstance; these should be explained in the submission and will be considered by the Equality and Diversity Panel
- A possible alternative approach would be for each discrete period of maternity leave to qualify for the reduction of an output

Individual circumstances: Tariffs

Early career researchers

Date at which the individual first met the definition of an ECR:	Outputs may be reduced by up to:
Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010	1
Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011	2
After 1 August 2011	3

Other clearly defined circumstances

Total months absent from work (1 Jan 2008 to 31 Oct 2013):	For part-time staff, average FTE worked (1 Jan 2008 to 31 Oct 2013):	Outputs may be reduced by up to:
0 – 13.99	0.801 – 1	0
14 – 27.99	0.601 – 0.8	1
28 – 48.99	0.301 – 0.6	2
49 or more	0.3 or less	3

The Research Excellence Framework – SUBMISSIONS

Submissions

- Each submission in a UOA provides evidence about the activity and achievements of a ‘submitted unit’ including:
 - Staff details (REF1a/b/c)
 - Research outputs (REF2)
 - Impact template and case studies (REF3a/b)
 - Environment data (REF4a/b/c)
 - Environment template (REF5)
- A submitted unit may, but need not, comprise staff who work within a single ‘department’ or organisational unit

Submissions

- Institutions will normally make one submission in each UOA they elect to submit in
- Joint submissions are encouraged where this is an appropriate way of describing collaborative research
- Multiple submissions **only** by exception and with permission from REF manager:
 - Where an HEI also makes a joint submission in that UOA
 - Where HEIs have merged
 - In Sub-panel 28 where one submission is in Celtic studies
 - Where a sub-panel considers there is a case given the nature of the disciplines covered

The Research Excellence Framework – EXPERT PANELS

The REF expert panels

There are 36 sub-panels (one for each UOA) working under the guidance of four main panels

Sub-panel responsibilities

- Contributing to the main panel criteria and working methods
- Assessing submissions and recommending the outcomes

Main panel responsibilities

- Developing the panel criteria and working methods
- Ensuring adherence to the criteria/procedures and consistent application of the overall assessment standards
- Signing off the outcomes

- Additional assessors will be appointed during 2013
- An Equalities and Diversity Advisory Panel will consider and make recommendations on equality-related issues

Main Panel C - Submissions and UOAs

- Criteria aim to enable submitting HEIs to showcase their excellent research and impact arising from it
- MPC covers a broad range of social science and allied disciplines
- Each sub-panel has a membership with a broad range of expertise within its remit
- MPC prefers work submitted in a UOA to be assessed by that sub-panel
- Additional assessors will be used where required & may work across UOAs
- Possibility of cross-referral retained

Main Panel C – Education sub-panel 25

James Conroy, University of Glasgow

Julian Elliott, Durham University

Becky Francis, RSA

John Furlong, University of Oxford

John Gardner, Queen's University Belfast

Tom Hamilton, General Teaching Council for Scotland

David James, University of the West of England

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Diane Reay, University of Cambridge

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Jane Seale, University of Plymouth

Judy Sebba, University of Sussex

Richard Thurston, Welsh Assembly Government

Malcolm Tight, Lancaster University

Main Panel C – Education sub-panel 25

Descriptor: Research in education is multidisciplinary and is closely related to a range of other disciplines with which it shares common interests, methods and approaches. This diversity of content and methodology requires the sub-panel to be **flexible** in marking the boundaries of work relevant to the REF.

The UOA may be broadly described as being concerned with research in the areas identified in the following illustrative lists:

Research which addresses education systems, issues, processes, provision and outcomes in relation to sectors such as: early years, primary, secondary, further, higher, medical, workplace, adult and continuing education. It also includes teacher, healthcare and other forms of professional education, vocational training; and informal, community and lifelong learning.

Research which addresses substantive areas such as: curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, teaching and learning; children, young people, student and adult learners; parents, families and communities; culture, economy and society; teacher training, professionalism and continuing professional development; special and inclusive education; participation, rights and equity issues; technology enhanced learning; education policy; the organisation, governance, management, effectiveness and improvement of educational institutions; education, training, workplaces, industry and the labour market; comparative, international and development education.

Main Panel C – Education sub-panel 25

Descriptor:

The UOA may be broadly described as being concerned with research in the areas identified in the following illustrative lists:

Research which employs a range of theoretical frameworks and methodologies drawn from disciplinary traditions including, but not limited to: anthropology, applied linguistics, economics, geography, history, humanities, mathematics, statistics, philosophy, psychology, science and sociology. Research in the field of Education deploys a range of qualitative and quantitative methodologies with structured, exploratory and participatory research designs. These **include, but are not limited to:** surveys, experiments and controlled trials; ethnography, interview and narrative enquiry; action research and case study; evaluation research; critical theory and documentary analysis; analytic synthesis and systematic review.

The sub-panel welcomes submissions in **pedagogical research** in higher education and professional education (including healthcare) while recognising that such work may instead be submitted in another relevant UOA. The sub-panel will consider submissions in counselling and neuroscience where this work has an educational orientation. However, submissions in these areas may be referred to another sub-panel for advice.

The Research Excellence Framework - OUTPUTS

MPC Assessment Criteria: Outputs

MPC interprets the generic assessment criteria as:

Originality will be understood in terms of the innovative character of the research output. Research outputs that demonstrate originality will: provide new empirical material; engage with new and complex problems; develop innovative research methods, methodologies and analytical techniques; and/or advance theory or the analysis of doctrine, policy or practice.

Significance will be understood in terms of the development of the intellectual agenda of the field and may be theoretical, methodological and/or substantive. Due weight will be given to potential as well as actual significance, especially where the output is very recent.

Rigour will be understood in terms of the intellectual precision, robustness and appropriateness of the concepts, analyses, theories and methodologies deployed within a research output. Account will be taken of such qualities as the integrity, coherence and consistency of arguments and analysis, as well as the due consideration of ethical issues

Research outputs: Criteria

The criteria for assessing the quality of outputs are **originality, significance and rigour***

Four star	Quality that is world-leading in terms of originality, significance and rigour
Three star	Quality that is internationally excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which falls short of the highest standards of excellence
Two star	Quality that is recognised internationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
One star	Quality that is recognised nationally in terms of originality, significance and rigour
Unclassified	Quality that falls below the standard of nationally recognised work. Or work which does not meet the published definition of research for the purposes of this assessment

* Each main panel provides a descriptive account of the criteria

Research outputs: Eligibility

- Outputs must be:
 - a product of research (as defined for the REF)
 - first brought into the public domain between 1 January 2008 and 31 December 2013
 - Authored/co-authored by the member of staff against whom it is listed (regardless of where they were employed prior to the census date)
- Outputs may include but are not limited to: printed or electronic publications, materials, devices, images, artefacts, products, buildings, confidential or technical reports, patents, performances, exhibits or events
- All forms of outputs shall be assessed on a fair and equal basis

MPC Research outputs: Eligibility

Co-Authored and co-produced outputs

- Recognised to be increasing as collaboration grows in MPC disciplines
- Where outputs are co-authored/produced, submitting author expected to have made a *substantial* contribution
- Sub-panels wish to receive the fullest picture of a submitting HEI's research
- Co-authored/produced outputs may be submitted twice in the same UOA by the same HEI – *by exception* - should explain why it is felt necessary and outline the distinct contributions of the authors

MPC Assessment Criteria: Outputs

Double-weighting of outputs

- Recognises outputs of extended scale and scope having required *exceptional research effort*
- HEIs may identify up to 2 outputs per individual author which they consider worthy of double weighting and submit a supporting statement
- Sub-panels will assess the claim for double weighting separately from the quality of the output
- No reserve item may be submitted

MPC Assessment Criteria: Outputs

Use of citation information (new for the REF)

- Assessment will be primarily by expert professional judgement
- No sub-panel will use journal hierarchy or impact factor as part of the assessment process
- With two exceptions, sub-panels in Main Panel C will **not** use citation information
- UOA 17 (to be consistent with sub-panel 7 in the assessment of some areas of physical geography and environmental studies only) and UOA18 (Economics and Econometrics) will use citation data provided by the REF team – *where available and appropriate* – as a minor component to inform peer-review judgements

The Research Excellence Framework - IMPACT

Assessment Criteria: Impact

- Opportunity for MPC disciplines to showcase the benefit beyond academia of their excellent research
- Case studies will showcase the strongest examples of impact and a template will explore the support units offer to enable impact

Assessment Criteria: Impact

MPC interprets the generic assessment criteria as:

Reach will be understood in terms of the extent and diversity of the communities, environments, individuals, organisations or any other beneficiaries that have benefitted from or been affected

Significance: will be understood in terms of the degree to which the impact has enriched, influenced, informed or changed policies, opportunities, perspectives or practices of communities, individuals or organisations

NB Reach is not geographic – will take account of the potential domain

Impact: Criteria

The criteria for assessing impacts are **reach and significance***

Four star	Outstanding impacts in terms of their reach and significance
Three star	Very considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance
Two star	Considerable impacts in terms of their reach and significance
One star	Recognised but modest impacts in terms of their reach and significance
Unclassified	The impact is of little or no reach and significance; or the impact was not eligible; or the impact was not underpinned by excellent research produced by the submitted unit

* Each main panel provides a descriptive account of the criteria

Impact: Definition for the REF

- An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia
- Impact **includes** an effect, change or benefit to:
 - The activity, attitude, awareness, behaviour, capacity, opportunity, performance, policy, practice, process or understanding
 - Of an audience, beneficiary, community, constituency, organisation or individuals
 - In any geographic location whether locally, regionally, nationally or internationally
- It **excludes** impacts on research or the advancement of academic knowledge within HE; and impacts on teaching or other activities within the submitting HEI

Impact: Submissions

Impact template (REF3a)

- Sets out the submitted unit's general approach to enabling impact from its research
- One template per submission – with a page limit depending on the number of staff submitted
- Covers the period 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Jul 2013
- Contributes 20% to the impact sub-profile

Case studies (REF3b)

- Specific examples of impacts that were underpinned by the submitted unit's research
- The number of case studies required depends on the number of staff submitted
- Impacts during 1 Jan 2008 to 31 Jul 2013; underpinned by research since 1 Jan 1993
- Contributes 80% to the impact sub-profile
- Four pages only

Impact: Template (REF3a)

- The unit's approach to enabling impact from its research:
 - Context for the approach
 - The unit's approach during 2008-2013
 - Strategy and plans for supporting impact
 - Relationship to the submitted case studies
- Provides additional information and context for the case studies, and can take account of particular circumstances that may have constrained a unit's selection of case studies
- To be assessed in terms of the extent to which the unit's approach is conducive to achieving impact of 'reach and significance'

MPC Assessment Criteria: Impact

Case Studies

- Guidance does not provide lengthy lists of examples as MPC wishes to encourage widest possible range case studies
- Any impact eligible provided demonstrates effect, change or benefit beyond academia
- Recognise may include examples where change has *not* happened as a result of research findings holding public policy makers to account or scrutiny
- Public engagement examples should describe consequences of engagement in terms of effect, benefit or change

MPC Assessment Criteria: Impact

Case Studies - key issues

- Submitting unit must demonstrate that the research cited took place at the submitting HEI, was of at least 2* quality and made a *distinctive contribution* to the impact claimed
- Evidence for the impact claimed should be clearly cited and should be independently verifiable wherever possible
- Case studies should not describe activity alone, but should make clear links between the activity and impact claimed

The Research Excellence Framework - ENVIRONMENT

MPC Assessment Criteria: Environment

MPC interprets the generic assessment criteria as:

Vitality of the research environment reflects the existence of a thriving, dynamic and fully participatory research culture based on a clearly articulated research strategy, displayed both within the submitting unit and in its wider contributions, and in terms appropriate to the scale and diversity of the research activity that it supports

The **sustainability** of the research environment will be understood in terms of the extent to which it is capable in the future of continuing to support and develop such research activity as defined in the quality levels, both within the submitted unit and the discipline more generally

Environment: Criteria

The criteria for assessing the environment are **vitality and sustainability***

Four star An environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability

Three star An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally excellent quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability

Two star An environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability

One star An environment that is conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability

Unclassified An environment that is not conducive to producing research of nationally recognised quality

* Each main panel provides a descriptive account of the criteria

Environment: Data (REF4)

- All submissions to include data on:
 - Research doctoral degrees awarded (REF4a)
 - Research income (REF4b)
 - Research income in-kind (REF4c)
- Definitions are aligned with HESA data. We will provide HESA data to institutions to assist in preparing submissions, and will use it for verification purposes
- Some sub-panels may request additional data related to the environment, to be included within the environment template (REF5)
- Data will be considered alongside the qualitative information provided in REF5

Environment: Template (REF5)

- Each submission to include a completed template (with page limits depending on the number of staff submitted):
 - Overview
 - Research strategy
 - People (including staffing strategy and staff development; and research students)
 - Income, infrastructure, and facilities
 - Collaboration and contribution to the discipline
- Panel criteria indicate the relative importance of each section; and identify appropriate forms of evidence
- No expectation that the environment relates to a single department or organisational unit

MPC Assessment Criteria: Environment

- **Quantitative data:**
 - Quantitative data will include doctoral degree awards during the period and research income
 - Both will be based on HESA data which HEIs will allocate to UOAs
 - Additional data required by:
 - UOAs 19 and 25 (Education): disaggregation of professional doctorates from the total number of doctoral awards
 - UOA 26: FTE of PGR students enrolled on doctoral programmes by year

The Research Excellence Framework - RESULTS

Publication of results

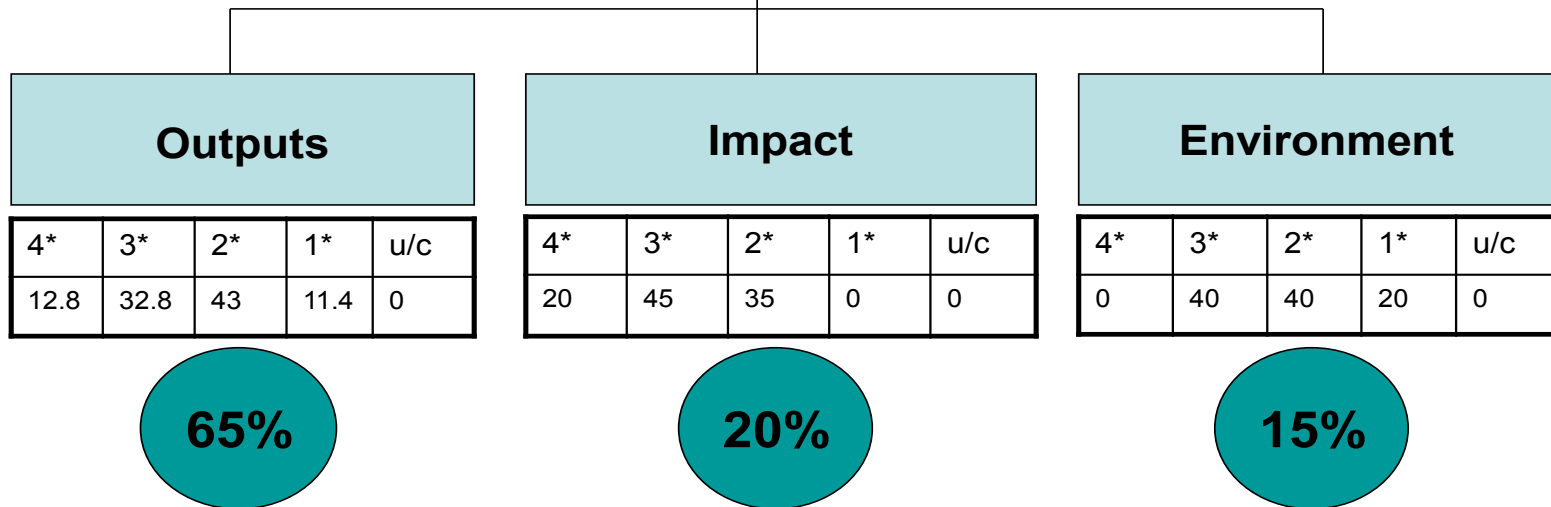
- The primary outcome of the REF is an ‘overall quality profile’ to be awarded to each submission:
 - In steps of 1%
 - To be published in Dec 2014
- Further reports and feedback during 2015:
 - An overview report by each main panel, including observations by each of their sub-panels
 - Concise feedback to the heads of HEIs
 - The output, impact and environment sub-profile for each submission
 - A report by the Equality and Diversity Advisory Panel
 - Submissions will be published (except for confidential or sensitive information)

Example of a quality profile

Overall Quality Profile

The overall quality profile is comprised of the aggregate of the weighted sub-profiles produced for outputs, impact and environment.

Quality Level	4*	3*	2*	1*	u/c
% of Research Activity	12	37	41	10	0



The Research Excellence
Framework – CONSULTATION
ON PANEL CRITERIA AND
WORKING METHODS

Consultation process

The REF panels and REF team are consulting on the criteria and working methods that panels will employ when assessing submissions:

- **Part 1:** A generic statement of criteria that will be applied by all panels
- **Part 2:** A statement of the criteria and working methods developed by each of the four Main Panels
- Responses must be made online at www.ref.ac.uk
- Consultation closes on **5 Oct 2011**
- Final criteria and working methods to be published in Jan 2012

Consultation questions

- Generic questions are about:
 - Consistency between the four main panels
 - Tariffs for individual staff circumstances (including the approach to taking account of maternity leave)
- Questions for each main panel are about:
 - Consistency between the group of sub-panels
 - UOA descriptors; and expectations about multiple submissions
 - Criteria relating to Outputs; Impact; Environment
 - Working methods
- Responses will help us refine the criteria and working methods

Further information

- www.ref.ac.uk (includes all relevant documentation)
- Enquiries from staff at HEIs should be directed to their nominated institutional contact (see www.ref.ac.uk for a list)
- Other enquiries to info@ref.ac.uk