

The Research Excellence Framework

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Geophysics Forum, 15 March 2013

Presentation outline

- Overview
- Staff and equalities
- Outputs
- Impact
- Submissions
- REF panels
- Recent and upcoming guidance

Overview:

The REF process

Criteria phase 2011

Development of:

- *Guidance on submissions* (Jul 11)
- *Criteria for assessment* (Jan 12)

Submissions phase 2012-13

- HEIs prepare submissions
- **Submission deadline**
29 Nov 2013

Assessment phase 2014

- Panels assess submissions
- **Publish outcomes**
Dec 2014

Overview:

Guidance and criteria

Comprehensive information and guidance is set out in:

- **Assessment framework and guidance on submissions (July 2011):**
 - Sets out the information required in submissions and the definitions used
- **Panel criteria and working methods (Jan 2012):**
 - Sets out how panels will assess submissions

The above documents set out the official guidelines for the REF. These slides provide a summary of key points but do not provide or replace the official guidelines.

Staff

Staff:

Staff selection

- HEIs are responsible for selecting eligible staff whose outputs are to be included in their REF submissions
- Each HEI is required to develop, document and apply a code of practice on the fair selection of staff:
 - Demonstrating principles of transparency, consistency, accountability and inclusivity
 - Guidance on developing the codes has been based on good practice found in the 2008 RAE
 - The code must be submitted to the REF team, will be examined for adherence to the published guidance, and will be published at the end of the exercise

Staff:

Individual staff circumstances

- Up to four outputs must be listed against each individual
- The number of outputs can be reduced without penalty where an individual's circumstances have constrained their ability to work productively or produce four outputs in the REF period
- We have sought to make these arrangements as clear and consistent as possible, with due regard to confidentiality

Staff:

Clearly defined circumstances

- **Early Career researchers**
- **Part-time working, career breaks and secondments outside of HE**
- **Periods of maternity, adoption and additional paternity leave**

- These are circumstances involving a clear 'absence' from work
- 'Tariffs' define the number of outputs that may be reduced without penalty
- These will be applied consistently by all REF sub-panels
- Circumstances can be combined up to a maximum reduction of three outputs
- Where an individual has a combination of clearly defined **and** complex circumstances, these should be submitted collectively as 'complex'

Staff:

Complex circumstances

- **Disability**
- **Ill health or injury**
- **Mental health conditions**
- **Additional constraints related to bringing a child into the family**
- **Other caring responsibilities**
- **Gender reassignment**
- **Other circumstances related to legislation**

- For these circumstances a judgement is needed about the appropriate reduction
- The EDAP will consider all these cases on a consistent and confidential basis, and recommend the appropriate reductions to the Main Panel Chairs
- Sub-panels will be informed of the decisions and will not have access to further details
- ECU has published worked examples (www.ecu.ac.uk)

Outputs



Outputs:

Co-authorship

- A co-authored output may be listed against one or more individuals that made a substantial research contribution to it
- It may be listed against any or all such co-authors returned in **different submissions**; and a maximum of two such co-authors within the **same submission**
- In very specific situations (as defined by the main panels), information is required to confirm that the author made a substantial research contribution
- Once this is accepted, panels will assess the quality of the output, not the individual author's contribution

Outputs:

Citation data

- Several sub-panels will make use of citation data as a minor component to inform peer-review:
 - Main Panel A: Sub-panels 1-6
 - Main Panel B: Sub-panels 7, 8, 9 and 11
 - Main Panel C: Sub-panel 18
- HEIs will be provided access to the Scopus citation data (in the relevant UOAs) through the REF submission system
- Panels will not use journal impact factors, rankings or lists or the perceived standing of the publisher

Impact



Image: FreeDigitalPhotos.net

Definition of impact

- Impact is defined broadly 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
- Panels recognise that impacts can be manifest in a wide variety of ways, may take many forms and occur in a wide range of spheres, in any geographic location
- Panels provide examples of impact relevant to their disciplines, intended to stimulate ideas - not as exhaustive or prescriptive lists

Impact:

Impact submissions

Impact template

20% of the
impact sub-
profile

- Sets out the submitted unit's approach and strategy for impact

Case studies

80% of the
impact sub-
profile

- Specific examples of impacts already achieved

Impact:

Case studies

- One case study must be submitted per 10 FTE staff (with a minimum of two cases in a submission)
- Impacts that took place during 2008 to 2013; underpinned by research since 1993
- Submitted case studies need **not** be representative of activity across the unit: pick the strongest examples
- Case studies must be completed on a template - maximum 4 pages

Impact:

Lessons from the pilot exercise

- All the material required to make a judgement should be included
- The narrative should be coherent and clearly explain the 'links in the chain'
- Clear definition of who benefitted, and what had changed
- Indicators should be meaningful and contextualised
- Key claims should be capable of verification
- Where the impact arises from public engagement:
 - How was the engagement activity based on the research?
 - Dissemination in itself is not impact – what was the benefit?

Impact:

Underpinning research

- Each case study must be underpinned by research that:
 - was produced by staff while working in the submitting HEI
 - is evidenced by outputs published between 1 Jan 1993 to 31 Dec 2013
 - meets the quality threshold of at least equivalent to 2*
 - made a material and distinct contribution to the impact (whatever the 'route' to impact was)
- Once the panel is satisfied that these criteria have been met, it will assess and grade the case study in terms of the 'reach and significance' of the impact

Submissions

Submissions:

Survey of submission intentions

	Submitted in RAE 2008	Planned for REF 2014	Change
All REF panels	52,401	54,269	+1,868 (+3.6%)
REF Main panel A (includes healthcare and life science)	14,086	13,805	-281 (-2.0%)
REF Main panel B (includes science and engineering)	12,234	13,532	+1,298 (+10.6%)
REF Main panel C (includes social sciences)	14,834	15,694	+860 (+5.8%)
REF Main panel D (includes arts and humanities)	11,247	11,239	-8 (-0.1%)

Submissions:

The submission system

- All submissions must be made through the REF submission system:
 - Pilot available to all HEIs: Sep – Dec 2012
 - Open for submissions: Jan–Nov 2013
- Each HEI to set up system users and user permissions
- All data may be entered directly onto the system; bulk imported; and/or using web-service
- Details of data requirements have been published
- User guidance and support is provided

REF Panels



Overview:

REF expert panels

- 36 sub-panels working under the guidance of 4 main panels
- Panels will adhere to the published criteria and working methods

Sub-panel responsibilities

- Contributing to the 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

REF panels:

Main panel working methods

- Each main panel has developed a consistent set of criteria for its group of sub-panels
- Each main panel will guide its sub-panels throughout the assessment phase, ensuring:
 - Adherence to the published criteria
 - Consistent application of the overall standards of assessment
- Main panels will undertake calibration exercises and keep the emerging outcomes under review
- Main panel international and user members will be engaged at key stages across the sub-panels

REF panels:

Sub-panel working methods

- Sub-panels will review their expertise to ensure appropriate coverage
- Each sub-panel will run calibration exercises for outputs and impacts, guided by the main panels
- Work will be allocated to members/assessors with appropriate expertise
- All outputs will be examined in sufficient detail to contribute to the formation of the outputs sub-profiles
- Each case study will normally be assessed by at least one academic and one user
- Graduated sub-profiles will be formed for each aspect of submissions

REF panels:

Interdisciplinary research

- UOAs do not have rigidly defined boundaries and sub-panels expect submissions to include work that is interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or spans boundaries between UOAs
- Panels are committed to assessing all such work on an equal basis:
 - Members were appointed with experience of such work
 - Additional assessors will be appointed to augment their expertise (in some cases, working across UOAs)
 - Sub-panels have the option to cross-refer specific parts of a submission to another other sub-panels for advice. The original sub-panel remains responsible for recommending the quality profile.

REF panels:

REF panel meetings 2013

- Panels met in late January/ early Feb to prepare for assessment phase.
 - Considering requirements for additional assessors and specialist advisers
 - Panel working methods
 - 2014 meeting scheduling
 - IT systems for assessment phase

REF panels:

Additional assessors

- Additional assessors are being appointed to extend the breadth and depth of panels' expertise:
 - Both 'academic' assessors (to assess outputs) and 'user' assessors (to assess impacts) will be appointed
 - Assessors have been identified in the light of the survey of institutions' submission intentions
 - Assessors will play a full and equal role to panel members, in developing either the outputs or impact sub-profiles
 - Assessors will be fully briefed, take part in calibration exercises and attend relevant meetings

Guidance and information

- Guidance on confidential data
- Panel member confidentiality agreements – Feb
- Additional complex staff circumstances examples (ECU website)
- Guidance on collection and storage of outputs – Feb
- Contextual citation data
- Authorised submitters

Further information

www.ref.ac.uk

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