Research Excellence Framework (REF)
Consultation and Future implementation

October 2009
Consultation on the REF

The second HEFCE consultation on the Research Excellence Framework (REF) was published on 23rd September with responses due in mid December 2009

Consultation provides opportunity to respond to the proposals for the REF:

- Weightings of the sub-profiles toward the overall quality profile (Outputs: 60%, Impact: 25%, Environment: 15%);
- Criteria, selectivity and methods for assessing each component;
- Configuration of expert panels
- Treatment of interdisciplinary research
- Timetable and measures to reduce the burden
- Inclusion of indicators: Bibliometrics and others

Planning Division has prepared the College’s initial draft response and is seeking input and feedback from faculties and other key College stakeholders
HEFCE propose that the REF will be comprised of three elements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Outputs</th>
<th>Impact</th>
<th>Environment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Selection highest quality research outputs (all types) by selected staff.</td>
<td>Demonstrable economic and social impact arising from excellent research.</td>
<td>Strategy and infrastructure, user and public engagement, collaboration and interdisciplinarity.</td>
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- Similar to RAE, these elements will be assessed separately as sub-profiles. It is likely these will then be aggregated to form an **overall quality profile**, weighted as follows:

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<tr>
<td>60%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</table>

- Likely to retain the 4 star weightings utilised in RAE08 recognising need to review definitions to enable greater discrimination of the highest levels of excellence
REF bibliometrics pilot (July 2008 to March 2009) run to test feasibility of using citations to assess quality of journal outputs.

- Main outcome: Citations alone do not provide rigorous assessment of quality

Proposed model:

- HEIs responsible for the selection of staff and research outputs for submission
- All types of research output

Assessment

- Expert peer review *informed* and *supplemented* by citation information (for journals only) and other quantitative indicators where appropriate
Research Impact sub-profile: 25%

Demonstrable economic, social, public policy, cultural and quality of life impacts achieved through activity (exploitation and translation) during the assessment period, underpinned by excellent research.

The College is participating in REF Impact pilot: Oct 2009 – March 2010

Assessment

• Narrative assessed by expert peer review panels.
• Case studies of evidence of impact and effort towards exploitation of underlying research
• Impact statement for unit describing breadth and range of interactions with research users and impacts achieved
• Indicators to support case studies and impact statement
  - Likely to include research income, collaboration with research users
Quality and sustainability of the research environment - likely to include:

- Context (structure);
- Strategy;
- Infrastructure and facilities;
- Staff development;
- Training of PGR students;
- Engagement with research users and the public;
- Contribution to the research base.

Assessment

- Pro-forma covering each key area
- Assessment of each area graded and weighted separately
- To include indicators allocated to ‘Esteem’ in RAE2008 (editorships, fellowships, awards)
Important that

- any assessment framework is able to distinguish the highest quality research and differentiate it from that which is very good
- the funding methodology supports concentration of research excellence across a breadth and depth of subjects

REF assessment

- Assessment period: 2008-2012
- Census date for staff: Autumn 2012
- Reduction in the number of assessment panels
- More consistency across assessment panels
## Research Excellence Framework timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REF bibliometrics pilot</td>
<td>Outcomes published</td>
<td>Sep 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td>REF consultation</td>
<td>Consultation exercise</td>
<td>Sep-Dec 2009</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Announce outcomes</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact pilot exercise</td>
<td>Initiate pilot</td>
<td>Autumn 2009</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conclude pilot</td>
<td>Mid 2010</td>
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<tr>
<td>Panels</td>
<td>Invite nominations for membership</td>
<td>Spring 2010</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Appoint panels</td>
<td>Late 2010</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consultation on panel criteria</td>
<td>2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>REF exercise</td>
<td>Publish guidance on submissions</td>
<td>Mid 2010</td>
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<td></td>
<td>HEIs make submissions</td>
<td>2012</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Assessment phase</td>
<td>2013</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outcomes published</td>
<td>Dec 2013</td>
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<tr>
<td>Funding</td>
<td>Determine funding outcome</td>
<td>Feb 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HEFCE QR funding driven by REF</td>
<td>2014-15</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
To provide input and feedback on the consultation please contact Josie Lewis-Gibbs in the Planning Division (josie.lewis-gibbs@imperial.ac.uk)

REF consultation document can be found at:
• www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2009/09_38/09_38.pdf

Further information can be found at:
• www3.imperial.ac.uk/planning/strategicprojects/researchassessment/ref
  • www.hefce.ac.uk/Research/ref/