

# Consultation on draft panel criteria and working methods

[Name]

[Event/location]

[Date]



Research  
England



Scottish Funding Council  
Promoting further and higher education

Cyngor Cyllido Addysg  
Uwch Cymru  
Higher Education Funding  
Council for Wales

hefcw



Department for the  
Economy  
www.economy-ni.gov.uk

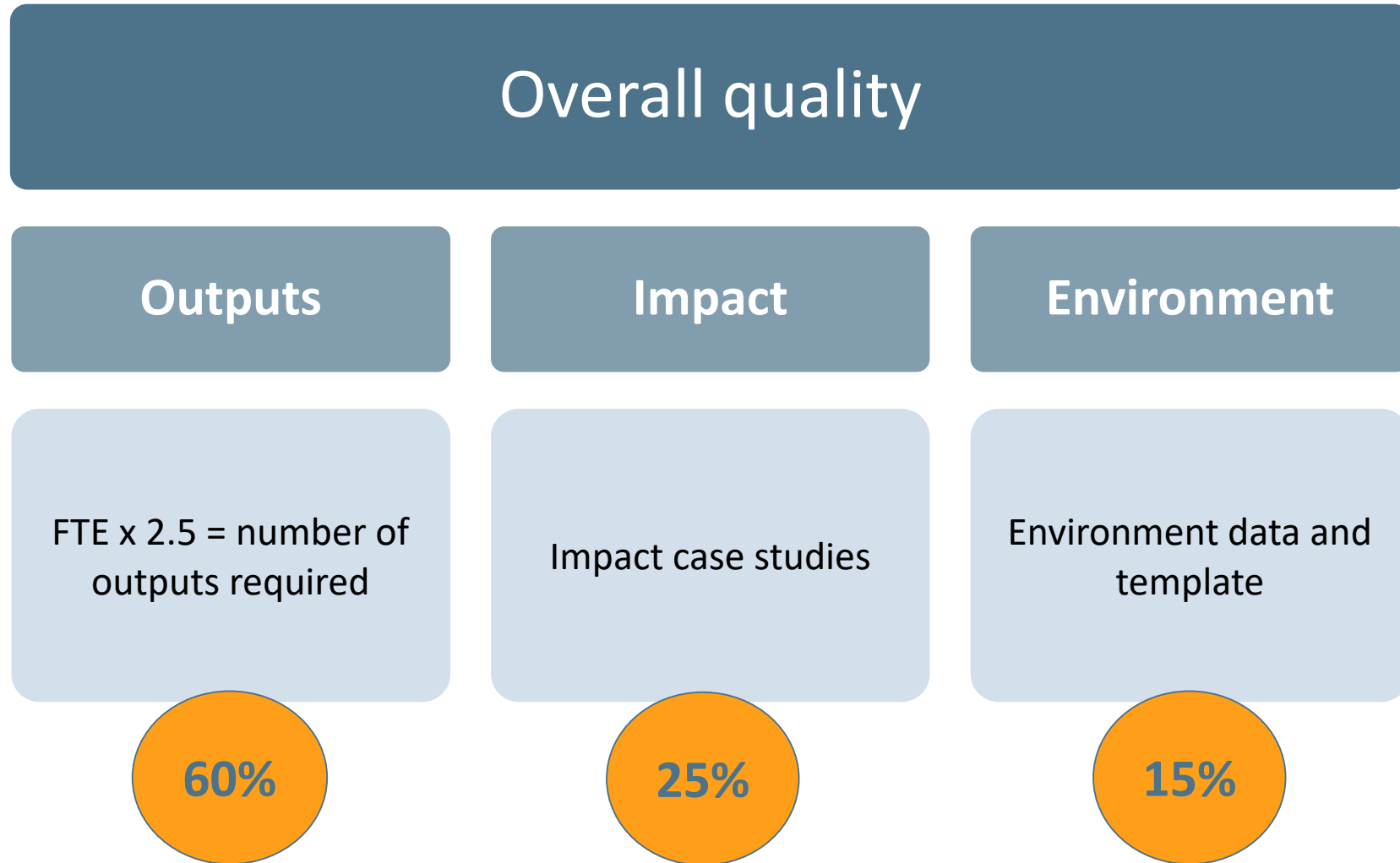
# REF 2021

Follow us on Twitter  
[@REF\\_2021](https://twitter.com/REF_2021)

Email us: [info@ref.ac.uk](mailto:info@ref.ac.uk)

# 2021 framework

REF2021



# Key changes since REF 2014

REF2021

## Overall framework

- Submission of all staff with significant responsibility for research
- Transitional approach to non-portability of outputs
- Decoupling of staff from outputs
- Open access requirements
- Additional measures to support interdisciplinary research
- Broadening and deepening definitions of impact

# Guidance on submissions

REF2021

## Specific consultation areas

- clarity, usefulness and coverage of the list of independent research fellowships
- proposed eligibility arrangements for seconded staff
- proposed ineligibility of staff based in a discrete department or unit outside the UK
- proposed approach for taking account of staff circumstances
- clarity and usefulness of the glossary of output types
- proposal to make ineligible the outputs of former staff who have been made redundant (except where the staff member has taken voluntary redundancy)
- proposed intention to permit the submission of co-authored outputs only once within the same submission
- PLUS comments on overall clarity of the guidance, including annexes

# Expert panels

- 34 sub-panels working under the guidance of four main panels with advice from Equality and Diversity and Interdisciplinary Research advisory panels (EDAP and IDAP)
- Two-stage appointment process (via nominations):
  1. Criteria-setting phase – sufficient members appointed to ensure each sub-panel has appropriate expertise
  2. Assessment phase – recruitment in 2020 of additional panel members and assessors to ensure appropriate breadth of expertise and number of panel members necessary for the assessment phase, informed by the survey of institutions' submission intentions in 2019.

# UOAs

Main panel	Unit of assessment	
A	1	Clinical Medicine
	2	Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care
	3	Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
	4	Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
	5	Biological Sciences
	6	Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences
B	7	Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences
	8	Chemistry
	9	Physics
	10	Mathematical Sciences
	11	Computer Science and Informatics
	12	Engineering

Main panel	Unit of assessment	
C	14	Geography and Environmental Studies
	15	Archaeology
	16	Economics and Econometrics
	17	Business and Management Studies
	18	Law
	19	Politics and International Studies
	20	Social Work and Social Policy
	21	Sociology
	22	Anthropology and Development Studies
	23	Education
D	24	Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism
	25	Area Studies
	26	Modern Languages and Linguistics
	27	English Language and Literature
	28	History
	29	Classics
	30	Philosophy
	31	Theology and Religious Studies
	32	Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory
	33	Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies
	34	Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management

# Interdisciplinary advisers

REF2021

## Interdisciplinary Research Advisory Panel

- oversee application of agreed principles and processes

## Main panel interdisciplinary leads

- facilitate cross-panel liaison
- oversee calibration exercise for IDR outputs

## Sub-panel interdisciplinary advisers

- Offer guidance to sub-panels on assessment of IDR outputs
- Liaise with advisers on other panels

# Expert panels

## 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

## Sub-panel responsibilities

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



# Panel criteria

## Aims

- build on REF 2014 criteria to maintain continuity
- achieve consistency across the main panels, where possible, while taking into account disciplinary differences

## Structure

- Unit of assessment (UOA) descriptors
- Panel criteria (submissions, outputs, impact, environment)
- Panel procedures
- Working methods

# Panel criteria - consultation

REF2021

We invite comments on:

- whether the criteria are appropriate and clear
- where further clarification is required
- where refinements could be made
- where more consistency across panels could be achieved
- where differences between disciplines could justify further differentiation between main panels

PLUS specific questions on:

- double-weighted outputs
- Main Panel D guidance on output types
- section weightings in the Environment statement

# Outputs

REF2021

Assessed against three criteria:

## Originality

- the extent to which the output makes an important and innovative contribution to understanding and knowledge in the field

## Significance

- the extent to which the work has influenced, or has the capacity to influence, knowledge and scholarly thought, or the development and understanding of policy and/or practice

## Rigour

- the extent to which the work demonstrates intellectual coherence and integrity, and adopts robust and appropriate concepts, analyses, theories and methodologies

Scored one to four star (or unclassified)

- Each main panel sets out its own understanding of the starred quality levels

# Outputs – interdisciplinary research

REF2021

- For the purposes of the REF, interdisciplinary research is understood to achieve outcomes (including new approaches) that could not be achieved within the framework of a single discipline. Interdisciplinary research features significant interaction between two or more disciplines and / or moves beyond established disciplinary foundations in applying or integrating research approaches from other disciplines.
- HEIs are invited to identify outputs that meet this definition. This process is **distinct from** a request for cross-referral.
- There will be **no advantage or disadvantage** in the assessment in identifying outputs as interdisciplinary.

# Outputs – co-authored

REF2021

- Institutions may only attribute co-authored outputs to individual members of staff who made **a substantial research contribution** to the output
- Main Panel A: For each submitted co-authored output where there are **ten or more** authors and where the submitted member of staff is not identified as the lead or corresponding author, institutions are required to affirm the substantial contribution to the research by the submitted member of staff.
- Main Panel B: for outputs with **more than 25 co-authors**, specific information is required about the author's contribution
- Main Panels C and D: not require the submission of information about the individual co-author's contribution but may seek to verify via audit.

# Outputs – double-weighting

REF2021

- Double-weighting may be requested where the scale of academic investment in the research activity and/or the intellectual scope of the research output is considerably greater than the disciplinary norm.
- Submit a 100-word statement
- HEIs may submit a reserve output, should the request not be accepted. This **does not** have to be attributed to the same member of staff but must be in accordance with min. 1 and max. 5 outputs attributed to staff.
- Main panels set out their individual expectations

*Specific consultation on:*

- *proposed criteria for double-weighting outputs in Main Panels C and D*
- *whether requests to double-weight books should automatically be accepted?*

# Outputs – additional information

REF2021

- For Main Panel D, an output will either consist of a single item (e.g. a journal article, a book), or an integrated presentation of a range of material that **makes clear** the **research dimensions** of the submitted work.
- The material submitted and 300-word statement (where required) should provide evidence of:
  - the research process
  - the research insights
  - the dissemination
- Should be presented as a coherent package – to assist panel members to access fully the research dimensions of the work

# Outputs – citation data

REF2021

## Main Panel A

- All sub-panels will use citation data (where available), as potential indicator of academic significance

## Main Panel B

- Sub-panels 7, 8, 9 and 11 will receive citation data (where available), as part of indicator of academic significance

## Main Panel C

- Sub-panel 16 will receive citation data (where available), and will use where it is considered appropriate as an additional piece of supplementary evidence

## Main Panel D

- No sub-panels will receive or use citation data



# Impact – submission

REF2021

## Submission:

- Impact remains eligible for submission by institution(s) where research was generated (i.e. non-portable)
- Impact must be underpinned by research of minimum 2\* quality
- Timeframe:
  - 1 January 2000 - 31 December 2020 for underpinning research
  - 1 August 2013 - 31 July 2020 for impacts
- Case studies continued from examples submitted in 2014 will be eligible for submission in REF 2021, **provided they meet the same eligibility criteria**

# Impact – criteria

REF2021

Assessed against two criteria:

## Reach

- the extent and/or diversity of the beneficiaries of the impact, as relevant to the nature of the impact. (It will **not** be assessed in geographic terms, nor in terms of absolute numbers of beneficiaries.)

## Significance

- the degree to which the impact has enabled, enriched, influenced, informed or changed the performance, policies, practices, products, services, understanding, awareness or well-being of the beneficiaries.

# Impact – types and indicators

REF2021

- Panels welcome case studies that describe **any type(s)** of impact
- Panel will welcome, and assess equitably, case studies describing impacts achieved through public engagement, either as the main impact described or as one facet of a wider range of impacts.
- Impact on teaching within (and beyond) own HEI is eligible
- Case studies must provide a clear and coherent narrative supported by verifiable evidence and indicators
- Should provide evidence of reach and significance of the **impacts**, as distinct from evidence of dissemination or uptake
- Annex A includes an extensive – but not exhaustive – list of examples of impact and indicators, including evaluation frameworks from non-HE organisations

# Impact – underpinning research

REF2021

- Panels recognise that the relationship between research and impact can be indirect and non-linear
- Underpinning research as a whole must be min. 2\* quality
- Case studies must include up to six key references (not every output referenced has to be 2\*) – HEIs can consult the outputs glossary in the Guidance on submissions
- Can also include indicators of quality e.g. evidence of peer-reviewed funding, prizes or awards for individual outputs etc.
- May be a body of work produced over a number of years or may be the output(s) of a particular project

# Environment

REF2021

## Assessment criteria:

### Vitality

- the extent to which a unit supports a thriving and inclusive research culture for all staff and research students, that is based on a clearly articulated strategy for research and enabling its impact, is engaged with the national and international research and user communities and is able to attract excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers.

### Sustainability

- the extent to which the research environment ensures the future health, diversity, well-being and wider contribution of the unit and the discipline(s), including investment in people and in infrastructure.

# Environment template

REF2021

## Sections

- a. Unit context, research and impact strategy.
- b. People, including:
  - a. staffing strategy and staff development
  - b. research students
  - c. equality and diversity.
- c. Income, infrastructure and facilities.
- d. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society.

*Information about the unit's support for impact to be included across the four sections*

# Environment template

REF2021

## Weighting

- Main Panel A, B and C will attach equal weighting to each of the four sections
- Recognising the primary role that people play as the key resource in the arts and humanities, Main Panel D will attach differential weight to sections:
  - Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy (25%)
  - People (30%)
  - Income, infrastructure and facilities (20%)
  - Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society (25%)

*Specific consultation on whether the difference in section weightings across main panels is sufficiently justified by disciplinary difference*

# Institutional level assessment of environment

REF2021

- Institutional-level information will be appended to the UOA-level environment template and will be taken into account by the sub-panel when assessing the unit-level statement.
- Pilot of the standalone assessment of the discrete institutional-level environment will draw on this submitted information.
- Outcomes from the separate pilot exercise will **not** be included in REF 2021 but will inform future research assessment.



# Timetable

REF2021

Spring 2018	Panels met to develop criteria
Summer to Autumn 2018	Consultation on draft guidance and criteria Draft guidance on codes of practice <b>Consultation deadline: noon, 15 October 2018</b>
Early 2019	Publish final guidance and criteria
2019	Complete preparation of submission systems <b>Submission deadline for codes of practice: noon, 7 June 2019</b>
2020	Submission phase <b>Submission deadline: noon, 27 November 2020</b>
2021	Assessment phase <b>Publication of results: December 2021</b>

## Further information

- Consultation survey: <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/DTZ10/>
- Registration for consultation events: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/research-excellence-framework-hei-consultation-events-tickets-47811987943>
- [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk) (includes all relevant documents and FAQs)
- Enquiries from staff at HEIs should be directed to their nominated institutional contact (available at [www.ref.ac.uk/contact](http://www.ref.ac.uk/contact))
- Other enquiries to [info@ref.ac.uk](mailto:info@ref.ac.uk)