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Consultation on the second Research Excellence Framework

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1. Respondent details

Responses to this consultation are invited from any organisation, group or individual with an interest in research or research assessment. We will publish an analysis of the consultation responses. We may publish individual responses to the consultation in the summary. Additionally, all responses may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the relevant Freedom of Information Acts across the UK. Responses to this consultation are unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. Please note that each question has a limit of 500 words.

Please indicate who you are responding on behalf of

- As an individual
- Higher education institution
- Subject association or learned society
- Representative body
- Department or research group
- Business
- Charity
- Public sector organisation
- Other

Please provide the name of your organisation

Universities Scotland

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2. Overall approach

1. Do you have any comments on the proposal to maintain an overall continuity of approach with REF 2014, as outlined in paragraphs 10 and 23?

Universities Scotland is a member organisation working for the Principals and Directors of Scotland's 19 higher education institutions (HEIs). Maintaining overall continuity of approach with REF 2014 has been supported by all members. This is important not just in terms of minimising the burden of the exercise, but to have a level of comparability across REF2014 and REF2021. As we discussed in [our response](#) to Lord Stern's review REF is valued by the sector for a number of purposes (not just as a resource allocation method) such as acting as a recognised quality endorsement, to provide useful benchmarking and to enable institutions to drive improvements. These other important purposes of REF are best served through continuity where possible.

The REF exercise must have the support of the research community to be meaningful, which can only be achieved through peer review. We therefore strongly support that the Stern Review 'confirmed the centrality and importance of peer review'. We also support the key principles outlined in paragraph 12 (equity, equality and fairness) which should guide all activities around REF2021.

The following response is based on consultation with our membership. Our key concerns are:

- For a number of Scottish HEIs the definition of research active does not reflect the research activity of the institution due to the nature of the HE2000 contract and requirement that HESA coding is based on contracts. This must be addressed as soon as practicable
- HESA cost centres should not be used to map staff to UOAs; HEIs should retain the flexibility to assign staff/outputs to UOAs
- As outlined in further detail in question 38 we have significant concerns with institutional-level impact case studies (as described in the consultation) as the method for implementing the proposed institutional-level impact assessment
- Timing is critical and HEIs need to guidance for the REF2021 as soon as possible.
- There are significant differences from REF2014 to REF2021 (as described in this consultation) which will cause considerable additional burden to the sector if implemented as a package of changes.

3. Unit of assessment structure

2. What comments do you have about the Unit of Assessment structure in REF 2021?

As explained in our answer to question 1, continuity would be welcomed.

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We are aware of specific subject areas which may need adjustments (such as forensic sciences) but broadly we would support consistency with the UOA structure between REF2014 and REF2021.

4. Expert panels

3a. Do you agree that the submissions guidance and panel criteria should be developed simultaneously?

Yes

No

Comments:

In the majority, there was support for simultaneous development of the guidance and panel criteria. However, all identified a need for members of sub-panels to be fully involved in developing criteria to ensure an appropriate spread of expert input (considering the breadth of the UOAs) and ownership by the sub-panels.

Should the simultaneous development of guidance and criteria cause delay in providing the submission guidance to the community several HEIs indicated that they would, for practical considerations, prioritise as soon as possible release of the submission guidance.

3b. Do you support the later appointment of sub-panel members, near to the start of the assessment year?

Yes

No

Comments:

The consensus is that the sub-panel members should be appointed as soon as practicable and involved with the development of panel criteria. This will also ensure the confidence of the subject communities.

In considering the timing issues, a compromise approach could be achieved via a two-stage recruitment (so a sub-set, or at least the Deputy Chair, are involved with development of panel criteria) – it is generally agreed that it would be too large a role for a sub-panel chair to reasonably take individual responsibility for.

4. Do you agree with the proposed measures outlined at paragraph 35 for improving representativeness on the panels?

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- Yes
- No

Comments:

5a. Based on the options described at paragraphs 36 to 38, what approach do you think should be taken to nominating panel members?

It is important that the agreed approach is transparent and highly visible to all involved in REF2021.

Further comments on process are:

- It should be clear when, why and how a nomination process will be used e.g. the Funding Bodies' websites could provide such information
- There should be open applications for the roles outlined
- Given the scale, and necessary speed, of appointments the need for nomination has been recognised by the sector

HEIs should be able to make their own nominations for main and sub-panels, including their own staff and others with appropriate expertise. This would ensure a wider pool from which to draw appropriate representation.

5b. Do you agree with the proposal to require nominating bodies to provide equality and diversity information?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

We strongly support ensuring more representative panels. Considering practicalities, the best approach

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may be that the Funding Council produce a statement of expectations which nominating bodies must confirm that their processes have adhered to.

6. Please comment on any additions or amendments to the list of nominating bodies, provided alongside the consultation document.

5. Staff

7. Do you have any comments on the proposal to use HESA cost centres to map research-active staff to UOAs and are there any alternative approaches that should be considered?

It is inappropriate to use HESA cost centres to map research staff to UOAs. These cost centres fulfil a specific purpose which aligns to teaching structures and is not appropriate for use in the REF.

Using the HESA cost codes would run counter to the Funding Bodies stated objective of 'identifying research excellence of all kinds in the UK HE sector' (paragraph 40). This would unnecessarily constrain each HEI's ability to present a coherent submission across research groups and would run the risk of disadvantaging cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary research, which would not meet a key aim of the Stern Review.

HEIs should retain the flexibility to assign their own research staff to a UOA, as per REF2014.

8. What comments do you have on the proposed definition of 'research-active' staff described in paragraph 43?

Principle

Across the sector there is (in the majority) support for the REF to include 'all academic staff who have **significant responsibility** to undertake research' (Stern Review).

Independence

For many institutions, particularly those with a large research base, the definition of research-active, using HESA data, is acceptable providing these individuals meet a (to be agreed) independence test. For these institutions a key concern is ensuring that the individuals eligible to count towards the total FTE are independent in either 'teaching and research' or 'research only' roles. The measure and definition of independence will need to be flexible to suit disciplinary norms and to avoid creating a significant audit burden.

Contractual issues

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For many institutions the [HESA definition](#) (related to contract, not actual work) causes a significant issue with the proposal to define 'research-active' as outlined in paragraph 43. In Scotland, many institutions follow a model academic contract (HE2000) which states an 'appropriate balance' of activities including teaching, scholarly activity and research. Using the HESA definition some staff would be submitted to HESA in the categories proposed to measure 'research active' staff, irrespective of whether the 'appropriate balance' for that individual did indeed include research, or a significant responsibility for research.

Using HESA data in such circumstances could:

- Give an inaccurate view of the volume of research activity within such institutions and runs the risk of unnecessarily diluting the quality of the submissions made by such institutions, masking their research excellence.
- Provide a stimulus to a move to changing the contractual status of individuals, perhaps moving to 'teaching only' contracts, although this might not accurately reflect the actual work undertaken either. While 'teaching only' contracts are appropriate for many institutions the use of such contracts should not be driven by the mechanisms of the REF. This could cause considerable disruption for staff.

There should be a mechanism to ensure that the REF actually identifies those with significant responsibility for research. It may be possible to achieve this through:

- Application of the independence test noted above – to exclude those without a research portfolio (as well as Research Assistants) therefore allowing institutions to demonstrate why an individual does not meet the independence definition
- Consider an additional optional HESA code which would take into account the actual job role rather than contract of employment (however, this is likely to be very challenging given time constraints)

A significant change to the HESA record may be required by some institutions and this should not be 'held against' an institution in the REF. There is an indication (paragraph 44) that HESA data would be used to 'identify shifts in employment patterns' suggesting this would be viewed, irrespective of the causes, as poor practice.

At this time use of such HESA data to produce an average FTE across the whole REF period would be inappropriate given concerns held by a distinct sub-set of institutions. Many such institutions have already been moved to investigate what would be the ramifications of not meeting the set number of outputs.

9. With regard to the issues raised in relation to decoupling staff and outputs, what comments do you have on:

9a. The proposal to require an average of two outputs per full-time equivalent staff returned?

Most institutions support decoupling staff from outputs and removing the burdensome staff selection process and the issues identified in the individual circumstances process.

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There are concerns that having few, or zero, outputs selected may cause considerable anxiety for individual members of staff and having a scale of 0-6 outputs could be divisive. There is support for the Funding Bodies producing a template code of practice for how the flexibility in number of outputs per FTE might be used

There have been a number of points raised that the Funding Bodies need to consider, and as many of the recommendations in this consultation cannot be viewed in isolation, the following lists issues raised:

Number of outputs / multiplier

- The basis for the selection of a multiplier of two is concern for panel workload (if HESA data is used as described to determine headcount)
- Using a multiplier of two may not represent a robust assessment of the total UK research output
- For highly productive areas (particularly STEM disciplines), two outputs per FTE may be insufficient for the time period in question
- On balance, there is support for a greater number of outputs per FTE (up to three), perhaps with disciplinary differences (assuming the headcount issues are resolved)
- Irrespective of the output decision there is support for maintaining the double weighting option

Information collected (using the approach described in the consultation)

- Institutions that submit a high proportion of staff will actually see a reduction in the number of outputs allowable so would focus on the highest quality research – this would make differentiating between submissions a real challenge
- Institutions who have typically submitted on a more selective basis, if required to submit outputs using a multiplier of two based on HESA data, would see a significant increase in the number of outputs required
- The combination of the two above could lead to a very different distribution of information captured in the REF at a sector level and we would not be confident this would serve to meet the objective to ‘identify excellent research of all types in the UK’

Approach

- A sampling approach is not appropriate and would not receive sector support – it appears that the paragraph 49 indicates that a sampling approach would be required if there were more than two outputs per member of staff, but as noted this is premised on a certain method for defining volume
- Some institutions have noted to fully decouple staff from outputs there would be no minimum or maximum, just a set number per FTE. This maximum/minimum approach means there is continued selectivity in the system.

9b. The maximum number of outputs for each staff member?

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It would be useful to clarify how disciplines with a culture of multi-authorship might approach this i.e. an individual might feature in several author lists (>6) but not be associated with all outputs in terms of the per FTE submission requirements (i.e. there should be a method to allow a maximum of 'attributed papers' for an individual that is not just related to appearing on the author list). Having clear guidance of how to approach this would be useful.

There were no significant concerns raised with 6 as a maximum number of outputs

9c. Setting a minimum requirement of one for each staff member?

In the case of flexible outputs per FTE there is some support for a minimum of 1 output per FTE, although members of Universities Scotland have raised specific examples of where a need for a zero output might be required (for early career researchers or staff with mitigating circumstances).

A minimum of one output per staff member in a unit with a high number of part-time staff, with an average of two outputs per FTE, could lead to a high proportion of the total required outputs being 'pinned' to individual members of staff. This would be caused by the headcount being much greater than the FTE count. In these circumstances the institution would have less opportunity to utilise the flexibility the number of outputs per FTE because they would have fewer 'free choice' outputs (compared to a unit with more full time staff). This could restrict their ability to present the best work of the unit. The Funding Bodies should work to understand the potential impact and options to better reflect the work of such a unit and/or institution

10. What are your comments on the issues described in relation to portability of outputs, specifically:

10a. Is acceptance for publication a suitable marker to identify outputs that an institution can submit and how would this apply across different output types?

There is a significant number of practical concerns with implementation of non-portability of outputs, which may make this unworkable.

On balance the preferred approach is to use date of publication (accepting this is an imperfect solution) to identify eligible outputs. The burden of using acceptance for publication will create a number of monitoring difficulties for HEIs.

For non-journal article outputs there are significant concerns around suitable markers for the timing of outputs (e.g. performance and composition)

10b. What challenges would your institution face in verifying the eligibility of outputs?

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There are concerns on how to evidence that an output was 'demonstrably generated' at a certain HEIs. There are many potential barriers to verifying eligibility, particularly of confirming dates of staff joining/leaving an institution, acceptance/publication dates and potentially confirming when a researcher became 'independent' and therefore the output eligible.

10c. Would non-portability have a negative impact on certain groups and how might this be mitigated?

Early career researchers (ECRs) could be disproportionately impacted by non-portability of outputs, introduced at this stage in the REF cycle, and this could have a detrimental impact in terms of securing their next position.

Concerns have also been raised that this might impact potential recruits from industry, overseas or those moving within the REF cycle (especially in certain disciplines where the timeframes involved in producing an output are inevitably long). There are concerns that this approach could create a strong disincentive for individuals to move institutions which could be damaging to the vibrancy of the UK research base.

While many institutions see a need to counteract 'transfer markets' in the REF process, particularly around the census date there is significant concern this may produce a new 'gaming' method around withholding publications/outputs as a negotiating strategy.

In order to mitigate the issues arising in this REF exercise, the Funding Bodies could:

- Agree not to apply non-portability retrospectively, so this applies to outputs published after the REF 2021 submission guidance (i.e. 2018). However, institutions have noted concerns with the additional workload this would create in monitoring (bearing in mind the different open access periods too)
- Create exceptions for certain groups – this may be on the basis of identifying those who were not previously submitted to REF2014 and allowing their outputs to be portable.

It may be more workable to signal the intent to introduce non-portability for the REF exercise following REF2021.

From a broader perspective we would highlight that individual institutions have in some cases stated strong opposition to the principle of non-portability noting that this could:

- introduce a significant barrier to recruitment of those individuals (whether ECRs or from industry) with a limited output track record;
- provide significant issues in disciplines where it may be challenging to articulate where the work demonstrably has taken place (particularly in disciplines with longer output gestation periods such as those which do not tend towards article based outputs); and
- create significant practical issues around the monitoring process.

10d. What comments do you have on sharing outputs proportionally across institutions?

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All institutions have raised concerns that this would be difficult, time-consuming and would introduce considerable additional burden into the system.

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11. Do you support the introduction of a mandatory requirement for the Open Researcher and Contributor ID to be used as the staff identifier, in the event that information about individual staff members continues to be collected in REF 2021?

Yes

No

Comments:

12. What comments do you have on the proposal to remove Category C as a category of eligible staff?

Institutions which utilise the Category C staff option value this therefore we would support retaining Category C staff. This can be valuable to institutions as part of their work to demonstrate close collaborations with non-academic partners including industry and public sector organisations like the NHS.

13. What comments do you have on the definition of research assistants?

14. What comments do you have on the proposal for staff on fractional contracts and is a minimum of 0.2 FTE appropriate?

We support this approach

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6. Collaboration

15. What are your comments in relation to better supporting collaboration between academia and organisations beyond higher education in REF 2021?

This will likely be captured in the impact section of the environment element of the assessment.

There was some caution noted about a simple metric driven approach to understanding collaborations between academia and organisations outside HE (e.g. staff mobility) which may not allow institutions to express the high levels of interaction and understanding between HEIs and their partners. There was support for the option to include this in the narrative, with metrics used where HEIs consider these appropriate to illustrate specific activities.

7. Outputs

16. Do you agree with the proposal to allow the submission of a reserve output in cases where the publication of the preferred output will postdate the submission deadline?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

17. What are your comments in relation to the assessment of interdisciplinary research in REF 2021?

If an agreed definition of interdisciplinary research can be developed this would likely support the smooth running of the REF and minimise HEI concerns about the appropriate identification of interdisciplinary research (and therefore potential reluctance to use markers).

In terms of the specific suggestions:

- There is some support for interdisciplinary 'champions' on the sub-panels provided they are well

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connected to other such champions

- The option of cross referral between sub-panels should be maintained
- The interdisciplinary identifier should not be mandated
- A section in the environment element specifically inviting a narrative on how institutions support interdisciplinary research would be welcome; this could be addressed in the institutional-level environment assessment

18. Do you agree with the proposal for using quantitative data to inform the assessment of outputs, where considered appropriate for the discipline? If you agree, have you any suggestions for data that could be provided to the panels at output and aggregate level?

Yes

No

Comments:

We welcome the work of the Forum on Responsible Metrics and the Funding Bodies willingness to explore the use of quantitative data, rather than implement an untested system. In general the sector is content that metrics can be used in some disciplines to support expert peer review judgement. There is a consensus that this information is not appropriate for Panels C & D and the level of metrics use in REF2014 was broadly acceptable.

The sub-panels should be given clear guidance as to how to utilise the information, and of the limitations of the metrics provided, to help inform their judgements. This is especially important should new types of metric be introduced with which panels are unfamiliar. If, and how, metrics are being used by a sub-panel should be made clear.

8. Impact

19. Do you agree with the proposal to maintain consistency where possible with the REF 2014 impact assessment process?

Yes

No

Comments:

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We support this

HEIs have fully engaged with impact and invested considerably in preparing systems to monitor and supporting staff to maximise impact. Culture change is a long-term process and maintaining consistency with REF2014 will enable HEIs to continue to embed change.

20. What comments do you have on the recommendation to broaden and deepen the definition of impact?

We support this

Institutions generally agreed that ground breaking academic impacts (e.g. creation of new disciplines) should be assessed through the output or environment element, not impact.

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21. Do you agree with the proposal for the funding bodies and Research Councils UK to align their definition of academic and wider impact?

Yes

No

If yes, what comments do you have on the proposed definitions?

22. What comments do you have on the criteria of reach and significance?

There is support for maintaining the criteria of research and significance as part of the overall approach to maintaining consistency with REF2014. Further guidance and examples would be useful to understand how reach and significance will be assessed by panels

23. What do you think about having further guidance for public engagement impacts and what do you think would be helpful?

There is consensus across the sector that it would be useful to have clearer guidance from panels on what is acceptable to demonstrate the impact of public engagement.

24. Do you agree with the proposal that impacts should remain eligible for submission by the institution or institutions in which the underpinning research has been conducted?

Yes

No

Comments:

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25. Do you agree that the approach to supporting and enabling impact should be captured as an explicit section of the environment element of the assessment?

Yes

No

Comments:

26. What comments do you have on the suggested approaches to determining the required number of case studies? Are there alternative approaches that merit consideration?

We support the position that the number of impact case studies across the sector should not be greater than in REF2014.

27. Do you agree with the proposal to include a number of mandatory fields in the impact case study template to support the assessment and audit process better (paragraph 96)?

Yes

No

Comments:

We would emphasise the importance of impact case studies being narrative submissions to allow institutions to articulate the range and types of impacts clearly.

28. What comments do you have on the inclusion of further optional fields in the impact case study template?

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29. What comments do you have in relation to the inclusion of examples of impact arising from research activity and bodies of work, as well as from specific research outputs?

30. Do you agree with the proposed timeframe for the underpinning research activity (1 January 2000 to 31 December 2020)?

- Yes
- No

Comments:

In our response to the Stern Review we recommended the date for underpinning research should remain at 1993 given evidence about the time lag between research and impact.

31. What are your views on the suggestion that the threshold criterion for underpinning research, research activity or a body of work should be based on standards of rigour? Do you have suggestions for how rigour could be assessed?

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32. Evaluation of REF 2014 found that provision of impact evidence was challenging for HEIs and panels. Do you have any comments on the following:

32a. The suggestion to provide audit evidence to the panels?

Institutions do collect evidence of impact, based on the experience of the previous REF. This information will be collected in various formats and there is likely to be a significant volume of information. Across the sector there is a majority view that, because of the practical issues, such information should be provided to panels in response to a specific audit query.

32b. The development of guidelines for the use and standard of quantitative data as evidence for impact?

We would recommend caution in applying any standardisation of quantitative data as evidence of impact. Impact is multifaceted and this is best captured by narrative submissions. Providing guidance runs the risk of developing a hierarchy of evidence types that would not be reflective of broadening the definition of impact.

It is also important to consider the burden that any real or perceived drive towards standard data types may place on the non-HEI partners that HEIs work with and require support from to evidence impact.

32c. Do you have any other comments on evidencing impacts in REF 2021?

The consensus is to maintain as much similarity with REF2014 as possible as the impact assessment period for REF2021 has already begun – retrospective data collection (especially if there are new standards) would be a huge burden to the sector.

33. What are your views on the issues and rules around submitting examples of impact in REF 2021 that were returned in REF 2014?

We would support this if there has been 'new' impact in the period since the previous submission. This is also important to incentivise long-term research projects and ongoing impact delivered through HEI expertise.

We do not support a limit on the number of impacts submitted to REF2021 that were returned in REF2014.

9. Environment

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34a. Do you agree with the proposal to change the structure of the environment template by introducing more quantitative data into this aspect of the assessment?

Yes

No

Comments:

Introducing more quantitative data to the environment template could be valuable (without understanding which data it is challenging to form a judgement), but on the basis that any data has an accompanying narrative to contextualise it. For instance, having information on the number of research students is useful but this needs to be contextualised. It would not cover the institutional approach to supporting career development without allowing for narrative explanation.

34b. Do you have suggestions of data already held by institutions that would provide panels with a valuable insight into the research environment?

35. Do you have any comment on the ways in which the environment element can give more recognition to universities' collaboration beyond higher education?

36. Do you agree with the proposals for providing additional credit to units for open access?

Yes

No

Comments:

Given the lack of information about how additional credit might operate and the differential resources

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available to institutions to pursue this (including different issues associated with disciplinary mix) we would not support this. It is also important to note there are already open access requirements for REF2021 which will drive behaviours.

37. What comments do you have on ways to incentivise units to share and manage their research data more effectively?

The Concordat on Open Data sets out principles for working with research data and was released in just July 2016. This Concordat explains good practice and explicitly recognises that the processes and principles described within with need time to establish within institutions. The Concordat acknowledges the direction of travel and the significant developments needed to enable open research data to be achieved. Using the REF to drive this would be inappropriate at this early stage. From the Scottish HEI perspective the SFC intends to sign up to this Concordat and introduce discussions on this Concordat to the Outcome Agreement process which would be a more appropriate means of supporting the sector to move towards open data.

10. Institutional level assessment

38. What are your views on the introduction of institutional-level assessment of impact and environment?

Scottish HEIs are broadly supportive of the institutional-level environment assessment as this should prevent duplication at the UOA level. However, this could be very challenging for smaller, specialist institutions and this must be addressed through the further development of the plans and piloting phase.

There is variation amongst Scottish HEIs in terms whether they do or do not support institutional-level assessment of impact and therefore this response focusses on the implementation as outlined in the consultation, rather than the principle.

The institutional case studies appear to have been devised to enable better representation of interdisciplinary research in delivering impact. We are not persuaded this is necessary as [our review](#) of Scottish HEI impact case studies demonstrated these were often interdisciplinary. Further, smaller institutions submitting to fewer, or one, UOA might be unfairly disadvantaged if institutional-level impact focusses on cross UOA work as a marker of interdisciplinary or institution-wide collaboration. We would not recommend that institutional-level impact case studies are introduced as described in this consultation. Some individual institutions have made specific suggestions on implementation of the institutional-level impact assessment which the Funding Bodies may wish to consider in the piloting phase.

Scottish HEIs have a particularly strong track record in joint submissions reflecting the high levels of collaboration in the sector. The introduction of institutional level elements will mean HEIs involved in a collaboration would receive different quality profiles. This risks discouraging joint submissions which would be an unfortunate consequence of these developments. Such a change may also

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disproportionately impact Scottish HEIs.

39. Do you have any comments on the factors that should be considered when piloting an institutional-level assessment?

The pilots must be completed by the end of 2017 to ensure guidance is available as swiftly as possible. These pilots must reach a range of types of institutions to be informative.

11. Outcomes and weighting

40. What comments do you have on the proposed approach to creating the overall quality profile for each submission?

41. Given the proposal that the weighting for outputs remain at 65 per cent, do you agree that the overall weighting for impact should remain at 20 per cent?

Yes

No

Comments:

Yes, particularly given there will be further weight to impact as it is incorporated into the environment element also.

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42. Do you agree with the proposed split of the weightings between the institutional and submission-level elements of impact and environment?

Yes

No

Comments:

Should the institutional level assessments proceed, it would be more appropriate that institutional-level elements were weighted at 5% rather than 7.5%.

Some members have noted concern that 12.5% of the quality profile for each unit will be outside of their control which may act to bring down high performing units or inflate the results for poorer performing units – this may act against identifying excellence where it is found.

12. Proposed timetable for REF 2021

43. What comments do you have on the proposed timetable for REF 2021?

We broadly agree with this but would emphasise the need to give an indication of the initial decisions following on from the consultation as soon as possible in 2017 and to deliver the guidance as soon as possible after that.

13. Other

44. Are there proposals not referred to above, or captured in your response so far, that you feel should be considered? If so, what are they and what is the rationale for their inclusion?

We are concerned that these changes will not reduce the burden of the REF to HEIs, and may either transfer or increase the burden depending on decisions made through this consultation. As noted in paragraph 10 the Funding Bodies 'do not intend to introduce new aspects to the assessment framework that will increase burden' and it is really important this is considered thoroughly in making decisions based on this consultation. The interdependence of various options and therefore knock on impacts are clear in this (as well as institutional) response so we are concerned that the Funding Bodies work to ensure that their decisions form a cohesive and workable whole.

There is an opportunity for the Funding Bodies to reduce some of the reporting burden on HEIs by working with providers of commercial research information services to ensure the online REF2021

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submission system is as simple as possible.

14. Contact details

If you would be happy to be contacted in the event of any follow-up questions, please provide a contact email address.

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