REF 2021

Institutional-Level Environment Pilot – HEI workshops: May 2019

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Agenda

• 9.30 - Arrival and refreshments
• 10.00 - Introduction and overview of the day
• 10.05 - Background to Institutional-Level assessment
• 10.15 - Overview of the guidance and criteria
• 10.30 - Panel Q&A
• 10.45 - Breakout to tables for facilitated discussion: Session 1. *Each table appoint a scribe/rapporteur to record/provide feedback*
• 11.25 - Break
• 11.35 – Table discussions: Session 2
• 12.15 - Plenary: feedback from table groups
• 12.45 - Key issues and Q+A
• 12.55 - Summary and next steps
• 13.00 Close
Background to the IL Pilot

• Stern Review of REF 2014 - Proposed institutional environment submission.

• Three main goals:
  • Reduce duplication
  • Bring focus on to aspects of the environment which represent institutional activity
  • Capture institution wide strategic and cross cutting activities.
Feedback from 2017 consultation

• HEI feedback generally supportive of including IL environment.
• Funding bodies agreed to run a pilot IL environment submission for REF 2021:
  • Pilot assessment to take place alongside Unit Level assessment.
  • Assessed by the Institutional-Level Environment Pilot Panel.
  • Assessment of IL environment will not contribute to final profiles.
  • IL submission will be available to sub-panels to support assessment of the UL environment submission.
Panel

- Chair: Professor Chris Day – VC Newcastle University.
- Panel members, appointed through EOI:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Institution</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professor John Cattell</td>
<td>Historic England</td>
<td>Professor Weiru Liu</td>
<td>University of Bristol</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr Stephen Conway</td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
<td>Professor Ruth Northway</td>
<td>University of South Wales</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Nandini Das</td>
<td>University of Liverpool</td>
<td>Professor Mark Ormerod</td>
<td>Keele University</td>
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<td>Professor Michael Fitzpatrick</td>
<td>Coventry University</td>
<td>Professor Murray Pittock</td>
<td>University of Glasgow</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Sir Barry Ife</td>
<td>Guildhall School of Music and Drama</td>
<td>Mr Michael Rayner</td>
<td>University of the Highlands and Islands</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Andrew Jones</td>
<td>City, University of London</td>
<td>Dr Rosa Scoble</td>
<td>Brunel University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Linda King</td>
<td>Oxford Brookes University</td>
<td>Professor Martin Tillotson</td>
<td>University of Leeds</td>
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<tr>
<td>Professor Fiona Lettice</td>
<td>University of East Anglia</td>
<td>Mr Alisdair Wotberspoon</td>
<td>Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Dewi Lewis</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Professor Dianne Berry</td>
<td>University of Reading</td>
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Principles

• IL Guidance and criteria supplementary to, and consistent with, main REF Guidance and Criteria.
• Submissions more than an aggregation of UL.
• Should reflect IL strategy and policies and articulate/examine cross-cutting central activities.
• Areas of interest:
  • HEI strategy and underpinning factors;
  • Progress since 2014;
  • Investment decisions, impacts across the institution and how this reflects HEI specialisms;
  • Engagement between central and unit level activities.
Progress

• Panel met November 2018 to:
  • Set the framework for the guidance, assessment criteria and panel working methods;
  • Consider the evaluation framework.
• Follow-up work to finalise and publish Draft guidance.
• Identification of the main issues for consultation workshops.
• Appointment of EDAP chair as observer, to support consistent approach across REF and inform equalities considerations.
Finalising the IL guidance and criteria

- Three sector workshops May 2019.
- To get the views of the sector on the draft IL guidance and criteria.
- Explore the appropriateness and clarity of the guidance and criteria, and identify any emerging concerns.
- Understand HEI perception of benefit and burden.
- Panel will consider feedback in Summer 2019.
- Finalised guidance and criteria will be published in Autumn 2019.
Guidance and Criteria
Guidance and Criteria: REF5a

• Submission requirements for REF5a:

  • Context and mission (10%)
  • Strategy (30%)
  • People (30%)
  • Income, infrastructure and facilities (30%)

• Differences to REF5b template
  • Focus on organisational context and mission
  • Collaboration, contribution to research base and economy is not included as a separate section
Assessment criteria

• Same criteria of vitality and sustainability as UL assessment.

• **Vitality**: promoting and facilitating a culture of collaboration, enabling and actualising impact within research units, within a thriving and inclusive research culture.

• **Sustainability**: ensuring the future health, diversity, wellbeing and wider contribution of the institution and its research units, including investment in people and in infrastructure.
Word limits

• Word limits for submissions are based on FTE category A staff to be submitted across the whole institution.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Category A submitted staff returned by institution (FTE)</th>
<th>Word limit for environment statement (REF5a)</th>
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<td>1 – 99.99</td>
<td>4,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>100 – 499.99</td>
<td>4,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>500 – 999.99</td>
<td>5,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>1000 or more</td>
<td>5,500</td>
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Considerations for assessment

• Size, structure and specialisms.
• Impact of central strategy, policy and activities.
• Organisational progress against 2014 objectives.
• Strategic aims and plans for future.
• Research culture.
• Central impact and support for activities at disciplinary/unit level.
Considerations continued...

• Support for wider impacts and engagement across institutions and outside of academia.

• Support for staff and students, including organisational approach to:
  • Staffing strategy and staff development;
  • Early career researchers;
  • Research students;
  • Equality and diversity.

• Strategies for generating research income.

• Infrastructure and resources and in-kind funding.
Data analysis and benchmarking

• Panel will receive data from UL REF4a/b/c submissions which will be aggregated to IL.
  • Are there risks in missing data through this approach?
• Panel will apply clustering for consistency and comparison.
  • Guidance identifies TRAC clustering, are there other/better alternatives?
• Data will also be aggregated to main panel level for each HEI in order to take into account and compare institutional specialisms and focus.
Indicators for the IL environment

• Institutions include indicators relevant to their own context.
  • Consider principles and measures developed by Forum for Responsible Research Metrics.

• Panel key areas of interest:
  • Recruitment by age profile;
  • Professors and senior staff by equalities characteristic;
  • Accreditation standards – demonstrate institution-level commitment to staff support and progression. e.g.:
    • Athena Swann;
    • Race Equality Charter;
    • HR Excellence in Research.

• Other key measures to consider?
Quality profile

- The panel will undertake assessment using the same 4* model set out in Annex A of the REF Guidance on submissions (REF01/2019).
- Panel will build an IL environment sub-profile for each submission, assessing the elements within each section, and applying weightings given.
- This will not inform the overall sub-profiles for submitting institutions, but will be used to inform views on the inclusion of IL environment for future REF exercises.
Working methods

• Panel members are subject to the same standards and conditions for confidentiality and conflicts of interest as all other panel members.

• The work of the panel will be supported by secretariat to advise on process and record decisions.

• Calibration in advance of assessment, with advice from main panel international members.
  • Ongoing monitoring and moderation throughout the assessment to ensure consistency.
Assessment

• Each submission will be read and scored independently by three panel members:
  • At least one with previous REF experience.
  • At least one senior academic or research professional.

• Research users will advise on a range of submissions to inform calibration and assessment standards.
• The panel will publish a report on its work to advise on whether assessment at this level should be included in future exercises.

• The guidance and criteria proposes that individual HEI scores will not be published, but anonymised and aggregated scores may be used to support the conclusions and recommendations.
  • We would like to explore institutions’ views on publications.

• Narrative feedback on assessment will be provided to heads of institutions.

• The panel will also contribute to evaluation of the process throughout the assessment phase.
Breakouts:

• Please appoint someone to take notes of discussions.
  • (and send to admin@ref.ac.uk afterwards).

• Please also appoint someone to be spokesperson to feedback.

• Overall questions to consider:
  • Does the guidance make sense and work for HEIs?
  • Are there relevant aspects of the IL environment which won’t be captured under the draft guidance and criteria?

• Two 40 min discussion sessions - with a break in between.

• Feedback from tables.

• Identify key issues and Q+A.
Table discussions – Session 1

General

1. Do you consider that the guidance and criteria are clear in their approach and aims?
   • If not, why, and how could they be improved?

2. Do guidance and criteria give confidence that the panel can assess submissions equitably, taking into account relevant factors?
   • If not, why, and how could they be improved?

3. Do institutions consider that the proposed approach minimises, as far as possible, additional burden?
   • How could this be improved?

4. Are there particular elements which cause concern?
   • How do we address these?

5. The panel will not publish scores following the IL assessment but will provide written feedback: the panel’s scores will be used to inform the recommendations of the pilot.
   • Do institutions agree that this is the most appropriate approach?
Table discussions - Session 2

1: Indicators:
- Are the identified indicators relevant and appropriate for assessment at institutional level and relevant across the range of institutions by size, type and speciality?
- Are there relevant and robust indicators which are not currently included and should be? NB these should be relevant across the range of institutions by size, type and speciality.

2: Benchmarking:
- The panel will be provided with comparator benchmarking data using the TRAC clustering. Do HEIs consider that this is a robust and relevant approach or is there a better alternative?

3: Guidance for preparing submissions.
- Is the required information across the four sections clear, meaningful and reportable at institutional level?
- Does this approach provide sufficient scope for institutions to demonstrate their approach and mechanisms to support research?
- Are any key aspects missing?