The Research Excellence Framework

- Assesses the quality of our work in relation to
  - outputs (publications and other outputs)
    - REF-2014 - 4 outputs per submitted academic
  - societal and economic impact of our research
    - REF-2014 - 1 impact case study per 10 academics
  - research environment

- Scored as a profile over
  - 4* - world leading
  - 3* - internationally excellent
  - 2* - recognised internationally
  - 1* - recognised nationally

- Maximise f(score-distribution, number-people-submitted)
REF-2021
What do we know?

• Open access policy
  • to be eligible for REF, publications must be deposited in an institutional / subject repository (= PURE)

• Likely assessment period
  • 1-Jan-2014 – 31-Dec-2020

• Likely staff census date
  • 30-Nov-2020

• Likely outcome date
  • Dec 2021

• Outputs, impact, environment
Stern Review, July 2016
Recommendations

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-excellence-framework-review

1. **Keep peer review**: Panels should continue to assess on the basis of peer review, with some “judicious use of metrics”

2. **Return everyone**: “all academic staff who have any significant responsibility to undertake research” returned ~ “independent researchers”

3. **Outputs not linked to individuals**: Set an average number of outputs per person, with minimum and maximum number per person

4. **No portability**: Outputs should not be portable between institutions

5. **Institutional-level impact cases**: Showcase interdisciplinary collaboration, university-wide impacts

6. **Fewer constraints on impact cases**: less prescriptive rules on how impact cases link to research

7. **Broader interpretation of impact**: including policy, public engagement and understanding, cultural life, academic impacts outside the field, teaching.

8. **Condensed environment statements**
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The most important part of the REF assessment is research outputs (publications)

- Expect range of 1–6 publications per submitted person with average of 2?, 3?, 4?

- Emphasise quality over quantity

- Originality, Significance, and Rigour

- 100 word statements to support each submitted output

- REF-2021 output period: Jan 2014 - Dec 2020
REF Impact

• What is REF impact?
  • “An effect on, change or benefit to the economy, society, culture, public policy or services, health, the environment or quality of life, beyond academia.”
  • Assessed in the form of impact case studies – REF-2014 impact case studies at http://impact.ref.ac.uk/CaseStudies/

• REF-2014 impact case studies contained:
  (1) summary of the impact, (2) underpinning research, (3) references to the research, (3) impact details, (4) corroborating sources.

• REF-20121: Impact occurs during Aug 2013 – July 2020, based on research done in Edinburgh since 2000

• Looking for “reach” and “significance”
Summary

• REF is an admin task; but optimising REF criteria should be correlated to research quality

• What to do?
  • write high quality papers and submit them to high quality venues – the REF criteria of originality, significance, and rigour are not bad things to consider when writing a paper…
  • think about how your research can have impact
  • track the impact of research that you have done

• Any questions?
  • ask now, or mail me at s.renals@ed.ac.uk