



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

REF-2021

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REF

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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REF Outputs

- 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