

REF – 100 words workshop

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What is it good for?

The primary purpose of REF is to **assess the quality of research** and produce outcomes for each submission made by institutions:

- The four higher education funding bodies will use the assessment outcomes to **inform the selective allocation of their grant** for research to the institutions which they fund.
- The assessment provides accountability for public investment in research and produces evidence of the benefits of this investment.
- The assessment outcomes provide benchmarking information and establish reputational yardsticks, for use within the higher education (HE) sector and for public information.

Stern Review and Consultation

- After the last REF in 2014, the Government asked Lord Stern to conduct an independent review of the process.
- His review was published in the summer of 2016, and made a number of recommendations.
- HEFCE then organised a consultation on the proposals and published an initial outcome in September 2017.
- Unfortunately some decisions were put out for further consultation and so the complete framework is not yet available.
- We do know that the next REF will take place in 2021, evaluating the period from **January 2014 to December 2020**.
- Applications for sub-panel chairs are now closed and the nomination process for sub-panel members is currently open.

Changes proposed by Stern

- The inclusion of all research-active staff
- Non-portability of outputs
- Group rather than individual assessment of output quality
- The approach to research impact
- The information required to assess the research environment
- The introduction of an institutional-level assessment of impact and environment

What we do know

- The dates: evaluating the period from **January 2014 to December 2020**.
- The proportions:
 - paper outputs remain at **60%**,
 - but impact case studies are now worth **25%**
 - and environment is worth **15%**.
- All academic staff will be returned.
- The process will be largely the same as before.

We don't yet have the decisions on **portability of outputs** or **Research staff eligibility**.

University REF preparedness plans

- In February/March 2017 a **REF-readiness exercise** was conducted:
 - The emphasis was on process rather than content at this stage, so there was no judgement of quality.
 - Steve Renals (our REF czar) and I carried out the check (3 papers per eligible member of staff) and filed a report to College Research Office.
 - Michael Fourman (our Impact Champion) reported on our process for capturing and developing impact case studies.
- There will be another exercise next year, but it will be a **mock REF exercise**, i.e. quality of papers will be checked and we will need to present some impact case studies in draft form.
- The full mock REF exercise is currently scheduled for **late summer 2018**, with some impact case studies due in **May 2018**.

Open Access Compliance

- For papers to be eligible for return in REF, they must be lodged in PURE within **3 months of paper acceptance**.
- **Research Data Team** contacts everyone approximately every three months asking them to verify their PURE record – please reply.
- Increasingly open access compliance is important for funders as well as for REF.
- For example, FP7 and H2020 project publication outputs are expected to be included in **OpenAire** — this can be set up to happen automatically from PURE, but only if papers are in PURE.
- The open access compliance with respect to research outputs is monitored monthly.