

# REF 2021 consultation on the draft guidance and criteria

**Introduction**

Responses to this consultation are invited from any organisation, group or individual with an interest in the conduct, quality, funding or use of research.

If you would like to save a copy of your response, please choose 'print response' on the last page of the survey. We regret that we won't be able to accommodate requests to download and send individual responses submitted.

Following the deadline, the REF team will copy responses to the Department for the Economy, Northern Ireland, the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales, Research England and the Scottish Funding Council. Responses will also be copied to the panel secretariat for the purposes of analysis. A summary of responses and, where requested, a copy of responses will be provided to the expert panels.

The funding bodies will be holding consultation events for HEIs during the consultation period. The events will outline the questions and proposals, and will provide an opportunity for institutions to raise any issues for clarification and discussion. HEIs across the UK may register up to two delegates each across all of the events. Details of these activities are available at [www.ref.ac.uk](http://www.ref.ac.uk), under Events.

The responses to this consultation will be considered by the funding bodies and by the REF panels during late 2018. The final ‘Guidance on submissions’ and ‘Panel criteria’ will be announced in early 2019.

We will commit to read, record and analyse responses to this consultation in a consistent manner. For reasons of practicality, usually a fair and balanced summary of responses rather than the individual responses themselves will inform any decision made. In most cases the merit of the arguments made is likely to be given more weight than the number of times the same point is made. Responses from organisations or representative bodies with high interest in the area under consultation, or likelihood of being affected most by the proposals, are likely to carry more weight than those with little or none.

We will publish an analysis of the consultation responses. We may publish individual responses to the consultation in the summary. Where we have not been able to respond to a significant material issue, we will usually explain the reasons for this.

Additionally, all responses may be disclosed on request, under the terms of the relevant Freedom of Information Acts across the UK. The Acts give a public right of access to any information held by a public authority, in this case the four UK funding bodies. This includes information provided in response to a consultation. We have a responsibility to decide whether any responses, including information about your identity, should be made public or treated as confidential. We can refuse to disclose information only in exceptional circumstances. This means that responses to this consultation are unlikely to be treated as confidential except in very particular circumstances. For further information about the Acts see the Information Commissioner’s Office website, www.ico.gov.uk or, in Scotland, the website of the Scottish Information Commissioner www.itspublicknowledge.info/home/

For further information relating to UK Research and Innovation’s Privacy notice, please visit https://www.ukri.org/privacy-notice/

**Respondent details**

**Please indicate who you are responding on behalf of: \***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | As an individual |
|  | Business |
|  | Charity |
|  | Department or research group |
|  | Higher Education Institution |
|  | Public sector organisation |
|  | Representative body |
|  | Subject association or learned society |
|  | Other (please specify):   |  | | --- | |  | |

**Please provide the name of your organisation. \***

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**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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**If your response is in relation to specific main panels, please indicate which one(s): \***

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Main Panel A: Medicine, Health and Life Sciences (Sub-Panels 1-6) |
|  | Main Panel B: Physical sciences, Engineering and Mathematics (Sub-Panels 7-12) |
|  | Main Panel C: Social Sciences (Sub-Panels 13-24) |
|  | Main Panel D: Arts and Humanities (Sub-Panels 25-34) |
|  | Relevant to all |

**We are seeking views during the consultation on both the draft guidance on submissions and the draft panel criteria and working methods. Please select the documents for which you would like to provide a response:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Both documents |
|  | Guidance on Submissions only |
|  | Panel Criteria and Working Methods only |
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**Guidance on submissions: Part 1: Overview of the assessment framework**

**1a. The guidance is clear in 'Part 1: Overview of the assessment framework':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

1b. Please provide any comments on Part 1. (300 word limit)

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 2: Submissions**

**2a. The guidance is clear in 'Part 2: Submissions':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

2b. Please provide any comments on Part 2. (300 word limit)

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 3, Section 1: Staff details (REF1a/b)**

**3a. The guidance is clear in 'Part 3, Section 1: Staff details':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

3b. Please provide any comments on Part 3, Section 1. (300 word limit)

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### **4. Possible indicators of research independence are set out at paragraph 130, including a reference to a list of independent fellowships. This list is intended to guide institutions on determining independence for staff holding fellowships from major research funders. The list is not intended to be comprehensive. Do you have any comments on the clarity, usefulness, or coverage of this list? (300 word limit)**

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### **5a. Do you agree with the proposed eligibility of seconded staff set out at paragraphs 121.c to d?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes |
|  | No |
|  | Other (please specify):   |  | | --- | |  | |

5b. Please provide any comments on this proposal. (300 word limit)

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### **6a. Do you agree with the proposed ineligibility of staff based in a discrete department or unit outside the UK?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes |
|  | No |
|  | Other (please specify):   |  | | --- | |  | |

6b. Please provide any comments on this proposal. (300 word limit)

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 3, Section 1: Staff circumstances (paragraphs 149 to 193)**

**7a. The proposed approach for taking account of circumstances will achieve the aim of promoting equality and diversity in REF 2021:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

Please provide any comments on your answer. (300 word limit)

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**7b. The potential advantages of the proposed approach outweigh the potential drawbacks identified:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

Please provide any comments on your answer. (300 word limit)

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**7c. Please provide any further comments on these proposals, including any suggestions for clarifying or refining the guidance. (300 word limit)**

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 3, Section 2: Research outputs (REF2)**

**8a. The guidance in 'Part 3, Section 2: Research outputs' is clear:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

8b. Please provide any comments on Part 3, Section 2. (300 word limit)

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**9. A glossary of output types and collection formats is set out at Annex K, to provide increased clarity to institutions on categorising types of output for submission. Do you have any comments on the clarity and usefulness of this annex?**

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**10a. Paragraph 206.b sets out the funding bodies’ intention to make ineligible the outputs of former staff who have been made redundant (except where the staff member has taken voluntary redundancy).Do you agree with this proposal?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes |
|  | No |
|  | Other (please specify):   |  | | --- | |  | |

10b. Please provide any further comments on this proposal. (300 word limit)

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**11a. Do you agree with the proposed intention to permit the submission of co-authored outputs only once within the same submission?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Yes |
|  | No |
|  | Other (please specify):   |  | | --- | |  | |

11b. Please provide any comments on this proposal. (300 word limit)

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 3, Section 2: Research activity cost for UOA 4**

**12a. How feasible do you consider to be the approach set out at paragraphs 267 to 271 for capturing information on the balance of research activity of different costs within submitting units in UOA 4? (300 word limit)**

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### **12b. Are the examples of high cost and other research activity sufficiently clear to guide classification? (300 word limit)**

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### **12c. Please provide feedback on any specific points in the guidance text as well as the overall clarity of the guidance. (300 word limit)**

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 3, Section 3: Impact (REF3)**

**13a. The guidance in 'Part 3, Section 3: Impact' is clear:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

13b. Please provide any comments on Part 3, Section 3. (300 word limit)

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**Guidance on submissions: Part 3, Sections 4-5: Environment data and environment (REF4a/b/c-REF5a/b)**

**14a. The guidance in 'Part 3, Section 4: Environment data' is clear:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

14b. Please provide any comments on Part 3, Section 4. (300 word limit)

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**15a. The guidance in 'Part 3, Section 5: Environment' is clear:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

15b. Please provide any comments on Part 3, Section 5. (300 word limit)

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**Guidance on Submissions: further comments**

**16. Please provide any further comments on the 'Guidance on submissions', including Annexes A-M. (500 word limit)**

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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 2: Unit of assessment descriptors**

**1. Do the UOA descriptors provide a clear and appropriate description of the disciplines covered by the UOAs? Please include any suggestions for refining the descriptors and state which UOA(s) you are commenting on.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | All |
|  | UOA 1: Clinical Medicine |
|  | UOA 2: Public Health, Health Services and Primary Care |
|  | UOA 3: Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy |
|  | UOA 4: Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience |
|  | UOA 5: Biological Sciences |
|  | UOA 6: Agriculture, Food and Veterinary Sciences |
|  | UOA 7: Earth Systems and Environmental Sciences |
|  | UOA 8: Chemistry |
|  | UOA 9: Physics |
|  | UOA 10: Mathematical Sciences |
|  | UOA 11: Computer Science and Informatics |
|  | UOA 12: Engineering |
|  | UOA 13: Architecture, Built Environment and Planning |
|  | UOA 14: Geography and Environmental Studies |
|  | UOA 15: Archaeology |
|  | UOA 16: Economics and Econometrics |
|  | UOA 17: Business and Management Studies |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | UOA 18: Law |
|  | UOA 19: Politics and International Studies |
|  | UOA 20: Social Work and Social Policy |
|  | UOA 21: Sociology |
|  | UOA 22: Anthropology and Development Studies |
|  | UOA 23: Education |
|  | UOA 24: Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism |
|  | UOA 25: Area Studies |
|  | UOA 26: Modern Languages and Linguistics |
|  | UOA 27: English Language and Literature |
|  | UOA 28: History |
|  | UOA 29: Classics |
|  | UOA 30: Philosophy |
|  | UOA 31: Theology and Religious Studies |
|  | UOA 32: Art and Design: History, Practice and Theory |
|  | UOA 33: Music, Drama, Dance, Performing Arts, Film and Screen Studies |
|  | UOA 34: Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management |

Where relevant, please state which UOA(s) you are commenting on.

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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 3, Section 1: Submissions**

**2a. Overall, the criteria are appropriate in 'Part 3, Section 1: Submissions':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**2b. Overall, the criteria are clear in 'Part 3, Section 1: Submissions':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**2c. Please comment on the criteria in 'Part 3, Section 1: Submissions', in particular on:**

**- where further clarification is required- where refinements could be made**

**- whether there are areas where more consistency across panels could be achieved**

**- whether there are differences between the disciplines that justify further differentiation between the main panel criteria.**

**Where referring to particular main panels, please state which one(s). (300 word limit)**

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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 3, Section 2: Outputs**

**3a. Overall, the criteria are appropriate in 'Part 3, Section 2: Outputs':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**3b. Overall, the criteria are clear in 'Part 3, Section 2: Outputs':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**3c. Please comment on the criteria in 'Part 3, Section 2: Outputs', in particular on:**

**- the proposed criteria for double-weighting outputs in Main Panels C and D, and on whether requests to double-weight books should automatically be accepted**

**- whether Annex C ‘Main Panel D – outputs types and submission guidance’ is helpful and clear**

**- where further clarification is required**

**- where refinements could be made**

**- whether there are areas where more consistency across panels could be achieved**

**- whether there are differences between the disciplines that justify further differentiation between the main panel criteria.**

**Where referring to particular main panels, please state which one(s). (300 word limit)**

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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 3, Section 3: Impact**

**4a. Overall, the criteria are appropriate in 'Part 3, Section 3: Impact':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

### **4b. Overall, the criteria are clear in 'Part 3, Section 3: Impact':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**4c. Please comment on the criteria in 'Part 3, Section 3: Impact', in particular on:**

**- where further clarification is required**

**- where refinements could be made**

**- whether there are areas where more consistency across panels could be achieved**

**- whether there are differences between the disciplines that justify further differentiation between the main panel criteria.**

**Where referring to particular main panels, please state which one(s). (300 word limit)**

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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 3, Section 4: Environment**

**5a. Overall, the criteria are appropriate in 'Part 3, Section 5: Environment':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**5b. Overall, the criteria are clear in 'Part 3, Section 4: Environment':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

### **5c. Please comment on the criteria in 'Part 3, Section 4: Environment', in particular on:**

**- whether the difference in section weightings across main panels is sufficiently justified by disciplinary difference (paragraphs 322 and 323)**

**- whether the list of quantitative indicators provided at www.ref.ac.uk is clear and helpful**

**- where further clarification is required**

**- where refinements could be made**

**- whether there are areas where more consistency across panels could be achieved**

**- whether there are differences between the disciplines that justify further differentiation between the main panel criteria.**

### **Where referring to particular main panels, please state which one(s). (300 word limit)**

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| --- |
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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 4: Panel procedures**

**6a. Overall, the criteria are appropriate in 'Part 4: Panel procedures':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**6b. Overall, the criteria are clear in 'Part 4: Panel procedures':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**6c. Please comment on the criteria in 'Part 4: Panel procedures', in particular on:- where further clarification is required or where refinements could be made. (300 word limit)**

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**Panel criteria and working methods: Part 5: Panel working methods**

**7a. a. Overall, the criteria are appropriate in 'Part 5: Panel working methods':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**7b. Overall, the criteria are clear in 'Part 5: Panel working methods':**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

**7c. Please comment on the criteria in 'Part 5: Panel working methods', in particular on: - where further clarification is required or where refinements could be made. (300 word limit)**

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**Overall panel criteria and working methods**

**8a. Overall, the ‘Panel criteria and working methods’ achieves an appropriate balance between consistency and allowing for discipline-based differences between the panels.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Strongly agree |
|  | Agree |
|  | Neither agree nor disagree |
|  | Disagree |
|  | Strongly disagree |

8b. Please comment on the balance between consistency and allowing for discipline-based differences between the main panels. (300 word limit)

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