

Research Assessment Exercise 2014

Panel 08 – Law **Specific Criteria and Working Methods** (August 2013)

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Introduction

1. Panels of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2014 have formulated panel-specific guidelines to provide advice on the criteria and working methods in assessing submissions to the RAE 2014. This document sets out the specific criteria and working methods that the Law Panel will apply. It should be read alongside the General Panel Guidelines. In areas where the panel-specific criteria do not provide further information, this is because the provisions in the General Panel Guidelines prevail and apply to the Panel without further elaboration or amplification.
2. The panel-specific guidelines may also assist institutions and staff members with the process of arranging submissions for assessment. These guidelines do not replace or supersede the requirements for submissions that are set out in the Guidance Notes for the RAE 2014.
3. The RAE 2014 is an expert review exercise. Panel members will exercise their knowledge, judgement and expertise to reach a collective view on the quality profile of research.

Section A: Submissions

Cost Centres under the Panel

4. The Law Panel acknowledges the mapping of cost centres in Appendix B of the General Panel Guidelines, also in Appendix F of the Guidance Notes. The Panel covers the following cost centre:

34 law

Weighting the Elements of the Assessment

5. The Law Panel will attach the weighting to the three elements of the assessment as follows when determining the overall quality profile for each cost centre:

- Research outputs : 80%
- External competitive peer-reviewed research grants : 5%
- Esteem measures : 15%

Research Strategy Statements

6. Following paragraphs 2.15, 2.16 and 3.2 of the Guidance Notes and paragraph 15 of the General Panel Guidelines, Research Strategy Statements submitted by each institution and individual cost centres of each institution will provide contextual information for the Panel when assessing the submissions.

7. The Panel would expect the Cost Centre's Research Strategy Statement to describe its research strategy, its role and stage of development as well as the distribution of research activity and outputs across research areas during the assessment period. It will reflect the cost centre's research philosophy, vision and priorities, and should not address future research strategy.

Output Types

8. The Law Panel will consider the eligibility of research outputs as described in paragraph 18 of the General Panel Guidelines and paragraphs 5.8 to 5.12 of the Guidance Notes.

9. The Panel will assess the quality of each eligible item on its own merits and not in terms of its publication category, medium or language of

publication. The Panel will study each item in detail and will not assess outputs mechanistically according to the medium of publication. The Panel recognises that there can be work of the highest quality in various output forms, and no distinction will be made between types of output submitted nor whether the output has been made available electronically or in a physical form.

10. Forms of research outputs that are admissible and specifically relevant to the Law Panel include the following examples. This should not be regarded as an exhaustive list. Equally, there is no implication of priority or importance in the ordering of examples in this list:

- books and book chapters
- journal articles
- policy submissions and reports

Co-authored/Co-produced Outputs

11. The Panel confirms the principles on assessing co-authored/co-produced research outputs as set out in paragraphs 31 to 33 of the General Panel Guidelines.

Double-weighted Outputs

12. Paragraphs 29 and 30 of the General Panel Guidelines and paragraphs 5.13 to 5.14 of the Guidance Notes indicate that in exceptional cases an academic may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted in the assessment. This Panel recognizes that there may be items of such scale and scope and will consider items submitted for double weighting in line with the General Panel Guidelines.

Section B: Assessment Criteria: Research Outputs

Criteria and Quality Levels

13. Panel members will use their own informed judgement with reference to international standards in assessing research outputs.

14. In assessing outputs, the Panel will look for evidence of originality, significance and rigour, and will grade each item into one of the five categories of quality level as set out in paragraph 19 of the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel will use the generic description of the quality levels as set out in paragraph 20 of the General Panel Guidelines.

15. In addition, the Law Panel provides the following advice on their understanding of the quality definitions adopted for assessing research outputs:

In assessing the quality of eligible research outputs, the Panel will bear in mind the Carnegie Foundation's definition of scholarship (as described in Appendix A of the Guidance Notes) and will recognize the diversity of legal research and of the audiences to which it is addressed.

Additional Information on Outputs

16. Other than the data as specified in the Guidance Notes, and unless specifically required by the Panel, no other information should be provided, and the Panel will take no account of any such information if submitted.

Metrics

17. This Panel will not seek, accept or use bibliometric data in reaching its judgements on the quality of submitted research outputs.

Section C: Assessment Criteria: External Competitive Peer-reviewed Research Grants

18. This Panel will review the completed proforma on external competitive peer-reviewed grants and the listing of the competitive peer-reviewed grants as described in paragraphs 7.2 to 7.4 of the Guidance Notes.

19. Pursuant to paragraphs 45 to 47 of the General Panel Guidelines, factors relevant to the Panel's evaluation of the submitted data are as follows:

- a. The number of eligible staff members.
- b. The trajectory of funding (relative growth or decline through the assessment period).
- c. The total number and value of grants and their distribution amongst the eligible staff members of the cost centre.
- d. That the level and profile of external, competitive, peer-reviewed research grant activity may be affected by the areas of specialism and research strategy of the cost centre.
- e. That all grant sources should be treated equally.

- f. That some areas of legal research are more resource-intensive than others.

Section D: Assessment Criteria: Esteem Measures

20. This Panel will assess esteem measures according to the generic criteria in paragraphs 7.5 and 7.6 of the Guidance Notes. Esteem measures should be recognition conferred by an external body.

21. Indicators of esteem that are of particular relevance to the Law Panel include, but are not limited to, the following in no particular order:

- Editorship of journals
- Membership of editorial or advisory boards of journals
- Editorship of prestigious encyclopedias and handbooks
- Honours and prizes
- Significant grants or donations for research which are not competitive or peer-reviewed (e.g. industry research grants)
- Major government or industry consultancies
- Keynote addresses at major international conferences
- Named lectures
- Citation of eligible research outputs by courts

22. This Panel will make an overall judgement about the indicators of esteem relating to individual academics and groups according to paragraphs 48 to 50 of the General Panel Guidelines.

Section E : Working Methods

Allocation of work

23. The Convenor, consulting the Deputy Convenor and other panel members as appropriate, will allocate work to members and if necessary external reviewers in light of their expertise and workload, and taking into account any potential conflicts of interest. All panel members will take account of the requirements of the General Panel Guidelines to ensure that the exercise is conducted fairly and transparently.

Use of Sub-Groups

24. The Law Panel does not intend to establish sub-groups.

Assessment Process

25. Panel members will examine the submitted outputs in detail, and put forward a recommendation to the panel for a collective decision on the final grading. To ensure fairness and consistency, each research output will be assessed in detail by at least two members, one of whom will, where possible, be a non-local member.

26. Subject to conflicts of interest, the assessment of external peer-reviewed research grant and esteem measures will be undertaken by each member of the Panel and grading will be a collective decision of the Panel.

External Reviewers

27. This Panel will follow the procedure in paragraph 42 of the General Panel Guidelines when referral to external reviewers becomes necessary for panel assessment. In considering requests for external review, the Panel Convenor may consult the UGC Secretariat but will be ultimately responsible for identifying suitable external reviewers.

Cross Referral

28. This Panel will follow the process described in paragraphs 37 to 41 of the General Panel Guidelines when initiating and assessing cross-referrals by another panel.

29. Generally, research on pedagogy and education issues submitted to this Panel will be assessed by panel members or external reviewers with expertise in pedagogy. Exceptionally, such work may be cross-referred to Panel 13, Education.

Trial Assessment

30. Following paragraphs 67 and 68 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will conduct a trial assessment using a representative sample consisting of up to 5% of the total of submitted eligible research outputs spread proportionally across institutions. In the trial, each output will be assessed by all Panel members. The Panel will assess the data relating to external, competitive, peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures submitted by one of three submitting institutions. The purpose of the trial is to determine whether the assessment criteria and procedures set out in this document need to be modified.