

Research Assessment Exercise 2014

Panel 11 – Humanities **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 Humanities 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 Humanities 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 centres:

- 44 Chinese language & literature
- 45 English language & literature
- 48 translation
- 50 history
- 51 other arts/humanities
- 67 area studies (e.g. Japanese studies, European studies, etc.)
- 68 philosophy & religious studies
- 69 linguistics & language studies
- 70 cultural studies

Weighting the Elements of the Assessment

5. The Panel will attach the default 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 : 10%
- Esteem measures : 10%

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 include a factual description of the research environment of the cost centre. The Panel is especially interested in information provided on a cost centre's support for early career researchers, career planning and mentoring (such as involvement in building disciplines through the training of postgraduates). The Panel is also interested in information on the organisational structure of a cost centre, given that cost centres are not

necessarily exact mappings of pre-existing departments and given that some submissions will be split between departments. Useful information may include, for example, any change in strategic direction over the assessment period.

Output Types

8. The Humanities 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 Humanities 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, book chapters and research monographs
- published conference papers/proceedings
- edited books, special issues of journals
- creative works relevant to the cost centres in this panel
- digitally produced and/or disseminated works
- reports
- published papers in journals
- websites, digital data bases, microfilm collections, DVDs
- significant curated works that show evidence of research input

11. Research outputs will be assessed for the quality of original research they include. All outputs will be judged only on their original research or new insight derived through the process and publication of the work concerned.

Co-authored/Co-produced Outputs

12. 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

13. 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

14. Panel members will use their professional judgement with reference to international standards in assessing research outputs.

15. 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.

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

The Panel will look for evidence of some of the following types of characteristics of quality, as appropriate to each of the quality levels:

- significant rigour and excellence, with regard to design, method, execution, originality, and analysis
- significant addition to knowledge and to the conceptual framework of the field
- the scale, challenge and logistical difficulty posed by the research
- the logical coherence of argument

- contribution to theory-building
- significance of work to advance and disseminate knowledge, skills, understanding and scholarship in theory, practice, education, management and/or policy

Additional Information on Outputs

17. 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

18. This Panel does not expect to refer to metrics in reaching its judgements on the quality of submitted research outputs.

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

19. 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.

20. 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. That only competitively awarded grants awarded for research purposes are considered relevant.
- b. The monetary value of individual grants as well as the total number and total value of research grants for the cost centre.
- c. The source of funding.
- d. The overall balance of funding sources.
- e. The trajectory of funding (relative growth or decline through the period) as an important demonstration of vitality.
- f. That some areas of research within its remit are less resource-intensive than others.
- g. The fit of research grants with the cost centre's research strategy.

Section D: Assessment Criteria: Esteem Measures

21. This Panel will assess esteem measures according to paragraphs 7.5 and 7.6 of the Guidance Notes. Esteem measures should be recognition conferred by an external body. They may include, but are not limited to, editorship of academic journals, research-based awards, honours or prizes, significant grants or donations for research, which are not competitive or peer-reviewed (e.g. industry research grants), government consultancy awarded through tender process.

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

- Prizes, honours, major fellowships, significant invitations to address academic, public and policy audiences, major editorial responsibilities, active membership of major committees, election to academic and learned societies, appointment to leading public service bodies, significant advisory roles, participation in external promotion committees, a significant profile in the media

23. The Panel would particularly welcome the following research group or cost centre level esteem indicators:

- Exemplars of collaborations with industry or other end-users of research, including in particular long-standing partnerships and knowledge transfer
- Exemplars of commercialisations activity in terms of patents awarded, creation of spin-outs or other forms of wealth creation
- Exemplars of the impact of research activity on policy, practice and the quality of life
- The social and cultural life of the community

24. Pursuant to paragraphs 48 to 50 of the General Panel Guidelines, this Panel will make an overall judgement about the indicators of esteem relating to individual academics and groups based on the following criteria:

- comparison with like cost centres internationally
- comparison with like cost centres locally

Section E : Working Methods

Allocation of work

25. 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

26. The Humanities Panel does not intend to establish sub-groups.

Assessment Process

27. 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 should be a non-local member to the extent possible. Similarly, for those cost centres which are only housed at one or two local institutions, submissions should be assigned to at least one non-local member in order to ensure fair and impartial assessment.

28. 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

29. 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 the Humanities Panel it is expected that referral to external reviewers is likely to be required in cases where an output is in a sub-discipline or language unfamiliar to any of the Panel members.

Cross Referral

30. 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 or by cost centre(s) within the Panel.

31. 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

32. Following paragraphs 67 and 68 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will conduct a trial assessment using a sample of 5 articles, 1 monograph, and 2 non-traditional items, together with a sample of data on external competitive peer-reviewed grants and esteem measures submitted to the Panel. The sample submissions will be trial assessed by all members of the Panel.