

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE

Research Assessment Exercise 2014

Questions and Answers (Q&As)

The following series of questions (Q) and answers (A) pertain to the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2014 in general and the submissions required in light of the promulgation of the Guidance Notes, General Panel Guidelines, Panel-Specific Criteria and Working Methods for the RAE 2014. Relevant guidance materials are available on the UGC website at <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/rae/rae2014.htm>.

A. Purpose and Scope of Assessment

1. Q: *What is the purpose of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2014?*

A: The RAE 2014 is intended to assess the quality of research of University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions on a sharpened basis by cost centre and to drive excellence by evaluating their outputs, inputs and esteem measures; the results will be one of the factors for the allocation of part of the research portion of the recurrent Block Grant in a publicly accountable way. Essentially, cost centres of similar disciplines will be compared (e.g. History with History, but not History with Chemistry.) Results will be communicated on a cost centre basis without disclosing the identity of individual academic staff.

2. Q: *What is the dimension of assessment in the RAE 2014? How is that different from past RAEs?*

A: While the past RAEs focused on assessment of research outcome / outputs, the RAE 2014 has broadened the dimension of assessment in that:

- (a) 80% of the weighting is based on the quality of research outputs;
- (b) 20% of the weighting correlates with other assessments on a cost-centre basis, namely (i) research inputs, i.e. the number and magnitude of external competitive peer-reviewed research grants received; and (ii) esteem measures e.g. awards and editorship in prestigious academic publications. The default weighting split between peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures is

10/10, but a panel may justify a departure from the default weighting split (to either 15/5 or 5/15). The weighting split for individual panel is stated in the respective panel-specific criteria and working methods for each of the 13 panels.

3. Q: *Why spending resources to conduct research assessment in the way as proposed in the Guidance Notes which involves evaluation by panels, and not referring to some existing agency ranking and research profiling of the institutions?*

A: Extended consultations and discussions between the UGC and institutions have been undertaken in reaching a decision to conduct a RAE in 2014. Different from pure formulaic science, the RAE involves evaluation by experts in respective fields and benchmarking against international standards. Therefore it requires expert panels to conduct the assessment. Should there be any mechanism that can sufficiently fulfill the purpose of research assessment, then panel assessment may be replaced. As an agreeable mechanism is yet to be identified and the results of RAE serve to inform allocation of part of the research portion of the Block Grant, there is a need to conduct a new RAE to provide more up-to-date quality profiles of research performance among institutions on a cost centre basis.

4. Q: *The Carnegie Foundation's definition of four types of scholarship has been adopted since the RAE 1999. What is their role in the RAE 2014 and are they listed in the order of value?*

A: The UGC considers it important to maintain an inclusive view in defining the scope of research for the purposes of assessment activities. The Carnegie Foundation's definition of four types of scholarship (namely discovery, integration, application and teaching) has been adopted to help addressing the perceived bias in favour of the so-called basic/traditional research. It remains a useful guiding reference on the scope of research for the RAE 2014. Institutions will not be required to classify research outputs into one of the four types of scholarship for their submissions. Moreover, the UGC would like to reiterate that it is the quality of research that matters and none of the four types of scholarship is of higher value than the others.

B. Assessment Period and Important Dates

5. Q: *What is the assessment period and census date for the RAE 2014?*

A: The census date for the RAE 2014 is 30 September 2013, and the period of assessment is six years from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013. For the submissions by institutions, relevant periods as stipulated in the Guidance Notes in relation to research outputs, external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures are summarized below:

- (a) Research outputs: “assessment year” period from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013; “gap year” period (since the last RAE) from 1 January 2006 to 30 September 2007;
- (b) External competitive peer-reviewed research grants: reporting of relevant data for the period from 2007/08 to 2012/13 academic years, i.e. from 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2013;
- (c) Esteem measures: reporting of relevant data for the assessment period from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013.

6. Q: *When is the due date for institutions to make submissions for the RAE 2014?*

A: Institutions are requested to submit the following data and supporting documents through an RAE electronic system as well as any outputs in physical format in accordance with the dates below:

- 2 December 2013 - A list of all eligible academic staff for each cost centre;
- 16 December 2013* - Research Strategy Statement of the institution;
 - Research Strategy Statement of each cost centre;
 - A full set of research output items and data on such research outputs;
 - Data on external competitive peer-reviewed grants received by each cost centre and esteem measures of each cost centre.

* *To avoid overloading to the electronic system, consideration is being given to allow institutions to submit the research data within a specific time-slot on 16 or 17 December 2013 by ballot voting. The detailed arrangement, if finalised, will be announced separately by the UGC Secretariat.*

C. Eligibility of Academic Staff

7. Q: *What are the eligibility criteria for making submissions of research outputs for the RAE 2014?*

A: According to Section IV. of the Guidance Notes, a staff member must meet all the following criteria in order to be eligible for submitting research outputs for the RAE 2014:

- (a) holding a full-time paid appointment at a UGC-funded institution for a continuous period of at least 36 months covering the census date, i.e. 30 September 2013, provided that the employment start date was no later than 1 October 2012; and
- (b) wholly funded by the institution proper¹ for degree or higher degree work within staff grades of “Professor” to “Assistant Lecturer”, or corresponding to Staff Grades “A” to “I” as defined for the purpose of the UGC Common Data Collection Format (CDCF).

¹ Excluding schools/arms of the continuing education and professional training and other analogous organisations.

8. Q: *Will all eligible academic staff of an institution or just those who make submissions be counted in the RAE 2014?*

A: All academic staff of an institution who meet the eligibility criteria as set out in Section IV. of the Guidance Notes, regardless they make submissions or not, will be taken into account in the institution’s results in the RAE 2014. Nevertheless, the RAE 2014 will be assessing the quality of research of the institutions holistically on a cost centre basis rather than evaluating each individual submitting staff member.

9. Q: *If an academic staff member has taken or is taking no-pay leave during the assessment period, is he/she eligible for submitting research outputs for the RAE 2014?*

A: The Guidance Notes includes a statement, among others, that “only academic staff who have full-time paid appointment at a UGC-funded institution for a continuous period of at least 36 months may submit information to be assessed, provided that the employment start date was no later than 1 October 2012”. So long as the staff member concerned holds a full-time paid appointment as stated, he/she would be regarded as an eligible staff member irrespective of any paid or unpaid leave taken during the period, subject to meeting other

requirements in the Guidance Notes. For instance, for a staff member holding a continuous full-time paid appointment with an institution since 1 January 2008 and with the current paid appointment contract valid until 31 December 2013, if he/she should take one-day unpaid leave on 30 September 2013 (the census date) for whatever reasons, as long as he/she would still be under the paid employment contract with the institution, this staff member would still be regarded as eligible.

10. Q: *Will any exemption arrangement be given to certain academic staff, such as those who are in practice-oriented disciplines or those who were / have been on leave for a prolonged period during the assessment period?*

A: All academic staff who meet the eligibility criteria in Section IV. of the Guidance Notes are included in the RAE 2014. There is no exemption arrangement for particular groups of staff under the RAE 2014. Moreover, research submissions will be assessed on their merits on a cost centre basis. Research outputs and submissions of a discipline will be compared with peers alike.

11. Q: *How institutions are to handle academic staff who are on joint appointment by more than one cost centre of an institution?*

A: Provided that the staff concerned meet all the eligibility criteria as set out in Section IV. of the Guidance Notes for the RAE 2014, institutions are required to assign each of the eligible full-time paid academic staff, including those on joint appointment by two or more cost centres in the same institution, to a primary cost centre by head count. Each eligible staff member reported will be counted as a whole unit "1" against the cost centre to which he/she is assigned.

12. Q: *Can institutions assign just one member of eligible academic staff to a cost centre for the RAE 2014?*

A: The number of eligible academic staff members in an institution's cost centre must be three or more.

D. Research Outputs

13. Q: *How many research outputs can a member of eligible academic staff submit for assessment?*

A: Each eligible staff member can only submit a maximum number of four research outputs for assessment as per paragraph 5.4 of the Guidance Notes. That is, each eligible academic staff member can submit up to four research outputs produced during the assessment period, or up to three research outputs produced in the assessment period plus up to one research output produced in the gap year period. Individual staff members can choose to submit fewer than four items, and in such case, the missing item(s) will be counted as “unclassified”.

14. Q: *Will professorial staff who have been engaged in full-time or above-average administrative duties be given a special weighting to, or optional exemption from, submitting research outputs for the RAE 2014?*

A: While there could be operational difficulties and possible loopholes in defining who are eligible for special weighting, the RAE 2014 would follow the past RAEs that no special weighting would be given to staff with full-time or above-average administrative duties.

According to Section IV and paragraph 5.3 of the Guidance Notes, each institution is free to decide, in consultation with the individual staff member concerned, not to make a submission, and no adverse record should or will be attached to any individual in respect of whom such a decision is taken. If the individual staff member is listed as eligible academic staff of the institution but does not submit any research output for assessment, he/she will be deemed to have submitted four “unclassified” outputs.

15. Q: *Will a greater weighting be given to new researchers who submit four research outputs, especially quality ones?*

A: Special arrangement is provided for new researchers who, for the purpose of the RAE 2014, are eligible staff who first took up a full-time academic appointment (in Hong Kong or elsewhere) on or before 1 August 2009. According to the scales as set out at paragraph 5.15 of the Guidance Notes, new researchers may reduce the number of research outputs to be submitted for the RAE 2014

without the reduced item(s) being regarded as missing and deemed as “unclassified”, as follows:

Time before the census date	Event #	Number of outputs may be reduced by up to
39 to 50 months	Between 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010 inclusive	1
27 to 38 months	Between 1 August 2010 and 31 July 2011 inclusive	2
Less than 26 months	On or after 1 August 2011	3

Event refers to the date the academic first took up a full-time academic appointment in Hong Kong or elsewhere (staff grades “A” to “I” in Hong Kong, or an appointment not below assistant professorship or equivalent outside Hong Kong).

However, a new researcher can choose to submit up to four research outputs if he/she so wishes. To maintain a fair assessment on a merit basis, no additional weighting would be given to research outputs by new researchers.

16. Q: *What kinds of research outputs can be submitted for the RAE 2014?*

A: According to paragraph 5.8 of the Guidance Notes, all output items submitted for assessment must meet all of the following criteria except PhD dissertations which are not accepted as outputs for assessment:

- (a) the output contains an element of innovation;
- (b) the output and its process contribute to scholarship; and
- (c) the output is publicly accessible.

For other criteria such as date of publication, please see paragraph 5.7 of the Guidance Notes.

17. Q: *Can research outputs which are not yet published by the census date be accepted for submission for the RAE 2014?*

A: Provided that a research output meets all of criteria at paragraph 5.8 of Guidance Notes, it can be submitted for the RAE 2014 subject to the maximum number of research outputs per each eligible academic staff member. Items that are regarded as research outputs include:

- (a) any publication, patent awarded or published patent publication, artifact, etc., provided it was –
 - (i) published or made publicly available in other form within the assessment periods as set out at paragraph 5.7 of the Guidance Notes (also in Q&A.5 above); or
 - (ii) not yet published, but officially accepted for publication (without any prior condition for its publication) within the assessment periods as set out at paragraph 5.7 of the Guidance Notes. In this case, a letter of acceptance must be attached; or
- (b) other output that may or may not be published, e.g. performance recording, video tape, computer software programme, architectural drawings, or any creative work that can be evaluated for merit and an assessment obtained.

Output items of exhibitions and demonstrations relating to proprietary research which are (i) accessible to the public and the profession, (ii) non-traditional output for assessment, and (iii) contain enough information for evaluation, may be submitted for assessment.

18. Q: *According to paragraph 5.2 of the Guidance Notes, research outputs which are inter-disciplinary in nature are to be flagged by the submitting staff concerned who also need to indicate the primary cost centre and secondary cost centre of the research outputs for relevant panel's consideration. In this case, should the primary or secondary cost centre of an interdisciplinary research output be identical with the primary cost centre of the submitting staff member?*

A: For the submission of a research output which is interdisciplinary in nature, the submitting staff member may refer to the list of cost centres at Appendix C of the Guidance Notes for indication of the primary cost centre and secondary cost centre of the research output. The primary cost centre and the secondary cost centre of an interdisciplinary research output do not necessarily be identical as that of the submitting staff member. However, in the event that the interdisciplinary research output is referred to other cost centre(s) under the same or different panels for assessment, the final score of the output will be logged to the primary cost centre of the submitting staff concerned.

19. Q: *Can co-authored research items from the same institutions be submitted for the RAE 2014?*

A: Submission of a co-authored research output by two or more academics within the same institution (irrespective of whether or not they are from one or more cost centres) will be counted as one output. If a co-authored research output is submitted by more than one academic within an institution, the institution needs to flag this and specify the academic under whose name the output is submitted for rating, so that the relevant panel will rate it once, with the other submission(s) (of the same item) graded as unclassified.

20. Q: *How many research outputs can an eligible staff member request for double-weighting in assessment?*

A: Pursuant to paragraphs 5.13 and 5.14 of the Guidance Notes, an academic may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted (i.e. counted as two outputs) in the assessment. No single output may be counted as more than double-weighted, and no more than two outputs listed should be listed for double-weighting against an individual academic.

21. Q: *Can a member of eligible academic staff submit a research output which was produced in the “gap year” period as the “reserve” item for a research output requested for double-weighting?*

A: According to paragraphs 5.4, 5.13 and 5.14 of the Guidance Notes, each eligible academic staff member can submit up to one “gap year” item in his/her submission of a maximum four research outputs for the RAE 2014. Provided that all other research output(s) submitted by the same staff member, including those requested for double-weighting, was/were not produced in the “gap year” period, the staff member concerned may submit a research output which was produced in the “gap year” period as “reserve” item for a research output produced in the “assessment year” period. If the staff member requests to double-weight a “gap year” output, the corresponding “reserve” item must be produced in the “assessment year” period.

22. Q: *If a research output is an online-only or online-first publication and is yet to be formally published in print, is it regarded as a published output?*

A: If the research output was published online and fulfills the criteria as

set out at 5.8 of the Guidance Notes, the output is regarded as published even if it was firstly published online.

23. Q: ***If a research output was published before or during the assessment periods, could a revised or translated version of the output as second edition or second language publication be submitted for the RAE 2014?***

A: If an eligible staff member already published his/her research output before the assessment periods for the RAE 2014, i.e. before 1 January 2006, a revised edition or translated version of this output would only be a derivative work of the staff member's previously published output. It could not be regarded as an output produced during the assessment periods that meet the criteria at paragraph 5.8 of the Guidance Notes for the RAE 2014.

24. Q: ***In what circumstances will textual justification or description be required for the submission of research outputs?***

A: With reference to the prevailing Guidance Notes for the RAE 2014 and panel-specific criteria and working methods of the 13 RAE panels, textual information is required for research outputs only under the following circumstances -

- (a) 100 words justification for requesting to double-weight a research output;
- (b) 150 words description for each non-traditional output as described in paragraphs 5.9(b) and 5.17(b) of the Guidance Notes, i.e. other outputs that may or may not be published, e.g. performance recording, video tape, computer software programme, architectural drawings, or any creative work that can be evaluated for merit and an assessment obtained.

25. Q: ***What data in relation to research outputs are required for submission for the RAE 2014?***

A: Relevant data requirements and specifications in relation to research outputs as well as other required submissions have been promulgated separately in the data templates A, B, C, D, E, F1, F2, G1, G2 and G3 in relation to the Data Preparation, File Upload and Data Submission Guidelines of the RAE Electronic System (RAEES). Relevant data templates will also be accessible by authorized users of institutions from the RAEES upon production.

26. Q: *How should research outputs which are published in parts be handled and submitted for the RAE 2014?*

A: It would be the decision of the Heads of Institutions (HoIs) as to whether research outputs published in more than one part only form a single coherent work when viewed together. If this is the case, the output should be submitted as such and not subdivided for submission as two or more separate items. Equally, however, if the separate parts stand alone as single coherent research outputs, they should be submitted as such. The Panel will assess the quality of the submitted work on its merits. If the Panel is not satisfied that the submitted parts form a single coherent work as submission of one research output, an unclassified grade may be used.

This kind of research outputs which should be very rare have to be certified by the Head of submitting institution or his/her delegate (i.e. Institutional Representatives for the coordination of the RAE 2014) with an one-page institutional endorsement with supporting argument that they do constitute a single body of work.

In considering such research outputs, it is expected that the individual parts should normally be published on the same date or very close in time, by the same group of authors/editors and by the same publisher/manufacturer, and probably reflected by the titles of the research outputs in parts.

E. External Competitive Peer-reviewed Research Grants

27. Q: *What can be submitted as “external competitive peer-reviewed research grants” for the RAE 2014?*

A: According to Section VII. (B) of the Guidance Notes, data on external competitive peer-reviewed research grants in form of Appendix G and Attachment to Appendix G of the Guidance Notes are to be reported per cost centre of an institution. The reporting of such data refers to: (i) external competitive peer-reviewed research grants received, i.e. grants received from outside the institution on a competitive basis through peer review to fund research; (ii) external competitive peer-reviewed research grants outside Hong Kong which are under the control of eligible submitting staff of a cost centre, i.e. the staff concerned have the authority to approve the use of the grants, for the research projects which would result in publications while the grants may not necessarily be transferred to the institutions

for use in Hong Kong, provided that the principles in Section VII. (B) of the Guidance Notes are abided by.

28. Q: *Should the external competitive peer-reviewed grants to be reported in terms of funding amounts and project details be grants held by eligible academic staff of a cost centre?*

A: For the reporting of external competitive peer-reviewed research grants outside Hong Kong which may not necessarily be transferred to the institutions for use in Hong Kong, such grants must be under the control of a researcher being an eligible submitting staff of an institution. As for other external competitive peer-reviewed research grants received by a cost centre of an institution, there is no prescription that such grants must be held by eligible academic staff. That said, the number of eligible academic staff per cost centre is relevant in respect of the maximum number of grants to be listed in Attachment to Appendix G of the Guidance Notes per cost centre.

29. Q: *Can a cost centre report an external competitive peer-reviewed research grant held by an academic staff member while the grant was funded and completed when the staff member was at another institution?*

A: The external competitive peer-reviewed research grant in question is not to be reported by the cost centre. The relevant cost centre of the staff member's previous institution may report the grant instead.

30. Q: *Should overhead, indirect/on-costs of an external competitive peer-reviewed research grants included in the funding amounts?*

A: Indirect/on-costs of external competitive peer-reviewed grants are to be included in the academic year in which the corresponding project funding is paid. This applies to the reporting in the Appendix G and the Attachment to Appendix G of the Guidance Notes. For the reporting of indirect/on-costs for Research Grants Council (RGC)'s Earmarked Research Grants (ERG) which may not be transferred to institutions at the same time as project funding, such indirect/on-costs refer to part of the research portion of the Block Grant which are distributed for such RGC's ERG projects starting from 2012/13 in form of "on-cost, PI cost and HSS premium".

31. Q: *Certain external competitive peer-reviewed grants may have unspent funds, how is such amount reported?*

A: Regarding unspent funds of external competitive peer-reviewed research grants which were subsequently returned to the funding body in 2007/08 to 2012/13 academic years, the relevant institutions should not report such amount in Appendix G. For example, if an institution received a grant of \$1 million in 2007/08 and reported so in Appendix G, but later returned an unspent balance of \$0.1 million in 2010/11, the returned \$0.1 million should be deducted in Appendix G accordingly.

32. Q: *How should “percentage of award to cost centre” be reported for collaborative external competitive peer-reviewed research grants in the Attachment to Appendix G of the Guidance Notes?*

A: “Percentage of award to cost centre” in the Attachment to Appendix G refers to the percentage of the net award amount to the cost centre for the project over the total award amount of the project.

The budget plan and funding shared by collaborators on certain projects may change during the project period. For the purpose of the RAE 2014, please report the relevant percentage of the award to the cost centre according to the position of the approved budget plan as at the census date on 30 September 2013.

33. Q: *How should funding amounts be reported in Hong Kong dollars if certain external competitive peer-reviewed research grants are/were funded in foreign currencies?*

A: For external competitive peer-reviewed research grants in foreign currencies, please report the amount converted to amount in Hong Kong dollars at the time of funding receipt or, for grants outside Hong Kong which may not be transferred to the institutions for use in Hong Kong, the date when the grants started to be under the control by the submitting staff.

F. Esteem Measures

34. Q: *Could a series of esteem measures of similar nature be reported as an item of esteem measure for the RAE 2014?*

A: According to paragraph 7.5(d) of the Guidance Notes, each separate

item of esteem measure should cover a single incidence, e.g. Editor of Journal A; Invited Keynote Speaker at Conference X; etc. Examples like serving on editorial board of different journals, or receiving awards / donations for similar purpose in different occasions during the assessment period, are not regarded as single incidence.

35. Q: ***According to paragraph 7.5 (a) of the Guidance Notes, each cost centre of an institution is required to provide data on esteem measures in respect of submitting staff. Is “submitting staff” referred to any eligible academic staff or any staff in the cost centre?***

A: The data on esteem measures relating to individual academics (up to four items for each academic) refer to esteem measures in respect of submitting staff who are on the list of eligible academic staff of the cost centre for the RAE 2014. For esteem involving staff outside the eligible academic staff list, the cost centre may consider including such information in the “Cost Centre’s Research Strategy Statement and Summary of Research Activities” or as group esteem measures as appropriate.

36. Q: ***Could esteem measures of life-long honours which were conferred outside the assessment period be reported for the RAE 2014?***

A: If the conferment of such esteem measures to an eligible academic staff member took place during the assessment period, i.e. from 1 October 2007 to 31 September 2013, this incidence could be reported as an esteem measure relating to the individual academic for the RAE 2014. For academics who already obtained certain esteem before the assessment period, they may consider submitting other esteems that were granted or conducted during the assessment period as they see fit.

37. Q: ***If an academic has been serving on the editorial board of a journal before the assessment period and continues the editorship till now, could this be reported for the RAE 2014?***

A: If an academic's appointment on the editorial board of a journal was recognised by the relevant journal and took place in the assessment period, from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013, it can be submitted as an esteem measure relating to individual academics.

38. Q: *If an esteem measure was conferred to one academic of a cost centre with other researchers outside of the cost centre, such as a paper award for a co-authored article, should it be reported as an esteem measure in relation to individual academic or as a group esteem measure?*

A: According to paragraph 7.5 (b) of the Guidance Notes, “group esteem measures” refers to esteem measures in respect of groups of staff or the cost centre as a whole. An esteem measure relating to one individual academic of the cost centre with a group of other researchers outside the cost centre should be reported as an esteem measure relating to individual academic in the cost centre’s submission.

G. Research Strategy Statements

39. Q: *For the submission of “Institution’s Research Strategy Statement”, what should be attached in addition to the statement content?*

A: Subject to the prescribed format, attachment of (1) institution’s role statement and (2) institution’s scores by cost centre in the RAE 2006, each at one A4 page, is required in addition to the “Institution’s Research Strategy Statement” at the maximum length of two A4 pages.

40. Q: *Could the “Institution’s Research Strategy Statement” cover a fuller picture of the research environment than only listing grant income?*

A: Each institution will be required to submit a Research Strategy Statement, which is not restricted to listing of grant income. Instead, the statement should reflect, among others, each institution’s research philosophy, vision and priorities in relation to its role and stage of development, and the distribution of research efforts across disciplines. It should state and justify the institution’s selected research focus areas, its existing strengths and standard, as well as its overall long-term research strategy.

41. Q: *What is the “assessment period” being referred in the proforma of “Cost Centre’s Research Strategy Statement and Summary of Research Activities” at Appendix D to the Guidance Notes?*

A: The “assessment period” as stated in the proforma for “Cost Centre’s

Research Strategy Statement and Summary of Research Activities” refers to the period from 1 October 2007 to 30 September 2013.

42. Q: *Could the research portfolio in “Cost Centre’s Research Strategy Statement and Summary of Research Activities” include research activities of staff members who are not returned on the list of eligible academic staff of the cost centre?*

A: As stated in paragraph 3.2 of the Guidance Notes, the “Cost Centre’s Research Strategy Statement and Summary of Research Activities” will not be assessed but will provide a context for the panel’s deliberations and assessment of the cost centres. The submission of such statement and summary of research activities is for the cost centre as a whole, without specific inclusion or exclusion of particular group of staff.

H. Assessment Mechanism

43. Q: *Will the assessment be conducted by RAE panel members only?*

A: The assessment work is not limited to panel members. Expert advice from external reviewers will be sought as necessary.

44. Q: *Will research outputs produced in the “gap year” period be given a lower weighting?*

A: Research outputs produced in the “gap year” period and “assessment year” period will be assessed equally on a merit basis.

45. Q: *How do RAE panels assess non-refereed research output items?*

A: Research outputs will be judged on their own merits and will not be judged simply on their category or venues of publication. There could be quality output items in venues which are not peer-reviewed. In these cases and in any case when in doubt, the panel will review the item in question and will not judge it mechanically.

46. Q: *Will the RAE 2014 make assessment on a research portfolio basis (e.g. a series of research papers) of a staff member instead of individual research outputs?*

A: The panels will not conduct research portfolio analysis of individual researchers, but the quality profile of individual institutions’ cost

centres will be produced.

47. Q: ***How does a RAE panel assess non-traditional research output items if the panel does not have the appropriate experts?***

A: For the assessment of non-traditional outputs, the submitting staff must provide extra information on (i) novelty of the work, (ii) the deliverables, and (iii) the dissemination method. If the panel does not have the appropriate experts to assess the research output items, assistance from appropriate external experts will be solicited for assessing such items.

48. Q: ***How do RAE panels assess interdisciplinary research outputs?***

A: Individual research outputs will be assessed by panel members with relevant expertise, and they may be cross-referred to other panel(s) for assessment if they are deemed to be inter-disciplinary or fall into the expertise of other panel(s). In case panels do not have adequate expertise for assessment, expert advice from external reviewers will be sought to facilitate quality assessment of the outputs.

49. Q: ***Would non-English research outputs be assessed with the same fairness as other outputs?***

A: As emphasized at paragraph 5.11 of the Guidance Notes and paragraph 36 of the General Panel Guidelines, all output will be assessed without regard to the medium or language of publication.

50. Q: ***Apart from the Guidance Notes, what other guidance has been given on panel assessment and specific criteria such as the split of weighting between external competitive peer-reviewed research grants and esteem measures for panel?***

A: The UGC has promulgated the General Panel Guidelines for the RAE 2014 and Panel-Specific Criteria and Working Methods for each of the 13 RAE panels. These documents are mounted on the UGC website at <http://www.ugc.edu.hk/eng/ugc/rae/rae2014.htm>.

I. Form of Submission

51. Q: *How will the required data and submissions be forwarded to the UGC?*

A: Submissions for RAE 2014 will be primarily in electronic format through the RAE Electronic System (RAEES), to which all required data are to be uploaded and the full version of research outputs be stored in individual institutions' electronic repositories for access by panel members and external reviewers. There will be flexibility on items that cannot be accessed through electronic repositories. Arrangements will be made with institutions on the submission of physical items for the RAE 2014.

52. Q: *On the required full version of research outputs, could pre-print manuscripts be submitted in place of the published full version of the research outputs?*

A: For research outputs which are indicated as published as of census date, the full version of the published research outputs is required. Paragraph 5.12 of the Guidance Notes provides that, for the purpose of minimizing the financial and administrative burden in clearing copyright, manuscripts of the final accepted version of journal articles may be submitted for assessment if this is allowed by the copyright owner, but it is not appropriate to submit earlier version of the manuscript such as that before peer review. However, the Guidance Notes have not provided for the submission of the manuscript of final accepted version of other types of outputs.

J. Handling of Results

53. Q: *How are results of the RAE 2014 be presented, and will the number of eligible submitting staff be taken into account?*

A: For the RAE 2014, the sub-profile results of research outputs, external competitive peer-reviewed grants and esteem measures of an institution's cost centre will be combined to form an overall quality profile of the cost centre. The number of eligible staff will be included in the presentation of overall quality profile.

54. Q: *How will the RAE results be used by the UGC to determine the block grant allocation, and when will this be determined?*

A: The RAE 2014 serves the purpose of driving excellence and assessing research quality using international benchmarks and sharpened measures. As regards how the RAE results are to be used to inform UGC's allocation of research funding, this will be formulated after the completion of the RAE 2014, the results of which are expected to be available in the first half of 2015. The principle remains that funding will be allocated in a fair, transparent and publicly accountable manner, taking into account sustainability and stability of institutional funding, so that high quality research of international standard will be adequately funded.

* * * * *

UGC Secretariat
October 2013