

## Supplementary Q&A of RAE 2006 matters

(Updated on 18 April 2006)

### **I. Cost Centre**

Q1. Can the overview in Table 1 also include description of research activities / portfolio of the “gap years” (i.e. from 01.01.1999 to 31.12.2001)?

A1. *While the UGC understands institutions’ concern and has agreed to receive submission items of “gap years” for assessment (within the limit as specified in the Guidance Notes), the main focus of the RAE 2006 is still the research activities during the “assessment years” (i.e. from 01.01.2002 to 31.12.2005). Institutions are therefore expected to focus their report of research activities on “assessment years” which will naturally carry more weight in RAE panels’ assessment process. Activities in the “gap years” should be evaluated by grading only ONE piece of research output that are of noteworthy quality. Nevertheless, the whole Table 1 must still be limited to one page in length, and that descriptions of “gap years” activities should be clearly specified and differentiated from “assessment years” activities.*

### **II. Academic Staff in Each Cost Centre**

Q1. If an adjunct faculty has a part-time remunerated engagement in the cost centre, does that faculty count as a member of the institution proper? Do we underline his name as a co-author from the same cost centre in Table 3?

A1. *All academic staff (whether part-time or full-time) who meet all the criteria laid down in paragraphs 37, 38 and 40 will be counted as eligible staff in RAE 2006. It should be noted that such staff should not hold concurrent paid positions at other institutions. Their names should only be underlined to avoid double-counting if they belong to the same cost centre of the institution as the related staff member who submits the research output (please refer to paragraph 57).*

Q2. If the co-author had previous affiliation with the cost centre but is no longer a member of the cost centre, is that person counted as a member of the cost centre and his name underlined in Table 3? The person might have been actively engaged in the work of the research project all or almost all of the time the project was being done but the person left the cost centre on its completion.

A2. *No. According to paragraph 42 of the Guidance Notes, the census date for the reported data is 31 December 2005. Therefore a member who does not fulfill all the eligibility criteria on the census date must not be counted in the RAE 2006, and the names of such co-authors need not be underlined in Table 3. According to paragraphs 56-59 & 61(d), in the case of a multiple submission (i.e. co-authored item submitted more than once), additional information / indication should be provided in Appendices E1 and E2 as appropriate.*

### **III. Submission of Data for Each Eligible Staff**

#### **A. Definition of output**

Q1. Will the output of propriety research be considered by the RAE Panels?

A1. *According to paragraph 52 of the “Guidance Notes”, for RAE 2006, propriety research that does not result in output that is accessible to the public and the profession is **not** accepted as an output for assessment. However, output items of exhibitions, demonstrations and patents relating to propriety research which are (i) accessible to the public and the profession, (ii) non-traditional output for assessment, and (iii) contain enough information for evaluation, can be submitted for assessment.*

Q2. Will research conducted outside Hong Kong be considered by the RAE 2006?

A2. *Yes, provided that the submitting staff member fulfill all the eligibility criteria as stipulated in paragraphs 37 & 38 of the Guidance Notes.*

Q3. What is an “exceptional item”?

A3. *According to paragraph 60 of the Guidance Notes, an exceptional item refers to works of great impact which may take more than four years to complete. For the avoidance of doubts, “exceptional” item is referred to exceptional quality.*

Q4. Will chief editorship of a research journal be considered as a research output?

A4. *No, it is not a result of research process and should not be considered as a research output.*

B. What to submit

Q1. Can a staff member submit the following combination of research output items?

- (i) 4 “Assessment year” items + 0 “Gap year” items + 1 Exceptional items
- (ii) 5 “Assessment year” items + 1 Exceptional items

A1. *(i) conforms with Scenario A in paragraph 46 of the Guidance Notes and is therefore acceptable. (ii) does not conform with either Scenario A or Scenario B and therefore is not accepted.*

Q2. Can a staff member submit a research output item (be it “assessment year item”, “gap year item” or “exceptional item”) that was produced overseas prior to one’s appointment at a UGC-funded institution?

A2. *There is no restriction in this regard, as long as the staff member and the submission item in question fully meet the eligibility criteria for assessment.*

Q3. Should faculty from other cost centre of the same institution be underlined in Table 3?

A3. *No, paragraph 57 of the Guidance Notes only requires a staff member to underline those who belong to the same cost centre of the same institution.*

Q4. Is ‘nil’ return required for Appendix E-2 for a cost centre which does not have co-authored research output items being submitted for assessment by more than one staff member from within the same cost centre?

A4. *No*

Q5. Co-authors of book chapter(s) may not have a personal copy of the whole book to provide for assessment as required.

A5. *While the eligible staff should submit the requisite book as far as possible, where there is difficulty in obtaining the book, the staff may submit only a copy of the book chapter instead. Nevertheless, if the panel considers it essential to examine the whole book during the assessment, the Secretariat may contact the institution concerned for further assistance. As explained in the Submission Instructions, the requirement of the whole book is to prevent out-of-context assessment by the panel, which may be resulted if only the concerned chapter of the book is submitted.*

## IV Co-authorship

Q1 If co-authors from sister institutions are submitting the same item, how does that affect the assessment of the item? Will a discount be factored in the assessment of the item?

A1. *To allow the RAE panel to form a view as to the extent of the cost centre's involvement in the work, the staff member submitting the item for assessment should list all the authors when completing Table 3. The RAE panel will then have a basis to assess (apart from the quality of the item in question) whether the co-authors involved have made a significant and substantial intellectual contribution to that item. So long as the panel is satisfied that the cost centre (of an institution) as a whole has made a significant and substantial intellectual contribution, there will be no discount or pro-rating. (Please refer to paragraphs 57 and 58 of the Guidance Notes).*

Q2. How do the RAE panels assess co-authored research output items?

A2. *In the case of multiple submissions (i.e. a co-authored item submitted more than once) from the same cost centre of an institution, the staff members submitting that item for assessment should have provided additional information by filing in the declaration form (at Appendix E1 of the Guidance Notes). To avoid double-counting within a cost centre, the coordinator of submissions from each cost centre should have drawn multiple submission(s) from within the same cost centre to the Panel's attention by completing the form (at Appendix E2 of the Guidance Notes).*

*The possible scenarios and the modes of treatment for multiple submissions are as follows:*

(i) *Submitted more than once from **different** cost centres **within the same** institutions*

*So long the Panel is satisfied that the submitting authors of different cost centres have each made a substantial and significant intellectual contribution to the submitted work, there should be no discount or pro-rating on the respective cost centres.*

(ii) *Submitted more than once from **different** cost centres from **different** institutions*

*The same principle in (i) above applies.*

(iii) *Submitted more than once from the **same** cost centre within the **same** institution*

*Since it is the intention of RAE to measure the productivity of each cost centre, there is a need to avoid double-counting of the same item*

*submitted. The coordinator of submissions from each cost centre should draw multiple submission(s) from within the same cost centre to the RAE panel's attention by completing Appendix E2.*

## **V Assessment Mechanism**

Q1. Will a wrong classification of scholarship have adverse impact on assessment of a research output item?

*A1. The UGC expects the submitting staff members to classify their submissions according to the type of scholarship correctly, in order to provide UGC reliable information on the distribution of research items in the different categories of scholarship. However, a wrong classification of scholarship will not affect the RAE assessment which is to be made on the basis of quality.*

Q2. How should a research output item be classified if it involves more than one type of scholarship?

*A2. It will be up to the submitting staff members to judge which is the major type of scholarship for one's research output items.*

Q3. Will RAE make assessment on research portfolio (e.g. a series of research papers) of a staff member instead of just individual research output item?

*A3. In view of the size of the workload involved, the RAE panels will not conduct research portfolio analysis.*

Q4. Will there be any impact on the assessment score if the classification of scholarship in respect of the research output items is different from the role of the institution of the submitting staff member?

*A4. No, this should not have an impact on the assessment score in this RAE 2006 exercise which is based on quality. The information on classification of scholarship will only be used by the UGC as reference materials for review and planning purposes for other exercises, such as the Performance and Role-Related Funding Scheme (please refer to paragraph 27 of the Guidance Notes).*

Q5. Why is there a need to raise the quality standard in the RAE 2006? How can the standard be raised as compared to RAE 1999?

- A5. *According to paragraph 32 of the Guidance Notes, given the rising standards both in Hong Kong and elsewhere, the standard should be raised in the RAE 2006. It is further noted that the assessment period for 1999 was only 4 years, whereas that for RAE 2006 is 7 years. It was instructed by UGC that this RAE 2006 has to adopt a higher standard to conduct the assessment. As 33% of the RAE 2006 panel members have previous RAE experience, they will be in good position to formulate the requirements for reaching the raised standard. Also, about 31% of the panel members are from overseas and they can provide international benchmarking for the exercise.*
- Q6. How will the RAE panels rate a submitting staff members' research submission if six items are submitted - will it be the average of all the six items?
- A6. *The assessment will be made on the basis of the best four items (please refer to paragraphs 55 & 75 of the Guidance Notes).*
- Q7. Will citation index or journal lists be used in the assessment process? If yes, will it be to the disadvantage of the emerging disciplines?
- A7. *Not all the panels use citation index or journal lists. Even if they are used, they are only used as a starting point and reference materials for assessment. The panels will not judge the research output items automatically and mechanically according to the index / lists. Also, according to paragraph 78 of the Guidance Notes, output items will be judged on their own merits and will not be judged simply on their category or venues of publication. We have advised the panels that there could be quality output items in venues that may not be perceived as prestigious. In these cases, and in any case when in doubt, the panel will review the item in question and not judge it automatically and mechanically according to the venue.*
- Q8. If a submitting staff member of Cost Centre A requests his research output item be assessed by RAE panel of Cost Centre B, will the score of this item be allocated to Cost Centre A or Cost Centre B?
- A8. *The ultimate grading in respect of the item in question should rest and remain with the "original" cost centre to which the relevant staff member belongs (i.e. Cost Centre A).*

Q9. Will journal papers be evaluated with higher rating than book chapters?

A9. *Different disciplines will exercise different professional judgement on evaluating different types of research output. The panels have no uniform way to decide whether a certain type of research output should be given a higher rating than other types.*

Q10. How does the UGC maintain consistency in the assessment process among the 13 panels?

A10. *Panel Convenors' meetings have been / will be held to ensure consistency. A trial run of the 13 panels will be conducted to make sure that the assessment standards are comparable and fair.*

## **VI Handling of Results**

Q1. Will the assessment result in respect of individual submitting staff members be made known to the staff / institutions concerned?

A1. *No, the UGC wishes to stress that the RAE is intended to be an assessment of each institution's research performance by cost centre. It is **not** intended to be an assessment of individual research performance. Methodologies that are appropriate for assessment in the aggregate for funding purposes may not be appropriate for the assessment of the performance of individuals. As such, releasing such information will be misleading and inappropriate.*

## **VII Other General Questions**

Q1. Will feedback on the whole RAE be solicited from individual staff members?

A1. *Consultation on RAE has been undertaken through Heads of Institutions.*

Q2. Will the allocation of RPg student places be affected by the result of RAE?

A2. *No, RPg allocation will be covered by a separate exercise.*