

Research Assessment Exercise 2020
Panel 10 – Social Sciences
Panel-specific Guidelines on
Assessment Criteria and Working Methods
(September 2018)

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Introduction

1. This document sets out the assessment criteria and working methods that the Social Sciences Panel of the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) 2020 will apply. It should be read alongside the General Panel Guidelines of the exercise. The provisions set out in this document serve as further elaboration and amplification on the assessment criteria and working methods as applied to the Social Sciences Panel. In areas where no additional information has been specified, the provisions in the General Panel Guidelines will prevail and apply in the assessment process of the Panel. These guidelines do not replace or supersede the requirements for submissions that are set out in the Guidance Notes for the RAE 2020.

2. This document describes the criteria and methods for assessing submissions in the Social Sciences Panel. It provides guidance on the type of information required in the submissions. It also provides a single, consistent set of criteria that will be applied by the Panel and sub-group(s)/sub-panel(s), if any, when undertaking the assessment having regard to any differences in the nature of disciplines of respective units of assessment (UoAs) under purview. It also provides a common approach to the working methods applied within the Panel.

Section A: Submissions

UoAs under the Panel

3. The Social Sciences Panel will assess universities' submissions from the following UoAs:

<u>Code</u>	<u>UoAs</u>
24	psychology
25	political science (incl. public policy & administration & international relations)
26	geography
27	sociology & anthropology
28	social work and social policy
29	communications & media studies

4. The Panel expects to receive submissions whose primary research focus falls within the respective remit of the above UoAs, which are described as follows.

4.1 Social Science is the study of society and the way people behave and influence the world around us. Social science tells us about the world beyond our immediate experience and can help explain how our own society works – from the causes of unemployment or what helps economic growth, to how and why people vote, or what makes people happy. It provides vital information for governments and policymakers, non-governmental organisations and others. Social science involves acquisition of knowledge through rigorous investigation, using many different methodologies. All the UoAs listed above engage in selected fields of social science.

4.2 Psychology (UoA 24): The UoA includes research into all aspects of psychology. For psychology the Panel expects submissions in this UoA covering the full range of the discipline from all areas of psychology, including theoretical and translational aspects of developmental and educational psychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, social psychology, biological or physiological

psychology and neuropsychology. Animal or human studies to understand brain, psychological and mental functioning may employ a range of research designs and methodologies including controlled experiments, neuro-imaging paradigms, technological assays, computer simulation, statistical inference, meta-analysis, qualitative interpretative and descriptive research. These methods may be applied in a variety of applications, covering psychometric assessment, therapy and education for the promotion of well-being and mental health, public health policies and public administration. The Panel is aware of the breadth of this remit, which will cover submissions that inform, or have the potential to inform, practice as well as submissions reporting theoretical and methodological advances in basic research.

- 4.3 Political Science (UoA 25): The UoA includes (but is not restricted to) comparative, area, national and subnational politics; public policy and administration studies; political behaviour and political sociology; gender and politics; political theory and philosophy, including history of political thought; international relations, including strategic, war and peace studies, international history, international political economy and foreign policy analysis; methods in political studies; studies of philanthropy and non-profit policy and management. A wide range of methods are used in researching these topics, ranging from philosophical argument about the nature and justification of political systems to detail statistical studies of elector behaviour, archival research into the decisions of governments and other institutions.
- 4.4 Geography (UoA 26): The UoA covers all aspects of research – conceptual, methodological, substantive and applied – conducted within the discipline of geography including environmental studies. This research embraces a wide range of enquiries into natural, environmental and human phenomena, and their interrelationships in systems, contexts, periods and locations. Submitted research may include work from all fields of human geography (for example, environmental change, environmental geography; development, economic, health, political, population, social, cultural and historical, urban and rural geographies;

and geographical information sciences); work that combines any of these sub-fields; and work that uses a wide range of available methods, from based on quantitative and statistical evidence to humanistic and participatory, from the abstract to the experimental and field-based. Submitted research may include work in environmental economics, governance, management and policy; conservation, environmental pollution, and resource management. The UoA also includes work on the history and theory of geographical and environmental as well as work on geographical and environmental techniques, including remote sensing and geospatial analyses.

- 4.5 Given the breadth of the subject matter of geography there are likely to be some overlaps with other UoAs. The expectation is that submissions to UoA 26 that overlap with cognate fields will normally involve research in such areas that are integral to research programmes and research environments in geography. Where a submission's main research emphasis lies elsewhere, it should be submitted in a more appropriate UoA. Where there is significant overlap between UoA 26 and another UoA not included in the remit of Social Sciences Panel, it is expected that whole submissions will be made in the UoA appropriate to the academic context and research environment in which the research was undertaken, and with the most appropriate range of expertise for the body of work.
- 4.6 Sociology & Anthropology (UoA 27): The UoA covers all topics of research within the disciplines of sociology and anthropology, including research that is conceptual, theoretical, empirical, applied, strategic and practice-based. Research includes empirical and theoretical study of the structures, cultures and everyday practices of societies, including life-styles and material standards of living, opinions, values and institutions; social and anthropological theory and philosophy; historical and comparative studies; and research on pedagogy.
- 4.7 The Panel expects submissions from all fields of enquiry in sociology including, research on cultures, economies, and politics; stratification and mobility; class, ethnicity, gender,

sexuality, disability, and age; their intersections; religion, education, health and medicine, family, media, welfare institutions, work and employment; environment, technology, and climate change; the body, interpersonal and inter-group relations, violence; urban and rural issues; language and social interaction; political sociology, public policy, and social movements; political economy, globalisation, development, migration, and diaspora; comparative studies of societies of all kinds, including work on transnational structures and agencies.

- 4.8 Anthropological enquiry includes the fields of biological anthropology, social anthropology, cultural anthropology and archaeology, economic and political anthropology; kinship, gender and relatedness; religion and cognition; medical anthropology; environment, conservation and biodiversity; the anthropology of development; visual anthropology; ethnomusicology and performance; and material culture. Biological anthropology includes human and non-human primate evolution and adaptation; palaeoanthropology; human behaviour, growth and development; health and disease; ecology, conservation, genetics, demography; and forensic applications.
- 4.9 Sociology and anthropology draw on a range of methodologies including qualitative, quantitative, visual, field-based, laboratory-based, experimental, participatory, evaluative, visual and comparative.
- 4.10 The Panel welcomes sociological and anthropological research in such inter-disciplinary fields as: criminology and socio-legal studies; media and cultural studies; demography; socio-linguistics, social psychology, psychosocial studies; studies of science and technology; women's studies; and studies of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and inter-sex communities. Such work may overlap with the remit of other disciplines and will be assessed using joint assessors within the Panel or through cross-referral to other panels.
- 4.11 Social Work and Social Policy (UoA 28): The UoA covers all forms of research in social work, social policy and administration and criminology, including those in

governmental, voluntary and community, private for profit and not for profit areas. The field includes: (a) theory, methodology, empirical research, ethics and values, and pedagogy as they apply to social work, social care, social policy, criminology and criminal justice policy, gerontology and substantive issues in these areas of study; (b) comparative research and research into international institutions, policy and practice; (c) research that uses a range of disciplinary approaches including (but not exclusively) the following: business and management, demography, development studies, economics, education, geography, health studies, history, law, politics, psychology and sociology; (d) research in collaboration with other stakeholders, professionals, service users and carers; and (e) policy-making processes, practice, governance and management, service design, delivery and use, and inter-professional relationships. Social work, social policy and administration, and criminology are essentially multidisciplinary subjects and are closely related to a range of other disciplines within the social sciences.

- 4.12 Communications & Media Studies (UoA 29): The Panel recognises the rich diversity of research in communications and media studies and welcomes all outputs arising from this research, in whatever genre or medium, that can be demonstrated to meet the definition of research set out in the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel recognises that UoA 29 covers two broad fields of research which are often distinct both organisationally and academically: communications and media studies. The Panel welcomes submissions that reflect this. It also recognises that the activities are often rooted in quite distinct research traditions or infrastructures. It will assess research on its merits in both broad fields. It will welcome research which seeks to engage with questions and concerns, such as the nature of the information society, heritage (both cultural and museum aspects), networks or convergence, which may transcend field boundaries.
- 4.13 UoA 29 includes research that addresses or deploys theory, history, institutional, policy, textual, critical and/or empirical analysis, or practice within communication,

culture, media (including social media), journalism and film studies. This work is likely to emanate from units in communication studies, cultural studies, media studies, journalism, or film and television studies. This work will include research on print media, broadcasting and the moving image, and will include computer-mediated communication, popular culture, and diverse information and communication technologies, which will be variably titled and organised. Much will also be conducted in units or departments situated elsewhere within the social sciences, arts or humanities.

- 4.14 The Panel will assess research which addresses (but is not confined to): policy for regulation of culture and the media; the organisation, institutions, political economy and practice of cultural production; media and cultural texts, forms and practices; and media and cultural audiences, consumption and reception, including questions of power, identity and difference.
- 4.15 UoA 29 also includes research concerned with the management of information and knowledge in all formats, namely librarianship and information science, archives and records management, and information systems. This may include: research on the generation, dissemination and publication, exploitation and evaluation of information and knowledge; information policy; information media; information literacy; systems thinking; systems development; knowledge management systems; information retrieval; preservation and conservation; impact assessment; digital humanities; and historical and cultural aspects of the disciplines.

Inter-disciplinary Research

5. The Panel also recognises that individual UoAs do not have firm or rigidly definable boundaries, and that certain aspects of research are naturally inter-disciplinary or span the boundaries between individual UoAs, whether within the Panel or across panels. The Panel will adopt the arrangements for assessing inter-disciplinary submissions as set out in paragraphs 39-40 of the General Panel Guidelines.

6. The Panel will have assessor members who cover the fields of all UoAs listed in paragraph 3, so that inter-disciplinary research combining any of the UoAs can be considered by assessors from appropriate disciplines. Possible areas of overlap between the Panel's UoAs and UoAs outside of the Panel's remit may require cross-referral to another panel. The area of inter-disciplinary research relevant to the Panel include the following.

- 6.1 For Psychology (UoA 24), there may be overlaps with UoAs in Panel 1 – Biology or Panel 2 – Health Sciences.
- 6.2 For Political Science (UoA 25), there may be overlaps with UoAs in Panel 8 – Law.
- 6.3 For Geography (UoA 26), there may be overlaps with UoAs in Panel 1 – Biology, Panel 3 – Physical Sciences especially UoA 10 (Earth Sciences), Panel 7 – Built Environment especially UoA 18 (Planning and Surveying), with Panel 11 – Humanities especially with UoA 34 (History) or UoA 35 (Area Studies).
- 6.4 For Sociology & Anthropology (UoA 27) there may be overlaps with UoAs in Panel 2 – Health Sciences or Panel 9 – Business & Economics especially UoA 21 (Economics and Finance). In the field of Gender and Women's studies, there may considerable overlaps with Humanities and History as well as within the Panel with both Psychology and Political Science.
- 6.5 For Social Work and Social Policy (UoA 28), there may be overlaps with Panel 2 – Health Sciences or Panel 8 – Law.
- 6.6 For Communications & Media Studies (UoA 29), there may be overlaps with Panel 11 – Humanities or Panel 12 – Creative Arts, Performing Arts & Design.
- 6.7 Social gerontology, in particular, is a very inter-disciplinary field research on which may appear under Sociology / Medical sociology; Health / Medicine and Nursing, Psychology, and other disciplines.

Assignment of Eligible Academic Staff in Each UoA

7. Pursuant to paragraphs 7-11 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Social Sciences Panel does not expect to receive information on sub-discipline(s) in relation to eligible academic staff and respective research outputs. We will allocate appropriate assessors to an output based on the title and abstract or summary information provided.

8. It is critical that research outputs are assessed by the most appropriate panel. If a panel suspects any anomaly regarding universities' assignment of eligible academic staff (and therefore their outputs) to research area(s) and UoA(s) under its remit, it will follow the procedures for re-assignment of the eligible staff according to paragraphs 10-11 of the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel also recognises its responsibility to handle submissions arising from any re-assignment of eligible academic staff to the Panel.

University's Research Strategy Statement

9. Following paragraphs 2.16-2.18 and Appendix B of the Guidance Notes and paragraph 15 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Research Strategy Statement submitted by each university will provide contextual information for the Panel when assessing the submissions. These Statements will not be assessed, but may help the Panel to understand better the material that is presented in each submission, particularly insofar as UoAs refer to the overall position of their university. The Statements will also help the University Grants Committee (UGC) when viewing the quality profiles of the universities as a whole upon completion of the RAE 2020.

10. *(Template paragraph deleted)*

Section B: Assessment Criteria: Research Outputs

Output Types

11. The Social Sciences Panel will consider the eligibility of research outputs as described in paragraphs 16-18 of the General Panel Guidelines, paragraphs 5.7-5.11 and Appendix F of the Guidance Notes.

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

publication. The Panel will examine each item in detail and will not assess outputs mechanistically according to the publication venue. 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.

13. Forms of research outputs that are admissible and specifically relevant to the Social Sciences 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 and reports.
- new materials, devices, products and processes.
- patents awarded or published patent applications.
- published papers in peer-reviewed journals.
- published pedagogic manuals (containing research).
- review articles where these incorporate new research, new syntheses or meta-analyses.
- software, computer code and algorithms.
- standards documents.
- technical reports.
- portfolio of design work, creative arts.
- documentary film.

Please note the requirements for an abstract that includes a clear indication of what new insights or innovation are presented in outputs, as at paragraph 18 of the General Panel Guidelines.

14. Research outputs will be assessed for the quality of original research they include.

- 14.1 The Panel will accept the submission of review articles only where they contain a significant component of unpublished research or new and integrative insight. Such outputs will be judged only on their original research or

novelty of insight.

- 14.2 The Panel recognises the value of careful refereeing of papers submitted to academic publishing outlets through a process of peer review. Where outputs have not been subject to formal peer-review or refereeing processes, a note should be provided explaining what quality review has been carried out.
- 14.3 Outputs placed in open repositories should be accompanied by evidence of post-publication review.
- 14.4 The Panel will expect edited books to have a significant and original contribution by the editor.
- 14.5 Outputs from the same eligible member of staff should not include a significant amount of material in common (for example, the same material might have been published as both a book chapter and a journal article).
- 14.6 Practice-based outputs (e.g. software such as educational games embodying research findings, documentary film) or commissioned research outputs should be accompanied by a short text note explaining their content.
- 14.7 Conference papers and reports should be accompanied by a short explanation of no more than 100 words of the review process that led to their selection for presentation or publication.

15. The Panel will consider subsequent editions of previous work only where they make a significant and original contribution in the new edition.

Double-weighting of Research Outputs

16. Paragraphs 29-31 of the General Panel Guidelines indicate that in exceptional cases a submitting university may request that outputs of extended scale and scope be double-weighted in the assessment. In view of the established practice in some areas of Social Sciences of publishing major research outputs in the form of extended monographs, the Panel recognises that there may be outputs of such scale and scope and will consider the items submitted for double-weighting in line with the General Panel Guidelines.

17. When requesting for double-weighting of an output, universities should submit a statement in not more than 100 words, explaining in what ways the output is of sufficiently extended scale and scope to justify the claim. The Panel will decide whether to double-weight the output, based on the submitted statement and reading. The Panel will consider a sole-authored monograph to be equivalent to requiring research effort for producing two single outputs.

Co-authored/Co-produced Outputs

18. The Panel affirms the principles and arrangements on assessing co-authored/co-produced research outputs as set out in paragraphs 32-34 of the General Panel Guidelines.

19. The Panel will consider co-authorship to be a normal element of research activity in Social Sciences and expect all named co-authors to have made a significant contribution to the research process leading to the output concerned where there are six co-authors or fewer. In assessing co-authored/co-produced outputs, the Panel would particularly require information regarding the author's contribution when there are more than six co-authors.

Non-traditional Outputs

20. The Panel will handle research outputs in non-traditional form according to paragraphs 35-37 of the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel expects to receive additional information about each non-traditional output in terms of its novelty, the method used to ensure academic rigour in the production of the output, the deliverables, and dissemination method. For submissions involving recordings, images or photographs, the Panel would expect the contents are of good quality in at least MP3 standard audio and high definition 1280 × 720 video resolution for recordings and 300 dpi (dots per inch) for images/photographs respectively.

Criteria and Quality Levels for Assessing Research Outputs

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

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

paragraph 20 of the General Panel Guidelines will be applied in the Panel's assessment.

23. The Social Sciences Panel provides the following amplifications on the criteria of assessing research outputs –

- originality: will be understood as the extent to which the output introduces new evidence or a new way of thinking or a new method.
- significance: will be understood as the extent to which the output has exerted, or has the potential to exert, an influence on the academic field.
- rigour: will be understood in terms of the intellectual precision, robustness and appropriateness of the concepts and methodologies deployed within the output.

24. In addition, the Panel provides the following advice on their understanding of the quality definitions adopted for assessing research outputs. The Panel will take into consideration the following characteristics in particular –

- scientific rigour and excellence in the design, research method, execution and analysis of the work or in the arguments and conclusions of theoretical work.
- whether or not the output has been subject to peer-review.
- significant addition to knowledge and to the conceptual framework of the field.
- potential and actual significance of the research both within and beyond the field concerned.
- the scale, challenge and logistical difficulty posed by the research.
- the logical coherence of argument.
- contribution to theory-building.
- significance of work to advance knowledge, skills, understanding and scholarship in theory, practice, education, management and/or policy.

Metrics/Citation Data

25. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will not use metrics or citation data to inform the assessment of outputs.

26. The Social Sciences Panel will not refer to metrics or citation data in reaching its judgement on the quality of submitted research outputs.

Additional Information on Research Outputs

27. Other than the information required on research outputs as specified in the Guidance Notes, and unless specifically required by the Panel during the assessment process, no other information should be provided, and the Panel will take no account of any such information if submitted.

Section C: Assessment Criteria: Research Impact

Range of Impacts

28. The Social Sciences Panel will accept submissions on research impacts that meet the generic definition and criteria as set out in paragraphs 47-48 of the General Panel Guidelines.

29. The Panel will assess the quality of all eligible impact submissions based on their merits on equal footing with no consideration given to the differences among submitting universities/units in terms of staff size, resources and histories. The Panel recognises that impacts within its remit can be manifested in various ways and may occur in a wide range of spheres whether locally, regionally or internationally.

30. Examples are provided to illustrate the range of potential impacts from research across the Social Sciences Panel in Table A. These examples are indicative only and are not exhaustive or exclusive. Equally, there is no implication of priority or importance in the ordering of examples in the list.

31. Universities are expected to submit their strongest impact cases and not to align submitted cases specifically with the particular types of impact listed, as an impact case may describe more than one type of impact, such as a new drug can generate health and economic impact / a new energy technology can generate environmental and production impact / a

new knowledge or a new method can contribute to public policy and social welfare.

Table A: Examples of Impact

<p><u>Impacts on the economy</u> where the beneficiaries may include businesses, enterprises, governments, workers, consumers, tax payers or benefit recipients.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gains in productivity have been realised through research-led practices. • A spin-off or new business has been created, established its viability, or generated revenue or profits. • Contributing to economic prosperity, innovation and entrepreneurial activities through research-led practices. • Persuading national and international bodies to consider natural capital in their economic and resource planning.
<p><u>Impacts on the environment</u> where the beneficiaries may include people, flora or fauna experiencing environmental hazards or degradation, or environmental organizations concerned with preventing or mitigating environmental hazards or degradation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The management of an environment risk or hazard has changed. • The management or conservation of natural resources (e.g. water) has been influenced or changed. • Changes in practices or policies affecting biodiversity. • Influencing international climate mitigation strategies.
<p><u>Impacts on health</u> where the beneficiaries may include patients experiencing actual or potential ill-health, health treatment or maintenance organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions by health service or regulatory authority have been informed by research. • Development or adoption of new indicators of health or well-being. • Using names analysis to add ethnic, cultural or linguistic markers to health studies and trials. • Raising awareness of public health hazards or solutions.

<p><u>Impacts on public policy and services</u> where the beneficiaries may include governments and agencies determining public policy or delivering services, the beneficiaries of policy changes or recipients of public services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy decisions or changes to legislation, regulations or guidelines have been informed by research. • Policy or public debate has been stimulated or informed by research evidence. • Influencing the work of public or non-governmental organisations. • Influencing the design of legislative constituencies to achieve a fairer representation across geographical areas in a country.
<p><u>Impacts on quality of life and welfare</u> where the beneficiaries may include individuals, families and households, particularly those experiencing poverty or other forms of marginalization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved provision or access to services or innovations in service delivery. • Improved standards of training. • The user experience has improved. • Investigating the income required for individuals and households to live a reasonable life (the living wage) and persuading different organizations, companies and governments to adopt the standard.
<p><u>Impacts on society and culture</u> where the beneficiaries may include individuals, families and households in different social or cultural groups, social or cultural organizations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The awareness, attitudes or understanding of sections of society have been informed or enhanced. • Enhancements to preserving, conserving and presenting culture heritage. • Generating new or clarified ways of thinking that influence social or cultural policies or public opinion. • Adoption in public discourse by activists, artists, stakeholders and commentators of conceptual tools and empirical evidence. • Making knowledge about increasing inequalities and its causes part of the public debate on policies to reduce inequality.

<p><u>Impacts on official statistics</u> where the beneficiaries may include national or international statistical agencies, users of official statistics including researchers, businesses or the public.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing the geographies of small areas used in publishing official statistics for use in monitoring the effect of area-based policies. • Developing new ways of estimating key, policy relevant statistical outputs. • Improving the accessibility and utility of official statistics or data. • Introducing new variables or new classifications into official statistics.
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(Note: Other examples of research impact as assessed in other jurisdictions may be accessible online such as <<http://results.ref.ac.uk/Results/SelectUoa>> from the United Kingdom.)

Impact Overview Statement

32. Following paragraphs 7.7 (a) and (b), 7.8 and Appendix G of the Guidance Notes and also paragraph 49 of the General Panel Guidelines, submitting units are required to describe how they have sought to enable and/or facilitate achievement of impact arising from their research during the assessment period, and how they are developing and adapting their plans to ensure that they continue to do so. This is distinct from the environment overview statement, which should describe how the units support the conduct and production of research.

33. The impact overview statement should include relevant illustrative explanations with examples and traceable references where possible, rather than broad, general statements. The Panel expects the impact overview statement to include –

- context: the main non-academic user groups, beneficiaries or audiences for the unit’s research; the main types of impacts specifically relevant to the unit’s research, and how these relate to the range of research activities or research groups in the unit.
- approach to impact: the unit’s approach to interacting with non-academic users, beneficiaries, or audiences; its approach and mechanism to support the achievement of impacts from its research; this could include but is not limited to indicators such as participation in knowledge exchange schemes; industrial training provided or consultancy undertaken.

- strategy and plans: how the unit is developing a strategy for achieving impact including its goals and plans for supporting and enabling impact from its current and future research.
- relationship to the case studies: how the selected case studies relate to the submitting unit’s approach to achieving impact; how particular case studies exemplify aspects of the unit’s approach or informed the development of the unit’s approach; moreover, the Panel recognises that impact case studies are underpinned by research over a period often much longer than the assessment period, and that individual case studies may not directly relate to or necessarily arise from the unit’s current approach.

Impact Case Study(ies)

34. Following paragraphs 7.7 (c) and (d), 7.9-7.10 and Appendix H of the Guidance Notes and also paragraph 51 of the General Panel Guidelines, submitting units are required to provide a narrative account in each case study that should be coherent, clearly explaining the relationship between the research and impact, and the nature of the changes or benefits arising.

35. Each impact case study should include appropriate evidence and indicators that support the claims for the impact achieved, including who and what has/have benefitted. Individual case studies may draw on various evidence and indicators, which may take different forms depending on the type of impact.

36. Examples are provided in Table B to illustrate potential evidence or indicators that may be mostly relevant to the Social Sciences Panel. These examples are not intended to be exhaustive. Equally, there is no implication of priority or importance in the ordering of examples in the list.

Table B: Examples of Evidence or Indicators for Impact

Quantitative indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quantitative data relating to cost-effectiveness. • Performance measures (e.g. sales, turnover, profits associated). • Audience or attendance figures. • Indicators of quality of life or level of living.
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Documentary evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documented changes to public policy / legislation / regulations / guidelines. • New professional codes and standards. • Licences awarded and brought to market.
Engagements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial adoption of new technology, process, knowledge or concept. • Application or incorporation in professional best practice, training and continuing development materials. • Evidence of policy or public debate.
Independent testimony	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal acknowledgements of and/or evaluations by relevant beneficiaries, bodies and organisations. • Justified claims of benefit when formal acknowledgements cannot be obtained.
Reviews and citations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citations and reviews outside the academic literature, e.g. in policy, regulatory, practice documents. • Citations in media.

(Note: Other examples of evidence or indicators for research impact in other jurisdictions may be accessible online such as <<http://results.ref.ac.uk/Results/SelectUoa>> from the United Kingdom.)

37. The Panel provides the following advice on two aspects of impact case studies as follows –

- credibility: are there reasonable grounds for the claimed impact, bearing in mind other factors or organizations could have contributed to impact?
- evidence: is there a clear account of evidence that links the research with the claimed impact?

Underpinning Research

38. The Panel acknowledges the level of quality required for research underpinning impact cases, i.e. equivalent to at least 2 star (2*) or international standing, as stipulated in the General Panel Guidelines. Impact case studies should include appropriate evidence or indicators of the quality of underpinning research, such as details on number of citations or peer-review funding received. Where necessary, the Panel will review the

outputs concerned in order to ensure the quality of the research is of at least 2 star (2*). There should be clear linkage between the underpinning research and the impact claimed.

39. Provided that the Panel is satisfied that the quality threshold has been met, the quality of the underpinning research will not be taken into account in the assessment of the quality of impact. Underpinning research referenced in a case study may also be submitted for assessment under the research output element. The evaluation of the outputs concerned under the impact element is a separate assessment only for assuring the threshold of underpinning research. In this case, the guidance on output types and criteria for assessing research outputs as stipulated in paragraphs 11-15, 21-24 above would apply.

Criteria and Quality Levels for Assessing Research Impact

40. Panels will exercise their expert judgement in assessing the quality of each impact submission and will not judge in terms of the type of research underpinning the impact cases.

41. In assessing impacts, the Panel will look for evidence of reach and significance and will grade each impact submission as a whole and give a rating using the 4 star (4*) to unclassified (u/c) quality scale following paragraphs 53-55 of the General Panel Guidelines. In respect of the Social Sciences Panel, the criteria of reach and significance will be understood as follows –

- reach: the extent and diversity of the communities, individuals, organisations that benefitted from or been positively affected by the impact. For example, the Panel will evaluate the extent to which society, communities or individuals have benefitted from the introduction of a new method, understanding or policy, based on evidence provided in the impact case study. Note that reach can refer to any or all spatial scales – local, national or international or to a specific under-represented group.
- significance: the degree of beneficial effects to policies, practices, perspectives or awareness of organisations, communities or individuals, constructive change to the prevention or reduction of harm, risk or cost. For example, the Panel will evaluate the degree of benefit gained or improvement effected or reduction of harm, risk or cost from

the introduction of a new method, understanding or policy, based on evidence provided in the impact case study.

42. The Panel will make an overall judgement about the reach and significance of impacts, rather than assessing each criterion separately. The criteria will be applied in the assessment of the research impact regardless of the domain to which the impact relates.

Section D: Assessment Criteria: Research Environment

Research Environment

43. The Social Sciences Panel will accept submissions on research environment according to paragraphs 57-58 of the General Panel Guidelines. The Panel recognises that excellent research can be undertaken in a wide variety of research structures and environments. The Panel has no pre-formed view of the ideal size or organisational structure for a research environment. The Panel will assess each submission based on what has been presented in relation to the work of the submitting unit in providing and ensuring a good environment.

44. A research environment submission should relate to the submitting unit, the faculty it belongs to and the submitting university. The statement should identify what elements of the research environment are provided at each level. For example, each level might provide part of the research environment with a different focus. Well-resourced library facilities might be provided at university level; well-equipped laboratories might be available at faculty level; collaborative research teams or groups will work at UoA level; research motivation is generated at individual staff level. Links between and across levels should be identified. The operation and activities associated with the research environment and its main achievements should be identified. The submitting unit should provide information on its policy on sabbatical and teaching relief. An account of collaborations with other disciplines or institutions should be given.

Environment Overview Statement

45. Following paragraphs 9.6 (a) and (b), 9.7 and Appendix I of the Guidance Notes, and also paragraph 59 of the General Panel Guidelines, submitting units are required to describe how they have supported the conduct and production of research. This is distinct from the impact

overview statement, which should describe how the units encourage and facilitate the achievement of research impact.

46. Within the terms of the Guidance Notes, the Social Sciences Panel will expect in particular to see the following in the environment overview statement –

- overview: submission in this part is expected to briefly describe the organisation and structure of the unit, which research groups are covered in the submission and how research is structured across the submitting unit.
- research strategy: evidence of the achievement of strategic aims for research during the assessment period, and details of future strategic aims and goals for research; how these relate to the structure described above; and how they will be taken forward; methods for monitoring attainment of targets; new and developing initiatives not yet producing visible outcomes but of strategic importance; identification of priority developmental areas for the unit, including research topics, funding streams, postgraduate research activity, facilities, staffing, administration and management.
- people: staffing policy and evidence of its effectiveness; how individuals at the beginning of their research careers are being supported and integrated into the research culture of the submitting unit; strategies for postgraduate recruitment, training and support; mechanisms by which standards of research quality and integrity are maintained for example ethics procedures and authorship; how achieving a suitable level of diversity in the make-up of the research environment is addressed.
- income: information on research funding portfolio; evidence of successful generation of research income; major and prestigious grant awards made by external bodies on a competitive basis; consultancies with non-academic bodies; endowments or gifts linked to research.
- infrastructure and facilities: provision and operation of research infrastructure and facilities, including special equipment, library, technical support, space and facilities for research groups and research students; information on joint-university or cross-institution shared or collaborative use of research infrastructure.

- collaborations: information on support for and exemplars of research collaborations; mechanisms to promote collaborative research at local and international level; support for interdisciplinary research collaborations; research collaboration with research users.
- esteem: prestigious/competitive research fellowships held by individual researchers; external prizes and awards in recognition of research achievement; honorary appointments at other universities globally.
- contribution to the discipline or research base: exemplars of leadership in the academic community such as advisory board membership; participation in the peer-review process for grants committees or editorial boards.

Environment Data

47. Following paragraphs 9.6 (c) and (d), 9.8 and Appendix J of the Guidance Notes, and also paragraph 60 of the General Panel Guidelines, submitting units are required to provide environment data in conjunction with the environment overview statement. The Panel will consider the environment data within the context of the information provided in the environment overview statement, and within the context of the disciplines concerned.

48. Data on “staff employed by the university proper” and “graduates of research postgraduate programmes” will be used to inform the Panel’s assessment in relation to “people” (section (3) (i) and (ii)). Data on “on-going research grants/contracts” will be used to inform the Panel’s assessment on “income” (section (4)). Additional quantitative data or indicators that are particularly relevant to the Panel are indicated in paragraph 46 above. Such additional information should be submitted within the appropriate section(s) of the environment overview statement.

Criteria and Quality Levels for Assessing Research Environment

49. Panels will exercise their expert judgement in assessing the merits of each environment submission and will not judge automatically in terms of the scale of research environment concerned.

50. In assessing the research environment, the Panel will consider its vitality and sustainability, including its contribution to the vitality and sustainability of the wider discipline or research base. The Panel will grade

each environment submission as a whole, with a profile rating using one or more of five categories of quality level as set out in paragraphs 62-64 of the General Panel Guidelines. There is no weighting attached to individual aspects in the assessment.

51. The Social Sciences Panel provides the following amplifications to supplement the generic criteria for assessing the research environment –

- vitality: the extent to which a unit provides an encouraging and facilitating environment for research, has an effective strategic plan, is engaged with the regional and international research community, is able to attract excellent postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers through a worldwide reputation.
- sustainability: vision for the future and investment in people and infrastructure and, where appropriate for the subject area, the extent to which activity is supported by a portfolio of research funding; the extent to which recruitment strategies are aimed at sustaining and extending research areas.

52. The Panel will make an overall judgement about the vitality and sustainability of research environments, rather than assessing each criterion separately. In addition, the Panel understands the quality standards for assessing research environment as follows –

The rating will be based on the following five categories:

- (a) 4 star (4*): an environment that is conducive to producing research of world-leading quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability;
- (b) 3 star (3*): an environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally excellent quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability;
- (c) 2 star (2*): an environment that is conducive to producing research of internationally recognised quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability;
- (d) 1 star (1*): an environment that is conducive to producing research of limited quality, in terms of its vitality and sustainability; and
- (e) unclassified (u/c): an environment that is not conducive to producing research of 1 star (1*) quality; or nil submission.

Section E : Working Methods

Use of Sub-Group(s)/Sub-Panel(s)

53. To facilitate assessment of UoAs and/or research areas under the Social Sciences Panel, the following sub-groups will be formed to assess submissions in respective research areas as described in paragraph 4 –

- Psychology (UoA 24)
- Political Science (UoA 25)
- Geography (UoA 26)
- Sociology & Anthropology (UoA 27)
- Social Work & Social Policy (UoA 28)
- Communications & Media Studies (UoA 29)

The final assessment and grading will be decided by the Panel as a whole.

Allocation of Work in the Assessment Process

54. The Convenor, consulting the Deputy Convenor and other panel members, as appropriate, will allocate work to members and, if necessary, impact assessors and/or external reviewers in light of their expertise and workload. In allocating the work, the Convenor will also take into account any potential conflicts of interest of respective panel members and assessors. All panel members will take account of the requirements of the General Panel Guidelines to ensure that the exercise is conducted fairly and equitably.

55. 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. For UoA(s) which is(are) only housed at one or two local universities, submissions will be assigned to at least one non-local member in order to ensure fair and impartial assessment. Final grading on research outputs will be decided by the Panel as a whole.

56. Subject to conflicts of interest of individual members, the impact and environment submissions will be assessed by panel members and impact assessors in the sub-groups for respective UoAs or research areas

under the Panel. Final grading of individual submissions will be a collective decision of the Panel.

Cross-Panel Referrals

57. This Panel will follow the procedures in paragraphs 41-43 of the General Panel Guidelines when initiating referrals to other panels and assessing submissions cross-referred by another panel.

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

59. Cross-panel referrals are envisaged, if appropriate, in areas such as: physical geography (to Panel 3 – Physical Sciences); urban geography (to Panel 7 – Built Environment); neuroscience and its clinical specialities (to Panel 2 Health Sciences) and for some research in political science and in sociology (to Panel 11 – Humanities) with other areas for referral to be determined.

External Advice

60. This Panel will follow the procedure in paragraph 66 of the General Panel Guidelines when referral to external reviewers for expert advice becomes necessary for panel assessment. External reviews may be sought in the cases for which members of the Panel do not have the necessary expertise such as outputs in foreign language or niche research work.

Trial Assessment

61. With reference to paragraphs 89-91 of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will conduct a trial assessment using a sample of submissions selected from universities' submissions. These sample submissions will be assessed by all members of the Panel. Members will share among themselves any important observations in the assessment to ensure fairness and consistency in the actual assessment. Submissions used for the trial assessment will be assessed afresh during the main assessment period regardless of their assessment results during the trial. The Panel will decide on the sample size after the submissions are received.

Panel Feedback Report

62. With reference to paragraph 71 and Appendices E and F of the General Panel Guidelines, the Panel will provide feedback to the UGC after the assessment process. Non-local panel members will be involved in offering comments for an impressionistic international comparison. The Convenor on behalf of the whole panel will submit the panel feedback report to the UGC by 10 November 2020.